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THE COMMUNES AND OTHER MOBILE COMMONS

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introduction

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Communes and Other Mobile Commons

The article is the introduction to the special issue of *Theoretical Practice* which is dedicated to "the communes and other mobile commons". The editors of the issue explain how we could conceptualize various attempts to create communes in terms of mobile commons and mobile commoning. Since the exemplary case of the Paris Commune many social movements – urban, rural, indigenous, feminist, or migrant – experimented with communes as alternatives to state and capitalism and redefined in this way the meaning of spatial practices, work and the labor movement. Against the assumption that the commune is a necessary localized and sedentary political form, the authors who contributed to the special issue propose to grasp it from the perspective of subversive mobilities: as kinetic entities. The introduction presents the common ground on which these proposals meet each other and come into dialogue. Various models of mobile commons described here – communal, insurgent, liminal, temporary, latent, care, fugitive, maroon, black, indigenous, undercommons, uncommons, and many more – testify of a recent mobility turn in the theories of the commons.

Keywords: communes, mobile commons, subversive mobilities, commoning, Paris Commune

In reflecting on communes, we often encounter, not to say collide with, the seemingly contradictory question of the possibility of repetition, but also of transcending the experience of the Parisian communards. This challenge is particularly pertinent within the Marxist tradition, where each successive insurrection that ignites the political imagination – from the 1917 revolution to May 1968, the Zapatista uprising to the repeated occupations of public space in cities around the world since 2011 – is interpreted as a renewal of the energy that erupted in the spring of 1871 (see, for example, Lefebvre 1996; Harvey 2012; Merrifield 2011, 2013). Many of these interpretations are also imbued with the spirit of Paris: firstly, as a site for the production of high-quality theoretical knowledge; secondly, as a major capital city in the modern economy; and thirdly, as an arena for particular political events which are proving to be of a universal nature. Why is this the case, and is it worth fighting against these readings?

An important answer is provided here by none other than the communards themselves, especially if we think of them in the way Kristin Ross (2015) proposes, namely as a trans-geographical community stretching the values of the Paris Commune beyond the immediate place of struggle and its primary temporality. The one that postulated, but also practically realized, the basic principles of a universal republic, which was also advocated by Karl Marx, William Morris, and Peter Kropotkin, who were outside France at the time. The communards consciously rejected nationalism and state collectivism, undertaking instead a self-conscious experiment in being-in-common. They inaugurated this political exercise by, on the one hand, bringing together what had been separated by the urban redevelopment designed by Haussmann (Berman 1988) and, on the other, through developing a new formula for self-government, combined with the search for alternative modes of production to the capitalist mode. In the many voices of the direct and indirect participants in the events, we can hear in this context a resolute praise for cooperation, mutual aid, equality and solidarity, as well as a deep conviction of the collective nature of wealth, knowledge and culture. What was at stake, therefore, was a particular kind of 'insurgent universality' (Tomba 2019), which not only abhors all imperialism and separatism, but remains radically open to democratization and the inclusion of new participants (vide refugees, foreign rebels, artists, and, above all, women). In its aversion to traditional divisions – be they class, cultural, gender, or political – and physical constraints, it was also resolutely opposed to those forces that were responsible for their creation and instrumentalization. As such, it was the weapon of a popular upri-

sing against capital and the state, based on a revolutionary vision of belonging and the promise of absolute democracy. "Everywhere the word 'commune' was understood in the largest sense, as referring to a new humanity, made up of free and equal companions, oblivious to the existence of old boundaries, helping each other in peace from one end of the world to the other" (Reclus 1897, in Ross 2015: 5).

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Understood in this way, the Paris Commune not only practically abolished many of the oppositions that constrain left political thought – e.g. particularism vs. universalism, localism vs. globalism, community vs. class, reproduction vs. production (cf. Ross 2015) – but it was also a fundamentally mobile and, as we shall see below, transhistorical strategy for taking control of the space and conditions of one's own existence. Indeed, the typically communist movement of abolition undertaken in the face of structures of alienation and exploitation (Marx and Engels 1970), affirmed by Marx (1989) also in the context of the Commune, was being translated on the streets of Paris into a lack of geographical fundamentalism, an aversion to autarky and isolation, and an affirmation of liminality, networking and cooperation with similar spatial entities. It is rarely remembered in this context that the rise of the Parisian communards was accompanied by the even more quickly stifled communes in Marseille, Narbonne and Limoges (Hazan 2015: 109). Just as often overlooked is the experience of the banishment and exile of many communards to New Caledonia and the long-distance solidarity shown by some of them towards the anti-imperialist uprising of the Kabyle people in Algeria, who defended their communes against the French occupier (Nicholls 2019). Also, the barricades, i.e. the instruments of struggle suggesting closure, localism, and particularism, with which the events of 1871 are commonly associated, only appeared in the repertoire of the Commune in the last week of its brief existence (Hazan 2011: 241). More as a defensive measure or mechanism of separation, they served to halt the movement of the enemy (Berman 1988) – both the military troops sent into the city and the circulation of capital, freed by the Haussmannization of Paris (Harvey 2003). The limitlessness, translocality and mobility of the Commune thus opposed imperial mobility. Similarly, its power of connectivity and expansion has nothing to do with the absorption and subjugation of the outside that is characteristic of "extensive universalism" (Balibar 2002: 125). Rather, it was an incentive to liberate more territory and to fund new communes that could collectively form a networked federation of open cooperatives and, ultimately, fully reclaimed communist cities. Andy Merrifield (2011: 67) writes in this context about the methodology of moving through walls,

which was already intended by Blanqui or Reclus to challenge the traditional divisions between the city and the countryside, between the First, Second and Third Worlds, and between the West and the East or the North and the South. Its relevance is confirmed today by the words of amazement presented in the manifesto of the Invisible Committee (2009: 101): "What's strange isn't that people who are attuned to each other form communes, but that they remain separated. Why shouldn't communes proliferate everywhere? In every factory, every street, every village, every school?". The radical openness of communes broke with determinism and fatalism, according to which there exist chosen spaces and predestined subjectivities that can pursue social change.

Although transcending Paris was therefore inscribed from the outset in the Commune's excessive and multiscalar existence, a good way to reinforce this movement – not only in the language of theory – is to refer to practices of commoning and the production of the common. This is necessary, in our view, not only to provincialize the theory of the communes but also to reflect on the conditions of its persistence, proliferation and reproduction on the ground of everyday life. Indeed, one of the reasons for the failure of the Paris Commune is ultimately its ephemerality, rebel festivity of recapturing the city, so often affirmed by Lefebvre (1972, 2003), which nevertheless failed to soothe and fully satisfy the "cry of the people" (Tardi 2005). This is also why the great celebration of the people of Paris cannot serve as a direct model for later actions, especially when considering the much more diffuse networks of Empire and multitude (cf. Merrifield 2013, 30), but also the different and more complex nature of the crises to which contemporary communards must respond.

This challenge is rather better dealt with by much less spectacular mobile commons, which, especially in crisis situations, help people on the run (Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou and Tsianos 2015) to stay put for as long as possible (Lees, Annunziata and Rivas-Alonso 2018). This fact is only seemingly at odds with the dynamic and liminal ontology of the commons, which we seek to analyze in this issue. Indeed, the rootedness in space, even if temporary and provisional, is ultimately a condition for the creation of alternative realities. And it is exactly this aspiration, so typical for most acts of commoning (Linebaugh 2008), that unites the various expressions of communal struggle emerging both before and after 1871. From the maroon communities of fugitive slaves, living in the outskirts of oppressive states in the hills, forests, jungles, basins, swamps, or deserts in the Caribbean, Zomia (Southern Asia), North Africa, Balkans or Eastern European steppes (Scott 2009), through the

From the maroon communities of fugitive slaves, living in the outskirts of oppressive states in the hills, forests, jungles, basins, swamps, or deserts in the Caribbean, Zomia (Southern Asia), North Africa, Balkans or Eastern European steppes, through the utopian attempts to re-build the Garden of Eden on Earth in the New World, to the proletarian, black, indigenous and guerrilla urban insurgencies, communes never ceased to serve as the laboratories of emancipation and production of anti-capitalist space.

utopian attempts to re-build the Garden of Eden on Earth in the New World (Boal et al. 2012), to the proletarian, black, indigenous and guerrilla urban insurgencies (e.g. Lazar 2008), communes never ceased to serve as the laboratories of emancipation and production of anti-capitalist space. As such they are always more than "just" alternative forms of political organization – in striving for absolute democratic modes of economic production, education, and social relations, they are proposing nothing less than a holistic project for a new society.

It is no coincidence that these proposals most often appear precisely in times of crisis, which not only today – although now particularly so, due to the economic-social-environmental-pandemic meta-crisis – most severely affect areas peripheral to the West: its former colonies, internal margins (ghettos of poverty, banlieues) or despised neighbors (e.g. Mexico, the Balkans, Eastern Europe). Although we are far from romanticizing such situations, for commoners crisis can sometimes be synonymous with possibility (Varvourosis 2022) – treated as an opportunity to rethink the dominant forms of inhabiting the planet and using its resources, a chance to remodel insufficiently democratic social relations, and an incentive to activate alternative forms of production: of things, spaces and subjectivities. This is when commons often prove to be, as Silvia Federici, Massimo De Angelis, or Antonio Negri write, the promise of a future social life. This, in turn, forces us to take a very different view of social innovation. After all, what is most noteworthy today in terms of being-in-common comes to us not necessarily from the Parisian Latin Quarter or Manhattan but from migrant squats in Greece or Bolivian neighborhood communities.

The language of mobile commons thus also allows us to rethink the more-than-class composition of commoners. We tend to associate the history of the Paris Commune with the names of great leaders, ideologues or commentators. Meanwhile, the event of this and other communes is above all the responsibility of the dispossessed and the excluded: e.g. proletarians, migrants, former prisoners and slaves, radical militants and activists, and finally political dissenters and heretics, forming a multi-colored mob who dream of another more autonomous and democratic world. Particularly now, their precariousness and instability translate into a greater awareness of entanglement with other, equally vulnerable forms of life, as well as a sensitivity to the needs of the broadly understood environment (Tsing 2015). Mobility of communes does not imply, in this case, an escape from responsibility for the temporarily inhabited territory, which is a structural feature of Harveyan capital (Harvey 2006), but on the contrary political and

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ecological care for the here and now, as well as for the not entirely predictable future of a given place.

It is on this ground that the mobile commons mesh with the makeshift forms of space production (Vasudevan 2017). This is particularly evident in the case of squats and other forms of place occupation (e.g. community gardens or parks), which, out of necessity but also as a result of conscious decisions, renounce ecologically costly interventions into the urban fabric. They turn instead to various forms of reclaiming, remaking and repairing available materials, contradicting the thesis of the unproductive nature of reproductive labor. This draws our attention to the possibility of collectively producing and activating the given place through the intelligent use of waste and rubbish, as well as to the importance of tacit forms of resistance to capitalist labor relations (cf. Federici 2019). Importantly, based on improvised materialism (Vasudevan 2015), zero-waste sensibility (Linebaugh 2008), and a culture of care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), mobile commons thus open themselves up to interspecies forms of solidarity, cooperation, and sociability. This is confirmed by, among other things, the renaissance of permaculture, the popularization of ethical veganism, and many other ecocentric initiatives that grow out of the conviction that existing social-ecological relations need to be radically reworked. Such practices give us hope not only to mitigate the effects of the multiple crises of which current and potential commoners are the most frequent victims (especially environmental, climate, and humanitarian) but perhaps also provide us with the chance to retain them through the spread of similar practices, as well as the physical expansion of the common space (Stavrides 2016) consciously produced and managed by more-than-human communities.

Such an expansion of spatial commons requires the political work of the imagination, which, instead of holding tight to one location, can inspire other locations on a similar emotional-affective basis (cf. Merrifield 2011: 76; Castells 2012). The community of anger and hope, the collectivity of pain and care, or the aforementioned more-than-human experience of precarity cannot, however, overshadow the concrete material conditions in which each practice of commoning comes to develop. This does not, of course, negate the importance of translocal learning from other social movements or sharing experiences and strategies across geographical divides (McFarlane 2011). Quite the contrary. It does, however, place additional emphasis on the work of contextualized invention, adaptation, and creativity, as well as diagnosing problems and proposing solutions that may significantly differ from those encountered by historically distant and still-existing communes.

This caution corresponds very well with the very ontology of mobile commons, which in any particular case must reconcile situatedness with unfettered mobility, embeddedness with openness to the outside, as is well reflected in the metaphors of threshold and shared heterotopia proposed by Stavros Stavrides in his concept of common space. Communes are not only made of people on the move and not only circulate and ignite the struggle elsewhere, but the very forms of commoning that sustain them are in many cases hybrid, undetermined and viral. The fleeting conspiracies, revealing themselves here and there, the nomadic communities in-the-making, as in the case of clandestine migrant networks, camps, squats and shelters, the circulating information, gossip and ideas that help to organize spaces of flow, or the subversive uses of transport and communication infrastructures, vehicles and devices (which William Walters [2015] identified as sites of "viapolitics"), remind us that the insurgent aspect of communes remains possible only due to all these subtle and hidden acts of denizens' mobilization. Only with their experiences and capabilities, may we fight the most exclusivist political discourses and economic practices.

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It is worth examining some concepts which develop various aspects of mobile commons. Angelos Varvarousis (2022) stressed their liminal character, showing that the temporal, transitional and elusive functioning of these experiments does not necessarily mean that they are destined to perish without more permanent outcomes. The liminal potential triggers the process of transition: from crisis and provisional reactions to its course to the emergence of structures that draw from the repertoire of experiences, activities and ideas of carnivalesque commoning. The "liminal commons" structure the post-crisis landscape and multiply themselves in a rhizomatic and contagious way. Varvarousis shows this using the example of Greece, where the occupations and temporary mobilizations left behind many achievements, such as the whole constellation of social clinics and pharmacies, workers' cooperatives, banks of time and alternative currencies, neighborhood assemblies, networks of solidarity exchange, urban gardens, spaces liberated from the power of capital and the state, artistic collectives and recuperated factories.

A similar tension between ephemeral phenomena and permanent constituting of the new possibly post-capitalist world can be observed in the case of another form of mobile commons – those performed by migrants and their allies. Martina Tazzioli (2020) writes in this context of "temporary mobile commoning" to stress the processual and constantly renegotiated shape of bottom-up and floating structures of support which help to maintain the material guarantee for the right to

move. The spaces of flight and refuge which are opened and reproduced in the places of temporary shelter, routes of wandering, zones, and institutions of self-governance – even if they are fleeting and labile – they still play a part in producing something more foundational, something to-come that will haunt enclosed entities such as "fortress Europe". Tazzioli describes this phenomenon as the cartography of vanishing refugee spaces: an alternative, grassroots, and subversive cartography which – while remaining mobile and deterritorializing – happens outside the gaze of the state, stays out of the radar of regimes of circulations, and acts kind of subcutaneously – in the sphere to which Harney and Moten (2013) referred as "undercommons".

Situatedness which is under-the-deck and clandestine is typical also for the kind of mobile commoning which tends to be post-anthropocentric. For Anna Tsing (2015) the elusive and shifting socio-ecological relations are intertwined in the world of "latent commons". Being not exclusively human enclaves and crawling out from the various cracks and holes in the commodified order of capital, latent commons offer possible patterns for organizing motley pluriverses of becoming which resist the apparatuses of capture and the regimes of countability and governmentality. In that regard, post-human and multispecies commonalities are akin to "maroon commons" – the fugitive hideaways for fleeing subjectivities whose durability is dependent on deep knowledge of local ecology from below (Roane 2017) and the capability to navigate in spaces that are ungovernable from the top. The subaltern commoners, seeking lines of flight to the maroon commons, develop mobile practices and institutions of "sousveillance" (Browne 2015). They are composed as the world of fugitivity which Sylvia Wyner (1971) called "the plot – using wordplay: "the plot" is both the allotment, a close relation with the soil, and the conspiracy, intrigue and collusion of those who reject being pinned to the land. In this way, subversive models of movement are identical to the weaving of bottom-up counter-discourses of people on the move.

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Glen S. Coulthard, the theorist of "indigenous commons" (2014), convinces us that the kind of opacity for the imperial gaze of capital opens the possibility to decolonize not only resources such as water, plants, or animals but also the decolonization of the human – it paves a way to the horizon of non-possessive and non-colonized ontologies. Similar reflections come from the site of Latin American decolonial and indigenous social theory and social movements. Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser (2018) point out the fundamental incommensurability between Western/modern ontologies which are based on dichotomies

such as society/nature, matter/ideas, or property/wastelands, and indigenous cosmologies for which all reality exists in the web of life that needs our care and reproductive work. The commons, when seen from this angle, can survive only if we manage to locate them anew in a relational and dynamic order of flows which – from the perspective of capitalist property and commodification – seems to be "uncommon". Commoning of the uncommon, as it is advocated by the authors, can be successful only if we are ready to see and accept the radical plurality and heterogeneity of the many worlds which are operational in organizing the web of life in many incommensurable, parallel and intersecting ways. The attempts to reduce them all to one, exclusive ontology – as in the capitalist regime of things which equalizes everything with property, commodity, and money-form – will result in their destruction. Arturo Escobar (2020) uses the term "ontological politics" to name such a model of collective struggle, because it focuses on the conservation of living worlds. Ontological politics is also pluriversal in its orientation because it is interested in creating and caring for the world in which many worlds fit. According to Escobar, the commons are not a separate sphere of social reality which could be occupied and organized, but they are inscribed, embedded, and spread out in those multiverses, acting as their true social base. It will be necessary to strengthen and develop the social relations of care – which Silvia Federici refers to, from a feminist point of view, as "care commons" – if we are to be able to protect these multiple worlds from the risk of extinction.

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All the mentioned diverse forms of mobile commons – communal, insurgent, liminal, temporary, latent, care, fugitive, maroon, Black, indigenous, undercommons, uncommons, and many more – jointly compose a project of "mobility justice" whose aim is – to refer to Mimi Sheller's (2018) elaboration of the concept – "both the protection of the planet itself through a living process of commoning and the local mobilization of many networked mobile publics for the defense of the mobile commons".

How do mobile commons relate to the non-mobile, immobile or sedentary commons? Should we treat them as necessarily irreconcilable? Could the former be the supplement and the ally of the latter? Do we need both localized and enclosed commons organized around stable communities on the one hand, and motile and self-transforming mobile commons on the other? Or should we prioritize mobility over immobility? We believe that such questions are wrongly posed and tend to result in confusion and misunderstanding, rather than contribute to the creation of alternatives to capitalism. All communes are mobile commons

– this is our conviction – or they are not communes at all. Because no commune could flourish and reproduce itself over a longer period of time without weaving the socio-ecological web of life around its needs and relations with other entities. When separated and enclosed, communes are like a besieged fortress, crushed by external forces of capital and the state. Communes are not states and they cannot be statist. They have to multiply, pullulate and inseminate to maintain fruitful relations with each other. We adhere here to the view presented by Thomas Nail (2020) in his "kinetic materialism", namely that the state/static/statist form is just an ideological representation of the world which is constantly on the move and all structures that seem to be sedentary and immobile are in fact maintained and reproduced by complex flows and movements at their base. The advantage that communes could attain – against their static counterpart and adversary – would lie in gaining the consciousness of their dependency on the socio-ecological fabric of life (see Tsing 2015; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Federici 2019) and drawing lessons from it to organize the production of the common in such fabric. All these flows, which states assume to be just an "outside", external "nature", surrounding "environment", or outer "resources" to be enclosed, privatized, and commodified, are from the communal perspective not external at all, but are regarded the true foundation of commonist politics.

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In this issue, we have collected a diverse set of original articles and reviews which oscillate around the aim of protecting, reclaiming, and constructing mobile commons. The opening article by Mimi Sheller, *Mobile Commoning: Reclaiming Indigenous, Caribbean, Maroon, and Migrant Commons*, extends the concept of mobile commoning to include its marginalized, non-Western and non-modern forms, which emerge from histories from below, from subaltern people on the move. Sheller tries to reclaim the social theory of the commons for various types of Indigenous, Caribbean, maroon and migrant commons. She intends to demonstrate that jointly these endeavors can be presented as the project of contestation against enclosures, coloniality, imperialism, and capitalist extractivism. Such a project does not fit easily into those ideas and practices around the commons which are typical for the global North, being the outcomes of Northern social movements and subjectivities. The possible zone of encounter and agreement between two traditions of mobile commons seems to be – for Sheller – the history from below. But the author claims that it has to be understood as the history of mobile subjects who are imperceptible to the gaze of authorities and who transgress – due to their excess of mobility – the regimes of enclo-

sures. All those who "do not fit" and don't have their proper place, constitute the affective and flowing commonality of fugitive commoners.

In the following article some of the main authors of the concepts of mobile commons and mobile commoning propose their actualization in the context of the pandemic and post-pandemic era. Nicos Trimikliniotis, Dimitris Parsanoglou, and Vassilis Tsianos – the authors of the book *Mobile Commons, Migrant Digitalities and the Right to the City* – reflect how pandemic regimes of control and the modulation of mobility changed the capacity of mobile commoners to act. Their theorizations are based on empirical research conducted in the geographical triangle between Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey which is a neuralgic zone for migration to the European Union. Although it enters into crisis time and time again – and the freedom to move suffers from many restrictions – the triangle could be also grasped as the crucial laboratory for the social movements and practices of resistance from below and on the move. The authors try to propose the mapping of the impact of the pandemic on the radicalization of tension between control and subversion. And the epidemiological universalization of containment and surveillance – because viruses do not respect borders – makes the experience of control more widespread and common than ever, creating the potential for mobile commoning on an unprecedented scale and urgency.

The third article shifts the ground from the South to the North of Europe – Sweden – but in fact, it problematizes the oversimplified relationship between migrants and their geographical location. Maja Sager, Emma Söderman, and Vanna Nordling reflect on the case of "Swedish Afghans" in Paris – the working of networks of support and solidarity created by those Afghan refugees whose asylum claims in Sweden were rejected, leading to their relocation to France. The activities of the network, organized in both countries, are transborder and transnational in their reach. At the same time, they are focused on the inclusion of Afghan refugees in Swedish society, where they had already established social bonds and identifications. "Swedishness", identity, and locality serve here as the vehicles for the demands associated with belonging and overcoming the condition of exile. Nevertheless, these demands are created in the form of diffused and elusive meeting experiences. The authors propose describing this paradoxical phenomenon of situatedness and dispersal as "im/mobile commons": the solidarity of the people on the move co-exists here with the imagery of the end destination – in this case, Sweden – as the expected overcoming of a mobile condition which is – for "Swedish Afghans" themselves – only temporary and transient. Im/mobile commons raises some doubts regar-

ding anarchist elaborations on mobile commons, in which the anti-identitarian and anti-particularistic nature of mobile commons is celebrated as their dominant characteristics.

Similar, but slightly different doubts concerning the overly optimistic hopes invested in the mobile commons – as germs of a different European community, performed by people on the move in a dispersed and processual way – are discussed in the text by Łukasz Moll. The author focuses on the practices of solidarity associated with people migrating from Belarus and Ukraine between 2021 and 2022. Moll discusses two completely opposite stances towards mobile commoning which were widespread on the Eastern borders of Poland and the EU during this period. The first reactions to mobile commoning – in the case of migrants who were transported by Belarusian authorities from all around the world to push them through the Polish/EU boundary – entailed that mobile commoning went clandestine and became a risky endeavor, actively tracked and fought by the Polish state under the conditions of the state of exception. But in the face of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, mobile commoning was the crucial part of the official strategy of the Polish and civil society to provide hospitality to people who were escaping from the war: the development of the network of support, shelter and transportation was actively promoted by politicians and media. In his analysis, Moll tries to explain the phenomenon of such diverse responses to the migration challenge. For this purpose, he uses the concept of "differential commoning", with which he indicates that even horizontal and radical hospitality is entangled in the traditional dialectics of universalism and particularism, or inclusion and exclusion. The author argues, however, that despite these limitations, the mobile commoning which developed in Poland in the discussed period, serves as an important experience and a hint on how to redesign European borders.

The article of Jędrzej Brzeziński, *Anti-enclosures and nomadic habits: Towards a commonist reading of Deleuzoguattarian nomadology*, is a philosophical essay in which the author collects and re-interprets various nomadic motifs in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Brzeziński identifies the sources of these motifs and how they became the parts of writings of the French thinkers. Then he demonstrates their potential significance for the conceptualization of mobile commons. His interpretation is drawn against widespread (mis)readings of Deleuzoguattarian nomadology, according to which it affirms postmodern capitalism in an accelerationist spirit. Brzeziński argues that nomadology should be understood as the project of organizing post-humanist terri-

tories of resistance against the enclosures of the commons. This project has the nomadic distribution of social relations in the enclosed space as its basis, which is elusive for all sedentary, bourgeois and capitalist models of social reproduction.

Such nomadic distributions – in their historical aspects – are followed by Martin Tharp in his article which is dedicated to the countercultural communal living arrangement in Czechoslovakia during the so-called "Normalization era" (1970-1989). Tharp is interested in broadening the field of oppositional practices in the discussed period with the experiences of creating the communes (*baráky*) which were marginalized in the historical research. The author demonstrates the transnational reach of the phenomenon of communes which pierced the "Iron Curtain" between the capitalist West and socialist East. In his opinion, the commonist or communalist opposition was a response to the socialist vision of modernity and modernization. Its history cannot be easily included in the narrative of the anti-communist resistance of the opposition. The communal counter-culture was focused on developing communities of refuge and dispersion which sought to maintain their utopian impulse while materializing in the social reality. Czechoslovak experiences seem to be an interesting point of reference for contemporary theories and practices of the commons, showing the *longue durée* of these structures also in the former "Second World".

In the final text of the issue the reader can find the review article by Stanisław Knapowski, who devoted his attention to the social history of the Paris Commune in relation to the work of Jean-François Dupeyron *Commun-Commune: penser la Commune de Paris (1871)*. The author highlights the unfulfilled legacy of the Commune, which still serves as an inspiration in many places around the world, sometimes in a direct and conscious way and sometimes not. The commoning of resources, the radical horizontal democracy in their governing, and the federal association of communes, were the three pillars of the Paris Commune's project. Seen from such a perspective, the Paris Commune seems to be an absolutely fundamental experience to study for all those contemporary thinkers who believe that the federation of the commons/communes could be a potential post-capitalist alternative. Following Dupeyron in this regard, Knapowski argues that the social history of the Commune was overshadowed by the "black legend" of the event on the one hand, and the military accounts on the other. The contribution of various ideologies of the French Left to the social experiments during urban insurrection was marginalized by the scholars and commentators of the Commune. From Knapowski's review, it seems that the dilemmas that

were faced by the Communards remain our dilemmas in seeking the postcapitalist forms of life.

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Tytuł: Komuny i inne mobilne dobra wspólne

Abstrakt: Artykuł stanowi wprowadzenie do specjalnego wydania *Praktyki Teoretycznej*, które zostało poświęcone „komunom i innym mobilnym dobrom wspólnym". Redaktorzy numeru wyjaśniają, w jaki sposób możemy konceptualizować rozmaite próby wytwarzania mobilnych dóbr wspólnych i mobilnego uwspólniania. Począwszy od wzorcowego przykładu Komuny Paryskiej wiele ruchów społecznych – miejskich, wiejskich, rdzennych, feministycznych czy migranckich – eksperymentowało z komunami jako alternatywami dla państwa i kapitalizmu i redefiniowało w ten sposób znaczenie praktyk przestrzennych, pracy i ruchu robotniczego. Wbrew założeniu, że komuna jest z konieczności zlokalizowaną i osiadłą formą polityczną, autorzy, którzy zgłosili teksty do naszego okolicznościowego numeru, proponują uchwycić ją z perspektywy subwersywnych mobilności: jako jednostki kinetyczne. Wprowadzenie prezentuje wspólny grunt, na którym te propozycje spotykają się i wchodzą ze sobą w dialog. Różne modele mobilnych dóbr wspólnych opisane w numerze – komunalne, powstańcze, liminalne, tymczasowe, utajone, opiekuńcze, zbiegowskie, maroońskie, czarne, rdzenne, podziemne, niepospolite i wiele innych – zaświadczają o najnowszym zwrocie ku mobilności w teoriach dóbr wspólnych.
Słowa kluczowe: komuny, mobilne dobra wspólne, subwersywne mobilności, uwspólnianie, Komuna Paryska

the communes
and other mobile commons

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Mobile Commoning: Reclaiming Indigenous, Caribbean, Maroon, and Migrant Commons

Over the last two decades, the concept of 'the commons' has been rediscovered as a powerful organizing principle in social movements, radical political thought, and critical theory. The concept of commoning has also been adopted within discussions of migration and critical mobilities research. This article will first trace some of these emerging ideas of commoning as a relational practice found in many political mobilizations around 'reclaiming the commons'. Then it will turn to approaches to commoning that seek to complicate Euro-American histories by centering Indigenous practices of radical commoning, Caribbean and African diaspora mobile commoning, and recent concepts such as undercommons, queer commons, and migrant mobile commoning. The article asks: How can such practices of radical mobile commoning help us envision ways to unmake the existing violent settlings and destructive im/mobilities of enclosure, coloniality, imperialism, and capitalist extraction?

Keywords: commoning, counter-plantation, Indigenous, maroon, mobilities, undercommons

Introduction: From commons to commoning

Over the last two decades, the concept of "the commons" has been rediscovered as a powerful organizing principle in social movements, radical political thought, and critical theory. In the 1990s, the anti-globalization movement's call for "reclaiming of the commons" (Klein 2001) built on Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis' critique of the "new enclosures." Silvia Federici became known for her political activism as a member of the Wages for Housework Movement in New York in the mid-1970s, writing pamphlets such as *Wages Against Housework*, and *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen*. Federici, along with George Caffentzis and other collaborators, went on to describe the period of "new enclosures" in the late 20th century and explained how the idea of the commons helped many progressive movements fight back against it (Caffentzis and Federici 2014; Barbagallo et al. 2019). This and other work brought the idea of the commons into the 21st century, spanning both rural and urban locations of political struggles, in the Global North as well as in the Global South.

In the Global North one tradition of thinking about commons drew on the Nobel prize-winning work of political theorist Elinor Ostrom (1990), who demonstrated that ordinary people could (and did) create rules and institutions that allow for the sustainable and equitable management of shared resources. Open access and cooperative management and decision-making are central features of these commons. Against Garrett Hardin's influential essay on the "tragedy of the commons", which argued that commonly-held resources are subject to overuse and destruction (and inflamed racist white nationalist ideas of population control), Ostrom argued that commons have always been collectively managed and governed by rules of customary shared usage, not simply a disorganized free-for-all. She demonstrated how the regulation of the common pool resources (CPR) such as fisheries by self-governing institutions offers an alternative mode of shared governance, which has inspired subsequent work in political ecology (Blackmar 2006; Clement et al. 2019).

Another more radical tradition of thinking about commons emerged out of social history in the tradition of 'history from below'. Building on readings of *The Ethnological Notebooks* of Karl Marx, and historians such as E.P. Thompson's studies of the formation of the English working class, social historians extended cultural Marxist analysis toward the formation of the more complex, polyglot, and multi-ethnic working class of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Atlantic world, which

included sailors, enslaved people, port workers, and women, as well as the rural commoners whose land had been enclosed (Linebaugh and Rediker 2001). The historian Peter Linebaugh also traced the connections between Euro-American radical social philosophers of the commons and the anti-colonial struggles of the Irish, the Haitian Revolution, and the Indigenous peoples of North America, such as the Iroquois Federation (Linebaugh 2014). This work not only helped situate commoning as a widespread practice in opposition to capitalist modernization through enclosure and private property, but also influenced a generation of young activists and scholars within that radical tradition around the 1990s to the turn of the millennium (including my own work while in graduate school in the mid-1990s). Also embedded in this line of thought was an anthropological attention to "traveling cultures" (Clifford 1992), involving ideas of global exchange, hybridity, and creolization. The rejection of methodological nationalism and bounded societies fed into what became known as "the mobilities turn" in the social sciences (Sheller and Urry 2006).

At the same time, the idea of commoning was also taking on political life of its own, interacting with these theoretical trajectories. The Zapatistas rose up against the Mexican state in the 1990s to defend communal relations to land and indigenous ways of life in Chiapas, as well as creating new forms of political commoning. Social movements across Latin America and the Caribbean formed Via Campesina to resist the enclosures of land that were destroying peasant and Indigenous agroecologies. There was growing recognition of the diverse mobile subaltern counter-publics (e.g., Black, Latinx, Feminist, Indigenous) that have long created ways of life, insurgent movements, and autonomous spaces that some refer to as "Black commons" (Agyeman and Boone 2020). These Maroon and fugitive "undercommons" (Moten and Harney 2013) draw on deep forms of practiced knowledge of living outside binary structures of property, ownership, and capitalist extraction.

In the political sphere, also influential on these ideas and social movements reclaiming the commons were a series of books by the political philosophers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who called for building 'commonwealth' and 'assembly' through "constructing new, mobile constellations of shared life". In *Assembly*, Hardt and Negri define 'the common' precisely as being that which is "in contrast to property, both private and public":

> It is not a new form of property but rather *nonproperty*, that is, a fundamentally different means of organizing the use and management of wealth. The common

> designates an equal and open structure for access to wealth together with democratic mechanisms of decision-making. More colloquially, one might say that the common is what we share or, rather, it is a social structure and a social technology for sharing. (Hardt and Negri 2017, 97).

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Commons, in short, are not empty unclaimed spaces, or *terra nullius*, but are *socially produced shared spaces or spaces for sharing*. Examples of potential commons include "the earth and its ecosystems"; immaterial forms of wealth such as ideas, codes and images; material commodities produced through cooperative forms of social labor; "social territories" produced through cooperation (i.e., what we might call sharing economies); and social institutions and services aimed at health, education, housing and welfare (Hardt and Negri 2017, 98). Hardt and Negri draw on Judith Butler's notion of precarity as "a site of potential," arguing that the vulnerability of 'multitudes' might in fact be a means for securing "forms of life grounded in the common" by exercising "open and expanding networks of productive social cooperation, inside and outside capitalist economy, as a powerful basis for generating free and autonomous forms of life" (Hardt and Negri 2017, 60).

These understandings of enclosure and commons helped to expand these concepts toward more abstract imaginaries of mobile commoning as "constellations of share life" that are not just shared places or common pool resources, but shared practices and ways of being together. This brought a shift towards the verb form of 'commoning', which is said to have been coined by Linebaugh, who with Federici and Caffentzis, was part of the Midnight Notes collective which argued that "Commons are not *things*, but social relations — of cooperation and solidarity. And commons are not *givens* but processes" (Barbagallo et al. 2019, 6).

Critical urban geography also began to employ the active concept of commoning "as complex social and political ecologies which articulate particular socio-spatial practices, social relationships and forms of governance that underpin them to produce and reproduce them" (Chatterton 2010, 626). The idea of 'commoning mobility' has more recently been propagated in critical migration studies (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013; Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, Tsianos 2015, 2016), in recent work on low-carbon mobility transitions (Nikolaeva et al. 2019), and in my own work on mobility justice (Sheller 2018). As noted by Nikolaeva, Adey and Cresswell, there is a renewed emphasis on "the processual, the spatial and the relational dimensions of commons [that comes] forward as the focus shifts towards *commoning* (Chatterton 2010; Williams 2017) and to strategies and practices which can work to "assemble more inc-

lusive, just and sustainable spaces" (Jeffrey, McFarlane and Vasudevan 2012, 2)" through a commoning of mobilities (Nikolaeva et al. 2019).

Radical geographers have argued for this kind of processual, rhizomatic, and fluid process of commoning as a crucial aspect of post-capitalist urban commons (e.g., Chatterton 2016). So although commons have been imagined as common pool resources such as a pasture, a forest, or some other form of materially grounded access to a place, recent approaches put the emphasis on the social relations and *processes of commoning* as relationships of sharing and caring. Mobile commoning can be understood as socially produced rules for sharing and moving together with others. Neither private nor public, mobile commoning suggests a temporary practice of dwelling-and-moving without taking ownership. Mobile commons are not just a shared territory, natural resource, or open access information, but suggest a radical way of moving together in the world, sharing spaces, and refusing private property. Commons thus hover between thing-ness and sets of relations, blurring the boundary between object and action.

Crucially, these more relational theories of commoning as a practice have leveraged the concept as a critique of settler colonialism and racial capitalism, which both have their bases in private property, enclosure, and extraction. As the sociologist Craig Fortier describes it, "A useful place to start imaging the process of unsettling and decolonizing the commons is by recognizing that the commons is not simply a piece of property or a resource, but a practice" (Fortier 2017, 60). Indigenous and Black critical theory bring to light both diverse existing movements for commoning and multiple radical understandings of commoning that take us beyond European histories, although still connected to the continuity of pre-modern practices such as gleaning, pottaging, and access to shorelines, forests, fishing, hunting, and foraging grounds (Linebaugh 2014). Nevertheless, twenty-first century Euro-American movements to "reclaim the commons" and "occupy" various sites of power sometimes have had the problematic tendency to claim land that had already been stolen from Indigenous peoples without reflecting on the pre-existing presence of First Peoples. Indigenous scholars such as Glen Coulthard (2014), Audra Simpson (2014), and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) have problematized any easy alignment between non-Indigenous practices of commoning and their own longstanding relationships to land and territories practiced by their respective communities (Dene, Mohawk, Nishnaabeg).

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With this in mind, the scholar and activist Craig Fortier suggests possibilities for bringing into conversation the work of these Indigenous

scholars and the kind of critical "black study" advocated by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) in order to "unsettle the commons". Fortier argues that Moten and Harney's concept of "the undercommons" suggests the potential and the possibility for place-based knowledge that "resists both *enclosure and settlement*" (Fortier 2017, 104). We can learn from many "small, diverse, and widespread attempts to live outside the dominant logics of our time", how to "destabilize our intellectual, affective, spiritual, and material commitments to the power relations of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and settler colonialism" (Fortier, 105). Like the relational thinking of many Indigenous epistemologies, Moten and Harney's counter-point notion of the fugitive "undercommons" (2013) hints at some ways to mobilize the idea of the commons not simply as a place or a resource to be shared, but as a way of moving through the world, a relational counter-position, an embodied relation with others, and an epistemic perspective from below. The undercommons is imagined as a feeling, an improvisation, a break.

Queer theorist Lauren Berlant also highlighted the commons concept as "a powerful vehicle for troubling troubled times", deploying it not as a naïve place-holder for community, but to point towards "the difficulty of convening a world conjointly, although it is inconvenient and hard, and to offer incitements toward imagining a livable provisional life". Incoherent, ambivalent and "messed up", the commons concept nevertheless holds out a claim upon us: "Under its name, across the globe, communities tap into legacies of occupation to contest ownership rights and resource justice, and under its name, people project a pastoral social relation of mutual attachment, dependence, or vitality" (Berlant 2016, 395-396). Berlant poetically described commoning as an activity, a verb, a movement, a connected mediation. It is a queer concept that holds out the possibility of different kinds of more hopeful political futures. Tiffany Lethabo King, in *The Black Shoals,* also describes a "feminist, Two Spirit, queer, and errant form of critique [that] also compels decolonizing movements to move outside the dominant logics and narratives of 'nation'". Her notion of the Black Shoals implies that "[t]hese instances of coming together gesture toward an otherwise mode of being human that holds space for one another's well-being, joy, and future" (Lethabo King 2020, 27).

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These radical Black, Indigenous, feminist and queer theories of commoning press at the limits of Euro-American ways of knowing, which continue to reproduce binary logics of subject/object, Man/Nature, male/female, whiteness/blackness, materiality/meaning, public/private etc. Theories of commoning also point us toward alternative genealogies

of the concept and practices of commoning within non-settler communities. As Federici recognized, "The new enclosures ironically demonstrated not only that commons have not vanished, but new forms of social cooperation are constantly being produced" (Federici 2018). In that spirit of more hopeful futures and radical pasts, this article will revisit Indigenous, Caribbean and African-diaspora dimensions of mobile commoning in the Americas, showing how existing forms of mobile commoning extend decolonial frameworks by re-enchanting the world as a relational practice of everyday life that is more-than-human. It will ask: How can the cultural practices of Indigenous, Caribbean, and African diaspora mobile commoning help us envision ways to unmake the existing violent settlings and destructive enclosures and (im)mobilities of coloniality, imperialism, genocidal capitalist extraction, and ongoing climate disasters?

Indigenous Commoning

Across the place called Turtle Island — named by white settlers as America — diverse Indigenous peoples' relations to land, water, places and mobilities have very different genealogies than those that have informed European theorizations of the commons. Many scholars have noted the important role of traditions of Indigenous environmental mobilities in allowing for multi-local, multi-generational, and trans-species sets of relations. In the traditions of the Anishinaabe, for example, "philosophies focus on fluid and transformative relationships as constituting the fabric of resilient societies", in contrast to "how colonial power can operate as a containment strategy that works to curtail mobility", suggesting alternative ways of thinking about migration, mobilities, displacement and climate justice (Whyte et al. 2019, 319). Nishnaabeg scholars such as Gerald Vizenor and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson describe Indigenous forms of sovereignty through the concept of "transmotion" (Simpson 2011, 89). Simpson argues "that Native transmotion is based on a reciprocal relationship with nature that is neither monotheistic nor territorially sovereign" and can be understood as an "interdependence between humans, animals, the natural world, the ancestors, and the cosmos" (as described in Fortier 2017, 79). Transmotion is suggestive of the multiplicity of transits and transfers across various kinds of boundaries that make mobile commoning possible: moves of comingling across space, subjectivity, materiality, sexuality, animality, temporality, and spirituality are all in play.

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Michelle A. Lelièvre's *Unsettling Mobility* (2017) also characterizes the Mi'kmaw practices of movement in Nova Scotia as far more than simply relocating from one place to another. Instead, she shows how movement can *emplace* people on the lands across which they move. Disrupting binaries of settled vs. mobile, Mi'kmaw mobility practices show how "both mobile and sedentary practices, the narratives associated with those practices, and the embodied experiences of them contribute to how people make places — in other words, to how they settle" (Lelièvre 2017). In this regard, practices such as seasonal mobility and access to particular landscapes —including rivers, forests, islands, shorelines, and mountains — have become a form of protest and assertion of cultural and political subjectivity for many Native American groups. Across the Wabanaki lands of the Northeast, where missionaries sought to settle Native peoples as small farmers, the Wabanaki have thus challenged the notion of settlement as sedentary.

A wide range of scholarship shows how Indigenous ontologies in many parts of the world avoid the separation of "Man" and "Nature" that has plagued Western philosophy. Non-binary understandings of mobility/settling incorporate a kind of relationality that is conducive to thinking in terms of commoning. People, animals and plants are in and of the land they come from and move through, and the land has both material and spiritual dimensions that are embodied in respectful human relations.

In white colonial settler states, in contrast, enclosure was (and is) crucial and settlement was sedentary, exclusionary, and grounded in the creation of private property. Even though original treaties made with Indigenous groups implied that they would still have rights to passage, and to hunt and gather food across certain lands in perpetuity — which were held in common by entire peoples — these treaties were quickly violated and land was stolen. Across white settler jurisdictions such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, existing indigenous commons were violently seized for private (individual and corporate) and public (state) property, and genocide ensued whether directly through attacking entire villages and killing or driving off all the people (see Linebaugh 2014 on Thomas Jefferson's policies to exterminate the Iroquois), or indirectly through massive forest cutting, eliminating species through hunting in certain territories, damming rivers, and blocking fish runs and spawning grounds.

Previously common pathways, waterways, and access across shared land used to gather common resources (plant fibers, foraged food, fishing and hunting rights) eventually became surrounded by private and public

(i.e., state) property, as enclosures and fences increasingly constricted human mobility. This process continues today. Most resource extraction takes place on once common-access Indigenous lands that were seized through settler colonialism, expropriation, and expulsion. Common land and common passage have been blocked by private property holders, corporations, and the state in various ways. Oil drilling, mining, forestry, and the building of hydroelectric dams have utilized the seizure of the commons, often in the form of "public" land, to generate private profits. In doing so, they have destroyed those commons, violating the social rules for sharing, allocating, and preserving places for future generations.

Yet, such forms of commoning are not a historical artefact that was simply wiped away with time, in fact they are constantly being renewed and practiced by Indigenous communities today, from the anti-extractivist challenges to lithium mining in remote places such as the Salar de Atacama in Chile (https://yestolifenotomining.org/latest-news/ylnm--lithium-communique/) to the encampments to stop the building of oil pipelines across Native Lands in Turtle Island. As Silvia Federici noted, new forms of social cooperation are constantly being produced. The same argument can be found as well in the Caribbean and African diaspora commoning in the Americas. There is a deep and ongoing creation of emergent commons, as Clyde Woods argued, with "working class leadership, social vision, sustainable communities, social justice, and the construction of a new commons" (in Woods 2017, xxviii; as cited by Heynen 2020). This is another kind of mobile commoning that emerged within, between, and on the edges of plantation geographies, through the persistent counter-plantation practices that I turn to next.

Commoning as Counter-Plantation

Commoning also emerged in the transatlantic plantation zone, as people resisting slavery overturned capitalist forms of private land ownership and rejected the owning of human beings and brutal systems of enslavement. Caribbean, Afro-Indigenous, and African diaspora commoning took place along extra-state margins (marronage), within interstitial spaces of the plantation zone (the counter-plantation, 'free spaces', family land), and around settlement edges (piracy, banditry, criminality). Commoning took place at the juncture of built and natural environments (woods, rivers, swamps, underground); at the edges and interstices of urban and national formations (streets, borders, margins); and on the fugitive peripheries of geo-political-ecologies (maritime spaces, coastal

Commoning also emerged in the transatlantic plantation zone, as people resisting slavery overturned capitalist forms of private land ownership and rejected the owning of human beings and brutal systems of enslavement.

ports, islands), wherever runaways and resistors established counter-practices of mobile survival. The historian Julius S. Scott depicted these subversive mobilities in *The Common Wind*, his evocative narrative of the anti-slavery and anti-colonial communication networks that spanned subaltern worlds across the Atlantic and Caribbean, stirring rebellion and spreading news of revolution (Scott 2018).

This Atlantic world commons also came into social history "from below" through the work of Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker. The transformation of the noun "common" into the verb "commoning" was used by Linebaugh (2008) to highlight the active and collective process of making commons. Tracing the seafaring culture of sailors, pirates, and merchant seamen of the Anglo-American maritime world, Rediker likewise argued that "Mobility, fluidity, and dispersion were intrinsic to the seaman's life", producing a "nomadic" culture without firm geographic boundaries. Mobile workers spread information, ideas, and new practices around the ports of the Atlantic world, along with an insurrectionary politics, and they were not only European and North American, but also "West Indian, African and even Indian" (Rediker 1987, 297). In the midst of slavery, dislocation, piracy, exploitation, and incarceration, there took shape a mobile world of "sailors, pilots, felons, lovers, translators, musicians" and "mobile workers of all kinds [who] made new and unexpected connections" (Linebaugh and Rediker 2001, 6). The "many-headed hydra" formed by these rebellious working classes was a motley crew of "dispossessed commoners, transported felons, indentured servants, religious radicals, pirates, urban laborers, soldiers, sailors, and African slaves" (Linebaugh and Rediker 2001, 2-3).

Among the millions of African people captured, imprisoned and transported across the Atlantic into enforced slavery, thousands escaped and moved throughout the Americas in a vast system of subversive mobilities. Maroon communities escaped the plantations and found refuge deep within the hilly interiors of islands and coastal areas, or inside the swamps of North America, places where they also intermingled with Native Americans. Newly discovered primary sources and archeological evidence suggest that there was far more extensive maroon settlement in places such as the Great Dismal Swamp than historians had previously imagined (Diouf 2016; Sayers 2016; Nevius 2021; Morris 2022). Significant Maroon communities existed in French Guiana, in the Saramaka Maroon regions of Dutch Guiana (later Suriname), in the hilly interiors of Jamaica and Saint Domingue (where they successfully launched the Haitian Revolution), in the famous *quilombo* of Palmares in Brazil, in the *palenques* of Cuba and Colombia, in the Dismal

Swamp between Virginia and North Carolina, and many other forgotten places where fugitives "shoaled" together and sometimes joined forces with Indigenous communities (Lethabo King 2020). Recent studies have focused on the complex mobilities and interconnections between Maroon and Indigenous communities that exceeded the control of settler colonialism and indeed undermined it (Diouf 2016; Sayers 2016; Morris 2022). The self-emancipation of these rebel slave communities depended on their capability to move away from the plantation zone, to hide in remote places, to resist the slave patrols that sought after them, and to reproduce alternative food systems (Price 1987) and indeed alternative abolitionist geographies (Bledsoe 2017; Wright 2019).

Marronage of necessity invented a new relation to the land, to nature, and to forms of co-existence, as the Antillean political ecologist Malcom Ferdinand describes in his remarkable *Decolonial Ecology*, recently translated from the French:

> Many Maroon escapes were conditioned by the *encounter* with a nature and a land that was sheltered from the plains of the plantations and the colonial order… The mountains of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Cuba, the great forests of Suriname and French Guiana, and the swampy environments of Mato Grasso in Brazil or those of Louisiana acted as 'natural allies', facilitating the dissimulation of fugitives and the survival of Maroon communities. This is more than just taking flight, as the Marons practices 'a skillful fugue [*fugue*]' that disrupts colonial borders and opens up spaces of creation that are camouflaged by forests and swamps… *the Maroon must inhabit the uninhabitable*… Hillside-hideouts, hostile spaces become inhabited land. A *matrigenesis* emerges from this process of acclimatization by which the land and nature come to constitute the material womb and matrix of the Maroons' existence (Ferdinand 2022, 149).

Through this "Maroon ecology" and politics of encounter, the settler colonial matricide is transformed into a matrigenesis of "Mother-Earth" (Ferdinand 2022, 149), which is very much a form of mobile commoning. Rejecting the ownership of land as private property and of people as slaves, Maroons, self-liberated slaves, and other runaways built new ways of living that reclaimed or reinvented "abolitionist ecologies" (Heynen 2020) as collective agro-ecological, communal, and spiritual (re) connections to the world.

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Yet Maroon communities also forced accommodation of plantation capitalism to their ongoing existence through "petit marronage" and continuous small trade with enslaved workers. The historian Marcus

Nevius shows how the Great Dismal Swamp became a "city of refuge" where slave-labor camps on the periphery of the swamp engaged in ever-shifting trade with those mobile runaways hiding in its deep interior (Nevius 2021). As the historian Natasha Lightfoot likewise emphasizes, drawing on the work of Stephanie Camp (2004), enslaved people in Antigua used spaces such as provision grounds and open-air marketplaces to create "a *rival geography* that defied the spatial confines of enslavement". These "alternative ways of knowing and using plantation space" created a "rival geography [that] was characterized by motion: the movement of bodies, objects, and information within and around plantation space" (Lightfoot 2015, 47). Rival black geographies were a mobile commoning within the interstices of plantation societies, which also generated new kinds of collective relations (both human and more-than-human) that can serve as models for reparative relational commoning today.

In the Caribbean, this counter-plantation culture took the form of "family land" in the Anglophone territories and "lakou" in Haiti and the Francophone regions. As Jean Casimir (2020) shows for Haiti, the *moun andeyo* [outside people] — the largely African-descended rural peasantry — survived via a "counter-plantation system" that relied on small-scale landholding and spiritual relations to the land, known as the *lakou*. Often inhabited by generations of the same family, and a resting place for ancestral spirits, *lakou* became sites of ongoing resistance to exploitation and commodification because such land could not be individually sold or alienated from the collective kin group — it resisted property relations and supported human freedom to come and go, to be anchored in place and to move freely knowing there would be a place to return to. Against human enslavement and private property, the *lakou* represents a mobile commoning that freed people from capitalist relations of ownership.

In the Southern United States, similar arrangements took the form of "heir's land" which was land deeded to groups of descendants, without individual title. These commonly held lands ensured all descendants of the family access and use in common, while moving back and forth to other places and not necessarily living there. More specifically, the geographer Nik Heynen has worked with the Gullah Geechee people of Sapelo Island, inspired by the late Ms. Cornelia Walker Bailey who sought "to build a commons out of the ruins of the plantation" expressed through her idea of 're-Earthing'. Heynen suggests that this "resonates with ideas Clyde Woods was discussing toward the end of his life about the political importance of the commons for Black geographies"

(Heynen 2020, 97). Heynen calls for going beyond the European theoretical tradition that analyzes commons and enclosure through the work of Karl Marx, Karl Polyani, and E.P. Thompson, since they "are based in Eurocentric frameworks that do not take seriously either the uneven power-relations of colonial history, white supremacy or patriarchy as defining societal characteristics of property relations, law or any of the interconnected institutions of society in between" (Heynen 2020, 107). The formation of "an agro-ecological model of commoning" on Sapelo Island can thus be imagined as an "abolitionist commons" (Heynen 2020, 108).

Like the re-Earthing movement created on Sapelo Island in Georgia, many recent movements of Indigenous cultures, Black farmers, and other food justice movements such as Via Campesina have proffered alternative farming, eating, and sharing foodways that suggest some possible designs for commoning. Black and Native American farmers across Turtle Island are reclaiming their relation to land, seeds, water and soil through food sovereignty and #LandBack movements, which entail diverse mobilities as much as place-making. Beyond land itself, we can also think of this in terms of re-Oceaning, including reclaiming the many existing practices that communities around the world rely on to gather and forage in the sea, on reefs, and at the margins between land and sea through maintenance of access to shorelines, beaches, river deltas, and various fisheries around the world. Such movements also call for protecting coral reefs, protecting beaches from sand mining, and stopping the growing business of deep-sea mining.

Black commons also blur the distinction between settlement and mobility, a topic that has been taken up more widely in the formation of African diaspora vernacular cultures. The musicologist Ben Barson, for example, argues that the traveling brass bands that arose out of sugar plantations in Louisiana generated a form of resistant commoning. Plantation workers turned music "into a means of exodus, allowing working-class Black structures of affiliation, work, and community to take root in and against a society that had attempted to extinguish these spaces… Building off a centuries-long inheritance, such bands reproduced a common that created new geographies of Black social life and created opportunities for plantation workers to contribute to an emerging Creolized culture that would come to be called jazz" (Barson 2022, 152-153).

The emergence of Blues music has more generally been described as a kind of subaltern commons by Robin D.G. Kelley (1996), Angela Y. Davis (1999) and Paul Gilory (2010), suggesting a kind of musical mobility among roving practitioners and performers, as well as the

making of hidden undercommons and free spaces. These subaltern cultures of black commoning inform the lives so hauntingly described by Saidiya Hartman in *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, in which she creates a "critical confabulation" of the Great Migration from the plantations of the US South to the urban ghettoes of Philadelphia and New York. She describes the "long steady movement" of Black people as a "choreographed flight from rape, terror, and lynching" and towards the "tumult, vulgar collectivism, and anarchy" of the emerging ghetto (Hartman 2019, 108, 4). The lives they make inspire her understanding of the "wayward" — which is crucial for understanding forms of abolitionist commoning:

> Wayward, related to the family of words: errant, fugitive, recalcitrant, anarchic, willful, reckless, troublesome, riotous, tumultuous, rebellious and wild… the avid longing for a world not ruled by master, man or the police. The errant path taken by the leaderless swarm in search of a place better than here. The social poesis that sustains the dispossessed. Wayward: the unregulated movement of drifting and wandering; sojourns without a fixed destination, ambulatory possibility, interminable migrations, rush and flight, black locomotion; the everyday struggle to live free. The attempt to elude capture by never settling. Not the master's tools, but the ex-slave's fugitive gestures, her traveling shoes. Waywardness articulates the paradox of cramped creation, the entanglement of escape and confinement, flight and captivity. Wayward: to wander, to be unmoored, adrift, rambling, roving, cruising, strolling, and seeking. To claim the right to opacity… It is the practice of the social otherwise, the insurgent ground that enables new possibilities and new vocabularies; it is the lived experience of enclosure and segregation, assembling and huddling together. It is the directionless search for a free territory; it is a practice of making and relation that enfolds within the policed boundaries of the dark ghetto; it is the mutual aid offered in the open-air prison. It is a queer resource of black survival. It is a *beautiful experiment* in how-to-live (Hartman 2019, 227-228).

In this stunning description of the Black mobile commons, we understand the ways in which generations of dispossessed and expropriated people have nonetheless practiced mobile commoning — as a way to exercise freedom in both the rural and urban worlds that uprooted and policed them, unmoored and confined them, and the structures of governance that sought to both capture and evict them.

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we can imagine a "wayward undercommons" of experiments in mobile commoning as both a way of dwelling in places and in sharing free movement across space.

Migrant Commoning and Commoning Mobilities

The contemporary politics of migration and bordering speaks to all of these strands of mobile commoning. The politics of enclosure, displacement and capture engrained in settler colonialism and racial capitalism leads to the contemporary forms of migrant interdiction, detention and deportation that deny life to Indigenous, Black and Brown commoners. To cross the border is to seek the freedom of collective encounters and reclaim mobile commoning. As the late queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz put it, in *The Sense of Brown*:

> The brown commons is not about the production of the individual but instead about a movement, a flow, and an impulse to move beyond the singular and individualized subjectivities. It is about the swerve of matter, organic and otherwise, the moment of contact, the encounter and all that it can generate (Muñoz 2020, *xxxiii*).

Free movement across space is of course deeply connected to the question of mobility regimes that control migration and uphold the free flow of capital alongside the controlled movement of labor. Mobility regimes are racialized, gendered, and sexually policed — countered here by the queer "sense of brown" commons as dispersed and rhizomatic flows (Muñoz 2020).

Migration has also been identified as a site for making new commons and mobile practices of commoning. Hardt and Negri note the significance of migrants, who they say play a fundamental role in shaping the contemporary world since they engage in making new commons:

> [Those] who cross border and nations, deserts and seas, who are forced to live precariously in ghettos and take the most humiliating work in order to survive, who risk the violence of police and anti-immigrant mobs, demonstrate the central connections between the processes of translation and the experience of 'commoning': multitudes of strangers, in transit and staying put, invent new means of communicating with others, new modes of acting together, new sites of encounter and assembly — in short they constitute a new commons without ever losing their singularities (Hardt and Negri 2017, 152-153).

This migrant commoning through an ongoing effort of encounter and assembly is crucial to the mobile commons as a space of radical potentiality. Migrant commoning pushes at the boundaries of mobility justice and suggests the more radical *unsettling* of borders in a world marked by climate disasters and displacement, especially of Indigenous, Black and Brown people.

The concept of "mobile commons" first began to appear in the study of migration to challenge state-centered approaches with a more autonomous understanding of migrants' own perspectives. Papadopoulos and Tsianos initially characterized the mobile commons as consisting of five main elements: "the invisible knowledge of mobility" such as knowledge about transit routes, shelters, border crossings etc.); an "infrastructure of connectivity" such as media platforms, word of mouth, and social networks; "a multiplicity of informal economies" including knowledge of how to secure short-term work or engage with smugglers; "diverse forms of transnational communities of justice" such as solidarity groups, shelters, and NGOs; and "the politics of care" such as providing affective support, building trust, caring for people's relatives, etc. (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013, 191-192).

Further studies of migration have begun to discuss an "ontology of moving people" in which mobile commons are "generated, used, and extended... between people on the move", including the "shared knowledge, affective cooperation, mutual support and care between migrants" while on the move (Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos 2015, 19; Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos 2016, 1041). Scholars also highlight the role of practices of social reproduction and women's unpaid reproductive work as necessary to value and reclaim in building social relations in commons (Angulo Pasel 2019). The materiality of labor, energy, and reproduction are also crucial here. Anna Davidson's work on theorizing "radical mobilities" furthermore pushes beyond a simply critical analysis of mobility justice towards "a rhizomatic understanding of mobility as material-semiotic transformation of energy. This ontology shifts understandings of what just and sustainable mobilities can be" (Davidson 2021, 25).

In the broader field of mobility studies, commoning mobilities seeks to take back the common shared space of the street and transport infrastructure. In theorizing *mobility as common,* Nikolaeva, Adey and Cresswell seek to envision more "inclusive and collaboratively governed" cities, in which planners and policymakers draw "on the logics of commoning such as communal decision-making practices, openness to new forms of perceiving the right to mobility as well as the right to immo-

bility (the right not to be displaced), the awareness of the social production of mobility and the power relations inherent in it, as well as the commitment to creating equity and working in the interest of the public good" (Nikolaeva et al. 2019, 353). They suggest that commoning mobilities goes beyond shared transportation or public accessibility, to questions of decision-making, equity, and shared space in the name of the public good.

In my own book *Mobility Justice* I sought to show how power and inequality inform the governance and control of (im)mobilities, connecting across the scales of the body, the city street, urban infrastructure, national borders, and planetary extractive economies through the concept of mobility justice (Sheller 2018). This led me to the notion of commoning mobilities as a way of addressing intersecting challenges of uneven mobilities. If control over (im)mobilities is a primary way in which dominant hierarchies of gender, race, sexuality, nationality and disability are produced, then commoning mobilities can enact new ways of being in the world, becoming a method for moving toward mobility justice, environmental justice, racial justice, climate justice, and social justice. Mobile commoning implies a kind of mindful movement, shared with others, and based upon forms of solidarity, reciprocity, caring, trust, generosity, and stewardship. It means moving over the Earth lightly, carefully, with concern for others, and accompaniment across difference (cf. Sultana 2021, 2022).

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Conclusion

In this article I have suggested ways to build on Indigenous, Black, Brown, and African diasporic theories of the commons to push forward recent political mobilizations around "reclaiming the commons". By centering the existing radical notions of commoning that are grounded in Indigenous, Black, Caribbean and African diaspora philosophies and practices, we can connect the tradition of European social history "from below" to contemporary struggles for relational commoning, migrant justice, and queer undercommons. While we cannot ignore the incommensurabilities and contradictions that arise from co-creating commons within settler colonial spaces, we can reflect on these conjoined histories to imagine alternative futures that might unsettle settler colonialism and the traditional commons in productive ways (Fortier 2017). Tracing the histories of Indigenous Maroon, Afro-Caribbean and African-American commoning as relations of mobile place-making, we see the contours

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of a fugitive undercommons that challenges binary concepts of race, gender, nation, and sexuality. Indeed, the various threads of mobile commoning that I have described here are in fact braided together, into a powerful confluence of Indigenous, Black, Brown and multiracial commoning that is informing rising social movements that also call into question existing binaries of gender and sexuality.

This is just a preliminary sketch of some thinking in this area, and some thinkers who have inspired this train of thought. Far more work is needed not simply to unearth these forms of knowledge and praxis, but to re-Earth and re-Ocean them, as Ms. Bailey understood, by putting more-than-human practices of mobile commoning into practice more widely and urgently. Another dimension of this thinking pertains to how academics can help build participatory praxis around commoning with communities, as Nik Heynen has attempted to do in Sapelo Island. How is knowledge mobilized through commoning, shared through the "common wind" (Scott 2018), and intentionally turned towards commoning rather than enclosure? How do we turn the relations between land, water, thought, and energy into actions for the common good, and make the shared commoning of lifeways into more sustainable, wayward, radical, mobile politics? That is the challenge passed down to us by the converging encounters of Indigenous, Black, Brown, Caribbean and African diaspora mobile commoning.

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Tytuł: Mobilne uwspólnianie: odzyskiwanie rdzennych, karaibskich, zbiegowskich i migranckich dóbr wspólnych
Abstrakt: W ciągu dwóch ostatnich dekad koncept dóbr wspólnych został ponownie odkryty jako skuteczna zasada organizacyjna dla ruchów społecznych, radykalnej myśli politycznej i teorii krytycznej. Koncept uwspólniania został również przyjęty w obrębie dyskusji nad migracjami i krytycznymi badaniami wokół mobilności. Niniejszy artykuł zaczyna od prześledzenia niektórych spośród wyłaniających się idei uwspólniania jako relacyjnej praktyki obecnej w wielu politycznych mobilizacjach na rzecz „odzyskiwania dóbr wspólnych". Następnie zwraca się w stronę podejść wobec uwspólniania, które usiłują sproblematyzować jego euro-amerykańskie historie poprzez koncentrację na rdzennych praktykach rady-

kalnego uwspólniania, karaibskich i obecnych w afrykańskiej diasporze form mobilnego uwspólniania i najnowszych koncepcji takich jak podziemne dobra wspólne, queerowe dobra wspólne czy migranckie mobilne uwspólnianie. Artykuł stawia pytanie: w jaki sposób praktyki mobilnego uwspólniania mogą pomóc nam wyobrazić sobie sposoby na zdemontowanie istniejących przemocowych układów i destrukcyjnych nie/ruchomości wyznaczanych przez grodzenia, kolonialność, imperializm i kapitalistyczną ekstrakcję?

Słowa kluczowe: uwspólnianie, kontr-plantacja, ludy rdzenne, maroni, mobilności, podziemne dobra wspólne

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Mobile Commons in the Pre-Pandemic, Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Era: Drawing from Mobility Experiences in Post-Migrant Times

This paper examines the effect of the pandemic in the generation of simultaneous global, regional, and local processes as they materialize in realities and the potential for post-pandemic mobile commons. The paper theorizes the matter drawing on studies in the triangle of Cyprus-Greece-Turkey i.e., the south-eastern border of Europe/EU. Mobile commons is theorized in the current context by locating these processes in the pandemic and post-pandemic era, even though the first empirical work was done during the pre--pandemic period. The pandemic brought about an abrupt interruption of what is at the core of global capitalism: *mobility*. During this period, regimes of exception, derogation and suspension of rights were introduced across all fields of the civic, social, and political life almost all over the world. The concept of mobile commons aims to capture dynamic processes, as an *ensemble* or *matrix of care of the society on the move*, generating reciprocity on the move and a sustainability of the geography of the crossings. Digitality is part and parcel of the current migratory processes. Digitality is a space where media technologies of control coexist with the possibilities of alternative media use. To every form of control

technology there is a corresponding form of resistance to it. The paper examines how mobile commons resist digital registration and the process that generate a pan-European digital border infrastructure which aims to immobilize people. It illustrates how encounters between groups produce social dialectics within institutions; struggles, conflicts, disagreements, and negotiations occur, but so do new socialities and solidarities in a world in a constant state of being remade.

Keywords: mobile commons, mobility, digitality, digital border, dissensus, polarisation, ensemble or matrix of care, pandemic and post-pandemic era, society on the move, socialities, solidarity

Introduction

This paper examines the effect of the pandemic in the generation of simultaneous global, regional, and local processes as they materialize in realities and the potential for post-pandemic mobile commons. The paper attempts to theorize drawing on our studies in the triangle of Cyprus-Greece-Turkey from 2014 onward. The Cyprus-Greece-Turkey triangle is the south-eastern border of Europe/EU. This paper attempts to theorize mobile commons in the current context by locating these processes in the post-pandemic era, as our reading of mobile commons was developed before the current conjuncture. The pandemic brought about an abrupt interruption of what is at the core of global capitalism: *mobility*. During this period, regimes of exception, derogation and suspension of rights were introduced across all fields of the civic, social, and political life almost all over the world. The Geneva Convention, Schengen, and the right to free movement in general were suspended, as states invoked necessity arguments during the exceptional situations. Migrants and refugees were left desperate and stranded as closures of borders, incarceration and encampment, and pushbacks at sea and land, were normalized.

In this context, the *mobile commons* we had referred to prior to the pandemic, which claimed social spaces and rights, and augmented 'the right to the city' (Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou and Tsianos 2016). In the current period of moving from the pandemic towards the post-pandemic era, the notion of mobile commons, which aims to capture an agile and adaptive set of processes, is adapted to the new realities on the ground. The term 'mobile commons' initially coined by Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2013) was utilised in the context and was developed further, drawing on empirical research conducted since then. A lively debate pertaining to the meaning and the manifestation of mobile commons has since been taken up (Angulo-Pasel 2018; Fischer 2020; Jørgensen, Fischer 2022). As civic and social space for movement and manoeuvre contracted, so did certain aspects of mobile commons, but this was no linear process without contradictions. Agriculture, food production in the factories, food stores and restaurants, deliveries and the 'gig economy', where migrants (irregular and regular) thrive, not only did *not* cease to operate, but on the contrary, saw a massive expansion. In parallel to the processes of criminalization, repression and pushbacks during the pandemic, migrants (regular and irregular, including asylum-seekers) were a major source of labour in hazardous conditions of increasing risk (Mallet-Garcia and Delvino 2020). Moreover, as states of exception

In the current period of moving from the pandemic towards the post-pandemic era, the notion of mobile commons, which aims to capture an agile and adaptive set of processes, is adapted to the new realities on the ground.

proliferated, so did the necessity for resistance and the domains of struggle shifted accordingly. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU had imposed policies of containment across the EU and many European states bordering the EU had closed their borders to curtail the flows of asylum-seekers and migrants. The south-eastern border of the EU saw a massive expansion of surveillance and wall-building along the Greek--Turkish borders, policies of containment following the deal with Turkey (Parsanoglou 2020a; 2022), the containment on the Greek islands via the 'hotspot approach' and regular illegal pushback at sea with active support from FRONTEX. This led to the EU border agency's boss resigning in disgrace after a critical watchdog probe found that the Frontex Director Fabrice Leggeri had overseen the agency during a period of scrutiny into its alleged role in illegally turning away migrants (Barigazzi and Lynch 2022).

At this point it is necessary to clarify our terms and how we understand the 'pandemic' and 'post-pandemic era'. This paper was written during the period of the pandemic and was finished during the stages when the restrictive measures were being eased or had been altogether abandoned by most states, so we can say that we are entering what can be thought of as 'the post-pandemic era': in this sense, our arguments stand, as the COVID-19 measures which were invoked to restrict migration have been eased or disappeared in most countries. However, it is noted that we cannot be certain if the signs of resurgence of COVID-19 would lead to another or different round of immigration restrictions. We do know however that if the governments decide to reintroduce restrictions for COVID-19-related reasons, they are likely to include restrictive immigration policies, which are often discriminatory against the usual victims. This is something that can be deduced from the management of the pandemic so far. We thus take the risk of talking about the 'post-pandemic era' already, even though we recognize that we are not completely out of the pandemic.

In the period when the pandemic restrictions are being eased, which appears to be the beginning of the post-pandemic era, we are witnessing dynamic processes of major transformation and turmoil, which have been highlighted by the war in Ukraine, particularly after the invasion of Russia. The pandemic imposed hygiene-based states of exception in the 'third' crisis that the Euro-Mediterranean region has faced in the 21st century: the first was the global financial/economic crisis (2007-2017) and the second was the so-called 'refugee crisis' (2015-2016). We are currently witnessing what appears to be a *fourth crisis* facing the post-pandemic world — as there are various interconnected aspects of

this crisis – or these crises –with an increase in wars and conflict, food and energy crises, and of course the continuation and deepening of the environmental crises. In this context, we are witnessing processes cementing and generating new states of exception, the derogation of human rights, and a dramatic rise in the global numbers of refugees and other migrants seeking international protection.

This is the broader context that generates the processes that are giving rise to what appears to be the *post-pandemic mobile commons*: the harsh reality characterized by social and political struggles and contestations over the new (b)ordering processes that renegotiate sovereignties and territorialities. It is often stated that we live in an 'age of immigration', a phrase coined by the influential book of the late Stephen Castles (Haas, Castles and Miller 2020). Scholars have turned their attention to "the new mobilities paradigm", (Sheller, Urry 2006) in a time characterized by mobility, speed, liquidity and the movement of data, goods, capital and people. To study these processes, 'critical mobilities' (Eliot and Urry 2016) are combined with 'critical border studies' (Tsianos, Hess 2010; Tsianos, Karakayali 2010). However, this liquid and mobile capitalist world is based on unequal, often oppressive, and exploitative relations and racialized and gendered differentiations, fragmentations, and polarizations. Simultaneously, new forms of resistance, solidarities, and social imaginaries are emerging. From immigration history we know of countless examples where migration has functioned as a catalyst for transformation, exchange, and the enrichment of knowledge, experiences and skills. In our research of the migration/refugee process in the Greece--Turkey-Cyprus triangle, we can confidently claim that the three societies above are such instances. It is therefore inconceivable to portray such societies as if they have been suddenly and unexpectedly confronted with immigrants, as an event that has 'surprised' or 'shocked' (Parsanoglou 2009). For years we now live not just in 'migration societies', but in *post-migrant societies*, which have changed radically because of the presence of immigrants is felt across the spectrum of life. Greece, Cyprus, and all of Europe have been hosting migrant workers for decades, and their financial contribution to GDP growth has been enormous.

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Our theorization engages the remarkable advances in theory and empirical research in a critical manner, firstly in order to reach conclusions moving towards a theory of 'post-migrant society', and secondly to ensure that it is properly rooted and embedded in empirical grounding and can resonate with the great transformations we are witnessing across the globe. It may appear odd to insist on referring to a 'post-migrant society', when we are living through (at least in Europe) the greatest

immigration wave in living memory, including the largest number of forced migrations ever recorded, according to the IOM World Migration Report 2022:

> The current global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the global population. Overall, the estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past five decades. The total estimated 281 million people living in a country other than their countries of birth in 2020 was 128 million more than in 1990 and over three times the estimated number in 1970.

Our basic argument however is *not* that today we have less migration: in fact, in our conception of post-migrant society, we underscore that *today we have more migration*. We propose the concept to address *the way we understand how societies respond to migration*. Instead of conceptualizing our world as one based on 'migrant-arriving societies', we venture to propose that we ought to perceive and understand the societies in which we *now live* as s*ocieties with long migration histories and experiences*, i.e., as *migrant-settled societies*. We do not assume that the matter is simple and that there is integration, tolerance and belonging: settled migrants also face discrimination, racism and sexism and other abominable forms of behavior; this 'world out of joint' (Wallerstein 2014) is full of contradictions and dangers, as migration is becoming a major source of dissensus (Trimikliniotis 2020, 20). We recognize of course that settled migrants are still migrants, and even persons of migrant background for generations may – and often do – face discrimination, but they live in *societies already deeply transformed by migration*. Of course, the current waves of immigration and asylum-seekers are facing both old and new types of racism and hostility that require new theorization and new struggles. What we are claiming, however, is that the resources for theory and praxis are there, and this is what we refer to as *mobile commons*. We are merely trying to capture what is out there in society: *post-migrant society is being constructed as a product of the resistance struggles via mobile commons*.

This paper is essentially a theorization in the endeavour to make a step forward from our previous works. Our research draws on and develops the work from different empirical studies we have conducted over the last two decades, particularly over the last decade or so. A major source which we have developed further is our book on *mobile commons* (Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, Tsianos 2016), which was based on fiel-

dwork conducted in Greece, Turkey and Cyprus[1]. This research was extended with further empirical research during the so-called 'refugee crisis' in Greece,[2] and during the pandemic, drawing particularly on empirical findings from the fieldwork in Cyprus[3] and in Greece,[4] and continues with a research project currently in progress[5].

The methodology used in the fieldwork includes mixed methods. This includes critical policy and legal analysis but also interviews and focus groups with migrants, refugees, activists, border guards and police officers, as well as ethnographic research with participant observation. This was adapted to develop the methodology of digital networks and migration, in what we refer to as "net(h)nography of border regimes" deployed around flexible and porous border zones, that can elucidate migrant praxis, its repercussions and potentialities (Trimikliniotis et al. 2016, 40-45). It is via this methodology that 'mobile commons' are studied.

Migration and refugee dissensus, re-bordering and racist xenophobia in Europe reloaded

Immigration issues, and in particular refugee issues, are portrayed as a manifestation of a global crisis that needs to be managed. While, as

1 Under the project *Transnational digital networks, migration and gender*, MIG@NET, work package 9 on Social Movements, funded by the 7th Framework Program, EU DG Research. Some of the themes were further theoretically expanded in our book (Trimikliniotis et al. 2015).

2 Under the project 'Transit migration 2: a research project on the de-and re-stabilisations of the European border regime' (2016), funded by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung; and under the project 'Volunteering for Refugees in Europe: Civil Society, Solidarity, and Forced Migration along the Balkan Route amid the failure of the Common European Asylum System' (July 2016-June 2017), funded by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung.

3 Critical border research was conducted in Greece and Cyprus in 2020-2022.

4 Under the project "Beyond the 'refugee crisis': investigating patterns of integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Greece - BRECht" (2018-2022), funded by the Hellenic Foundation for Research & Innovation.

5 Extensive empirical research was conducted in Cyprus as part of the research project *Mobile Citizenship, States of Exception and (non)Border Regimes in post-Covid19 Cyprus* 2021-2022, having received Hellenic Observatory award for a research study project with partnership with LSE, funded by the A.G. Leventis Foundation, available at https://www.lse.ac.uk/Hellenic-Observatory/Research/Cyprus-Projects-2020-2021/Mobile-Citizenship-States-of-Exception-and-nonBorder-Regimes-in-post-COVID-19-Cyprus.

a rule, authorities tend to perceive immigration as a matter of management, immigration is a much broader and more complex social issue, both in terms of cause and effect, and is the result of multiple transformations read from different perspectives on society. In other words, it is deeply embedded, deeply rooted in the controversies, fragmentation and polarization observed in society — it is an integral part of the radical contradictions and inequalities that are particularly acute in our time. Today immigration and asylum have become a major European and global issue of polarization and disagreement that amounts to a new sociological, political and ideological cleavage in society. This can only be revealed after examining the underlying transitions and contradictions that exist. The focus is on the EU, but these migration processes go beyond (any) European borders. This is clearly a global issue that is multifaceted, affecting all aspects of social and political life.

Immigration is a major challenge for 21st century capitalism. A key to understanding disagreement in politics generally stems from the fact that immigration is an important factor in social transformation — in the sense that such turmoil is like *turbulence* in the air (Papastergiades 2001). The transformations caused by human mobility are critical, necessitating the examination of migration as a powerful force in social change that can be interpreted, and has been interpreted, as a mass social movement, a mass mobilization of people (Mezzadra 2011). However, the directions, times, trends and moments of human flows are so different, and are practiced at such different levels and times that it is generally inaccurate to define it as a social movement. Immigration in general is a powerful social force that acts as a driving force for change. Immigration as a phenomenon, as violent or voluntary flows, also affects the state function of borders: it is a constituent force in the reformulation of challenges and transformations, if not the erosion of the concept of state sovereignty (Papadopoulos et al. 2008). Another important issue concerns the institutional mechanisms, as well as the processes surrounding immigration and asylum shaping practices, that transform citizenship in the age of authoritarian austerity, hence the reference to austerity citizenship. There are economic, political, cultural, technological and social factors that expand the scope and area of controversy through which disagreements and polarizations arise. Diversity, fragmentation, differentiation and conflict at all levels are the other side of the integration, aggregation and homogenization of globalization. The proliferation of digital technologies and social media has given endless scope for the spread of controversy, polarisation and conflict.

The pandemic highlighted the enormous importance of the possibility of moving abroad, migration. Immigration is today studied as an autonomous scientific discipline, as immigration studies, which is not irrelevant either to the importance of this phenomenon, the 'age of migration' (Haas, Castles and Miller 2020), or to the extremely important contribution to the consideration of this complex phenomenon, beyond the outdated neoclassical theories of 'push and pull factors', where today there is a wealth of perspectives. These range from historical-structural approaches, post-colonial studies, social capital theory and network theory (Massey et al. 1993), through intersectional and translocation approaches (Anthias 2020), feminist and critical race theories, to perspectives based on worker rights, as part of the autonomy of migration perspectives (Papadopoulos et al. 2008).

Over the last two years, there has been an enormous number of studies connecting the pandemic to migration and asylum. Some studies showed how the virus has exposed, fed off and increased existing inequalities of wealth, gender and race, which were accentuated during the pandemic (Berkhout et al. 2021). From the outset of the pandemic and the measures to restrict the spread of a virus, these processes were found to be severe on migrants and asylum-seekers, particularly (Bhopal 2020), extending socioeconomic inequalities and access to health care (Clouston at al 2021). Comparative perspectives on migration, diversities and the pandemic are particularly revealing (Arias Cubas et al. 2022). Other studies focus the pandemic migration ethics (Collins 2021), others on migration and workplace/work-related transformations during the pandemic (Rymaniak et al. 2021), or on computerization processes, examining the implications of intensifying digitalization and AI for migration and mobility systems and evaluating the current challenges to and opportunities for migrants and migration systems. They find that while these expanding technologies can bolster human rights and support international development, potential gains can and are being eroded because of design, development and implementation aspects (McAuliffe 2021). Another important dimension is the impact of the pandemic on fundamental rights, as the studies of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has scrutinized the implications of COVID-19 during the different stages of the spread, and the various measures adopted to contain the spread of the virus (FRA 2021a, 2021b)[6]. The migration angle is particularly important. Studies have examined the implications

6 See the reports of FRA which produced regular bulletins on Fundamental rights implications of COVID-19, https://fra.europa.eu/en/themes/covid-19.

for Greece and Cyprus (Parsanoglou et al. 2022; Demetriou, Trimikliniotis 2022a, 2022b; Trimikliniotis and Tsianos 2022; Trimikliniotis 2020b).

A characteristic of the current era, moving from the pandemic toward the post-pandemic order, is that the issue of migration and asylum is engendering polarization due to fundamental disagreement or dissensus, as discussed below (Trimikliniotis, 2020; 2022). The migration dissensus is best viewed as a Gramscian crisis of hegemony, the manifestation of which is *authoritarian statism*[7] in the "policing of the crisis" (Hall et al. 2013). It is no coincidence that Antonio Gramsci is often invoked, even in the most unlikely quarters, during these strange pandemic and post-pandemic times: Once again we live in what Gramsci (1972, 276) called an 'interregnum', an unstable and contradictory transitional period of unknown duration and eventual outcome, which generates morbid symptoms. This rather simplified historical schema of the long death of the 'old', where the 'new' is stillborn, contains plural temporalities and potentialities, despite the dangers it generates. 'Morbid symptoms' are inherent in the long and multidimensional crisis that takes various forms (Sassoon 2021). Today's radical disagreement, or *dissensus* – characterized by authoritarianism, tensions, polarizations and contradictions of our time – is not only valid but has intensified even more during the pandemic and post-pandemic era. There is a major disagreement, best described as dissensus, around the refugee crisis and immigration as the central feature of the time (Trimikliniotis 2020a; 2021; 2022). It is a term that refers to the use of consensus or unanimity, but primarily to *a social and ideological situation* other than a simple lack or absence of *political consensus*. The meaning of the term *dissensus* incorporates the fundamental disagreement on the major issues related to immigration and asylum.

Today's radical disagreement, or *dissensus* – characterized by authoritarianism, tensions, polarizations and contradictions of our time – is not only valid but has intensified even more during the pandemic and post-pandemic era.

The EU is undergoing the bordering process as a re-territorialising of place, with a renegotiation of borders, boundaries, and othering in relation to nation, migration, and race (Anthias 2020: 141—175). We are dealing with processes pertaining to 'interrelated aspects of territorializing resource allocations and subordinations' where '"nation", "race" and migration mark important spaces where struggles about where and how borders are placed for control and management of populations and resources are played out' (Anthias 2020: 141). This has been particularly

7 This is a Poulantzian concept, from which Stuart Hall et al. draw on to speak of the organic crisis of the decade in the late 1970s and early 1980s, i.e. the period when neoliberalism was imposed in Europe and North America, cf. (Poulantzas 2016).

the case after what can be thought of as a 'triple crisis', which combines the economic crisis from 2008, the 'migration and refugee crisis' in 2015—2016, and the pandemic crisis since 2020. In the EU today, bordering processes are intensified and this tends to further politicize and police belonging and to hierarchize resources. We are acutely aware how borders are connected to violence and dislocations as boundaries are erected in categorizing the collective 'other': the 'migrant' category then is reimagined and reconstructed in relation to the so-called 'migration and refugee crisis' and the racisms and nativisms, and other associated forms of racialisation, are treated as both modes of exclusion and modes of exploitation within new regimes of generated exceptions (Anthias 2020; Trimikliniotis 2020).

In this sense, the current European *dissensus*, often framed in political discourses as *a fundamental disagreement*, is the connection between national identity and migration and the incorporation of the ethnic/national 'Other' within the boundaries of the 'nation'. In many EU countries there is an increasing tendency in many mainstream discourses to refer to a 'crisis of multiculturalism', which may be read more precisely as a crisis of citizenship in Europe (Bertossi 2010; Caldwell 2010). Similar intolerant discourses are prominent in media and policy debates over migration and migrant integration, which reactivates old forms of racial, ethnic and religious intolerance and hatred – and breeds new ones. The anti-immigrant Right, particularly the virulent neo-Nazis and far Right groups, express an intense feeling of being threatened by immigration and the need to reaffirm the 'national heritage' via drastic anti-immigrant action. There is a contagion of generating a sense of 'national emergency' and a siege mentality against 'the enemy' who is depicted as having 'invaded' or 'illegally' entered Europe. This legitimizes the call for 'drastic' acts by vigilante groups, which are portrayed as either 'self-defence' or 'legitimate reaction/retaliation' for the state's alleged failure to take resolute action to 'secure' the nation's survival. There is a new polarization in the public discourse over questions relating to migrants (integration, irregular migration, border control, and to some degree racism, discrimination and xenophobia), as there is a radicalization by new groups consisting of persons who live a multicultural life and claim the right to the city as a matter of fact: they defend their way of life and a public sphere which is very much their 'everydayness', a crucial feature in their daily lives. Anti-immigration and anti-asylum discourses, political groups and politics across the world are on the rise. Human rights groups have called for a decisive pushback against this racist populist challenge. There is structural *disagreement* or *dissensus*

over migration and asylum, i.e., the absence of consensus in Europe with resistance against right-wing anti-immigrant populism (Trimikliniotis 2020; 2022).

Mobile commons, migration, and asylum in the Cyprus-Greece-Turkey triangle

The Turkey-Greece-Cyprus triangle must be read in the context of the migration and refugee dissensus described above. In fact, this triangle is historically and structurally connected, but migration and asylum has made them even more connected (Trimikliniotis at al. 2015). On the one hand, there is confirmation and reconstruction of old states of exemption and the emergence of new ones, i.e. authoritarian regimes of surveillance and derogation of rights at the border and inland, in which must be critiqued from both theoretical and empirical points of view, as the Euro-Mediterranean countries. EU borders (Portugal, Spain, and colonial enclaves in North Africa), the south-central (France, Italy, and Malta) and the south-eastern borders of the EU have launched massive repatriations by land, sea and air, de facto imprisonment and deportation of informal immigrants and refugees.

In our study of migrants on the move in three capital cities: Istanbul, Athens and Nicosia (2016b), we found that migrants organize their mobility around their — in many cases digital — networks of knowledge, connectivity, economy and everyday politics in ways that transcend and therefore transform control. Nevertheless, the incessant war over the border regime is not taking place in specific geo-political border zones; nor is it confined to specific geo-political border zones; the geo-political border zones are not necessarily limited to specific spots of control-entry--exit, but are often diffused all over what is considered to be a sovereign territory. In what appears prima facie as a paradox, on close examination what an Afghan woman, mother of three, told us was common knowledge and 'common sense' – 'common' if one views the world from the vantage point of an irregular migrant: "Athens is the border". The inland capital of Greece which is far from any border of the territory of the Hellenic state is *the border par excellence*. Pregnant with her third at the time, she crossed over with her two children on boat via the river Evros and lived in Athens: In search of an atypical gateway to another European country, the borderline for her was neither the river Evros (which divi-

des Greece from Turkey), nor Patras or Brindisi, but Athens[8]. This is a common secret amongst thousands of illicit migrants crossing into Greece through the northern-eastern border zone with Turkey: it is this kind of common knowledge that must thought of as *a mobile common* transmitted via word of mouth and/or migrant digitalities. Athens remains the border, not only in the sense that the whole machine of control is deployed there; it is also the border in the sense that in certain Athenian districts, knowledge regarding mobility, infrastructure of connectivity, as well as informal economies of temporary survival and — maybe most importantly — communities of justice and politics of care, are constantly produced. Athens is also the theatre on the stage of which control of mobility and escape through mobility are performed in much more complex ways than in the bare border-life. The same can be said about Istanbul or Nicosia, or any other 'arrival city' in the world. This is where mobile commons materialize in praxis.

The study of migrant social movements in Athens, Istanbul and Nicosia opens a much broader terrain than an area-specific terrain, as regards social movements, migration and precarity. Beyond the dichotomy between 'old' and 'new' social movements, we examine the emergence of germinal social movements. Frequently, these are accompanied by moral panics (Cohen, 1972: 120), but not necessarily so. The three arrival cities (Saunders 2011) are where subaltern migrants, along with other subalterns, deploy their strategies and praxes of social movements; in their turn, they chart out new socialities, new spatialities and reshape new citizenship modes. In our endeavour to capture the ways precarious labour is fused with and within precarious spaces, we followed the trails of subaltern migrants; not only because of our expertise, but also because subaltern migrants are very often in an excessive way bridging imperceptible politics of everyday life and visible manifestations of new forms of subjectivity. However, precarious labour has always been theorized in the context of time: precariousness is thought to be essentially a product of time-control. We do not read the triangle as an interesting peculiarity of the periphery of Europe but as an instance of a laboratory that speaks to the global and to the present and future. This was the reading we proposed in our book in 2016, and we suggest that today the evidence is even stronger. Ari Sitas (2010) proposed analytical and practical lenses that allow us to see the vitality and importance of modes of livelihoods which are kinds of socialities, solidarities and connectivi-

8 Interview with two Afghan women conducted by D. Parsanoglou, N. Kambouri and O. Lafazani, Athens, 03/05/2012.

ties long experienced in the Global South, the East and what was thought of as "backward Rest" and not in "the West" or the "Global North" (Hall 1992). How to make sense of the new socialities produced by the "wretched of the earth", as famously referred to by Fanon, in the days of austerity and "structural reform" is made possible by listening in on what Sitas called "voices that reason" (Sitas 2004) from the perspective of the "ordinary lives" (Sitas 2010). Contrary to the neo-Schmidtian and Neo-Platonist readings of politics as the exception (e.g. Badiou 2012 etc.), we mount the method of reading "ordinary lives" as resistance: the subaltern can and indeed do speak; they speak back, but most importantly they act and inscribe social struggles. In this sense, "ordinary lives" are perceived as objects for gaze, categorization and classification, no matter how well intended, as machines reproducing the ways "the modern, waged and bureaucratic forms of domination have been thought to 'interpellate' and 'socialize' people as subjects" (Sitas 2004, ix). Our project is precisely to identify, study and theorize the "contranomic instances of sociality" (Sitas 2004, ix) shaped by the migrant struggles of passage, which re-define, spatially and mentally, the areas in which they have resided in the three arrival cities covered by our study. Just like South Africa has been "a vicious laboratory of extreme situations", the crisis-ridden cities of Istanbul, Athens and Nicosia have also been vicious laboratories producing new socialities of livelihoods.

This is not an instance, as is usually depicted in the case of societies that were suddenly and unexpectedly confronted with immigrants, an event that 'shocked': We no longer live in 'immigrant societies' or 'immigration societies' (Pavlou, Christopoulos 2004) but in *post-migrant societies* (Tsianos 2018 and Tsianos, Karakayali 2014). Migration or post-migration societies have changed radically as a result of the presence of immigrants (Wiest 2020). The political, cultural and social transformations that have taken place are such that the society can be described as having been structured by the experience of migration across the spectrum of economic, political, legal, cultural and social life (Balarajan et al. 2013). Greece (Parsanoglou 2007; Kapsalis 2018) and Cyprus (Trimikliniotis 2020b; 1999; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2015) have been hosting migrant workers for decades, whose financial contribution to GDP growth has at some point been estimated at more than 50% (Michael et al. 2005). While the anti-immigrant discourse, racist ideologies and practices are already deeply rooted in Greek society, mainly on the far right and the right, after the refugee crisis raging attacks have been launched against refugees by the media and politicians seeking to create chaos and hatred. Policies aimed at cultivating an anti-immigrant

climate by creating a hostile environment have a historical depth of a few decades, as reactionary movements to the social changes that have already taken place (Goodfellow 2019; Trimikliniotis 2020; Anthias 2020). However, the pandemic crisis was the golden opportunity in the 'perfect storm' that allowed — through authoritarian regimes of exclusion — the expansion and multiplication of anti-immigration policies, ideologies, and practices through the creation of an even more hostile environment to migrants and refugees.

The legacy of the 2015 'immigration/refugee crisis' is the hotspot approach, as announced by the European Commission framework of the "European Agenda on Migration" (Parsanoglou 2020b). In its brief paper "The Hotspot Approach to Managing Exceptional Migratory Flows" (European Commission 2015b), the Commission stated that the hotspots should serve as a platform for the rapid, integrated and mutually complementary cooperation of the different European agencies — the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the Frontex European Border Guard Agency, the European Police Office (Europol), the European Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust)[9]. The aim was the smooth cooperation between these agencies and the corresponding national authorities of the Member States to be able to react adequately to the possibility of disproportionately high migration pressure on the European external border. The hotspots should help to channel the mixed migratory flows faster and more closely, either to the European asylum system or to a process for the return of persons classified as irregular migrants. In the wake of the long-standing crisis of the Dublin regulation (Kasparek 2016; Kasparek and Speer 2013), which determines the responsibility of the Member State where an asylum application is filed, and its definitive collapse in the summer of 2015, the hotspot approach represented a new, a more even and therefore more sustainable distribution for the resettlement of asylum seekers within Europe, and the implementation of a common European asylum system (European Commission 2016c: 6). Therefore, hotspots were seen as an elementary tool for an effective and, more importantly, fast-track procedure to deal with flows and classify newcomers.

The hotspot approach, at the time, seemed the perfect tool to react to the steadily rising numbers of arrivals on the islands of the Greek East Aegean. Until March 2016, the Greek hotspots functioned primarily as registration centres, where identification, fingerprinting and the confirmation of refugees' nationalities was carried out. Until then, the primary

9 For a critical analysis, see ECRE 2016; Statewatch 2015.

objective of the hotspots had been to collect and match the data of refugees with the existing European databases, i.e. Eurodac and SIS II. In practical terms, arrivals were classified as potentially vulnerable or 'illegal', depending on their nationality. Eurodac, the "Automated Fingerprint Identification System" (AFIS, Auto-Fingerprint Identification System) covers the territories where the Dublin III applies. This Regulation and Eurodac are a response to the crisis of the European asylum system. A system accompanied by the concoction and use of vulgar terms, such as 'asylum shopping'. The Dublin III Regulation is based on the notion that "the polluter pays'" principle: it stipulates that the member state 'responsible' for the entry of an asylum seeker (e.g. by granting a visa, or the entry of an asylum seeker or by poorly controlling its borders) must take charge of the asylum the asylum procedure. The Dublin III Regulation allows for the identification of the single member state responsible for each asylum application, and thus regulates the mobility within the EU of non-EU nationals without a visa in the EU. The first classification level of the sprawling Eurodac system divides individuals into three into three categories: Category 1 is for asylum seekers, Category 2 is for foreigners who have crossed the external border illegally. Category 3 is for illegal migrants in the Schengen area (Kuster and Tsianos, 2016).

Except for persons from Pakistan and the Maghreb, whose right to asylum was collectively denied, most persons received a 30-day residence paper, while Syrians received a six-month paper, which enabled them to transit through Greece. However, on March 18, 2016, the EU-Turkey 'Common Statement', most often described as the "EU-Turkey deal", changed everything. Turkey promised, amongst other arrangements, to stop the departure of migrants towards Greece and to readmit refugees from Greece (European Council 2016). The introduction of a certain protection status for Syrian refugees in Turkey as well as granting access to the Turkish labour market allowed the Hellenic Asylum Service to declare Turkey, while not explicit in the law, either a Safe Third County or a Country of First Asylum, depending on the individual circumstances of the case. In order to facilitate the readmission of Syrian nationals to Turkey, the hotspot centres were declared closed facilities and migrants were subjected to a "restriction of freedom", i.e. detention, for a period of 25 days as prescribed by law 4375/2016. The immediate result in at least three of the hotspots where we have conducted research so far was an outbreak of violent protests, followed by a peculiar re-opening of the centres. While migrants were legally still subjected to the restriction of freedom, they were free to leave the centres. A second

tier of 'restriction of movement' is based on the fact that they were barred from leaving the islands, while the centres themselves remained largely inaccessible to outside observers, such as journalists, NGOs or researchers.

Despite the EU-Turkey-Deal, the hotspot centres in Greece are still operational on Greek islands. One can locate the territorialized aspects of the reconfiguration and the exterritorialization of the European border regime. From the early 2000s the control of European borders has been shifting outwards, depicting extra-European "wardens of the European border regime". In this framework, several attempts have been made in the past to outsource detention and control in both Africa and Middle East. Through this lens, the EU-Turkey Common Statement seems to be the first comprehensive plan for a systematic, holistic extra--territorialised control and processing of refugee and migrant flows. In other words, a buffer zone has officially been established at the very external border of the EU through the EU-Turkey Common Statement. In this sense, hotspots as configurations of condensed control in terms of space and time can provide new insights into the transformation(s) of the European border regime. Along with the tendency towards an *extra-territorialization* or *externalization* — pointed out since the mid--1990s in critical migration studies — the hotspot system inaugurates a systematic endeavour for the comprehensive processing of bodies and data *inside* the EU borders. Apart from the reconfigurations of geographies of control, exemplified in specific territories of enacted sovereignty, i.e. hotspot-non hotspot, islands-mainland, country of entry-country of relocation, and so on, the concentration of different actors in specific chronotopics, i.e. spatialities and temporalities, leads to constant renegotiations of the margins of both mobility and control within the European border regime and points to a deeper restructuring not only of the European border regime, but the European space itself. What is even more interesting, however, is the fact that the new regime introduced by the EU-Turkey Common Statement and the hotspot system is not only shifting outwards; it is also creating internal buffer zones within the EU territory, and particularly within a specific EU country; and even more particularly within specific spaces of detention and processing. This internalization of control is exemplified in different moments and different spaces: the first moment/space where someone is confined if she/he manages to cross the external buffer zone erected by Turkish authorities, is the hotspot system deployed in the five famous Greek islands. The first spatial distinction that a migrant or refugee faces arriving in the EU is now that between 'hotspot' and 'non-hotspot' territory;

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in terms of time, the distinction between pre-identification and post--identification, including initial investigation of one's condition. Then the migrant/refugee comes across the distinction between island and mainland, Greek or Turkish depending on the outcome of her/his demand; in terms of time, the month, more or less, during which her/his application is examined. And then comes the distinction between Greece and other EU+EEA member states, i.e. the distinction between application for relocation, acceptance or rejection of the demand, transmission of the files to other countries, acceptance or rejection, trip to the destination, while living in formal or improvised camps on the Greek mainland, in accommodation places provided by the UNHCR, local authorities, international or national/local NGOs, or informal housing projects provided by activists and people in solidarity with refugees and so on. Unless, both in terms of time and space, the 'infinity in confinement' exhausts these persons leading them to 'choose' the way back home, sponsored by the IOM (Parsanoglou 2020b; 2022).

Mobile commons in the pandemic and post pandemic era

Capitalisms (in the plural), as Robert Boyer aptly points out, are in the "whirlwind of the pandemic" and this overturns the logics where the economy imposes its own logic on society, something that ceases during wars, great economic crises, or pandemics. The fact that we must deal with the consequences of a virus, the basic properties of which scientists only discover gradually, creates the need to reflect more broadly on what emerges on the basis of the knowledge that we have incomplete knowledge: that we do not have the perfect solution (Boyer 2021, 33). Moreover, the pandemic is dislocating international relations, the euro zone remains unstable, and there is long-term undermining of the welfare state and public health systems, now stretched to the limit, whilst we are witnessing the rise of various xenophobic and racist populisms, as well as irrational and far right antivaxxer movements. However, nothing is predetermined in struggles and contestations, and we are also witnessing destabilizations and the emergence of different contradictions and resistance movements. We can also observe a major shift towards a new model built on the complementarity between education, training, health, and culture, which would meet the demand for solidarity from citizens and the requirements of the ecological transition. Back in 2008, Ari Sitas spoke of the emergence of an 'ethic of reconciliation' challenging the dominant ethos of domination, fragmentation, and destruction:

mobile commons may well be located as an instance of this.

From 2020, across the world, the pandemic crisis has managed, albeit temporarily, to slow down the dizzying speed of a moving world. Of course, before the pandemic crisis we could not have imagined either the scale or the depth of the panic and the global state of emergency invoking the danger posed by what we had described as a 'miasmic deviance' (Sitas et al. 2015). From the beginning of the pandemic crisis in 2020, many critical analysts questioned whether we would return to the previous state, if all restrictions would finally be lifted, and whether the new 'normality' would be different from what had been familiar with. Moreover, the terms of this 'normality' are under development.

At the beginning of the pandemic, after a delay due to embarrassment and political inefficiency, the pandemic exemption regime was imposed both in Greece and in Cyprus. The measures imposed and the order that followed show that the conservative-right-wing governments of Greece and Cyprus are, ideologically speaking, communicating vessels. The targeting and negative impact on immigrants and refugees was obvious, but most importantly, the pandemic exemption regime attempted to ideologically, politically, and legally legitimize a system of multiple immigration exemption regimes that preceded the pandemic crisis. It worked in this way to cover up the peculiar state of exception in the islands of the eastern Aegean with the European 'hot spots' (ECRE 2020) and in Evros. The instrumentalization of the refugee, which is no longer defined by the authorities and the regime as a 'refugee', but as an 'immigrant', takes the form of "moral panic" in Stanley Cohen's classic schema (2020/1975), which is now projected as an 'asymmetric threat' and a component of 'hybrid warfare'. Such a response was launched by Turkey in Evros. So, before the outbreak of the pandemic crisis, the Republic of Cyprus sent a police raid to the 'motherland', ostensibly to 'defend the nation' from the external threat of an attempt at authoritarianism.

The pandemic crisis after the spread of COVID-19 brought the celebrated 'world on the move' to a standstill. In the fear and panic generated, new global and localized states of hygienic emergency against what we term 'miasmic deviants' (Sitas et al. 2014) has generated more virulent anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric and bordering practices (Trimikliniotis 2020b). As the various waves of the pandemic unfold with the mutation of the virus, we witness accentuated processes of exclusion, racialization, marginalization and expulsion of migrants, refugees and 'the damned of the earth' in different parts of the globe. Both new borders and bordering processes are generated, and old ones

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are re-enacted and invigorated. This environment is engendering both 'old' and 'new' forces in Europe and the globe, bringing about the collapse of consensus in politics and generating a 'politics of hate', as well as invigorated forms of solidarity and resistance, by enacting new socialities of significant segments of the populations. Dissensus reigns and migration and asylum are at the heart of these processes (Trimikliniotis 2020). New struggles of resistance are emerging in a system flipping 'out of joint' (Wallerstein 2015) *against* the competing reactionary camps of 'fixers'. On the one hand, the mainstream 'managers' of neoliberal globalization, in their forty-odd years of reign, are essentially calling for *more of the same*. Against them, we have the reactionaries of the 'new' far right calling for 'authoritarian restoration' of the 'old' order: nostalgic for some idealized 'golden age of nation states', a (bizarre) bygone era of 'authentic' national or ethnic 'homogeneity' that has never existed.

Theorising mobile commons anew during the current multiple crisis

It may appear that we are stating the obvious by asserting that the notion of being a 'refugee' seeking asylum from another sovereign state or non-sovereign entity is, by definition, at the centre of this very process. The system was supposedly designed in the first place – and subsequently developed – to deal with people fleeing from wars, oppressive regimes, and disasters. The intention was that the inter-state system would regulate the obligations of states and rights of asylum-seekers, who may be nationals of another state or stateless persons. However, the development of various specialized areas of studies within and across disciplines was slow and particularly interested in addressing or connecting various aspects of the migration and refugee phenomena. For instance, important relations were uncovered between social, legal and security aspects relating to migration and asylum processes in local, regional, and global terms. Few studies exist connecting what is now an increasing fascination with the notion of *commons*, particularly from scholarship that is radical, critical or innovative perspectives – let's call them the political-ideological and technocratic *breakers* of capitalistic sovereignties *versus* the *security-and-management related studies* studying the so-called 'migration/refugee crisis' as a field dominated by political-ideological and technocratic *fixers* at the service of states system. Of course, today there is a vast and increasingly expanding critical scholarship that attempts to make the connections in what is a complex theorization and activism on

critical border regimes, camps and hotspots. However, the connection between the commons debates, migration and crisis is a rather novel area of focus.

The study of commons examines the processes that generate, develop, maintain and/or extinguish social spaces. These are seen as somehow lying *outside* the private capitalistic world, or as pockets, enclosures and cracks within the broader capitalistic frame. They are often perceived to somehow transcend and go beyond the scope of sovereignty of a single state. This peculiar transcendence is sometimes perceived as a transformative potentiality for the spheres of power, territoriality, and ownership due to the fact they are shared by the multitude, rather than belonging to or being controlled exclusively by a single subject.

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We endeavour to connect two aspects that are often depicted as polar opposites. In the effort to schematize, we may run the danger of bending the stick a little more than is necessary to illustrate our point. The commons may be depicted, at least symbolically, as a kind of *Utopian Ithaca* or *Refuge* that allows the peoples, classes, and multitude to realize a world of cooperation, solidarity and equality beyond the confines of capital, oppression/exploitation and sovereignty. This is an anarchic communist utopia of the present.

At the polar opposite we have the world of the 'Refugee/migration crisis'. This is a world of a permanent and global *state of exception* and state of emergency: Sovereign order(s) must be re-established. This is the Hobbesian world of fear: the Leviathan needs to re-establish order from migrants, criminals and terrorists who are threatening human civilization. Matters are not only more complicated, but the dichotomy above, as shown below is false ab initio. In our study on *mobile commons,* we argue that these *very special types of commons* emerge in complex and diverse ways and take various shapes and forms, primarily as a result of *encounters*, which are unpredictable and uncertain. Sometimes commons are somehow designed as they emerge and develop; most often they emerge without planning, design or intention, as unintended consequences of the circumstances that gave rise to them. We are dealing with different encounters with social forces, mechanisms and technologies, institutions, agencies and people. These can be of short-term or longer duration, they can be peaceful, cooperative and harmonious, or alternatively they can be antagonistic, painful, oppressive, violent and/or exploitative. It must be pointed out that class, gender, racial and other social factors, which order in terms of power and social hierarchies, and which entail unequal, oppressive and exploitative relations, do not miraculously and automatically disappear once commons are generated.

Access to the commons, sharing, making, and exploiting the commons is subjected to such problematic and unequal relations.[10] In our work, we do not suggest that we share naïve or idealized conceptions of the commons; neither do we advance any reading of the nature of the power and socioeconomic relations within the commons.

It is precisely via the processes of *encounters* that mobility is forced upon people on the move, the various forms of necessary defiance, resistance and challenges to the sovereign order emerge in response, and this generates the mobile commons. But this is a precarious and unsettling process. It also requires that several theoretical and methodological issues be addressed. Migration as a mass population movement is made up of many aspects which can work in parallel at the same time, sometimes in contradiction and in other times symbiotically. It is both part of 'the order of things' and is meant to operate as 'a safety valve' allowing labour and other persons to move around in the capitalist world, thus allowing for the forces of supply and demand to affect accumulation, profits and wages. However, it also contains another aspect, which is part of *disorder*: it causes turbulence, trouble and can unsettle societies, setting in motion transformation processes whose direction and extent are often difficult to predict. The *encounters between migrants and others unleashes processes which are uncharted, unrated, and uncertain.* This is where what we can call "the sociology of the encounter", augmenting 'the philosophy of the encounter', as the late Althusser put it, i.e. 'underground', the 'unique' current of 'aleatory' materialism. This is Althusser's critique of teleology in his later work *Philosophy of the Encounter*, which "emphasizes the radical contingency of events and the impossibility of understanding the past in a "future anterior" tense" (Cockshott 2013, 50):

> In the beginning were the atoms falling in the void and then ever so slightly they swerve, jostle, collide and stick together and from these chance encounters comes the world. No aim, no purpose, just the play of chance and fortune produce the world we know.

We extend this basic notion to how the mobile commons are produced via migrant encounters. The focus is thus on the *excess, the surplus* produced as a result of migrant encounters that are also an intrinsic part of the production and reproduction of populations which are characte-

10 This was aptly pointed out by Floya Anthias in the book launch of *Mobile Commons, Migrant Digitalities and the right to the City,* Nicosia, 8.7.2015.

rized as being somehow 'lesser', 'sub' and 'under'. Later, Balibar (2015) sought to understand and explain the loss of unrestricted power without exception or control as the dying paradigm of the Westphalian order. This slow but certain death is radically changing how human rights are to be addressed – "chaotically but irreversibly". We largely agree with his basic idea:

> Europe forms a space within which borders *multiply and move* incessantly, 'chased' from one spot to the other by an unreachable imperative of closure, which leads to its 'governance', resembling a permanent state of emergency.

He proceeds to question those in power from the perspective of a more civil or civilized public policy, which he refers to as "the more immediate and more urgent question":

> What is the most effective and the most civil (not 'to say 'civilized') way to *govern a permanent state of emergency in which borders that we inherited* or added are either beginning to collapse unless they become continuously fortified and militarized?

His response then was to read how President Hollande had referred to the ships that commute from Libya to Italy in April 2015, when he said, "They are terrorists". Somewhat puzzled, the philosopher notes that the President's approach failed to differentiate whether he was referring to the traffickers or the passengers:

> We must focus on what is *practically at stake: human beings w*ho are 'in excess' and their inalienable 'right to have rights' - not to the detriment of those who already have them, but next to them and together with them. No one can claim such a governance is easy, but it certainly should not be based on obsolete discriminations ('migrant" and 'refugees') or dangerous generalizations ('refugee" and 'terrorists') that nourish racist fantasies, prompt murderous acting out and disarrange the surveillance policies that the state needs to efficiently protect its citizens.

This was not an extraordinary reference by the French President. In fact, since then this has been reiterated time after time, as politics in Europe and many countries in the world has since lurched to the right. What we saw in the following months is how cynically the EU would make an agreement with Turkey to treat essentially all those crossing from Turkey to Greece to go to other EU countries not as refugees, but as migrants. The agreement completely bypasses the Refugee Law. From

the point of view of the struggles of refugees and migrants, until the EU or the world sorts out what to do to address the question in a civil or an uncivil manner, the urgent and immediate issue is firstly to survive the border and sea crossings and then somehow to settle in. This urges the migrants to seek immediate solutions and their *mobile commons* is all they have: now it is a struggle for survival; then they move on.

Mobility in what Bauman (2000) called 'liquid modernity' is about a mobile capitalist world based on unequal, often oppressive, and exploitative relations, and racialized and gendered differentiations, fragmentations, and polarizations. In these contexts, we have the simultaneous emergence of new forms of resistance, solidarities, and social imaginaries as praxes of 'real utopias', as Wight (2010) put it. Countries have been hosting migrant workers, whose financial contribution to GDP growth has been enormous, for decades. It is thus not surprising that significant segments of the population would presumably identify themselves as active members of a 'post-migrant society'. The term 'post-migrant society' does not denote or imply that one ascribes to or adopts various 'postmodern' notions about the world, but rather aims to take seriously the contributions and debates in various strands of poststructuralist scholarship, a field which we consider to be valuable.

Even though it is difficult to define 'post-migrant' in a sociological sense, post-migrant situations arise everywhere in our common everyday life, thus involving the worldly side of these relationships: post-national spaces of perception and action of lives whose self-relations do not directly refer to migration experiences but are reflected and lived between multiple affiliations and multiple discriminations. In a sense, we are all post-migrant now. For example, a third-generation German-Greek woman has never personally been racially discriminated against, as she says, but has experienced and processed the experiences of discrimination of her parents and even her grandparents as part of her post-migrant identity in Germany. The same applies to 'German partners of origin' in binational marriages who have to painfully process the experiences of discrimination of their partners or children in their own lives. We can make similar claims about second- and third-generation Greeks or Turks in the UK, the USA, Canada or Australia. Yet many of these will bear witness that they have faced, and are faced with, numerous instances of racism and discrimination that are endemic, which are reproduced in different shapes and forms in societies. The major rupture seems to be between the first and second generations of migrants, where the expectations and attitudes of second-generation migrants with regard to how institutions must treat them rise to meet the levels of their peers

born from non-migrant parents. These persons live in societies that have over 50 to 100 years of migration history, like all post-migrant societies: and the fact that second-generation, even third-generation migrants have the same expectation to be treated equally with dignity and respect is proof in itself that we are already living in a post-migrant society. The same could be said about other European countries with empires or an imperial past (Spain, Portugal, France, Denmark, the Netherlands etc.). Can we claim that even countries which have relatively recently and with astonishing rapidity been transformed to migration destinations, and transit and receiving countries from sending countries, have also become post-migrant societies, moving beyond 'migration societies'? This empirical question must carefully be scrutinized in context.

Solidarity, Socialities and Mobile Commons: Post-pandemic resistance and potentialities

Mobile commons are intimately connected to the transient and precarious lives of migrants, and precarity has become a key feature in the processes, rendering the precariat a protagonist in the current post-Fordist world (Standing 2015; 2018). This generates highly fluid, transitional, uncertain and contradictory situations. Different processes emerge via the destruction of what were assumed to be 'unities' or 'commonalities' but in reality the break-up of such categories of unity or commonality, via their fragmentation generates and reassembles new forms of subjectivities and resistance which transform social struggles and movements as we have known them (Trimikliniotis et al. 2015; 2016). This was apparent prior to the mass exodus from conflict-ridden zones in Syria, the Middle East and northern Africa – often described as the "Mediterranean refugee crisis", because the eastern Mediterranean became the most populous route and porous for refugees to enter the European borders in their desperate journey to the prosperous EU core. In our previous work, the realities in the eastern Mediterranean boundary triangle illustrate infinite survival struggles, articulations and claims in precarious spaces that can be illuminating in different ways. In the current debates, dominated by alarmist binaries between regimes of humanitarian compassion and military crusades against smugglers, the reading of such struggles may offer some pointers for alternative approaches. This is because such readings can provide us with insights into the processes of precarity that are routing, sharing and 'commoning' to overcome the borders of immigration

surveillance, suppression, and violence. This where 'solidarity' must be connected to 'mobile commons':

> It is the reconstruction and reconnection of the fragmentations or disjointed fractures in the specific forms of praxis that allows for the particular to be "captured" as theoretical snapshots allowing for both politics and theory to emerge. The notion of *mobile commons* (see allows us to locate the trail, the marks or scratches punctuated on the global canvas of precarity of people constantly on the move, as precarity is deeply punctuated in their *modus operandi*. Labour then is not confined to work or the work place; labour is a force or energy propelling us "forward" or "back and forth" that is derived from our vitality-as-existence (survival, pleasure and revolutionary imagination): it is propelling forces of labour forward in opposition to the sense of death shaping the sphere of praxis — thus time (of labour and struggle) is "*morphologized*", that is, it takes a particular shape and form, or it is *spatialized* (Trimikliniotis et al. 2016).

The question then is an empirical one, derived from the concrete situation in the current polarizing context of anti-immigration hysteria launched by the Government in Cyprus (Trimikliniotis 2020; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2022 forthcoming) which has resulted in the shrinking of the democratic public sphere and all sorts of pressures being imposed on civic organizations for civil society action (Demetriou and Trimikliniotis 2021). Is there something resembling what we can call solidarity towards migrants and refugees in Cyprus during the pandemic years? Do we see something emerging as part of social 'magma' (Castoriadis, 1994) in Cyprus resembling solidarity towards the other as action-based initiatives during the pandemic? From outset of the Pandemic, solidarity, as opposed to the repressive logic of many of the restrictive measures, was invoked as being a creative and real potential, drawing on the resources of communities across the globe (Mitas 2016; Trimikliniotis and Tsianos 2022).

In Cyprus, at an activistic level we see this emerging immediately with the lockdown, where previous small local initiatives began to converge to create a country-based initiative, subject to the de facto division which imposed a ban on free movement across the country. This is neither a charity-based approach, nor one that merely relies on the state, which clearly simply arrested and encamped asylum-seekers and flatly refused to offer any support for migrants and asylum-seekers. If we are take the dictum that "one must practice sociology in such a way

that the ingredients making up the collective are regularly refreshed" (Latour 2005, 261), then what we are witnessing in the polarized situation of Cyprus is a process of "reassembling the social" in a conflictual manner: the racist antimigrant immigrant discourses which justify the policies of encampment, marginalization, neglect and abandonment versus the various manifestations of solidarity of praxis. 'Actor-networks' are creatively engaging in the process of making spaces for *praxis*.

> It is amazing how we connect with people from so many different backgrounds: we work together because we have a common purpose, and we all bring our own perspectives, ideas and resources! Also, what is amazing is that we connect with some many youngsters who have just finished their studies but are unemployed and refused to be drawn to the set ways of their conservative parents who don't see the mass poverty, hunger, and homelessness of migrants as *their* problem. We connect across generations, something I never saw before!

This is how an activist explained why younger activists are involved:[11]

> We are dealing with a revolt of the young. This is what I can deduct from what I was told by a young woman in her late 20s or early 30s who joined via the WhatsApp and became active in collecting a delivering basic goods to asylum-seekers who are homeless and freezing during this usually cold winters. After finishing her university studies, she is happy just to get some income to get by to do activistic work. As she told me: 'I cannot just get a regular office job and pretend that nothing is happening around me! I am unemployed now but I simply need some income to carry on what I am doing. Is this too much to ask?

This is a highly polarized situation where migrants and refugees face a humanitarian crisis. Those who do solidarity work are forced to oppose state policies with the backing of subservient media, which not only fails to support migrants but also blames them for their plights and treats them as dangerous accomplices who are sent over by Turkey. This polarisation generates new militancy, resistance and solidarity. Mostly Africans, but also other communities of asylum seekers are experiencing precarious living in squalor and misery, in camps or the community, and are forced to take up any jobs that involve extreme forms of exploitation and low-skill chores.

It is apparent that the praxis of solidarity as a manifestation of sociality and consciousness emerges via the alliances between those committed to collective and individual praxis and those in need themselves.

11 Interview with an activist, 30 January 2022.

Breaking and overcoming barriers and ethnic borders produces a specific "time and space for solidarity", in the words of Agustin and Jorgerberg (2016) contra the pessimism of our times: the crisis of (state) solidarity produces "a solidarity as a political action which enhances alternatives to existing policies on refugees and asylum seekers".

Breaking and overcoming barriers and ethnic borders produces a specific "time and space for solidarity", in the words of Agustin and Jorgerberg (2016) contra the pessimism of our times: the crisis of (state) solidarity produces "a solidarity as a political action which enhances alternatives to existing policies on refugees and asylum seekers" (Agustin and Jorgerberg 2019, 129). In our book *Mobile Commons*, we charted some aspects of the socialities generated as mobile commons and migrant digitalities: via moving, struggling, learning how to survive, bringing in their own cultural and social resources, ideas and knowledge-systems, new life was born in the form of new socialities.

From a mere summary of the ethnography of these processes, it is apparent that there is an osmosis that brings together persons from different national, ethic and social backgrounds, as well as different perspectives. What is crucial is how the vast majority draw on migration experiences and knowledge. Many of them are *migrants* themselves. Mostly they are settled migrants from different countries — a retired social worker from the UK, another is a doctor, many are students (Cypriots and foreign students), refugees and asylum-seekers who are active, settled migrants with shops or restaurants, persons from the diaspora bringing to Cyprus their own experiences and knowledge of activism from abroad. One activist who comes from Thessaloniki was very active in solidarity work with refugees who were stuck in Edomeni in Greece during the Greek refugee crisis. Now he is a student residing in Cyprus, and is one of the most persistent and reliable activists, willing to defy the authorities and risk helping refugees with their basic needs, even during the lockdown period.

Another cohort are workers and retired persons who identify themselves with the Left. As one-woman activist told me:

> If we don't do something now to support refugees and migrants in need, what sort of left-wing people are we? Where is our internationalism? If you are on Left, you are antiracist and must show your support when another human is in need![12]

She regularly collects and distributes food and clothing and is an organizer. Another organizer has been an organizer since her student years; now as a teacher is she is one of the most active organizers.

A third cohort is organized around the Catholic religious charity Caritas. However, unlike the middle-class Red Cross, which has simply

12 Interview with activist, 30 January 2022.

failed or refused to distribute the mass of supplies it has stockpiled in storage rooms, they have been amongst the most active in offering support via the 'dignity centre'[13], the free supermarket, the evening centre organising soup kitchens, mobilising support, and distributing food and clothing[14]. A fourth cohort is around groups of anarchists who have also been active in providing shelter and support during the current crisis.

This is a process that is still in the making; new groups are emerging, both formal and informal. As the crisis takes new shapes and forms due to the pandemic, economic crises, wars, conflicts, refugeehood and dispossession in the world, and as racialised border regimes are generating a hostile environment, resistance manifests itself in different forms of socialities and solidarities.

Solidarity cannot be viewed as a fetishized or sanctifying category, but should rather be seen as resulting from the emergence of multiple socialities in specific conjunctures. This more than evident in our research on *migrant digitalities* and *mobile commons* (Trimikliniotis et 2016). Drawing on Ari Sitas (2004), which has illustrated this from the struggles and lives in South Africa. With Parsanoglou and Tsianos (see Trimikliniotis et al., 2016) we have illustrated but a mere fragment of what is already there:

> We are witnessing modes of livelihoods which are kinds of socialities, solidarities and connectivities long experienced in the Global South, the East and what was thought of as "backward Rest" and not in "the West" or the "Global North" (Hall 1992).

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Solidarity in this sense is a manifestation of the socialities that are connected to deeper senses, as forms of consciousness whereby a deeper sense is externalised as praxis, not in abstractum. Of course, it can be cultivated and enhanced, as it is very much part of socialisation processes. The 'ideological apparatuses', i.e., institutions specializing for the purposes of reproduction can work towards or undermine such ideas and processes, but we are dealing with a dialectic here, with contested ideas about whose solidarity, whose boundaries, whose definition and delineations etc are at stake. E. P. Thompson (1964, 13) notes various instances as historic processes in class struggles. From the early days of the industrial revolution, workers formed socialities built by their own senses of community in their daily lives and struggle — Thompson (1964, 583) invites us to "imagine the solidarity of the community" and

13 https://www.facebook.com/DignityCentreNicosia
14 https://caritascyprus.org/

"the extreme isolation of the authorities". As Tony Negri (2013, 77) puts it,

> Consciousness rises up — not as a utopian element, but as a real one — as consciousness of collective antagonism, or rather, of antagonistic collectivity. As we have seen, time is collective and productive essence.

We are dealing however with a process that is broader and much more diverse than consciousness as such. This is intimately connected to the movement, the struggles and social transformation in the way collective subjectivity is affecting politics and organization of social life:

> The form that its struggles and activities take, on the basis of the collective and productive temporal displacement of class, is first of all that of mobility. By mobility, I mean the constant formation and re-formation of the material strata and of the collective subjects of social labour. At the level of real subsumption the first and fundamental characteristic of the class consists in the omniversality of its dimensions of movement. 'The essence of the—unity — and of the concept — of class is that all workers present themselves as migrants, as mobility'. Omniversality is pliant (Negri 2013, 92).

This is part of what we call 'mobile commons', in what promises to be a breakdown of races, racism and borders:

> 'Proletarians of all countries, unite' is an injunction that today means: mix up races and cultures, constitute the multicoloured Orpheus who generates the common from the human. Break down all the transcendental barriers that prevent the singular from becoming common and that block the innovation of the eternal: that is what it means to take leave while constituting (Negri 2013, 260—261).

The concept of the commons on the move includes not only digital media but all their uses, forms and versions. By the in-motion commons we mean the distributed capacity for action within the continuum of internet-analogue communication structures and, at the same time, the concern in use for the maintenance and sustainability of this structure.

The concept of the commons on the move includes not only digital media but all their uses, forms and versions. By the in-motion commons we mean the distributed capacity for action within the continuum of internet-analogue communication structures and, at the same time, the concern in use for the maintenance and sustainability of this structure. Sustainability in this context means ensuring that those who come after the earlier wave of migrants and refugees find and use the same migration path and media infrastructure intact, i.e. it means the timely identification and correction of malfunctions and technical problems literally at all times. This is the ethical economy of the border crossing, which is less about the ethical dimension of the policies of flight and more

about the matrix of care of the society on the move, which is the reciprocity on the move and the sustainability of the geography of the crossings.

The mobile commons of migration are a response to a particular form of digital registration that we would describe as digital hostage or digital prison. It is no coincidence that for a few years now the most important demand of migrant(s) has been the deletion of their fingerprint records. The actual crossing of a real borderline is only one aspect of border crossing, the most important part of which is to maintain or regain sovereignty over digital data. This primarily concerns the pan-European EURODAC database and the processing of fingerprints, through which the identified person becomes a 'digital prisoner'. In other words, the possibility of arriving in places outside the legal regulation of his asylum claim is annulled. What we are interested in is how a tracking technology and digital border infrastructure works to prevent and control forms, practices and activities of border crossing, which are also organized using social media, how it seeks to immobilize people by making them a particular object of identification for longer periods of time.

Conclusion

Migration is not a uni-linear individual selection process, it is not an outcome of the mechanical 'push and pull' associated with the supply and demand of human capital. Migration adapts differently to each particular situation, changes aspects, interconnects unexpected social protagonists, absorbs and reconfigures the dynamics of domination aimed at controlling it. Migration is unpredictable in its flows, de-individualized in the dynamics of its occasional groupings, and constantly constitutes new transnational spaces that challenge and sometimes neutralize the politics of border regimes. They therefore require research approaches that ask questions about how transnational mobility and transnational subjectivities are produced and enabled, and how routes and spaces of mobility, i.e. political geographies of migration autonomy, are produced in interaction with technologies.

At the border crossing, migrants are not necessarily social groups in the strict sociological sense. Rather, they are *social non-groups*, i.e. agile networks of social groups that can connect and disconnect, update and renew themselves, but also disappear in the elusive manner in which they appeared in the first place. No one travels alone, at least not for the

entire journey, and no one makes individual use of media. We conceptualize the transnational space of these social non-groups by borrowing the term from Arjun Appadurai (1996) who conceives them as "technocultural geographies of ethnospaces" which emerge in the context of the "widening mismatch between territory, subjectivity and collective social movement". For this reason, we use the concept of mobile commons. In criminalized, cross-border, transnational migration, everyone is surrounded by many people and by many media environments, which everyone can make use of individually or by proxy. As one migrant we interviewed stated: "I use your mobile phone and give you something else, you give me your mobile phone to Bremen and I leave it at the internet café. Or you just send a text message instead of me."

The concept of mobile commons aims to capture dynamic processes, as an *ensemble* or *matrix of care of the society on the move*, generating reciprocity on the move and a sustainability of the geography of the crossings. When a migration route 'ceases' to be 'open', i.e. passable, it also ceases to function as a cover for past transit stakes, but also for future ones. Even if a person is no longer in transit, but is recognized somewhere as an asylum seeker, it is still his/her concern if the migration route is interrupted or technically disconnected. (S)he is thus cut off from his/her relations, from the many semi-conventional forms of informal economies of migration. (S)he may, in case of doubt, become vulnerable to blackmail. Digitality is a space where media technologies of control coexist with the possibilities of alternative media use. To every form of control technology there is a corresponding form of resistance to it.

Mobile commons of migration are a response to a particular form of digital registration that we would describe as *digital hostage* or *digital prison*.

Mobile commons of migration are a response to a particular form of digital registration that we would describe as *digital hostage* or *digital prison*. This is why we track data processes, such as the pan-European EURODAC database and the processing of fingerprints, to claim back sovereignty over digital data contra the tracking technology and digital border infrastructure which aims to immobilize people by making them a particular object of identification.

Encounters between groups produce social dialectics within institutions; struggles, conflicts, disagreements, and negotiations occur, but so do new socialities and solidarities in a world in a constant state of being remade. We can thus begin to imagine the world that Derek Walcott (2014) writes about in his poem 'The Prodigal, 3.II' that refers to the "the tidal motion of refugees" in the *Province of Mercy*. Whilst we may not be near the place where "the only government is that of the apples and the only army the wide banners of barley", our theorizations merely attempt to capture what is happening on the ground. It's where theory

meets a praxis-of-resistance. After all, "every theoretical encounter has some collective roots and some affinity with the spirit of its era" (Negri 2013, 123).

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Tytuł: Mobilne dobra wspólne w epoce przedpandemicznej, pandemicznej i postpandemicznej: wnioski z doświadczeń mobilności w postmigranckich czasach
Abstrakt: Niniejszy artykuł prezentuje badania nad skutkami pandemii w zakresie generowania równoległych globalnych, regionalnych i lokalnych procesów, które materializują się w rzeczywistości i określają potencjał postpandemicznych mobilnych dóbr wspólnych. Artykuł oferuje konceptualizację tych kwestii opierając się na studiach podjętych w trójkącie Cypr-Grecja-Turcja, tj. na południowo-wschodnich granicach Europy/UE. Mobilne dobra wspólne są tu teoretyzowane w bieżącym kontekście epoki pandemicznej i postpandemicznej, nawet jeśli pierwsze badania empiryczne zostały wykonane przed pandemią. Pandemia oznaczała nagłe wtargnięcie w obszar tego, co jest rdzeniem globalnego kapitalizmu: mobilności. Podczas tego okresu, reżimy stanu wyjątkowego, derogacji i zawieszenia praw zostały wprowadzone na polu życia cywilnego, społecznego i politycznego w zasadzie na całym świecie. Koncept mobilnych dóbr wspólnych ma za zadanie uchwycić dynamiczne procesy jako zestaw czy matrycę opieki społeczeństwa znajdującego się w ruchu, generujące wzajemność w ruchu i zrównoważenie w geografii przepływów. Cyfrowość jest nieodłączną częścią obecnych procesów migracyjnych. Cyfrowość to przestrzeń, w której medialne technologie kontroli współistnieją z możliwościami alternatywnego wykorzystania mediów. Każdej formie techniki kontroli towarzyszy odpowiednia forma oporu. Artykuł analizuje, w jaki sposób mobilne dobra wspólne opierają się rejestracji cyfrowej i procesowi, który wytwarza ogólnoeuropejską cyfrową infrastrukturę granic, której celem jest unieruchomienie ludzi. Ilustruje, w jaki sposób spotkania między grupami wnoszą dialektykę społeczną w ramach instytucji; pojawiają się walki, konflikty, niezgoda i negocjacje, ale pojawiają się też nowe społecz-

ności i solidarności w świecie, który nieustannie się przeobraża.
Słowa kluczowe: mobilne dobra wspólne, mobilność, cyfrowość, cyfrowa granica, dyssens, polaryzacja, matryca opieki, epoka pandemiczna i postpandemiczna, społeczeństwo w ruchu, społeczności, solidarność

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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).

In Europe, the systems of asylum 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.

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

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.

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

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.

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-

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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.

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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

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Mobile Commoning from the Margins to the Fore? Hostipitality on the Polish--Belarusian and Polish-Ukrainian Borders (2021–2022)

The article was written as an intervention piece in the midst of the massive escape of war refugees to Poland during the first four weeks of the war in Ukraine (24 February-24 March 2022). It aims to map and discuss the condition of grassroots hospitality (and inhospitality) in Poland between Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022. It was a time of shifting context in terms of policies: from the state of exception, migrant push-backs, and walling the border with Belarus, to the policy of solidarity with war refugees, legitimized humanitarianism and open border with Ukraine. In the course of half a year, the frames of bottom-up hospitality on Eastern borders of Poland changed entirely and abruptly. When a couple of thousands of migrants from the Middle East and beyond were camping in the border zone between Belarus and Poland, unable to claim asylum in the EU, practices of solidarity from the bottom up were barely tolerated by Polish state, if not criminalized and condemned. In these realities, structures of support remained an informal, fugitive, and underground network. But with the Russian attack on Ukraine on 24th February 2022, Poland opened its border for the unprecedented arrival of over two million

people (during first month of the war) and bottom-up solidarity became a massive response of Polish society, which started to organize shelters, transportation, food and medicines. The same politicians and media which were fighting hospitality to migrants — in terms of 'crimes of solidarity' — on the border with Belarus, this time welcomed it with enthusiasm and support. The article proposes to view the nascent rise of grassroots hospitality with Ukrainian migrants in terms of 'mobile commoning': precarious, makeshift and autonomous practices of solidarity with people on the move. Mobile commoning is considered here as potential basis for a different migration policy in the EU. At the same time, the Polish case is analyzed as an instructive study of the limits of political universalism which are constructed at and by the borders.

Keywords: mobile commoning, Polish borders, EU borders, migration governance, refugees, universalism

From Autumn 2021 to Spring 2022, the refugee issue in Poland gained new momentum and it evolved from one extreme to the other. It was triggered with a planned operation and provocation by the Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko, who organized the transit of a couple of thousands of migrants from the Middle East — mostly Iraq, Syria, Iran and Afghanistan, but also places like Cuba, Somalia, Cameroon and Sri Lanka. And it was completely reformulated with the invasion of Russia on Ukraine on 24 February 2022, when over two million people reached Poland during the first two weeks of the war. In the first case, the Polish government responded with harsh border measures and forbade helping migrants who suffered hunger, cold, and beatings. In the second case, it encouraged citizens to manifest radical hospitality to Ukrainians. The difference in the state response is not difficult to explain and this article will discuss it only briefly. Also, the reaction of Polish society to the refugee issue — limited support, provided mostly by activists and some local residents in the case of the humanitarian crisis on the border with Belarus, and full-fledged citizen mobilization after the attack on Ukraine — can be rather easily explained by the different context: geopolitical interests (against Russia and Belarus), national sympathies and cultural closeness (towards Ukrainians), the scale of the crisis (millions of neighbors instead of thousands of people from afar), the reaction of politicians and the media (pro-Ukrainian consensus), the demographic characteristics of Ukrainian refugees (overwhelmingly women and children), and social ties with the more than 1 million Ukrainians who already lived in Poland before the war.

But, for my purposes, what is the most interesting puzzle in the shifting status of grassroots solidarity with migrants which happened just over the course of several months? Why is it the case that 'the pressure on our borders', 'uncontrolled migration', or 'the migratory wave' provoked such different responses in the practices of hospitality and inhospitality to newcomers? In this article, I propose conceptualizing the practices of bottom-up solidarity with people on the move in terms of 'mobile commoning'. The concept of mobile commoning was introduced in migration studies and applied to some empirical cases in order to explore precarious, makeshift and autonomous practices, institutions and networks of support and solidarity with migrants in the context of the securitization of borders and the inhospitable policies of the state (e.g. English, Grazioli and Martignoni 2019; Sheller 2018; Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou and Tsianos 2017). Mobile commoning draws our attention to the phenomenon of the 'socialization' or 'communalization' of politics of hospitality by citizens and in everyday life. It is also infor-

Mobile commoning draws our attention to the phenomenon of the 'socialization' or 'communalization' of politics of hospitality by citizens and in everyday life.

med by studies of the commons, understood as autonomous structures of self-governance and cooperation functioning beyond the regimes of the private and the public. But in comparison to most commons, which are theorized as communitarian, sedentary structures with clear boundaries, mobile commons are more fluid, elusive and elastic entities, constituted rather by precarious and shifting borders (Varvarousis 2022). As for mobile commoning, what differentiates it from commoning in the (non-mobile) commons, is the openness towards the arriving commoners. This gives mobile commoning the potentiality to overcome political exclusion — maintained by borders — and move towards radical hospitality and political universalism.

At the same time, the Polish case analyzed in the article can be instructive for scholars of commoning because we find in it a very sudden and profound transformation of its meaning, scale and further prospects. The undertaking which — at the very start — was regarded as typical for NGOs, radical activists, and naïve idealists, with its informal, fugitive, and underground character, overnight became the core response of Polish society to the war in Ukraine. Without mobile commoning the Polish state would have been completely unable and unprepared to answer the needs of over two million refugees (and the number keeps rising). This demonstrates the expanding and contagious potential of mobile commoning. On the other hand, we will see that mobile commoning, even in the exceptional conditions of war in the neighboring country, didn't result in all limits to hospitality and political universalism being overcome. Not all people on the move were welcomed with the same openness, and some subjectivities remained harshly excluded from the reach of mobile commoning. Thus the Polish case provides important material for analysis of the limits of bottom-up universality towards migrants.

The case is worth reflecting on also because we were unable to predict what would happen to mobile commoning in next weeks or months. Would it only be a short-lived carnivalesque mobilization after which the state would take full responsibility? Or would it contribute to a more lasting culture of hospitality? Which institutionalized forms could this culture gain in the near future? Will it be formalized and bureaucratized? How long could it last? It is far too early to answer these questions, so the article will limit itself to a more modest aim: I want to map the shift of status of mobile commoning which is happening in Poland at the moment of writing (the end of March 2022). I believe that such up-to-date intervention can contribute to the general problem: could mobile commoning re-direct the EU's migration policy in a more hospitable direction? What can we learn from the Polish case?

Enclosures of commonality: borders and the production of a migrant's illegality

Taking place alongside the evacuation of US troops from Afghanistan — in summer 2021 — the appearance of migrants from Asia and Africa on the Polish-Belarusian border provoked concerns about a possible 'wave' of refugees caused by the transition of power to the Taliban. The humanitarian crisis on the external borders of the EU with Belarus started even earlier in the Baltic countries: the rise of the 'illegal' border crossing was noted in Lithuania already in June, then the situation repeated itself in Latvia and Poland in August. As a result, thousands of migrants became caught in-between the instrumental and cynical policy of Lukashenko, which pushed them outside to the EU without permission to turn back and stay in Belarus, and the stubborn and hardline border policies of the EU, which was determined to avoid a similar 'refugee wave' to the 'migrant crisis' of 2015. The Polish Border Guard estimated that almost forty thousand migrants tried to cross the border from Belarus 'illegally' in 2021, in comparison with only 129 attempts in 2020 (Szczepańska 2022). The actual number of 'trespassers' had to be much higher because many migrants were not noted by the guards. The situation gained high public coverage from the Polish media in August 2021, when a group of migrants became stuck in no man's land near Usnarz Górny village, on the border with Belarus. Around sixty people stayed there — in a limbo between two countries, watched by guards from both sides of the border — for a couple of weeks, suffering from inhumane conditions.

The terms of political dispute over migrants stuck at the border were organized around the controversy: who is a legitimate refugee and what kind of border crossing is legal? My initial assumption is different. Instead of asking about legal and illegal ways of cross the border, I am interested in the role that a border itself plays — materially, discursively, symbolically — in producing legality and legality (De Genova 2004; Üstübici 2018, 47-82), including the status of the refugee. A border will be seen here as a biopolitical device that differentiates between the welcomed and unwelcomed movement of people, but which is at the same time contested and driven into crisis by the mobility of these people (Vaughan-Williams 2009). The fragile status of a border makes hospitality a shifting terrain — giving and retrieving it in exclusive and changing ways. Thus the practices of mobile commoning — which will be subsequently analyzed — should be seen as a bottom-up response to the appearance of the people on the move who were produced by border

regimes as 'illegals', and whose rights to claim rights — e.g. the right to claim refugee status — were quite literally and physically denied in the European Union. Living as 'illegalized' denizens, wannabe-refugees or expelled abjects haunting the political community, these excluded people manage to transgress the limits of European universalism from below, through mobile commoning (Tazzioli and Walters 2022). If a border acts as the instrument of enclosures — of depriving the migrant of his/her embeddedness in commonality — then mobile commoning might be regarded as a counter-process of reclaiming the commons, even if in a temporary and unsteady way.

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Enclosures of Europe: EUropeanization as the securitization of borders

In order to map the reasons behind the recent situation on the Polish-Belarusian border, we have to begin with its geopolitical context. Until 2021, Poland and Baltic States had not been directly involved in the higher arrivals of refugees, as was the case with the Southern bordering member states (Greece, Italy, Spain) or those Central-Eastern European countries which were located on the 'Balkan route' from Turkey to Western Europe (as in the case of Hungary or Austria). According to data from Eurostat (2022), after 2015 the number of asylum applications in Poland decreased and remained lower and stable until 2020 (10,255 in 2015, 9780 in 2016, 3005 in 2017, 2405 in 2018, 2765 in 2019, and 1510 in 2020). In 2021 the sum of applications rose significantly to 7700 cases, but most claimants did not come from the group of migrants who were involved in transit through Belarus. Almost 2300 applicants were Belarusians who sought to escape from post-electoral repressions in their homeland. Then 1800 Afghans applied as well, but more than half of them were collaborators of the Polish army and embassy evacuated from Afghanistan by planes with the help of the Polish state. The data from the official statement (Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców 2022) confirm indirectly that Poland was very reluctant to let the clandestine migrants to even submit their applications. What's more, apart from Belarusians (95.3% positive decisions) and Afghans-collaborators (58% positive), people from other countries were largely dismissed during asylum procedures (86% negative decisions in the case of Iraqis, 68.6% in the case of Russians).

Even if the incoming of migrants between 2015 and 2020 wasn't a big concern, the circulating images and public panics from the 'sum-

mer of migration' of 2015, and member states' disputes around the relocation of refugees according to institutional quotas, also had their consequences for framing the refugee issue in Poland. Already the election campaign in Summer-Autumn 2015 was influenced by the fear of the mass of Muslim migrants who were depicted as a threat to Poland's security, economy, culture and identity. In May 2015, only 21% of Poles were against hosting refugees from war regions, then — after the election campaign won by the right-wing parties — this number rose to 52% in December 2016, and in the case of refugees from the Middle East and Africa to 74% in April 2017 (Cywiński, Katner and Ziółkowski 2019, 7-8). After the formation of a new government by the Law and Justice Party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS), Polish 'skepticism' about opening borders for refugees and even undisguised Islamophobia became part of the public media narratives (Bobako 2017), culminating in the figures of refugee-stranger, refugee--terrorist, refugee-Islamist (Bielecka-Prus 2018; Sydow 2016; Tymińska 2020). No wonder that stories — often fake ones — about refugees who were responsible for terrorist attacks in Europe, Sharia zones in Western cities, or mass rapes of women in public spaces, made a large part of Polish society basically insensitive to the fate of refugees, even from countries like Syria, from which people had to flee because of destroyed cities and a threat from ISIS forces. The theme of migration became 'securitized', presented in terms of a big threat, and the migrants themselves were otherized, racialized and demonized both by the narratives of the ruling party and the main part of the opposition — i.e. the liberal camp (Legut and Pędziwiatr 2018).

It is crucial to frame this stance of Polish society not in terms of some particular or cultural eccentricity. Of course, it would be unwise to completely forget about geopolitics (the EU's external border with Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia), cultural myths (*antemurale christianitis*, or the bulwark of Christian Europe; Tazbir 2017), or history (recent accession to the EU with its desire to become Westernized and de--Orientalized; Grzymski 2016). But the situation in Poland has to be analyzed together with the EU-ropean dimension. The limitations in claims to asylum, overflowing refugee camps, rigid and fanciful Dublin regulations on the 'first secure country', or dramatic scenes near the border fences, with Frontex's patrols or during deportations — these snapshots from the 'migrant crisis' are the by-products of EU's policies. And their circulation in the member states contributed to the paradox of ontological border (in)security discussed by Nick Vaughan-Williams (2021): policies that were supposed to give citizens the sense that the

government has the capacity to control borders provoked even more anxieties and fears, by suggesting that the sovereignty of the state is undermined by 'illegal' border crossings and turbulent scenes. The Polish government consciously referred to the discourse of 'defending Europe'. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki frequently repeated — also in English messages addressed to European partners — that

> Europe, our common home, is in danger. […] For centuries, Poland has guarded our common home when it was needed. […] No matter where we live, we all know that when someone tries to break into your home, you defend it. This principle applies also to national borders, the borders of the European Union and NATO. Let us stand together, let us defend Europe (Rzeczpospolita 2021a).

The Polish government had a clear aim to draw lessons from the short-comings (real or imaginary) of Western countries which were accused by Polish politicians of naivety, weak humanitarianism, and inability to provide security for its citizens. A good example is a comment by the Polish Minister of National Defense, Mariusz Błaszczak:

> As early as 2015, the PiS government was talking about the possible results of uncontrolled migration. The open-door policy has led to acts of terror in Western Europe. I consistently talked about it on the EU forum when I was still the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration. I was rather bitterly satisfied that the EU came round after many months. They agreed with us. Currently, Poland is defending not only its territory against another wave of emigration. We also defend the entire territory of the European Union, remembering that for migrants we are only a transit country en route to Germany and then on to the west of Europe (Wprost 2021).

Błaszczak added to this that the violent acts from the border will appear in Polish cities if the country fails to defend its territory. The tough stance on Lukashenko's provocation was presented as the only way to stop it, to avoid bigger numbers of 'illegal' migration from Belarus in the near future. This tough stance included blocking the legal possibilities for claiming asylum in Poland. The migrants were regarded as a 'living weapon' of the Belarusian ruler, used by him as an act of revenge on the EU and Poland for their criticism of rigged presidential elections in 2020, and for their support of the Belarusian opposition with the policy of sanctions against Lukashenko's regime.

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Hostipitable border: between securitization and humanitarianism

Government reports and media stories showed that Belarusian secret services organized a transfer grid of migrants to Belarus by promising them the legal possibility to enter the EU. The aim of 'operation Floodgate' (Polskieradio24.pl 2021) — as it was supposedly called by the Belarusian secret services — was to destabilize the EU, uncover the non-humanitarian logic of its border policies once more, and create conditions for a successful campaign of disinformation in the Western media. Not all people who were transferred to Belarus came from regions torn by war and, clearly, not all of them faced in their countries of origin the persecution which would legitimize their claims for asylum. What's more, Polish politicians argued that these people should apply for it in Belarus, which was the first safe country on their route. "Belarus is a signatory to the Refugee Convention [1951 Refugee Geneva Convention]", said Morawiecki, "therefore, those who would like to declare their status must declare it in accordance with international law on the territory of Belarus" (Sobczak 2021). These arguments were manipulative, because the Geneva Convention does not state that it is the responsibility of migrants to claim asylum in the first safe country, but it was the responsibility of Poland to abide by the non-refoulement principle and give migrants the possibility to apply for protection. The Polish Prime Minister also forgot that the European Court of Human Rights had ruled in July 2021 — directly before the crisis — that Belarus is not a safe country for refugees, because it lacks a proper system of granting asylum (Górczyńska 2021, 11).

All these security and legal arguments were put forward not only to prevent migrants from accessing to the right of claiming asylum in Poland but also to justify the inhumane treatment of these people: illegal push-backs to Belarus (where the migrants were beaten by Belarusian border guards), refusal of medical assistance, and denial of access of journalists and NGOs activists to the border zone under the policy of the state of exception. On 2nd September Polish President Andrzej Duda announced the introduction of the state of exception in the border zone with Belarus (formally it lasted until 30th November, but in practice the securitization remained in force after that date). The emergency measures prohibited organizing public assemblies and mass events, entering the zone from outside (except residents and laborers), or conducting media relations. These measures were adopted in order to make the support of migrant crossing much more uncomfortable, to make

the operations of border guards, army and police much easier, and to make the government's handling of the crisis more resistant to critique from the side of media and civil society. The only possible assistance to migrants was from residents of the border zone and informal activist groups supported by a couple of opposition MPs who risked fines for helping in 'illegal' border crossing, facilitating 'illegal' stays in the country, or even smuggling people — which was in accordance with the wider tendency to criminalize solidarity towards migrants in the EU (Amnesty International 2020). On the other hand, humanitarian acts could be legally justified as saving life and health in a state of necessity (Nazaruk and Pacewicz 2021). The tension between the logics of securitization and humanitarianism created a grey zone of legal ambiguity. This grey zone was occupied by practices of mobile commoning — organizing rescue interventions, giving shelter, preparing transit — which had to remain in the shadows.

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The assistance to clandestine migrants took place under conditions of public fear and support for securitization. Apparently, the activists had no majority support for their actions. For example, two surveys conducted in October 2021 showed that more than 70% of Poles were against receiving migrants from the Belarusian border (77% responded with "no" when asked if Poland should give asylum to all the people who cross the border 'illegally'; 72% were against giving refuge to migrants coming from Belarus [Bodalska 2021]). The peak of the crisis was reached in November when Belarusian secret services forced thousands of migrants to storm the border and Poland responded with huge mobilization of the military, border guards and police to fight them off. In the meantime, the Polish government decided to start the construction of a 5.5 metre border fence with cameras, sensors, and barbed wire. In the survey conducted in the middle of November — at the height of confrontation on the border — 57% of respondents declared their support for the fence, with only 23% being against it (Rzeczpospolita 2021b).

On the other hand, also in October 2021 the majority of the public declared that they support the idea allowing humanitarian organizations (60%) and journalists (51%) access to the border (Rzeczpospolita 2021c). The shanty camps of migrants, their massive storming of border fences, and the cynical attitude of Lukashenko's regime were part of a mediatized 'border spectacle' (De Genova 2002) which legitimizes — by images and manufactured emotionality — the protective actions of the sovereign power and contributes to permanent marginalization and illegalization of migrants after their arrival in the recipient country. But the reports on people dying from cold, hunger and thirst, deprived of

medicines, lost in the forests, pushed-back to Belarus where they suffered beating from the border guards and were forced to cross the border once again, countered the logic of securitization with humanitarian instincts and gave rise to concern about the ruthless position of the Polish government and the hypocrisy of the EU's discourse on human rights and freedom of movement.

That's why the support for sending back 'illegal' migrants and building border fences co-existed in Poland with general approval of human rights activists and local residents helping migrants in Polish forests: in December 2021 as many as 72% respondents declared their support for such actions (Ambroziak 2022). Up to 33% expressed 'definite support' for it, with only 12% being 'definitely against'. Although the humanitarian attitude largely prevailed in opposition voters (over 90% were positive) — probably coinciding with their criticism of the government in general — also the majority of supporters of the ruling party were in favor of of helping migrants in need (52% were supportive, 37% were against). Interestingly, among the voters of the far-right and openly Islamophobic Confederation (Konfederacja) the supporters of humanitarian activism prevailed over its opponents (47% vs. 45%). How to explain this dual stance: the militarization of the border zone with the approval of saving life? As a paradox? As contradiction? As remorse? As double morality? Or shameless cynicism? We can adhere to the view expressed by Nick Vaughan-Williams (2015) in his work on the 'biopolitical character' of the EU's border regime, which struggles to be both about saving human life and guaranteeing security against 'illegal' migration. The structural limitations of the EU's migration policy and system of asylum provoke paradoxes of 'hostipitality' (Derrida 2000a) — hospitality mixed with hostility — in which migrants become either dangerous and vicious intruders who we have to stop and/or helpless refugees who we need to save (from ourselves and our border policies). We feel that we should help, not *despite* the fact we support securitization of borders, but — however ridiculous it might sound — we feel that we should help *because* we support the securitization of borders. This paradox of the securitization of borders was recently noted in the complex research on citizens' narratives on Europe's 'migration crisis': the support for border enforcement often goes hand in hand with humanitarian impulses and remorse (Vaughan-Williams 2021).

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The effects of such a dual stance on migration are clear: the hardline stance of the Polish government contributed to more 'illegal' border crossings and dangerous passages of tired and neglected migrants deprived of water, food, shelter, heating, and medicines, and it created

a demand for humanitarian action which — in turn — was officially condemned, but in practice to some extent tolerated. This split between "defending your country" and "saving lives" was also visible in the attitudes of residents of the border zone and public functionaries, according to the sociologists Przemysław Sadura and Sylwia Urbańska (2021), who conducted fieldwork during the crisis.

But the social costs paid by migrants because of the politics of the state of emergency were very high. It seems that since the vast majority of migrants planned to reach Western Europe, they were not interested in claiming asylum in Poland (even if it were possible for them). In this way, their journeys became more desperate and riskier. Those migrants who were unable to cross the border zone were turned back to Belarus and had to start their efforts once again. According to the report prepared by Grupa Granica (Border Group) (2021) — a coalition of migrant activists' organizations from Poland, which was published in December 2021, migrants experienced regular violence both from Belarusian border guards (e.g. beatings, harassment, forced border crossings) and their Polish counterparts (e.g. push-backs, ignoring of asylum claims, rejection of medical support). The activists stated that most people on the move came from regions plagued by military violence and human rights violations, which made their asylum claims legitimate for processing in the EU countries. But the possibilities for legal migration to the EU are so limited — and the asylum system is so inhospitable for refugees — that it makes it possible for the Belarusian government to organize the transit and destabilize EU-rope politically by means of the migrant issue. At the same time, Poland tried to legalize push-backs. In October 2021, the Polish Sejm adopted the so-called Removal act (*Amending the act on foreigners and certain other acts*, passed in Sejm on October 14, 2021). The new law was negatively reviewed by institutions such as *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the* Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and was criticized by human rights organizations. But in the EU the Polish 'Removal act' — though conflicting with the European law — was acknowledged with understanding, showing that it served as a test site for the further reform of the asylum system in the EU (Mikulska 2021).

Fugitive commoning: against the 'crime of solidarity'

The social consequences for migrants were disastrous. According to the report by Grupa Granica (2021), 5370 people on the move made con-

tact with activists from the coalition — they asked for food, water, medicines, warm clothes, shelter, and help with legal proceedings. The number does not include support provided by independent activists and local residents. Eight migrants were found dead on the Polish side of the border (until November 12), and media stories regularly reported on desperate, hungry, sick and frozen people who needed help. From the data presented by Polish Border Guard, we know that from August to November 1st there were over 28,500 "attempts to cross the border illegally" from Belarus. The reports mentioned also almost 28,000 "thwarted attempts to cross the border illegally" (1400 people were detained). The relation between the two numbers — illegal crossings and thwarted illegal crossings — is unclear, so we don't know exactly how many people were noticed by border guards during the crisis. What we know for sure is that restrictive border measures were not fully effective because almost 9000 people tried to cross the Polish-German border 'illegally' in 2021, and over 5000 attempted to do so in October alone. We will never know how many people successfully reached Western Europe. These migrants became imperceptible, staying off the radar. Those who were detained remain in closed Border Guard's centers and were kept under constant supervision. The Polish Ombudsman described the humanitarian conditions in these centers as overcrowded, unsafe, and militarized, which contributed to mutinies and hunger strikes by the migrant-detainees (Rozbrat 2022). The acts of solidarity and publicizing the abuses and ill-treatment of these people might also be considered as manifestations of mobile commoning, or 'communities in transit' (Wheatley and Gomberg-Muñoz 2017) — overcoming the fenced, enclosed exclusion by exposing the struggle of detainees.

Although the state of exception mobilized unprecedented security measures, and although this policy was supported both by the majority of the Polish population and by the partners from EU, the networks of support from the bottom up were quite successful in giving migrants basic humanitarian help and sustaining their efforts to travel to Western Europe. Even the criminalization of solidarity was not enough to break the grassroots organizing for migrants and to take back the support of the public for the humanitarian actions of citizens.

These forms of transnational solidarity with people on the move, being a bottom-up alternative to restrictive EU migration policies, were conceptualized by critical migration scholars and activists as 'mobile commons' and 'mobile commoning'. It seems that three characteristics make mobile commons distinctive phenomena in comparison with traditional (or im-mobile) commons such as collectively governed fishe-

ries, forests or factories (Ostrom 2015). Firstly, mobile commons are co-created and co-sustained by subversive, unruly mobilities whose practices — or mobile commoning — remain elusive, fugitive, and hidden from the governmental gaze. That is why not only clandestine migrants but also other excluded or persecuted groups — such as maroons (Besson 2007), escaped slaves (Roane 2017), indigenous people (Coulthard 2014), squatters (Squatting Europe Kollective 2014), or lumpenproletarians (Linebaugh and Rediker 2002) — are often theorized as mobile commoners. All those groups that are forced to live in the shadows or under the deck traditionally contributed to the creation of mobile commons. Secondly, mobile commons remain in tension with all the discourses and practices that are focused on reproducing the community understood as a bordered or enclosed entity. Mobile commoning seeks to open and transgress communitarian or citizenship loyalties in order to make place for those who live as commoners without community — as dispossessed, destitute, and unbelonging (Jørgensen and Makrygianni 2020; Nordling, Sager and Söderman 2017). Stavros Stavrides (2016, 41-44) describes the migrant structures of solidarity as the 'expanding commoning' which remains ready to include newcomers and constantly negotiate the terms of co-living. And thirdly, mobile commoning has the constitutive potential to create new political subjectivities and ignite new radical struggles, going beyond existing political loyalties and lines of division. This capacity is most fully described by the followers of the 'autonomy of migration' thesis who see in migration the social movement of overcoming border regimes and building new transnational fields of struggle (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013). Mobile commons are understood here as the constituent power for hospitable Europe generated by frenetic movements in the everyday life of migrants.

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It seems that all three aspects of mobile commoning were confirmed during the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border. Irrespective of its achievements and determination, practices of mobile commoning remained informal and fugitive. They were barely tolerated by the state, facing growing repression, i.e. arrests for organizing 'illegal' border-crossings and search of personal belongings (Rumieńczyk 2022). In these conditions, the activists had to act as the underground current of solidarity in the cracks of border controls and surveillance. Their work operated at the threshold of legality and illegality. In the face of lack of recognition and inclusion by the discourse of humanitarianism, mobile commoning was focused on building social relations between people on the move and their advocates — in the margins of both the national and EU-

-ropean community. When it is almost impossible to become EU-ropean on legal and official terms, when it becomes hard to even be recognized as human, mobile commoning contributes to the subversive attachment of commoners in the in-between zone: at the edges of legality and illegality, visibility and invisibility, inclusion and exclusion. Álvaro Ramírez March (2022) speaks here of the 'excess of solidarity', generated by mobile commons, which goes beyond humanitarian affection towards more universal and radical forms of politics which challenge the divisions between us and them, Europe and non-Europe, or citizen and human/refugee. Also, Sandro Mezzadra (2020) points out that the violence and stubbornness of border regimes contribute to disappointments with the discourse of human rights, and then brings migrant activism to more abolitionist positions which prioritize freedom of movement as a political stake in the struggle. And finally, in a similar way to the structures of mobile commoning already noted by scholars from other bordering countries, migrants and activists in Poland were contributing to the alternative vanishing counter-cartography of the EU (Tazzioli 2020): a network of temporary shelters, gatherings and crossings, giving people on the move the possibility to enter and wander the political space of the EU. It was an 'alternative Europe', a Europe in the making from below or even from the underground structures of liberation, conceptualized by Harney and Moten (2013) as 'undercommons'.

But the recent situation in Poland also hint at a different sort of mobile commoning. Not anymore liminal and latent, but rather fundamental for overcoming a much bigger migrant challenge which started in February 2022 with the war in Ukraine. The same practices which were marginal, oppositional and criminalized during the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border, became — at least for now — the basis for the Polish response to the Ukrainian fate. What might happen when mobile commoning becomes a universal phenomenon, legalized and even propagated by the authorities? It is worth following the Polish case to analyze the prospects of mobile commoning for the EU's dysfunctional policies.

"There's no border between Ukraine and Poland": universal commoning?

The term 'refugee', which had been demonized from the time of the migrant crisis in 2015 and then had been linked to events at the Polish-Belarusian border in the summer of 2021, gained positive connotations

very rapidly with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The same politicians and media who created the politics of fear on account of Muslim/Asian refugees, now are eager to support Ukrainian refugees. The massive influx of victims of war — mostly women and children — found the Polish government unprepared for the scale of the refugee crisis. Hitherto, in the face of migration from the Middle East and non-European countries, the authorities had refused to build welcome centers, hotspots, and other humanitarian infrastructure — they preferred to construct border fences instead. As a result, with refugee centers already overcrowded with migrants from Belarus, and with the lack of experience in dealing with humanitarian support, the only rescue for the government came from below — from civic society and ordinary people who reacted to the war with impressive acts of hospitality. The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, announced in his grateful address to Poland that in practice there is no real border between Poland and Ukraine anymore (Gazetaprawna.pl 2022).

In direct response to the start of war in Ukraine — at the end of February 2022 — as many as 90% of respondents were positive about hosting refugees from Ukraine. 60% were of the opinion that all Ukrainians in need should be welcomed. When asked about concrete numbers, 35% expected millions of Ukrainians to come and 31% — hundreds of thousands (Rynek Zdrowia 2022). A friendly stance is visible also in the practical attitude of Polish society. Poles — together with Ukrainians who already lived here before the war — take refugees into their own homes, travel to the border to offer free transport, hand out food, medicines, and cleaning products, volunteer at railroad stations, and manifest their support for Ukrainian people in public spaces and workplaces. Previously stalwart anti-refugee politicians and public figures now are grateful to ordinary Poles for their generosity. The fact that Poles host refugees not in camps — as in the Western countries — but under their own roof, is stressed by politicians, time and time again, as proof of high moral standards and authentic solidarity with their Eastern neighbors. For example, the right-wing president of the country, Andrzej Duda, during his recent visit to Turkey on March 16th, praised his compatriots for providing domestic hospitality to Ukrainians. Simultaneously, Duda — who is an opponent of receiving refugees from the Middle East — thanked Turkey for giving shelter to millions of refugees from Syria — the same people which Duda didn't want to host in Poland (Pap.pl 2022).

An even more 'miraculous change' of stance towards refugees can be noted in the coverage of public television — TVP — which is famous

for its pro-government orientation. TVP repeatedly delivered biased, propagandist materials against refugees. They were depicted as dangerous, criminal thieves, rapists and terrorists who endanger Poland's security, culture and economy. For example, as recently as October 2021 — during clashes with Belarus — TVP broadcast a report stating that 'Illegal migrants paralyze Europe', in which gunshots and acts of terrorism were presented as an everyday reality in Western cities. As 'proof' of this phenomenon the state television channel used… a fragment from Netflix's TV series *Snabba Cash* (Jakubowski 2021). A little earlier, in September, TVP claimed that there are clues that terrorists were hiding among migrants from Belarus. During a public conference on the subject the Minister of the Interior and Administration, Mariusz Kamiński, showed a video that was supposed to have been found on the telephone of one of the migrants. According to the minister, it presented sexual intercourse between a migrant and a cow. 'He raped a cow and wanted to come to Poland? Details on migrants at the border' — informed TVP, clearly appealing to the racist stereotype of the Muslim-zoophile. In fact, the video was quickly recognized as old material which was accessible on the internet (and what's more, the alleged 'cow' was — in reality — a mare) (Sitnicka 2021). But since February 2022 the same TVP has used the word 'refugee' in the radically opposite sense. Now, these people need our help, the high numbers of people hosted in Poland are presented with national pride, and all the facilities and benefits for Ukrainians are regarded as acts of justice.

The over two million Ukrainians received by Polish society within the first month of the war are not even — strictly speaking, from the legal point of view — refugees. They were admitted on the basis of special act passed by Polish parliament — 'On the help to Ukrainian citizens in connection with an armed conflict in the territory of that country' (issued on March 12th, but in legal force from February 24th, the start of the invasion). The new law gave Ukrainian citizens — but only to those who came to Poland directly from the territory of Ukraine after February 24th — the possibility staying legally, access to labor market, education, health care, and other public services. No wonder that, given the creation of new status for Ukrainians escaping the armed conflict to Poland, on March 7th — two weeks after the beginning of the war — the Office for Foreigners declared that there were merely 450 asylum claims from Ukrainians. In the article which gave this information to the public, the expert on refugee policy stated that the Polish system of asylum is capable of processing between 5000 and 8000 asylum requests during a year, which is ridiculously low efficiency in com-

parison with the actual demands (Kacprzak 2022). Thus, although Ukrainians who escape from the war zone are refugees in the sociological meaning of this term, they don't have formal refugee status from the perspective of international law.

A comparison between the Belarusian and Ukrainian cases is instructive. In the case of the former, the right to claim asylum was massively refused by Polish authorities — these people were turned back and acts of everyday solidarity were criminalized. In the case of the latter, the right to claim asylum is regarded as not obligatory in order to seek hospitality in Poland and — in practice — as impossible for technical consideration by officials. The Polish government prefers to welcome Ukrainian refugees and help them not as refugees, but as Ukrainians, neighbors, citizens, allies etc. This symptomatic distinction between 'brothers' and 'the others' appeared in President's Duda speech at the Polish-Ukrainian border crossing:

> In recent days, we have received refugees from Ukraine who come from 170 countries around the world. (…) As president, I would like to thank all those who offer their help on a daily basis to the newcomers, to our brothers from Ukraine, *but also* to all others who come to us, fleeing the war, from death, from wounds, from fear (Rzeczpospolita 2022d).

It seems that mobile commoning ceased to be a fugitive activity. Now it constitutes the essential approach to supporting Ukrainians.

And this time acts of solidarity are encouraged, praised and rewarded by the authorities. It seems that mobile commoning ceased to be a fugitive activity. Now it constitutes the essential approach to supporting Ukrainians.

It has to be acknowledged that public assistance followed civic mobilization. A raft of supportive migrant policies was adopted: the right to legal stay for Ukrainian citizens for 18 months, and during the stay they will have free access to the labor market, public education, and health care, a one-time allowance for newcomers, and monthly child benefits (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji 2022). The government also guaranteed subsidies for households who give shelter to refugees for sixty days. But what is crucial here is that the recipients of these policies are not refugees in general, but only Ukrainian citizens who crossed the Ukrainian-Polish border after February 24th. This limitation should make us aware that even now the impressive scale of mobile commoning in Poland — and its assistance by the government — is far from universal.

The limits of hospitality: differential commoning

Three examples should be enough to demonstrate the limits of the universality which remain at play here. Firstly, war refugees who flew to Poland from Ukraine, but who are not Ukrainian citizens, are deprived of the rights which were offered to Polish neighbors. It is estimated that around 120-130 thousand war refugees from Ukraine are non-Ukrainians (6% of the whole) (Chrzczonowicz 2022b). The lack of a border, celebrated by president Zelenskyy, might be a reality for Ukrainians, but not for all refugees escaping the war in Ukraine. We see here the phenomenon of the 'polysemy of borders', which means that borders are experienced differently by people of different statuses (Balibar 2022). People who lived in Ukraine as migrants, foreign students, and even Ukrainians who came to Poland before February 24th or who first crossed the border with other neighboring countries and only then traveled to Poland, are not recognized as 'legitimate' recipients of solidarity (Wandas 2022). This limit is strengthened by the mechanism of the 'racialization of borders' (Tazzioli 2021) in the case of people whose appearance or cultural identity seems, "at first glance", to be non-Ukrainian. The everyday racism was noted by the media even among humanitarian activities at the border crossing with Ukraine: the needs of people of color were neglected, they were not recognized as 'authentic' refugees, and the nationalists organized patrols against them (Boczek 2022). The same barriers to solidarity that were at work in the case of the Belarusian crisis and the same prejudices and stereotypes reemerged in a different context. On the other hand, a recent survey showed that 67% of Polish respondents are against the differentiation of refugees based on origin (Chrzczonowicz 2022b).

Secondly, we would be mistaken if we diagnosed the current situation in terms of a shift from fugitive mobile commoning (in 2021 on the Belarusian border) to the universal one (in 2022 on the Ukrainian border). The crisis on the Belarusian border might be less significant than it was a couple of months ago, but it is far from over. People still try to enter Poland there, and their situation is not any better than the previous year. On the contrary, we might expect that the dramatic challenge posed by the numbers of Ukrainians coming to Poland and the rising political tensions between Poland/EU and Belarus/Russia will make their situation even worse than before. We can speak here of double standards in the treatment of refugees (Chrzczonowicz 2022) and even of 'differential commoning' when the feeling of commonness with some categories of people co-exists with exclusion of other subjectivities as uncommon and

strange, resulting in limitations being imposed on the scope of commoning. What needs to be underlined here is that sometimes this feeling of commonness can transgress 'cultural differences' and discourses of exclusion (such as Islamophobia). A good manifestation of this phenomenon can be found in the Polish stance towards Chechens. In the 1990s, during the first war between Russia and Chechnya, the public opinion clearly sympathized with the fate Chechens as the victims of Russian imperialism, seeing their struggle for national liberation as echoing Polish history. At that time, Poland became a hospitable country for refugees from Chechnya, giving asylum to tens of thousands people, despite their Muslim confession. But following the internationally significant terrorist attacks by Islamist terrorists in 2000-2002, the acceptance for giving hospitality to Chechens began to wane, and prepared the ground for anti-Islamic moral panic (Boćkowski 2020). Thus, differential commoning testifies to its 'hostipitable' character: the inclusion and hospitality of one category of the people may co-exist with the exclusion and hostility towards the Other. What's more, the deepening of social bonds with the guest is filled with some positive meaning of attachment and affiliation. If the newcomer fails to demonstrate that he/she deserves to be treated as our guest, then the barriers of solidarity might be even higher, provoking hostility towards the 'otherized' stranger.

And finally, the difference between fugitive and universal mobile commoning is far from obvious in the case of solidarity with Ukrainians. The fact that this time commoning is supported by the government does not change the fact that it is still very much a bottom-up and fragile phenomenon with an uncertain future. We cannot know how long, to what extent and by which forms mobile commoning with Ukrainians will be supported in the future. It depends on the current interests of the state and the situation in which the cooperation between citizens and politicians will end up is not hard to imagine. The type of hospitality offered to Ukrainians can be conceptualized — following Derrida (2000b) — as 'conditional' one, that is, a hospitality which is restricted to some categories of the (domesticated) Other and limited by the interests of the welcoming state. These interests — in the case of the war in Ukraine — are clearly visible. Allies such as Poland use the conflict and the fate of war refugees to gain new guarantees of security from NATO and especially the USA, to weaken the ties between the West and Russia, or rise to prominence on the international stage. Thus, the *raison d'être* of the state and the motives for commoning from the bottom-up are not necessarily in agreement. Another possible divergence between the two is related to practical concerns. The coordination of commoning

by the public sector is by definition limited — this phenomenon can flourish as long as there is enough civic enthusiasm and capacity to organize it. In her study on care commoning in radical Spanish municipalities, Manuela Zechner (2021) showed that even in the case of progressivist politicians it is very challenging to find a common ground between the point of view of the public sector and the perspectives of commoners. The logic of the state is simply to a large extent irreconcilable with the logic of social movements' experimentations. We might even look at commoning in a more skeptical and suspicious way — as another form of the neoliberal retreat of the state and privatization of public responsibility in the hands of ordinary people. In this case, crucial questions are raised: how long will Poles be eager and able to host Ukrainians in their own homes? What public assistance can prolong grassroots hospitality? Are refugee camps the unavoidable scenario that will appear on the stage after the initial phase of domestic solidarity? It's hard to predict. But it seems that even in the unique conditions of (more) universal commoning, its character remains to a high degree fugitive and autonomous.

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Conclusion: what prospects for mobile commoning?

The events in Poland between the summer of 2021 and spring 2022 provide a valuable case for analysing prospects of mobile commoning in the context of the migration issue in EU-rope. In Poland, the activities which were normally regarded as marginal and subversive became domesticated and normalized — if only for a while — with the beginning of the war in Ukraine and an unprecedented flow of refugees. But even then mobile commoning remains the set of practices that take place mostly in the everyday life, revolutionizing social relations between both hosts and guests. As it was theorized by Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos (2008), mobile commoning blurs and goes beyond stable categories of representation, such as Us and Them, citizens and migrants, Europeans and non-Europeans. The material social fabric in which people weave their social belonging in an elastic and precarious way seems to exceed juridical categories like refugee or citizen which — in the face of massive migration challenge — become inoperative.

But at the same time, the Polish case troubles the overtly optimistic view of mobile commoning as a phenomenon that almost necessarily and mechanically transcends all particular identities and loyalties — as in the well-known counter-empire thesis by Hardt and Negri (2000).

As the mobilization for Ukrainians demonstrates, the much-celebrated molecular excess of solidarity is certainly there (Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos 2015), but it is not free of some visible and troubling limits. Instead of truly universal commoning in which singularities co-operate in an undisturbed way, what we have is rather a 'differential commoning', where 'individual commoners engage with shared resources and each other in differing ways and to varying degrees' (Noterman 2016). Being a commoner in one dimension and with some people is not necessarily in contradiction with refusal to be a commoner in something else and with somebody else. Thus, the mechanisms of differential inclusion — which are typical for contemporary borders (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) — are reproduced in the realm of instituting the common. We see it in the drastically opposite treatment of migrants from Ukraine and Belarus, and the essentialist or even racialized depiction of 'fake refugees' from Asia and Africa.

The described situation is also a good example of flawed humanitarian discourses on migration. Approaching the migrant as a helpless victim, bare life, or — simply — a human, in practice gives him/her a little protection from inhumane treatment. Following political philosophers like Giorgio Agamben (1998), Jacques Rancière (2014), or Alain Badiou (2020), we could say that the depoliticized 'human' or the otherized 'Other' is not an obvious subject for the politics of universality (Moll 2021). That's why humanitarianism is criticized by critical migration scholars as an apolitical or even anti-political strategy which makes it almost impossible to regard migrants, not in terms of paternalistic concern, but with authentic solidarity, as your brother/sister, comrade, or commoner (Benhabib 2014; De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli 2018; Fassin 2012). The discourse of humanitarianism offers the EU a convenient alibi for the policies of securitization — protecting borders by militarization and saving lives from the same militarization results in the depoliticization of the migrant's agency and its reduction to biological life that has to be rescued by EU-ropean saviors. Mobile commoning offers the a perspective for transgressing the humanitarian stance towards forms of politics of universality from the bottom up, but the recent Polish case should make us aware of its limitations.

What we can note from the example of Poland in 2021-2022 is the paradoxical situation in which people who run away from war or other forms of persecution and injustice are either something less than a refugee or something more than such an entity. They are treated as 'less than human' — as bare, almost animal life — when their asylum claims are unrecognized, their bodies are discarded in the forests, and their visibi-

lity is banned. And they are treated as 'all too human' — as in the case of Ukrainians — when they are neighbors, allies, friends, mates from work, brothers/sisters, enemies of our enemy, (temporary) citizens, (aspiring) Europeans. From this perspective, we adhere to the view expressed by Balibar (2020), namely that the politics of universalism is never a pure negation of particularisms or identities, but is mediated and articulated through some — often negated or oppressed — particular, a part of a non-part. No wonder that over two million Ukrainians were welcomed in Poland and obtained their rights not as formal refugees, but simply as commoners in a common cause which is regarded as a universal struggle. The demand for universalism — of which the Ukrainians are now the carrier — and mobile commoning — which is the practical, concrete project of establishing and maintaining this universalism — helps to transgress the apolitical humanitarian reason, but this kind of universality is also not without its limits. The affective and caring impulses that Polish society exhibits towards Ukrainians are not at work in the case of those who are otherized, racialized, and ultimately excluded as people without 'the right to have rights' (De Gooyer, Hunt, and Maxwell 2018). These people stand at the threshold of universalism, and fugitive, shadowy commoning at the margins remains the only possible politics for those who cannot come to the fore and stand in the light of day.

It was not the aim of this article to give prognoses about the future outcomes of mobile commoning. It seems obvious that emergency situations have their own logic and temporality, and we would be naïve to believe that the sudden mobilization of solidarity from the bottom-up might be sustained for a long period. We might expect that some networks of mobile commoning will tend to institutionalization, risking the loss of autonomy and more radical potential to subvert border regimes. Some of them will vanish with possible stabilization on war fronts. And the others will still remain underground, first of all, serving the needs of those people on the move who are not welcomed by state policies and public opinion. But one of the possible scenarios that is worth examining in the near future is the eventuality of transforming mobile commoning into more sustained and diversified collective effort towards a solidary society. Angelos Varvarousis (2022), in his study of commoning in Greece, noted that many structures and practices of grassroots support that flourished in the country in the context of multidimensional crisis (after 2008), played the role of 'liminal commons'. The author understood this term to denote

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> transitional — yet not elusive — forms of temporary commons that despite their short lifespan are capable and marking new realities that were previously unthinkable. They often start as the results of a specific crisis but also can spark generative processes of more stable commoning practices in their wake (Varvarousis 2022, 5).

Occupations of public squares, makeshift open kitchens or libraries, and autonomous shelter centers for migrants, proved to be bridging institutions and experiences, paving the way for social centers, enterprises, clinics, squats etc. In this case, the crisis was not just a short-lived and exceptional moment of eruption of social energy, but rather a transitional and emergent trigger of desire to live differently. It remains to be seen what the energy of mobile commoning might bring for Poland, and whether it could transform the boundaries of EUropean universalism.

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Tytuł: Mobilne uwspólnianie z marginesu na przód? Wrogościnność na granicy polsko-białoruskiej i polsko-ukraińskiej (2021-2022)
Abstrakt: Artykuł powstał jako tekst interwencyjny w obliczu bezprecedensowego wychodźstwa wojennego do Polski w pierwszych czterech tygodnia wojny w Ukrainie (między 24 lutego a 24 marca 2022 roku). Jego celem jest zmapowanie i poddanie dyskusji warunków oddolnego gościnności (i niegościnności) w Polsce między jesienią 2021 a wiosną 2022 roku. Był to okres zmieniającego się kontekstu dla polityki nie/gościnności: od stanu wyjątkowego, stosowanych wobec migrantów tzw. push-backów i grodzenia granicy z Białorusią, po politykę solidarności z uchodźcami wojennymi, usankcjonowany humanitaryzm i otwartą granicę z Ukrainą. Na przestrzeni półrocza warunki brzegowe oddolnej gościnności na wschodnich granicach Polski zmieniły się nagle i diametralnie. Kiedy kilka tysięcy migrantów z Bliskiego Wschodu i nie tylko obozowało w strefie granicznej między Białorusią a Polską, ponieważ odmówiono im możliwości składania wniosków uchodźczych w Unii Europejskiej, praktyki oddolnej solidarności były ledwo tolerowane przez państwo polskie, jeśli nie wprost kryminalizowane i potępiane. Ale wraz z rosyjską inwazją na Ukrainę 24 lutego 2022 roku, Polska otworzyła swoją granicę dla bezpreceden-

sowego przyjazdu ponad dwóch milionów uchodźców (podczas pierwszego miesiąca wojny) i oddolna solidarność stanowiła masową odpowiedź polskiego społeczeństwa na tę sytuację, które zaczęło organizować miejsca schronienia, środki transportu, żywność i leki. Ci sami politycy i media, które zwalczały dotąd gościnność wobec migrantów na granicy z Białorusią – traktując ją jako „przestępstwo z solidarności" – tym razem powitały przybyszy z entuzjazmem i wsparciem. Artykuł proponuje, by spojrzeć na wzrastającą oddolną gościnność z ukraińskimi migrantami w perspektywie „mobilnego uwspólniania": prekarnych, prowizorycznych i autonomicznych praktyk solidarnościowych z ludźmi pozostającymi w drodze. Mobilne uwspólnianie rozpatrzone zostało jako potencjalny fundament dla odmiennej polityki migracyjnej w UE. Jednocześnie polskie studium przypadku zostało poddane analizie jako pouczający przykład barier politycznego uniwersalizmu, które konstruowane są na granicach i poprzez granice.

Słowa kluczowe: mobilne uwspólnianie, granice Polski, granice Unii Europejskiej, zarządzanie migracjami, uchodźcy, uniwersalizm

JĘDRZEJ BRZEZIŃSKI

Anti-Enclosures and Nomadic Habits: Towards a Commonist Reading of Deleuzoguattarian Nomadology

The paper has several objectives linked to Deleuzoguattarian nomadology. After a brief reconstruction of the concept, it proposes a selective reading oriented towards commonist, autonomist and posthumanist tropes. In this reading, nomadism is understood above all as a movement of countering or resisting enclosures and sustaining vital relations with broadly understood commons. It also critiques certain tendencies, present in Deleuze and Guattari, which make such reading unobvious: abstraction, deterritorialization and postmodern Nietzscheanism. The second part of the article is an inquiry on habits, still from a Deleuzoguattarian perspective. It contests the traditional story about private property as a condition of the development of good habits and reveals an array of 'nomadic habits' outside of sedentary, bourgeois and capitalist models of social reproduction. It argues that such understood habits can be seen as the anthropological basis of commoning.

Keywords: Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, nomadism, commons, habit

The philosophical career of the concept of *nomadism* seems to be largely prompted by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze — both alone and with Félix Guattari. This concept shows capacity to exceed the specialized philosophical field, all the while proving that it is driven by tensions if not paradoxes. Emblematizing mobility, wandering and exploration, it also stands for — as authors often repeat — resistance to change, remaining within territories, the art of waiting, even absolute stillness. Characterized through a series of oppositions (smooth-striated, war machine-state, etc.) nomads subvert all the binary dichotomies foundational for Western 'royal science'. In my article I will reconstruct the main points of the Deleuzoguattarian understanding of nomadism and 'nomadic distributions'. Despite scattered references to *actual nomads* (like in Hubac, Joset or Clastres) we will notice that authors' nomadology remains — for the better or worse — mainly a philosophical endeavor: instead of following the practices of nomadic peoples, it rather chooses to program the abstract machines in their deterritorializing movement of initiating new assemblages and new lines of flight. As such it still constitutes a complex problematic field, rich in political, ethical and practical consequences, which I will try to reconstruct in this article. Having done that, I conclude that there are two tendencies in Deleuzoguattarian nomadology, at least: one which I will call postmodern and one which I will call posthuman. And while the former focuses on following the absolute speed of intensities and differences, the latter tends to look for ways and practices that allow nomads to remain in possibly autonomous and sustainable relations with their changing territories — best understood as *commons* (see for instance Ruivenkamp and Hilton 2017, De Angelis 2017). I believe that the posthuman and commonist perspectives remain closely linked — jointly proving that neither multiplicity nor survival are thinkable outside of what is 'common'. The relationship of Deleuze and Guattari to the communist (and Marxist) tradition — of which commonism is an actualized, perhaps less 'molar' version — has already inspired many insightful studies (see for instance Thoburn 2003, Sibertin-Blanc 2016). Instead of repeating their findings, I will rather aim to see what c o m m o n i s t tropes, suggestions, and perspectives can be found in the nomadological project. Furthermore, I will argue that what is much more urgent and much more promising today, rather than praising the contestatory powers of generalized deterritorialization, is to think nomadic territories as commons[1]. Yet, these territories are vanishing, they're being sold out, enc-

1 Those researching commons see it very clearly: "The creation of new

losed by material and immaterial walls, fall prey to (so-called primitive) accumulation or simply become unlivable (Weizman and Sheikh 2015, Sheller 2018). But perhaps, once *habitats* lost, something to count on are *habits*? Here again, Deleuzoguattarian nomads, at first glance, seem to contradict anything habitual. But doesn't a cursory insight into nomadic practices already reveal a multitude of sedimented experiences, material knowledges, memories of collective struggles, rituals, ways of being together, dancing, dressing, etc.? In our societies of control and new enclosures, nomads' ability to move together with their territories proves to be perhaps their most prodigious feature.

From nomadic distributions to minoritarian war machine

The notion of nomadism, or more exactly — of nomadic distributions — appears in Deleuze's seminal work — *Difference and Repetition*. Distributions and hierarchizations are components of judgment — thought, against Kant, as a material and empirical procedure. Deleuze's book can be read as, among many other things, his critique of idealism and dialectics, and the formulation of his own thinking beyond structuralism. What is at stake in the book is to formulate the Deleuzian philosophy of difference — understood not negatively and abstractly, as an effect of comparison of two preexisting entities, but — after Bergson — positively and productively, as a primal metaphysical element, generative of the multiplicity of ever-changing being. Ontology here is univocal, which means flat, with only local hierarchies, resulting from different degrees of intensity. Deleuze brings Duns Scotus and Spinoza together with Artaud, claiming that "Univocal Being is at one and the same time nomadic distribution and crowned anarchy" (Deleuze 1994, 37). Nomadic distributions are effectuated without any superior or transcendental rule: their principle remains inherent to them. They could be called *distributions from below* or, in Deleuze's concise formulation, dis-

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social relationships takes place in specific physical locations; often these are created intentionally by those in the movements, for example the recuperation of land upon which to grow crops and build homes, the recuperation of workplaces, and even the weekly assembly meeting on the same street corner, standing in a circle. The use of space as a place within which new relationships are constructed is something that often has been reflected upon. These spaces are simultaneously sites of protest and creation: for example, piquetes are open to assemblies and have become spaces of mutual support where people can get food and medical support" (Sitrin 2012).

tributions "without property, enclosure or measure" (Deleuze 1994, 36). Already this early — at once brief and imperative — statement of Deleuze should draw the attention of all the readers interested in Deleuzian mobile commons, precisely because of its definition of nomadic distributions as *anti-enclosures*, antagonistic to any regime of property.

Speaking about the etymology of the 'nomad' Deleuze refers to the assessments of the French linguist Emmanuel Laroche, tracing it back to the Greek root *nem*, meaning 'pasturing livestock'. Laroche observes that the term is older than the agrarian reforms of Solon, and only since them did the partition and allocation of pastures come into question. Thus *nomos*, in its original meaning, refers not to a division of the land, but to a free distribution of animals themselves, within open and potentially limitless spaces, in view of their favorable coexistence. "To fill a space, to be distributed within it, is very different from distributing the space" (Deleuze 1994, 36) (obviously, Deleuze's understanding of the notions of territory and *nomos* can be seen as going exactly against the sovereigntist, legalist and Eurocentric reading of Carl Schmitt: see for instance Moll 2020). Interestingly, Deleuze observes a certain connection between the historical models of food production and our different epistemological dispositions — the tendency to think in terms of dualism, he says, may have something to do with the agrarian revolution and the process of delimiting arable fields. Nomadic thinking — consequently — would be the one that avoids forms of identity, duality, and division. Correspondingly, in *What is Philosophy?* the authors point to Immanuel Kant, who in the Preface to his First Critique scorned a certain anti-rationalist barbarism, comparing its representatives to "a kind of nomads who abhor all permanent cultivation of the soil" (Kant 1998, 99). Deleuze's thought or, better, his *nomadic science* — exactly against that of the great 'striator' from Koenigsberg — would rather follow those tribesmen, artisans and other practitioners of commons who look for non-possessive forms of reproduction.

"Treatise on Nomadology" from *A Thousand Plateaus* has to be seen as the main contribution of this duo to the theme in question. Several nomadic examples are mentioned — Bedouins, leopard-men, children's gangs from Bogota, city proletariat[2], nomads of the sea and more, whom

2 "Even Marx defines the proletariat not only as alienated (labor) but as deterritorialized. The proletariat, in this second perspective, appears as the heir to the nomad in the Western world. Not only did many anarchists invoke nomadic themes originating in the East, but the bourgeoisie above all were quick to equate proletarians and nomads, comparing Paris to a city haunted by nomads" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 558).

the authors follow, however loosely. The date in the title of this plateau — *1227* — refers to the death of Genghis Kahn — a point of 'highest intensity' of the nomadic Mongol Empire. The identification of nomadism with a 'war machine', analysis of which would need a separate paper, constitutes a pervasive trope of the text. The war machine (examples of which can be nomadic Mongols, but also the army of Moses, held captive by the striated space of the Egyptian state and resorting to violence to defend their nomadic venture) materializes the conflictual contents of nomadism — opposed to sedentary, striated spaces and the State (still the State is prone to recapture the violence of the war machine for its own goals and often does this). In fact, the notion of the war machine seems to be built on a certain (anti-Hegelian) dialectics (or *dialectics outside of dialectics*, as Małgorzata Kowalska put it, 2000). The war machine, first freely roaming through the smooth spaces, becomes captured by the State to serve its purposes and only then correlates with war as its object. This process — taking today a globalized, totalized and indeed fascist form — makes the war machine "grow stronger and stronger" resulting in a "highly discouraging" situation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 422). Yet — the authors write:

> (...) the very conditions that make the State or World war machine possible, in other words, constant capital (resources and equipment) and human variable capital, continually recreate unexpected possibilities for counterattack, unforeseen initiatives determining revolutionary, popular, minority, mutant machines. (...) However, in conformity with the essence, the nomads do not hold the secret: an "ideological," scientific, or artistic movement can be a potential war machine, to the precise extent to which it draws, in relation to a *phylum*, a plane of consistency, a creative line of flight, a smooth space of displacement. It is not the nomad who defines this constellation of characteristics; it is this constellation that defines the nomad, and at the same time the essence of the war machine (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 422).

This minoritarian transformation of the war machine allows it to remain active within the spaces of the globalized axiomatics of capital accumulation and among the apparatuses of capture, all the while sustaining the fundamental relation with its proper, nomadic object: "not war but the drawing of a creative line of flight, the composition of a smooth space and of the movement of people in that space" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 422).

Pierre Clastres, the nomos of the equal and a Deleuzoguattarian forest predicament

While opposing nomads and the State, Deleuze and Guattari pay an homage to Pierre Clastres, author of *Society Against the State* from 1974. Clastres describes a curious cleavage between two different South-American Indian cultures — on the one hand multiple tribes from the Andean plateaus, where emerged a "hierarchical authority, the power relation, the subjugation of men — in a word, the State" (Clastres 1989, 203) — on the other — so-called primitive or archaic — a number of tribes of Amazonian forest, mostly Guayaki and Tupi-Guarani, who — for reasons which Clastres does not decide to precisely determine — do not form a state. It doesn't mean that they live without any leadership — they do choose their chief, but on the basis of the prestige only, connected to his oratory talents and exceptional generosity, proved by multiple presents and services given to the members of the tribe. Clastres concludes that in stateless societies power and exchange are two opposed forces — and while exchange is the glue of the social fabric, power, even if weak, puts the chief in an external, somewhat suspicious position. The main law observed by these tribes (although often at least partially sedentary) is the law of the equality of the members of the tribe — which also mobilizes violence against those who want to step against it. From this point of view their 'archaism' can also denote the actual refusal to engage in 'modern', i.e. profit oriented, inegalitarian economy of agriculture.

What is perhaps worth noting is that despite their predilection for rhizomatic, intensive multitudes, Deleuze and Guattari do not hold forests in very high regards. "Forest, with its gravitational verticals" is qualified as a striated space (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 324) and mostly a counterpart to "agriculture, with its grids and generalized parallels" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 324). The authors write: "We're tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots and radicals" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 15). Besides, forests appear in *A Thousand Plateaus* mostly in the context of different approaches to deforestation, characterizing the difference between the Eastern and Western early economies. Notably more interested in oppositions like 'smooth-striated' or 'rhizomatic-arborescent' than in a historical silvology, the authors skip over the role of forest environments for the stateless life (protection, provisions, magic) (see for instance Scott 2009) — the role which in most cases indeed belongs to the past, eradicated by the joint forces of the capital and the state. This dislike of forests seems to be aligned with the rejection of the arborescent model of thought (transcendental law, hier-

archy, centeredness, hegemony) in favor of the rhizomatic one (nomadic distributions). But doesn't any forest, understood as deep, necessary and vital interdependence of under- and overground systems, prove that this division is extremely binary and abstract? Sadly, for although certainly not smooth, but definitely rhizomatic and haptic, forests can nurture significant nomadic potentialities. If only for the reason that they escape vision and provide favourable conditions for becoming imperceptible, today still much more than all the watched-over deserts and seas. They can also be seen as a kind of *common* — as is shown in countless studies (Shiva 1989, Federici 2019, Kohn 2013, Clark and Page 2022, and many others). Moreover, the recent migrant struggles for passage through the eastern border of Poland, notably through Puszcza Białowieska, clearly show that still today forests can provide means of defense and invisibility for those who wish to cross them (Oliphant 2021), casting a protective shadow on the practices of "temporary mobile commoning" among migrants themselves, or between migrants and activists:

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> Despite their partial political invisibility, migrants' spatial disobediences are not mere ephemeral movements; they also produce spaces of liveability and collective struggles, and these experiences are sedimented over time, even if their actual existence is fleeting and brief (Tazzioli 2019).

Nomadic solidarity and 'artisanal' line of flight

Another 'commonist' trope of the plateau can be found in the authors' reference to the medieval Muslim writer Ibn Khaldun and the notion of *assabiyah* — meaning 'group feeling' or collective *esprit de corps*. *Assabiyah*, understood as tribal solidarity and kinship can be seen as an essence of Bedouin social form, which is difficult to sustain after its transformation into a State. Loss of *assabiyah* is the main reason of the decadence and the fall of a State, exposing it to the attacks of the new nomadic war machines from the outside. Much more could be said about this fascinating topic — unfortunately Deleuze and Guattari devote only one footnote to it[3]. Thomas Nail justly picks up this trope to underscore the importance of solidarity and shared experiences in Deleuzoguattarian nomadology:

3 They also seem to commit an honest mistake while identifying *asabîyah* and "*ikhtilât*, from which the Arabic word for socialism is derived" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 555) for, as observes Cédric Molino-Machetto, these two notions are neither synonymous nor genetically connected (Molino-Machetto 2022, 563).

> It would thus be a mistake to understand nomadic solidarity as simply a matter of merely unlimited space, a line of flight from, or internal transformation of state power. Rather, I am arguing, following Khaldun, that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomadism is a matter of belonging and unity among heterogeneous relays. It is a form of belonging that does not rely at all on the status or identity of the individual but with their ability to take collective action with others (Nail 2012, 9).

The itinerant work of early modern artisans provides another example of autonomous practices mentioned in this plateau. The authors write: "From depopulation, make a cosmic people; from deterritorialization, a cosmic earth — that is the wish of the artisan-artist, here, there, locally" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 346); or: "The artisan is the itinerant, the ambulant. To follow the flow of matter is to itinerate, to ambulate. It is intuition in action" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 409). Artisans are the ones who own not only a specific set of skills, but also the tools needed to accomplish the work, regardless of its placement. They follow the flows of matter (like wood or ore), interchange movement and stasis, all the while keeping a strong, autonomous position in relation to contractors unable to finish the work if the artisans abscond. It is a matter of "organization" "that separates prospectors, merchants, and artisans, [and] already mutilates artisans in order to make 'workers' of them" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 409). This 'organization', identifiable with capitalist axiomatics, institutes the division of labour, depriving the artisans of their means of production, forcing them to rent their tools, destroying a certain form of life and leading to their deplorable proletarialization[4]. While this process can be described as a progressive destruction of the non-capitalist Outside (in the sense of Mezzadra and Neilson 2019), artisanry, I believe, may still today propose a line of flight from sedentary and capitalistic cooptation, providing ways of subsistence beyond immoblization and subordination. I've pointed out the most important

4 In the context of Polish XVIII century a similar process of instauration of movement control through a series of coercive and penal dispositives, banning the vagabonds, here called the 'loose people', from their sources of subsistence (help in agriculture, practices of usufruct, itinerant small scale trade, etc.) and forcing to contribute in the capitalist industrialization is graphically described in the seminal work of Nina Assorodobraj (Assorodobraj 2020). Processes described here are indeed the examples of relative deteritorialization in action — resembling quite a lot what commonist theorists identify as ever reinstated 'primitive accumulation'. The book also proves that our 'societies of control' have in fact their long and painful prehistory.

commonist tropes of Deleuzoguattarian nomadology: the insistence on political and collective aspects; the Clastrian description of egalitarian, non-state societies; the conception of the nomadic solidarity taken from Ibn-Khaldun; the minoritarian transformation of the war machine; and the praise of artisans as potentially freer producers of value. These motifs join a series of other arguments, formulated by the authors elsewhere, which can be seen as important components of many contemporary theories on the left (micropolitics, anti-fascism, critique of capitalist axiomatics, molecular revolution, Guattarrian "three ecologies", etc.). I believe that they can jointly provide resourceful imports for the researchers of 'mobile commons', going much further than the suggestions formulated here. Still, I think that there are at least three problems with the nomadology of Deleuze and Guattari, which I will group under three following notions: abstraction, Nietzscheanism, and deterritorialization. Noticing these problems may help to avoid certain theoretical dead-ends, which are still common even among supposedly leftist commentators (in the Polish context, a stunning and long-lasting academic career of a depoliticized, bluntly deconstructionist "philosophy of difference" can be a good example of that. See for instance: Kujawa 2021).

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Critique of abstract, immobile or optimistic nomadism

The fragments of the nomadological plateau devoted to artisans, Gothic architecture, smithing, metallurgy, etc. provide a bunch of concrete, practice oriented descriptions of nomadic itineraries[5]. It turns out that itinerant merchants, blacksmiths and artisans can at times be nomads, all the while remaining in resourceful exchange with the villages and towns, even while becoming to a degree sedentary. The above figures are mixtures of nomadic and sedentary features, similar to "a hybrid, an alloy, a twin formation" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 415), blurring what seemed to be organized according to strict (binary) oppositions: nomadic-sedentary, immobile-following flows, smooth-and-striated, etc. But these oppositions tend to come back: smooth constantly mixes up with the striated, all the while remaining — ideally — opposed to it. The authors claim explicitly that "de facto mixes do not preclude a de jure, or abstract, distinction" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 475). This

5 I am grateful to Piotr Wesołowski and other participants of the Machina Myśli seminar in Wolimierz for the insightful discussion on these topics.

is why also nomads can mix up with migrants, vagabonds, barbarians, blacksmiths, etc. while still constituting a certain ideal type or a pure Idea. A certain *speculative idealism* — to use Thomas Nail's qualification — can be seen in the following fragment in *A Thousand Plateaus* describing the nomadic war machine:

> (...) it is still an Idea, and it is necessary to retain the concept of the pure Idea, even though this war machine was realized by the nomads. It is the nomads, rather, who remain an abstraction, an Idea, something real and nonactual, and for several reasons: first, because the elements of nomadism, as we have seen, enter into de facto mixes with elements of migration, itinerancy, and transhumance; this does not affect the purity of the concept, but introduces always mixed objects, or combinations of space and composition, which react back upon the war machine from the beginning (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 420).

But if nomadic thought was supposed to go against transcendental laws, why is it now said to be organized around 'pure Ideas', which are only pure abstractly and de jure? Why talk at all about 'pure' Ideas, 'pure' Outside, etc., if, as we saw, nomads excel rather at impurity, mixing, patch-working? And what about Spinoza's critique of abstraction, as necessarily fictional and imaginary, and its replacement with *common notions* (Deleuze 1988, 44-48)? We could risk the thesis that in these abstract moments Deleuze and Guattari are the farthest from materialist and commonizing direction one would like to find in their nomadology. Thomas Nail develops a similar, although much more complex argument about the Deleuzian tendency towards something which can be called a dematerialized theory of motion. In many places Deleuze notes that nomads can move "while seated" (not unlike himself, this Parisian armchair-nomad, who preferred "his own foreign lands" to travels). If it is possible, it is precisely because the 'absolute speed' of movement can best, and in fact only, be achieved through thinking. To reach there, a 'nomadic thought' has to eventually go past all its material actualizations and discover the 'pure Ideas'. Nail observes:

> From his first book to his last, Deleuze grants a similar ontological primacy to what he calls "the image of thought". Thought, for Deleuze, following Spinoza, is just one plane of becoming among many, but more importantly, it is also the only plane capable of thinking its own plane and THE plane which is "the base of all planes" (matter, space, time, possibility, etc). (…) Strangely then, Deleuze and Guattari's description of the "infinite movement of thought" that defines philosophical practice must be understood as a kind of pure motion without

matter — an oddly abstract, ideal, and "purely formal motion," as Marx might say (Nail 2019, 39).

Deleuzoguattarian nomads seem to be often prompted to go in this dematerializing direction. Dematerializing, and in fact immobilizing, as nomads "do not move". According to Nail such an assessment can be linked to the fact that movement is not the primary feature of Deleuze's ontology and constantly turns out to be subordinated to "stasis, time, immobile speed, vital force, and other such attributes" (Nail 2019, 38). He adds that Deleuze, together with Whitehead, inherits an outdated Einsteinian paradigm, in which "the universe is absolutely static but internally and spatiotemporally dynamic; that it is immobile but creative and becoming; that it is an ontologically 'motionless voyage'" (Nail 2019, 40). Finally, Nail points out the privilege the authors ascribe to b e c o m i n g as intensive, differential process, opposing it to h i s t o r y as extensive and representational (which is related, among other things, to their reading of Toynbee, see Kerslake 2008). Nail quotes Deleuze and Guattari identifying history with the "set of conditions from which one turns away in order to become, that is to say, in order to create something new" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 96). One has to agree with their rejection of simplistic or deterministic visions of history, but their rejection of history all together — while still referring to historical events — is much less convincing. Especially "if there is truly an ontological equality of fluxes, then history and matter are fully capable of becoming other than themselves through their *own flux*: motion" (Nail 2019, 40).

A somewhat complementary argument can be found in the weighty critique of Deleuzoguattarian nomadology written by Christopher L. Miller. Just as the authors continually refer to momentous historical events, while "turning away" from history as such, they reject anthropology with its necessarily representational character, but constantly, and quite liberally, reach out for cases from anthropological sources. Subject to the famous critique in *Difference and Repetition*, representation keeps on coming back through the back door — and, to make matters worse, often through documents of colonial origin and orientalizing character. Deleuze and Guattari do not want to "identify a regime or a semiotic system with a people or historical moment", which makes the status of their anthropological references problematic. They want to define 'nomad' as an 'ideal type', but still informed by a selection of empirical insights and examples. Their selection, adds Miller, omits some substantial nomadic contradictions, "sanitizing" the source materials in

order to formulate a "happy nomadology" where there is no place for instances of actual violence, precariousness or risk of extinction (the forced sterilization of Roma women, still practiced in the 2010's Europe is one drastic example of this, see the Center for Reproductive Rights et al. 2003, Kóczé 2011, Sinti 2022. It also shows that struggles over territory start on one's own body).

Miller also critiques the notion of 'smooth spaces', claiming that such a pre-emptied notion of space "reflects nostalgia for a world prior to or exempt from the dualisms of the signifying regime" (Miller 1993, 25). Deleuze and Guattari are accused of finding such a world in (or rather project it on) Africa, seen — argues Miller — as an "utopia of undividedness". "The imagery of nomadology often describes this utopia in terms of 'empty space,' which Deleuze and Guattari call 'smooth space.' The making-empty of that space is a classic gesture of primitivism" (Miller 1993, 25). He highlights their tendency to immerse in the "changing state of things" instead of "reflecting on the world", which seems to leave them "literally indifferent to the interiorities within which many people live" (Miller 1993, 21). I think that Deleuze and Guattari would object to such intent being attributed to their text. Lacking ethnographic expertise, I cannot properly weigh the gravity of Miller's core arguments, but I also find that Bogue's 'apology' only answers them partly (Bogue 2004). Deleuze and Guattari's work may have indeed corresponded with a certain epoch in anthropology, when not all the anthropo- or Eurocentric shortcomings had been made apparent.

Smooth spaces as commons?

What to do with smooth spaces then? If, as we have seen, striations can be understood not as abstract, conceptual operations, but as applications of concrete dispositives in service of the dominating axiomatics, these "walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 381) — it seems that smooth spaces – limitless, open and unruly – bear significant resemblances to commons. Filled with affects and not properties, "symptoms and evaluations" rather than measurements and judgments, "intense *Spatium* instead of *Extensio*" — smooth spaces are self-organized, distribute themselves nomadically, emerge alongside the autonomous movements which cross them. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the secondary, that is, the metric, allocational, organizational, controlling, repressive, etc. character of striations, which are only possible on the intensive and creative smooth space, within its "sets of vicinities

and distances", in other words — autonomous and creative nomadic distributions. Using Marx's vocabulary, we could say that striations effectuate a 'subsumption' of the intensities of the smooth, they change natural and social *richness* into a mass of alienated *commodities*, and bring a halt to what in *Grundrisse* is called, in a very Deleuzian style, "the absolute movement of becoming" (Marx 1973, Holloway 2015). Smooth spaces, on the other hand, correspond with the definitions of commons in terms of emergent social creativity or a "collective self-experiment which can be the only meaningful response to the crisis of representative democracy", as Jeremy Gilbert writes (2014, 170). Referring to the Deleuzoguattarian conception of "transversality" and Simondons theory of individuation, Gilbert links commons with the transition from preindividual to transindividual, below the molar, individualist striation:

> In fact we might suggest that the common emerges precisely at the point where the preindividual becomes the transindividual, where the potentiality inherent in the sociality of social relations becomes the real creative potential of those relations as they are enacted and actualised in the present. (...) As such, to preserve and build commons — political and material instantiations of the common — is always to preserve and build the conditions of possibility for unpredictable future individuations (Gilbert 2014, 167).

Using Marx's vocabulary, we could say that striations effectuate a 'subsumption' of the intensities of the smooth, they change natural and social richness into a mass of alienated commodities, and bring a halt to what in Grundrisse is called, in a very Deleuzian style, "the absolute movement of becoming".

Deleuze's and Guattari's major example is the sea, "for the sea is a smooth space par excellence, and yet was the first to encounter the demands of increasingly strict striation" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 479). 1440 — the year in the title of the last plateau, marking the onset of the slave trade by Portugal — adds yet another cue to read "smooth and striated" politically. But perhaps a different "marine model" is still possible? This view became largely elaborated by the scholars assembled around so-called "blue humanities", who integrate critical posthumanist arguments while investigating the relations between humans and their aquatic environments (see Gaill and Euzen 2017, Mentz 2015, Linebaugh and Rediker 2000, and many more). In his recently published book, Guy Standing provides a global overview of the striating enclosures of the seas, once understood as paradigmatic commons, but increasingly subjected to threatening processes of appropriation resulting in "weakening commons communities, privatization of the seas, the handing of exploitation rights to multinational corporations, and the pursuit by governments of endless GDP growth" (Standing 2022, 52). Overfishing leading to the extinction of many species, dispossession of

fishing communities, state wars around marine zones and rights to resources, and finally the disastrous discontents of the profit-oriented, irresponsible activities of the corporate sector ("ocean warming and acidification caused by global heating; the devastation caused by millions of tons of plastic, unchecked oil spills and the pumping of diesel fuel into the sea; the damage and destruction from mining and related activity in the sea, such as drilling for oil and gas by BP in the world's largest deep-sea coral reef", Standing 2022, 26) are only the most glaring consequences of the destruction of the blue commons. To sum up, with regard to all the historical-materialist elements of the Deleuzoguattarian project, and their repeated definitions of striations as enclosures, instead of tracing the abstract permutations of smooth and striated, I think we can rather look for resemblances between the 'smooth' and the 'common' (like their distributive, intensive, affective and creative characteristics). The authors write: "make the desert, the steppe, grow; do not depopulate it, quite the contrary" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 417). Such an interpretation, in my opinion, would not necessarily contradict their intentions, while concretizing and actualizing their concept.

Nietzsche's 'nomadic thought'

A second group of problems with Deleuzoguattarian nomadology stems, in my opinion, from its inspiration by Nietzsche. Nomads come back in the presentation given by Deleuze in 1972, titled *Nomadic Thought* and devoted to the author of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Here the author describes nomadic as "a perpetual migration of the intensities designated by proper names" (Deleuze 2004, 257) in its movement between full body and the pure Outside. Proper names (an eclectic mix of examples: "pre-Socratics, the Romans, the Jews, Christ, the Anti-Christ, Julius Caesar, Borgia, Zarathustra": Deleuze 2004, 257) are employed to replace the "signifiers" in the Nietzschean-Deleuzian anti-representational approach. Pure Outside opens up to blow away any mediation and coding, and "hook up" the names with forces and intensities, 'machining' their new (be it even mis-)interpretations. Nietzsche's radical nomadism is identified with the movement in the 'field of exteriority', where the question whether one is a "fascist, bourgeois, or revolutionary in itself" is no longer adequate (associations of Nietzsche and fascism, were, says Deleuze, already undone by the revue *Acephale* and decides not to look into them at all). Nietzsche himself "lived like a nomad, reduced to his shadow, wandering from one furnished room to another" (Deleuze

2004, 259). Yet it is not actual movement that is definitive here but, again, a style of thinking: intensive, external, non-representational, ironic (and not hierarchical, individualistic, discriminatory, etc.). Jan Rehmann, in his seminal deconstruction of the 'postmodern left-Nietzscheanism' of Deleuze and Foucault, inscribes Deleuzian *Nomadic Thought* into what Domenico Losurdo called a "hermeneutics of innocence", silencing of all the politically problematic elements of Nietzsche's philosophy. Deleuze, according to Rehmann, fashions Nietzsche into a "anarchist rebel 'against everything normative'" (Rehmann 2022, 14), ideal for the times after the failed revolution of '68. But this declared radicalism covers a very reactionary political agenda – the fact which Deleuze is rather quick to omit. Rehmann shows how he equates the Nietzschean concept of *Macht* with the Spinozian concept of power (*potentia*), not willing to admit that while the latter refers to essentially collective capacity to act, the former necessarily implies a theory of domination, if not extermination, of "the weak". Rehmann argues that *difference*, a fundamental category for Deleuze, is hugely inspired by Nietzsche's aristocratic "pathos of distance" —

> [t]hat which in the *Genealogy of Morals* describes an explicit 'social' [*ständisch*] divide between the higher-ranking and the lower is transformed into a 'differential element', which is intended to distinguish the life-affirming active forces from the passive and negating ones. Paradoxically, this kind of levelling not only prevents any serious criticism of Nietzsche, but also defeats the possibility of being aware of the ideology-critical potentials of his blunt discourse of unfettered domination (Rehmann 2022, 14).

In his impressive and thorough analysis, Rehmann identifies many other problems with the Deleuzoguattarian reception of Nietzsche. For instance, the Nietzschean notion of *Urstaat*, the eternal State, again annuls the question of the historicity of domination, positing instead a synchronous, almost mythical coexistence of the generalized State and the rebellious war machine, as a "pure form of externality". Problematically, this 'externality' — argues Rehmann — often serves to dissimulate actual social conflict. Nomads may "take off on a nomadic adventure"[6] (Deleuze 2004, 259) and get integrated by the state or do not

6 Already reading Nietzsche is a sort of nomadic experience, compared also to "something like »being in the same boat«". However, this doesn't come across as a very harmonious vision of a coexistence: "We're in the same boat: a sort of lifeboat, bombs falling on every side, the lifeboat drifts toward subterranean rivers of ice, or toward rivers of fire, the Orinoco, the Amazon, everyone is pulling an

But it would be difficult to think this 'pure Outside' as a peripheral or marginal sphere of social relations opposed to the dominating axiomatics — at least with Nietzsche. It rather remains a vague, dematerialized and negative denomination of a postmodern pseudotranscendence *à la* Maurice Blanchot.

even leave the room at all — what matters is the intensity of nonconformist thinking and its relation to the pure Outside. But it would be difficult to think this 'pure Outside' as a peripheral or marginal sphere of social relations opposed to the dominating axiomatics — at least with Nietzsche. It rather remains a vague, dematerialized and negative denomination of a postmodern pseudotranscendence *à la* Maurice Blanchot. Rehmann's analysis of the term 'postmodern Nietzscheanism' is too detailed to be reconstructed here. In short, it points to the Deleuzoguattarian (and Foucauldian) rejection of the 'great narratives' — including Marxism and psychoanalysis — and their replacement with pluralized, decentralized and supposedly anarchistic Nietzschean critique ("Perhaps Marx and Freud are the dawn of our culture, but Nietzsche is something else entirely, the dawn of a counterculture": Deleuze 2004, 253). Replacement of the class struggle with a myth of the eternal conflict of masters and slaves (determined not by their social position, but by their spiritual and in fact moralistic 'nobility' or 'baseness'); an absolute blindness towards all forms of reciprocity and cooperation, as well as to the reality of exploitation; individualistic disdain of everything collective (gregarious) — all this renders Nietzsche a very problematic companion of any nomadic movement. His promises of liberation turn out to be extremely antiegalitarian and exclusionary.

Deterritorialization and its discontents

A third problem can be found in the authors' theory of territory and deterritorialization. Territory is not what we first think it may be: a delimited piece of ground or a country with its borders. It is "the first thing to constitute assemblage", with a geographical and political structure, but one that remains movable, changing and open. By definition, territory is the land which can always be left behind, it is a "place of passage" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 323), it also "separates the interior forces of the earth from the exterior forces of chaos" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 321). The authors talk about rhythms and refrains embedded in the territory, frequently using the example of birds, whose territories are sung, which means lived, affective, performative and

oar, and we're not even supposed to like one another, we fight, we eat each other. Everyone pulling an oar is sharing, sharing something, beyond any law, any contract, any institution. Drifting, a drifting movement or 'deterritorialization': I say all this in a vague, confused way, since this is a hypothesis or a vague impression on the originality of Nietzsche's texts. A new kind of book" (Deleuze 2004, 255).

mobile. Deleuze and Guattari develop an extremely rich concept of the territory, which they complement with their theory of deterritorialization. If territory is the ground of an assemblage, it is deterritorialization which constitutes its 'cutting edge' — an abstract-machinic front, generative in new configurations beyond limits. Movements of territorialization and deterritorialization shouldn't be understood as binary oppositions, because "territory is constantly traversed by movements of deterritorialization that are relative and may even occur in place, by which one passes from the intra-assemblage to interassemblages, without, however, leaving the territory" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 326). Deterritorialization can be absolute or relative: absolute deterritorialization — like philosophy — keeps its elements in the constant movement generating creative differences; relative deterritorialization — like capital — uproots its elements to reterritorialize them under new relationships of production (like peasants banned from accessing common pastures and made to work in the factories). Additionally, it can be negative (where a reterritorialization blocks the line of flight and a new assemblage is not created) or positive (which does create a new assemblage, calling for 'new earth' and 'new people'[7]). Nomads change the land into "simply ground or support" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 381)[8], they are "deterritorialized par excellence" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 381), they open new lines of flight and constantly transcend all the territories. But the authors are conscious of the fact that deterritorialization runs certain substantial risks. Too hasty deterritorialization or too violent abandonment of a form of the subject may launch forces and intensities too excessive to bear:

> Staying stratified-organized, signified, subjected is not the worst that can happen; the worst that can happen is if you throw the strata into demented or suicidal

7 An insightful and clear presentation of the four different deterritorializations (relative-negative, relative-positive, absolute-negative and absolute-positive) is given by Thomas Nail in his article *What is an assemblage?* (Nail 2017).

8 Which makes them different from 'reterritorializing' migrants, being only in transition from one sedentary set up to a new one. In *The figure of the migrant* Nail criticizes the theory behind this distinction, for its inconsistencies in understanding the movement. Put simply — if everything is difference and movement, how can one even stop it, after reaching certain point? "A point is simply a relay—both an arrival and departure point for further movement" (Nail 2015, 26). This is a serious philosophical question, not without ethical consequences. Nail quotes Papadopoulos and Tsianos, who write: "Nomadism's dictum 'you never arrive somewhere' constitutes the matrix of today's migrational movements" (Papadopoulos and Tsianos in Nail 2015, 245).

> collapse, which brings them back down on us heavier than ever (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 161).

For that reason, a great deal of caution is advised when undertaking any attempt at deterritorialization. But it is not the only problem. Deleuze and Guattari avoid moral judgments and favouring certain models over others — despite that, they constantly suggest their predilections. The more or less explicit criterium of their liking can be identified with novelty, the multiplication of differences, the creation of interesting convergences. Cede territories to open ways for the abstract machines! — seems to be authors' implicit imperative. But how often can we sustainably start a new assemblage? And what if we don't want to, feeling fine with the existing ones? And after all, don't the authors claim that "absolute deterritorialization does not take place without reterritorialization" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 101)? If this is the case, perhaps what we need is rather a new theory of reterritorialization, a reterritorialization which would be non-reactionary, anti-capitalist and below the radar of the State? In the age when deterritorializing powers are operated in their largest scope by globalized capital, free to venture around the Earth, don't we rather need some counter power, something to hang on to, to inhabit and defend? A ZAD, a TAZ, a squat, an inn, a square, a theatre, even "an object, a book, an apparatus or system" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 508). Eventually, if the deterritorializing edge of the war machine persists in the creation of new assemblages, its other edge — resistant and territorializing — rather seeks to endure within them, be it by mastering the infinitely slow movement, which can be associated with the refusal to work (see Thoburn 2003), with resistance (Smith 2016) and — to point ahead to my conclusions — a certain set of habits which allow for movement even without motion. At times, Deleuze and Guattari seem to be suggesting just that:

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> Whereas the migrant leaves behind a milieu that has become amorphous or hostile, the nomad is one who does not depart, does not want to depart, who clings to the smooth space left by the receding forest, where the steppe or the desert advances, and who invents nomadism as a response to this challenge. Of course, the nomad moves, but while seated, and he is only seated while moving (the Bedouin galloping, knees on the saddle, sitting on the soles of his upturned feet, 'a feat of balance'). The nomad knows how to wait, he has infinite patience (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 381).

Thus, we can probably conclude that deterritorialization — if it's to foster nomads — cannot do without any territorial backing, even

"simply a ground or support", be it as large as a Bedouin's saddle. Many examples from historical and contemporary class struggles could be used to show how difficult it is to attain necessary means of subsistence and resistance without at least some geographical groundedness. The inhabitants of the Aymara city of El Alto — or "the landless and rubber tappers in Brazil, indigenous Ecuadorians, neo-Zapatistas, water warriors and coca farmers in Bolivia, and unemployed in Argentina" (Zibechi 2012, 14) — represent a multitude of groups connected by struggles, concerning their rights of access to territories understood as commons. Also, affects need a space to spread, and even more so revolutionary ones[9].

Towards 'nomadic habits'

Perhaps h a b i t could be a notion to help us think such a non-compromising movement of reterritorialization? The *ideal type* of nomad — described by the notions of war machine, smooth space and deterritorialization seems to be a figure of the *non-habitual*: not inhabiting, exceeding habitats, contesting any social *habitus*, deterritorializing habits. Mark Seem, one of the translators and author of the introduction to *Anti-Oedipus*, seems to identify this anarchic, dismantling vector with the core of the Deleuzoguattarian political project:

> Such a politics dissolves the mystifications of power through the kindling, on all levels, of anti-oedipal forces-the schizzes-flows-forces that escape coding, scramble the codes, and flee in all directions: orphans (no daddy-mommy-me), atheists (no beliefs), and nomads (no habits, no territories) (Seem in Deleuze and Guattari 1977, xxi).

A somewhat similar thought can be found in Toynbee, according to whom habits would rather characterize migrants — who move away from

9 "One common factor is the territorialization of movements — that is, they have roots in spaces that have been recuperated or otherwise secured through long (open or underground) struggles. This reflects a strategic response of the poor to the crisis of the old territoriality of the factory and farm and to capital's reformulation of the old modes of domination. The deterritorialization of production (spurred by dictatorships and neoliberal counter-reforms) ushered in a crisis for the old movements. It debilitated subjects that were part of disappearing territorialities in which they had previously acquired power and meaning. This defeat opened up a still-unfinished period of rearrangement that was reflected in the reconfiguration of physical space" (Zibechi 2012, 14-15).

the drying territories in order to reterritorialize the same ways of life elsewhere and who "change their habitat in order not to change their habits" (Toynbee in Kerslake 2008, 31). Also, Cezary Rudnicki observes that habits, seen as constitutive in the process of subject formation still in the *Difference and Repetition*, become replaced by desire in *Anti-Oedipus*, which results in an opening of the conception of subject, allows for new, non-habitual connections and helps it make itself a body without organs. BwO is "the principle of anti-habit, as it frees the organs from the necessity of always connecting in the same old ways" (Rudnicki 2018, 58). Consequently, the nomadic subject is also necessarily a counter-habitual force. In the last part of my essay I will try to contest this interpretation. It may not be wrong to the Deleuzoguattarian letter — or the diagram — but I believe that, somewhat against Rudnicki's cooperationist declarations, it risks steering us back to the dematerialized, abstract, postmodern conclusions, which, as I showed, remain at variance with the commonist perspective. If we want to "materialize", we need to see the multitudes of nomadic practices. These practices very often turn out to be organized around habits — be it dance, techniques of travel, rules of cooperation, rites or rituals. The rebuttal of nomadic habituality looks almost like the flip side of the traditional liberal narrative, in which nomads, bypassing the regimes of property and untrammeled by the routines of land cultivation are deemed unable to form any positive habits and are thus necessarily unstable, irresponsible and potentially dangerous. My thesis is different: the example of nomads allows us rather to break this traditional coupling of habits with property. Nomads 'travel light', crossing the land which is never theirs. They do not sedentarize, do not enter into possession and do not buy or own more than can be autonomously carried. Still, they sustain certain patterns of repetitive action, which in the end allows them to carry more. Even descriptively they rather change properties — being fast, slow, seated, hungry, militant, precarious, etc. — without at the same time becoming something else. What describes them are then rather practices and habits — stabilizing yet changing ways of moving, communicating and sustaining nomadic forms of life. We can conclude that what may positively characterize nomads is on the one hand their habits, on the other — their conflictual relation with property. Their habits — communal luxuries or merely shared means of survival — can potentially be seen as 'mobile commons', the *hexis* of which is shareable, transmittable, based on the right to use, not on appropriation and extraction of value.

We can conclude that what may positively characterize nomads is on the one hand their habits, on the other — their conflictual relation with property. Their habits — communal luxuries or merely shared means of survival — can potentially be seen as 'mobile commons', the *hexis* of which is shareable, transmittable, based on the right to use, not on appropriation and extraction of value.

The question of mobility — today mostly privatized or state-controlled — is one of the momentous and ambiguous questions in the

history of capitalist axiomatics, as is shown in the insightful work of Yann Moulier Boutang (Boutang 1998). Wage labour needs workers in one place, unless it needs them elsewhere, and thus constantly redefines the limits of mobility. Dmitris Papadopoulos, Niamh Stephenson and Vassilis Tsianos comment on this, showing that from the point of view of regimes of property the control of movement has an absolutely crucial character[10]. Against this control and cooptation of mobility by capital — on the one hand, and against the 'humanitarian' view of migrants as victims — on the other, theorists of the autonomy of migration see in their movements a positive, constituent, counter-hegemonic, social power, following its own *nomos*. Perhaps, in the light of all the above, it is they who best embody today's nomads?

Papadopoulos points towards a certain habituality of nomads, while referring to the classical work of Norbert Elias describing the process of 'civilizing'. The property-oriented form of reproduction needs to be installed in the very matter of everyday life — with its practices and bodily attitudes. Autonomy, if it's to be sustained, has to start at the same level:

> Precarious workers create artefacts and social relations which remain outside capitalist modes of appropriation. Thus, they materialise their activities in ways which exceed the process of commodification. Continuous experience displaces hegemonic optic representations as it materialises in people's everyday lives. Continuous experience instigates a transformation which happens on the very immediate, mundane, ordinary, grounded sphere of our bodily shape, habits, perception, and sociability. This is the reason why continuous experience is the most basic stuff of the imperceptible politics of escape (Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos 2008, 156).

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Habit in Deleuze and his predecessors

Deleuze in fact has a few interesting things to say about the concept of habit, although rather in his earlier works and not in the context of

10 "The freedom to move is the main source of productivity and the main target of control. The spectre of the workhouse always hovers over free labour. The freedom, which is so central for the circulatory function of the market, needs always to be under control and surveillance. In this sense, free labour, that is, self-determined, autonomous mobility, is always under the threat of immobilisation and territorialisation. The control of mobility is a social issue for capitalism, not just an issue pertaining to some atypical mobile workers" (Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos 2008, 205-206).

nomads. Most generally, a robust, theoretical basis for a theory of habits can be found in the concepts of virtual and differentiating repetition. As virtual, that is "as real as actuality, as dynamic as potentiality, and as myriad and shifting as possibility" (Carlisle 2014, 11) habits present an enduring capacity to actualize, break into capable action. While being both receptive and resistant to change, they offer a form of a 'good' repetition in the potentially chaotic realm of constant differentiation. But what does 'habit' mean exactly? I find the commentaries of Elizabeth Grosz and Catherine Malabou particularly helpful to answer this question. Both scholars notice a certain divide in the philosophical tradition as regarding habit. On the one hand, a group of more or less Cartesian thinkers (besides Descartes — Kant, Sartre, Proust, and to some extent Spinoza) will identify habit with some kind of unconsciousness — ridiculous automatism making us look like machines, vacuous expression concealing the inescapable freedom of our every choice, a second nature which hides the first or a commonplace attitude dominated by powers of imagination. (It is curious, by the way, that Kant, whose life's clockwork regularity became anecdotal was among the most stringent attackers of the concept of habit). On the other — we have an apologetic, although not unambiguous, line of thinkers highlighting the essential powers and gains of habit (Aristotle, Hume, Leibniz, Hegel, Ravaisson, Bergson — and Deleuze). Grosz, drawing on this tradition, accentuates the intermediary function of habit, operating between the traditional dichotomies — passivity and action, materiality and life, necessity and freedom, instinct and reflection — or even invalidating them. The concept of habit also bridges specific divides (animals, plants, even inorganic matter like crystals develop habits in their "ability to discern and extract what [they] require from [...] earth, sun and the various forces of the earth"; Grosz 2013, 231). Grosz:

> Habit is, in short, a much more interesting concept than its place in the recent history of western thought, and especially within both the empiricist and phenomenological traditions, enables us to see. It signals the possibility of seeing a new kind of relation between life and its surrounding support systems, a new kind of immersion of the forces of the living in the forces of the real that is far richer and more complex than the immersion and transformation of the human accomplished through the eruption of language (and moreover, which help explain this eruption) (Grosz 2013, 218).

In his commentary on Hume, Deleuze writes:

> But isn't that the answer to the question: Who are we? We are habits, nothing but habits. The habit of saying Me … Maybe there is no more surprising response to the problem of the self (Deleuze 2006b, 365).

Showing that all knowledge comes from habit, Hume cancels the qualitative distinction between the rational discourse of the learned and the prejudiced discourse of the vulgar populace. We could also find in him a positive vision of society, which emerges from natural sympathy, but also from habits, contracts, institutions — and where the state comes from outside to play only a corrective and coercive role. Habits, for Hume, are great guides of human life.

Bergson — another of Deleuze's great predecessors — has a more ambivalent understanding of habit. Habit, as a kind of memory, preserves past in the present, and thus plays a decisive role for the continuity of becoming in the world of constant change. Habit is a property of a body made up of the past changes and open to the future, ready to create. On the other hand — in his essay *On Laughter* — Bergson sees the laughable and indeed tragic aspects of habituation — turning the subject into a ridiculous automaton. Automatism is a degenerated form of habit, where vitality and creativity are lost under mechanistic repetition. How to understand this ambiguity? It seems that the distinction between the rigidity and plasticity is decisive: habit, being basically a plastic reaction of the body accommodating the change, may become automatic, when it loses this plasticity. For Catherine Malabou, the eminent contemporary theorist of plasticity, automatism would no longer be opposed to habit, but rather synonymous with it, showing only a difference of degree. For her it is addiction that constitutes a negative limit of habit — or rather its other *fold*. She writes in her introduction to Félix Ravaisson's *Of Habit*:

> The law of reversibility of energies at work in the process of habit produces a weakening of passivity and an exaltation of activity. The weakening of passivity is explained by the development of an internal activity, and the exaltation of activity is accompanied by the birth of a passion and a degradation of effort. In this way habit engenders needs and tendencies, which can just as well be needs of intelligence, tendencies of the heart and of the will, as chronic illnesses, addictions, intoxications and tics (Malabou in Ravaisson 2008, xix).

Ravaisson calls habits "obscure intelligence" in its becoming and connects it to the natural tendency to persevere. Habit is a "middle term between will and nature", but "it is a moving middle term": "The history of Habit represents the return of Freedom to Nature, or rather the

invasion of the domain of freedom by natural spontaneity" (Ravaisson 2008, 77).

Deleuze, to my knowledge, does not refer to Ravaisson directly. Like him, however, he talks of habit as a bridge principle between traditionally opposed domains — notably between action and contemplation. If nomads do not move, then — one could argue — it is also because they, like us, contract new habits by contemplation. We 'are' contemplations, in which passivity and activity turn out to be intensive and continuous, not opposed. "Habit draws something new from repetition — namely, difference" (Deleuze 1994, 73). This is not only reserved for humans:

> What we call wheat is a contraction of the earth and humidity, and this contraction is both a contemplation and the auto-satisfaction of that contemplation. By its existence alone, the lily of the field sings the glory of the heavens, the goddesses and gods - in other words, the elements that it contemplates in contracting. What organism is not made of elements and cases of repetition, of contemplated and contracted water, nitrogen, carbon, chlorides, and sulphates, thereby intertwining all the habits of which it is composed? (Deleuze 1994, 75)

Deleuze notices the very basic, molecular function of habits in the realm of organic life, generating through their 'contractions' not what we have, but literally what we are — our nature, which is always already *a second nature*:

> A soul must be attributed to the heart, to the muscles, nerves and cells, but a contemplative soul whose entire function is to contract a habit. (…) Habit here manifests its full generality: it concerns not only the sensory-motor habits that we have (psychologically), but also, before these, the primary habits that we are; the thousands of passive syntheses of which we are organically composed (Deleuze 1994, 74).

The theme of habit, illustriously advanced in *Difference and Repetition*, gets somewhat brushed off in Deleuze's later writings: it practically doesn't appear in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* nor after. My intuition is that the reason for this omission can be connected with the Deleuzoguattarian rejection of the tropes derived from biological organicism and their replacement with 'machinic' terminology, BwO's and the polymorphous concept of desire. Yet, habits too point to the ontological openness of organisms, to their connections with the inorganic, their capacity of change, etc. They also, in my opinion, cope

with the task of thinking beyond binaries better than abstract permutations of concepts.

But why should habits matter for the commonist nomadology? If capitalism, as Elias shows, continually applies all its efforts to change the habits of vagabond populations, the resistance towards its axiomatics is always anchored in the continuous experiences of bodies (Elias 1994). Habits — as we have seen — are basically independent from property and properties, they are also something else than work or labour. Based on essentially free activity, they are a kind of resource that sidesteps the problems of scarcity. As such, they are rather reproductive (oriented towards "the perpetuation of our *case*": Deleuze 1994, 74) than productive (oriented towards specific gains). They can also be seen as prefigurative: their ends overlapping with their means, following their immanent principles of action. Habits are prefigurative, but not predefined — on the contrary, they are always dynamic and particular, unsubsumable under the general form of a concept. Being particular, they turn out to be shareable, or more — they are shareable *because* they're particular (also in the sense of something autonomous). They are profoundly common: like the ability of plants to contract elements, like the transmission of embodied knowledges, like memory, which is always collective, like the rituals of sociability, even Maffesoli's neo-tribalism (1988), like strategies of protest and resistance. Ultimately, habits embody one's tendency to be in common with one's very self — a certain ethics, not even of care, today mostly appropriated by the cosmetic industry, but rather of solidarity with oneself. Such solidarity, I believe, makes possible solidarity with others. The non-essentialist and transitive character of habits opens them towards what is new or just different – like dogs, sheep, plants or crystals. They keep together the nomadic societies, not organized by a system of enclosures and sold labor, but rooted in collective material practices. For these reasons, I think that (nomadic) habits can be seen as an anthropological basis of commoning.

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Conclusion

In this article, I've tried to present Deleuze as a theorist of *nomos* understood as autonomy, who can help us think about commons. But how would he relate to his established image of the philosopher of deterritorialization? I believe that there are many Deleuzes (and I am not the first to observe this; see Massumi 2015, among others). On the nomadic grounds at least two of them meet — a Deleuze whom we can call

'postmodern' and a Deleuze whom we can call 'posthuman'[11]. The first one will be criticizing representation, constructing more or less abstract (thus innocent) war machines, positing binary oppositions in order to contest them in the next step, accelerating movements of *flux*, while dematerializing them or fracturing with abstract moments of *stasis*. But movements seem to matter here less than speeds, for speed is intensive and movement extensive, i.e. a mere locomotion, a transit from A to B, hence in the end always a vector of reterritorialization. But if "absolute deterritorialization does not take place without reterritorialization" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 101), as I tried to show above, it seems worthwhile to think a reterritorializing movement which does not necessarily and by definition fall into traps of subjugation to the capital and the State. Such a conceptual decision would also cancel the sharp distinction between the nomad and the migrant, which turned out to be in many ways problematic. Last but not least, the postmodern Deleuze inherits substantial problems of Nietzsche's moral and social philosophy, whose 'principle of non-representation' or 'pathos of distance' should be deconstructed as anti-democratic dispositifs meant, among other things, to hide the exploitation of active, working people (yet morally 'reactive') behind the 'heroic fiction' about the self-affirmative, overmanly subject. (Nietzsche's trauma after learning about the Paris Commune, seen as a threat of destruction of all culture, is symptomatic here; see Losurdo 2020, Sautet 1981). In my opinion, the presentation of nomads as primarily the agents of intensive, differentiating thinking, "deterritorialized par excellence", along with apparent disregard of their actual trajectories, falls not too far from the Nietzschean postmodern "philosophization" (abstraction, pluralization, aesthetization, moralization, naturalization, etc.) of the social conflict.

The posthuman Deleuze, instead of praising immaterial flows and absolute speeds, would rather look for non-reductive and non-binary terms at work in the process of sustaining life, which is always to some extent nomadic, even 'destroying what destroys it', not reterritorializing it under a form of capitalistic property, but also not losing it in the abstract or machinic movement of pure deterritorialization.

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11 On the latter, see works of Rosi Braidotti, concentrating on Deleuze's "nomadic ethics" defined as "a thin barrier against the possibility of extinction" (Braidotti in Smith and Somers-Hall 2012, 187).

into something practiced, affective and portable. We would be searching here for some non-compromising bridge principles and practices which can inform movement different than just the armchair nomadism on the one hand and vacation travels on the other, movement which helps us withdraw from the regimes of property, while remaining sustainable and — with a little luck — maybe not precarious; which, finally, deconstructs the transcendental laws of morals but opts for some immanent ethics. Habit — understood as embodied practice or material intelligence — can be in my opinion seen as such a bridge principle and as a "ground or support" of nomadic movements. Characterized as both receptivity and resistance to change, it may allow nomads to deterritorialize or transform their territories while moving within them and with them. A certain nomadic distribution, based on a principle internal to itself, can be found operative in habits too, able to become deterritorialized and replaced when they stop serving the purposes of sustainability. I have sketched an affirmative conception of habit here, yet in fact nothing seems to definitely ward off its rigidifying function, which may still recapture the embodied intelligence and bring it down to the dull routine of reproducing the alienated and oedipalized form of life. As I have tried to show in this article, such an affirmative conception of habit is not possible without a certain deterritorializing, revolutionary or minoritarian caveat, preventing its rigidification and capture. Yet, it is even less possible outside of what is common.

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Autor: Jędrzej Brzeziński
Tytuł: Anty-grodzenia i nomadyczne nawyki: w stronę komonistycznego odczytania deleuzoguattariańskiej nomadologii
Abstrakt: Tekst stawia sobie kilka zadań związanych z Deleuzoguattariańską nomadologią. Dokonawszy zwięzłej rekonstrukcji tego pojęcia, proponuje on odczytanie oparte na wybranych – komonistycznych, autonomistycznych i posthumanistycznych – tropach. Nomadyzm w tym odczytaniu rozumiany jest przede wszystkim jako ruch anulowania grodzeń i oporu wobec nich, ruch podtrzymujący witalne relacje z dobrami wspólnymi. Jednocześnie, tekst poddaje krytyce pewne obecne u Deleuze'a i Guattariego tendencje, które takie odczytanie utrudniają: abstrakcję, deterytorializację i ponowoczesny nietzscheanizm. Druga część artykułu podejmuje zagadnienie nawyku, ciągle w Deleuzoguattariańskiej perspektywie. Kontestuje ona tradycyjną opowieść o własności prywatnej jako warunku wykształcania dobrych nawyków i wskazuje na wiele przykładów „nawyków nomadycznych", poza osiadłymi, mieszczańskimi i kapitalistycznymi modelami reprodukcji społecznej. Argumentuję, że tak pojęte nawyki mogą być uznane za antropologiczną podstawę uwspólniania.
Słowa kluczowe: Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, nomadyzm, dobra wspólne, nawyk

MARTIN THARP

Repressed Utopias vs. Utopian Repressions: Czech Countercultural Communal Living Arrangements in the 'Normalization' Era (1970–1989)

The present contribution aims to examine this specific historic 'Second World' phenomenon — the communal living arrangements attempted by counterculturally minded, predominantly working-class youth in post-1968 Czechoslovakia, often (though not exclusively) in the former German Sudetenland — as an instance of the potentials and limitations associated with an attempt at a 'mobile commons' in 20th-century state socialism. Not only is the legacy of the Czech communes (*baráky*) an insufficiently researched historical topic, but even further, the placement of this phenomenon between its reflection of the American communal-utopian tradition in its 1960s forms, the emerging critique of industrial modernity, the growth of 20th-century 'civil-society' concepts, and the 'Cold War' mobilities across the Iron Curtain (intellectual-cultural autarky versus forced political emigration) forms a highly fruitful starting point for wider considerations. Examination of the Czech countercultural communal-living attempts within the social framework of the 'normalization' order of the 1970s and 1980s — state repression, socialist modernity, anti-public familialism — finds that their character as communities of refuge, rather than as deliberate planned experiments, places them at a particularly unique angle to the utopian vs. antiutopian debates, indeed even calling into question the very premises of this opposition.

Keywords: communal living, utopian communities, radical space, commons, resistance, socialism, Czechoslovakia, underground

The purpose of the present contribution is intended to be twofold. First, it plans to draw attention to an instance in which a 'mobile commons' appeared spontaneously within a social order that was explicitly — and occasionally violently — inimical to autonomous activity, in this instance European state socialism of the second half of the 20th century. Such an (arguably) utopian 'commons' was the loose network of communal residences created by primarily working-class youth influenced by the international counterculture of 1960s and the domestic illegal rock scene, most active in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It examines this case study in its immediate national and historical position (Czechoslovakia after the 1968 Warsaw Pact military intervention, the relations between political and cultural dissent, state cultural control), in the wider context of the 'Second World' both before and after 1989 (including the dissident and post-dissident moral critiques of utopianism and social experiment), and in the process of intellectual mobility and transfer even within late 20th century strictures — specifically, the influence and local adaptation of the American tradition of utopian communal settlements, both directly through the hippie communes of the 1960s and indirectly through the widely variegated communal experiments of the early 19th century[1].

A second matter, inevitably less empirical and more speculative, is the question of the relationship of the chosen subject of investigation to the wider cultural and geographic frameworks of situated — perhaps, more accurately, de-situated — social knowledges. Put somewhat simplistically, the issue is whether the legacy of a social phenomenon of such specificity, moreover one originating in a historical social order greatly unlike contemporary circumstances, is — as much for scholarship as for activism — genuinely relevant. By one standard, the example of a communal living experiment from a European state-socialist order may seem to have little in common with the idea of the mobile commons as "the trail, the marks or scratches punctuated on the global canvas of precarity" (Trimiklinotis, Parsanoglu, and Tsianos 2017, 225) when the social order being opposed provided a far different set of challenges than those of globalized neoliberalism. As a counterargument, though, there equally exists an emerging body of thought finding an exciting new

1 The scholarly literature on American utopian communities is truly vast, if not necessarily recent. Major survey works include Sutton 2003 or Fogarty 1990. An extensive list of participant accounts and memoirs of the 19th century American utopians, along with 20th century historical works in the wake of the 1960s communes, is offered by Boyer 1975. For an intriguing comparison between US communities and their counterparts in Central America, see Peterson 2005.

trajectory through the heterogeneous, forcibly historicized experience of this area, less the 'Second World' than the "embracing of liminality… of the Global East" (Müller 2020, 17), only partially overlapping the current divisions, now more hegemonic than exclusively geopolitical, between the global North and global South[2]. For now, suffice it to state that the particular combination of quasi-utopian communal attempts, as a historical legacy placed against the post-1989 anti-utopian mental stance of "a clear no to dangerous experiments"[3] — on occasion, with the same participants found assuming both positions[4] — should place the questions brought up by the anti-systemic communes under state socialism in a far more vital role than that of mere historical interest.

These communal dwellings were known to their residents under the uniform designation *baráky* — literally 'houses'[5], though on various occasions it could apply to a multi-family urban apartment or even a common gathering space that did not serve predominantly as a residence. Not surprisingly, the term was used as the title for the hitherto most extensive oral-history mapping of the Czech underground communes, *Baráky — Souostroví svobody* [The Houses — An Archipelago of Freedom], a collection of personal participant-testimonies compiled by two participants themselves, František Čuňas Stárek and Jiří Kostúr, published in 2010. In the extensive Czech Television documentary series *Fenomén Underground*, aired in 2014 and 2015, an entire episode was devoted to the *baráky*[6], while a conference organized by the main Czech research group on the history of the 1948-1989 era, the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (*Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů*

2 The scholarly literature on the intellectual position(ality) of the formerly Communist world has expanded notably in the past decade; besides Müller see Tlostanova 2015 or Owczarzak 2009. For more extensive discussions see Melegh 2006, or Kołodziejczyk and Şandru 2016. A different question, of course, is the deployment of post-socialist postcoloniality toward conservative, often explicitly illiberal political ends; for a description of this practice in the Polish context note Bill 2014.

3 Electoral slogan of the Czech centre-right Civic Democrats (ODS) party, 1998.

4 By this, I have in mind the public activities on the political right, both in the early 1990s and in recent years, of several key figures of the Czech counter-culture/underground, most specifically the chief organizer of one of the most important communal residences, František 'Čuňas' Stárek: see e.g., Senft (2016).

5 That is to say, the word more prevalent in informal or conversational Czech (*hovorová čeština*) as opposed to the traditionally higher linguistic register of literary Czech (*spisovná čeština*).

6 Episode 27, Baráky, aired 6 March 2015, see: https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10419676635-fenomen-underground/.

— ÚSTR), discussed them in October 2016[7]. My own previous research, though addressing only certain residences primarily through their role in samizdat production (Tharp 2021) also touched briefly on the relationship between communal dwellings, underground or oppositional social networks, and the material and geographical conditions shaping the possibilities of resistance activity.

The existence of the *baráky*, in other words, is hardly an obscure topic for recent Czech historiography. At the same time, many aspects remain unclear. For one, the full extent of these communities is admittedly still incomplete. Within the ÚSTR research project, several participants have admitted the strong likelihood of other communal attempts occurring outside the main underground networks, yet vanishing without either coming to the attention of the police or other state authorities or making contact with better-connected circles of cultural dissent[8]. Concurrently, the examples that have been documented in the previously cited works all arose precisely within the social milieu affiliated with the 'established' dissident networks, above all Charter 77: the 'underground'. As such, the character of the known *baráky* is significantly shaped by the overlap with the collective traits and ambitions of this subculture. This coincidence should understandably be stressed in any evaluation of the communities, yet at the same time it underlines the specific, often highly contingent circumstances that shaped oppositional activities within Czechoslovakia during this period.

In a period known equally for its targeted repression of both political and cultural opposition and for its encouragement of a publicly disengaged materialism aptly characterized by the term "socialist Biedermeier", there emerged in response several instances of communal living arrangements among what could be termed Czechoslovakia's "cultural dissent".

In a period known equally for its targeted repression of both political and cultural opposition and for its encouragement of a publicly disengaged materialism aptly characterized by the term "socialist Biedermeier"[9], there emerged in response several instances of communal living arrangements among what could be termed Czechoslovakia's "cultural dissent". To characterize the underground in brief, the term (used in its original English spelling in Czech, though occasionally in speech subjected to linguistic "domestication" as 'androš' or 'androšskej'[10]) was applied to the community of disaffected youth who rejected the forms of approved socialist life; in the eyes of the Party and police

7 Note *Baráky: (Nejen) Komunitní způsob život v undergroundu*. Prague, Václav Havel Library, 18 October 2016, see old.ustrcr.cz/cs/baraky.

8 Personal comment from František Stárek (2014).

9 Credit for this designation is due to Kamil Činátl, see Činátl 2009, esp. 178-179.

10 For an intriguing view of Czech dissident slang, note Suk 1993, 105-114, esp. 110; also note http://www.disent.usd.cas.cz/wp-content/uploads/Suk_svedectvi_1981_65_Slang_Chartistu.pdf.

authorities, occupying a position somewhere between that of 'unorganised youth' [*volná mládež*, i.e., not directly involved in the Union of Socialist Youth or similar groups] and "deviant youth" [*závadná mládež*] inclined toward criminality, alcoholism, or other traditional social pathologies. Often or even primarily of working-class origin, they frequently shared a similar cultural-geographical background. Though not exclusively so, this place of origin was the provincial industrial cities toward Czechoslovakia's western edge, in particular Plzeň and its vicinity, or the northeastern coal-belt along the base of the Ore Mountains (*Krušné hory*), spanning the industrial towns of Sokolov, Klášterec, Chomutov, Teplice, Ústí nad Labem up to Děčín in the formerly German Sudetenland.

This latter region formed — indeed, to a significant degree still forms — a unique cultural geography within the Czech lands. For both Austro-Hungary and independent Czechoslovakia, it was a major economic force from the 19th century up until the end of the 20th, thanks to the extensive deposits of brown coal. Secondly, it remained a majority-German region until the expulsion of this population after 1945, followed by an intensive resettlement program accompanied by much nationalist propaganda (before and after the 1948 Communist coup) about "reclaiming the borderland"[11]. Several decades into Communist rule, though, northwest Bohemia had become a notably stigmatized region, marked not only by severe pollution from the high-sulphur coal but even more by the experience a Czech Communist social order being established in the purported tabula rasa of an ethnically cleansed territory[12].

Yet while both political authorities and official sociography found only social problems and anomie along the foot of the Ore Mountains, from the standpoint of Western subcultural studies, the situation of the industrial Sudetenland — not surprisingly — provided the necessary conditions for the emergence of alternate collective identities among its youth[13]. The influence of the 1960s counterculture, at least in its external manifestations, was felt quite rapidly in Czechoslovakia, sparking police persecution even in the years before the Prague Spring[14]. Howe-

11 See in this respect Spurný 2011, esp. chapter II, "České pohraničí na prahu nové doby", 30-81.

12 For the post-1945 history of the Czech Sudetenland, see Spurný 2016.

13 Besides Hebdige (1979) note especially Cohen (1972). It should be added that this parallel to Britain's subcultures has been mentioned even by Czech participants themselves, particularly in reference to the region as a counterpart to the Beatles' Liverpool.

14 For the history of this subculture, see Blažek and Pospíšil (2010).

ver, it was a group somewhat younger than the first quasi-hippies of the mid-Sixties, largely born in the early 1950s and thus coming of age right at the start of the post-1968 political and cultural crackdown[15], who predominantly composed the initial provincial and working-class base for the underground. It was, above all, their love of adversary-culture fashion and Anglophone rock music, rather than explicit political beliefs, that brought them into direct conflict with the authorities, before any turn to direct opposition.

Indeed, Czech oppositional activity — even the very origins of Charter 77 itself — has often been interpreted as the specific intersection of these two different (and previously notably separate) groups, starting with the interventions of support from major cultural personalities (e.g. Václav Havel, the philosopher Jan Patočka) during the trial of the rock group Plastic People of the Universe[16]. Scholarly attention towards the underground, particularly its non-metropolitan formations, has only become a significant topic in the past decade; of somewhat greater sociological significance, though, is the relative public obscurity of many of the participants, except for a few leading figures with more conventionally measurable cultural capital, such as the poet and theorist Ivan Martin Jirous. For the present purposes, I intend to define the underground as a relatively fluid formation grounded in personal ties and shared aesthetic preferences, where the oppositions of 'metropolitan/provincial' and 'worker/intellectual' assumed rather less importance among the immediate participants than the presence of a shared disgust with the extant social order. In 21st century theoretical comparisons, it might be compared to the idea of the 'undercommons' more than to the conventional ideas of dissidence without state socialism[17], even as the pressures from the state repressive forces shaped it in the direction of a typical social movement, perhaps more strongly than might have been the case even within a state-socialist regime with more liberal policies (Maslowski 2014).

All the same, while the historiographic literature on the Czech cultural underground in the last two decades of Communist rule is extensive[18], its predominant focus has been devoted to underground activities in cultural production — predominantly music but also including

15 Note here Denčevová, Stárek, and Stehlík (2012).

16 In this regard, note Bolton (2012), both for his discussion of the received ideas around the "intellectual-underground alliance" and the more nuanced historical picture he presents.

17 As defined by Harney and Moten (2013).

18 For studies in English, note esp. Bolton (2012) or Hagen (2019).

samizdat[19]. This attention has meant a relative neglect not merely of additional forms of autonomous culture (e.g., amateur theatre[20]), but equally of the underground's need to expend considerable effort on ensuring the simple physical or spatial conditions where such autonomy could be practiced within socialist Czechoslovakia's surveillance state. The present study aims to address this lack, analysing the *baráky* as a unique emergence of a radical (or perhaps more accurately, radicalized) space (Kohn 2003) existing within the context of the political and economic spatiality shaped by the state-socialist order — the intersection between pre-socialist built fabrics, modernist technophilia and all-pervasive state administration[21] [including, per Lefebvre, the critique "whether it is legitimate to speak of socialism where no architectural innovation has occurred, where no specific space has been created" (Lefebvre 1991, 55)]. Equally, it is addressed as a form of cultural transfer between two geographically separate yet nonetheless historically linked traditions of communal living ideas: the American utopian tradition reflected through the 1960s counterculture, and the Czech interwar Modernist reflections (themselves influenced by, indeed often in direct dialogue with, Soviet efforts in planning and architecture) on forms of shared physical space through the early 20th century.

Stárek and Kostúr, in their survey, assign historical priority to the rural residence near Mariánské Lázně (Ger. Marienbad, West Bohemia) of the internationally prominent artist Milan Knížák, where as early as 1966 he organized meetings of the action art group Aktuál[22]. The great majority of the others, though, appeared during the 'normalizing' 1970s - not the summer of love, one might say, but the winter of malaise. And many of the communes, in turn, failed to last beyond the same decade's end. The primary reason was the targeted persecution campa-

19 The major discussions of Czech samizdat are Machovec (2018), and Machovec (2019).

20 Note the production of Oscar Wilde's Salome at the residence of Květa and Jan Princ in Verneřice, see Stárek and Kostúr (2010, 161).

21 Recent Czech and Slovak considerations of the urban and architectural forms of this era with respect to this ambiguous dichotomy "modern and/or totalitarian" are Moravčíková (2013) and Rollová-Jirkalová (2021).

22 On Knižák, note Stárek and Kostúr 2010, 17-29. Undoubtedly, Knížák is a significant artistic personality, and the connection between his involvement in Fluxus and the role of conceptual art in the normalisation-era cultural opposition is an important question. However, his personal stance towards oppositional movements in Czechoslovakia, applied particularly to Charter 77 but extending partially towards the underground as well, was complex and indeed notably distant, which largely places him outside the scope of the current investigation.

ign of the Czechoslovak political police (StB) against Charter 77, "*Akce Asanace*" [Clearance], deliberately aimed at forcing the most active dissidents into exile, with special efforts aimed at the more visibly countercultural and youth-oriented sections of dissent. Houses were regularly expropriated on flimsy or entirely false pretexts; in one case, the married couple Květa and Jan Princ had three properties in succession taken from them. Recent Czech scholarship has provided exhaustive detail on the planning of the StB campaign against 'deviant youth' [*závadná mládež*] (Kudrna and Stárek 2017) and the exercising of police brutality against manifestations of cultural (most often musically oriented) dissent (Kudrna and Stárek 2020).

Within the framework of research conducted with a somewhat different object in mind[23], I personally compiled a working list of known communal residences, which here is compared to the published account of Stárek and Kostúr as well as several unpublished testimonies supplied to the ÚSTR research team. By necessity, the factual data on the full extent and range of Czech (and possibly Slovak) *baráky* should be acknowledged as incomplete, and the present theoretical reflections as at best tentative hypothesis that may not entirely correspond to the wider picture. All the same, taking the underground communities surveyed — partially by myself[24], partially by ÚSTR researchers — as a group, it could be feasible to divide them into several distinct categories:

(1) The rural dwelling as a large commune of several couples/families. Here, the primary example is the old farmhouse in the village of Nová Víska, near the industrial city of Chomutov, which formed a major focal point not only for youthful cultural discontent in its immediate region (the Ore Mountain industrial belt in the northwestern Czech Sudetenland) but equally in establishing contacts with metropolitan dissident intellectuals;

(2) The residence of a single family that provided a large space (usually an old farm courtyard) for independent cultural activities or simply sociability. Key examples include the three successive farmhouses in North Bohemia owned by (and officially confiscated from) the Princ family, or the old cottage on the outskirts of Prague owned by Olga and

23 Tharp 2021. As previously stated, since this work addressed samizdat production, its main source of data for communal dwellings was confined to those where samizdat was typed and printed (most notably, Nová Víska).

24 My own research on the topic included, in part, the Němec family apartment at Ječná 7 in central Prague. For the latter, it is worth mentioning the recent redevelopment of the entire building for luxury residences, and the "dissent-washing" rhetoric of the developer's website: http://www.vecna-jecna.cz/en/.

František Hochmann, destroyed in an arson attack assumed to be the work of the Czechoslovak political police (StB) in early 1989[25];

(3) The rural residence of a prominent underground figure used after 1989 specifically for events (e.g., the house of poet Ivan Martin Jirous in Prostřední Vydří, south Moravia).

Admittedly, the listing provided in *Baráky* is in a sense incomplete — not merely in the number of communities that may have existed in the given period, but also in terms of the participants' own recollections of the network of underground-friendly spaces extending beyond the residences and, in retrospect, granted near-equal standing. Repeatedly mentioned in both print and oral testimony[26] are a wider range of gathering spaces, indeed what we might now term "spatial practices", that were used by local communities or wider social networks. Besides the practice of the "open apartment" as a semi-collective space (though of course under observation from district housing authorities as well as possible pro-regime neighbours)[27], other frequently mentioned sites included underground-friendly pubs (most frequently in Prague, but present in most larger towns (Machovec 2018, 144), public parks or squares (Stárek and Kostúr 2010, 9-10) or even specific public festivals — usually associated with vineyard or hop harvests, and hence a more relaxed public atmosphere[28]. Some examples resemble, to a degree, the squatting practices of Western Europe in their involvement of abandoned structures for communal activities, though these buildings were never used, or more accurately were genuinely unusable, as residences: for instance, the locality known in the North Bohemian underground known as "Barrel House", a decrepit outbuilding near Chomutov's swimming area of Kamencové jezero used in the early 1970s and often claimed as the precursor to the Nová Víska commune[29], or even the abandoned spa building in Teplice where Stárek and his friends gathered in the late

25 An interview with the Hochmanns is available in Stárek-Kostúr (2010, 480-517).

26 Primarily the interviews in Tharp (2021).

27 However, the 'open' apartment was not unknown in more mainstream and/or metropolitan dissident circles, specifically through the movement of written 'production' into the realm of home handcraft via samizdat. And the domestic spaces of dissent necessarily had their own gender-determined status, even beyond typewriting: note in this regard Linková and Strakova (2017).

28 For the North Bohemian underground, a repeatedly mentioned public event was the 'Dočesná' beer festival in early September in the town of Žatec, marking the end of the hop harvest.

29 Note the interview with Miroslav Skalák Skalický, the owner of Barrel House in the mid-1970s, in Denčevová, Stárek and Stehlík (2012, 90-91).

1960s for improvised musical jams[30]. However, as will be mentioned later, squatting per se, or indeed any other illegal activities that could be avoided whenever possible, never became a part of underground social practices, particularly as the connections with metropolitan dissent grew stronger towards the end of the 1970s.

The *baráky* varied extensively not only in the degree of their communality, their duration, or their setting, but even more in the degree of their involvement with Czechoslovakia's active opposition.

Similarly, the *baráky* varied extensively not only in the degree of their communality, their duration, or their setting, but even more in the degree of their involvement with Czechoslovakia's active opposition. Květa and Jan Princ, for instance, not only had significant personal links to metropolitan dissent — hosting, for instance, a New Year's Eve party at the start of 1977 attended by Charter 77's leading lights, among them Václav Havel — but stood more at a remove from the illegal rock scene, instead favouring a form of resistance grounded in religion and Catholic spirituality.[31] Though they worked to provide a refuge for young people "looking for meaning" from surrounding towns, their primary aim was in offering these youths the "self-discipline of the underground", and in cultural terms focused more on theatre than music.[32] During their period in the village of Robeč,

> …every Sunday morning, we did spiritual exercises.[…] During the day, we sat around, drank, sang, rehearsed plays, did whatever, but every morning, whoever wanted to do so went down into the cellar, the tiny altar with candles, water dripping like in a cave, and we held hands and gave ourselves strength for the next week (Jan Princ, in Stárek and Kostúr 2010, 162).

In Nová Víska, by contrast, the cultural focus was predominantly on music, though an equal point of importance was its role in samizdat. It was here that the illegal cultural magazine *Vokno* [Window] was first compiled, typed and duplicated, making this dwelling one of the most crucial nodes within the underground's own information system, as well as its point of connection with metropolitan dissent, since the periodical not only offered reports on the underground rock scene but regularly printed essays from Prague intellectuals who felt an affinity with the countercultural young, such as the previously cited Ivan Martin Jirous or the Catholic philosopher Jiří Němec (Tharp 2021). Nová Víska may additionally have been the first such community to receive the term *barák*; before its founding in 1979, it appears (from the testimony of singer-songwriter Dáša Vokatá) that the hippie-adjacent proto-under-

30 Stárek, personal communication (2014).
31 Květa Princová, personal communication (2016).
32 Ibidem, 2016.

ground referred to such residences more often as "open houses" [*otevřené domy*] (Stárek and Kostúr 2010, 142).

With further analysis, Nová Víska — perhaps more than any other of the communities — would seem not only to match the idea of a genuine commune the closest, but also has tended to define the concept of the *barák*, setting it almost as an *Idealtyp* of a multi-family residence open to fellow members of the subculture and a free space for semi-public, usually cultural activities. With two official owners and an additional twelve "stakeholders", as Stárek has termed the participants who contributed financially to the house's purchase,[33] it was unquestionably the most deliberately "collective" undertaking within the underground; adding to the population were the spouses or partners of the original fourteen, several children, and various visitors for shorter or longer periods. Moreover, its residents themselves initially hoped to create not merely a social refuge from state surveillance, but equally as great a degree of economic self-sufficiency as possible. "Only diesel fuel and shoes" were planned as necessities requiring outside involvement (Stárek and Kostúr 2010, 272);[34] food was largely supplied by the garden and domestic animals (ibidem, 76).

At the same time, the radicalism of the Nová Víska community's departure from the conventional life-patterns of its place and era should not be overestimated. Socialist Czechoslovakia's mandatory employment and strict laws against 'parasitism' (Mejzr 2018) ensured that the participants remained within the monetary economy as wage-earners. Many goods (beer, fresh bread, etc.) still had to be purchased in nearby towns. Nor — perhaps still more significantly — did the practice of self-provisioning differ much in kind or degree from "mainstream" or "conformist" rural households of the era (Tharp 2021, 79). And, no less, the farmhouse itself had to be legally secured as the 'de jure' property of specific owners. Here, any parallels between underground spatiality and Western Europe's squatting movements entirely come apart: though a Czech squatting movement certainly emerged almost immediately after 1989,[35] the underground almost never ventured so far. (Even the semi-uninhabitable 'Barrel House' in Chomutov, mentioned above, was the legal property of 'Skalák' Skalický.) The struggle for legality, indeed for legitimizing recognition of property rights from

33 Stárek, personal comment (2016).

34 Also repeatedly noted in personal communications with former members: see Tharp 2021, 78.

35 For post-1989 Czech squatting, see esp. Märc (2022) and Novák-Kuřík (2019).

the socialist state, in nearly all cases came to form a central component of communal activity, particularly in the face of the repeated attempts (often successful) to confiscate the *baráky* from their owners, clearly with secret-police backing, often with the legal excuse of eminent domain for public infrastructure, which often was never built (Stárek and Kostúr 2010, 160-206).

While the insistence on following (even state-socialist) legality, against any deliberate infraction of the law as a form of protest, has rarely been mentioned among the underground's participants, it might not be too far-fetched to draw a parallel with the more political dissident community and Charter 77 in its own insistence on "merely" asking the regime to meet its own declared principles. Moreover, a possible (if largely unvoiced) collective decision to adhere to the letter of the law in property relations is further indicated by the fact that squatting was not quite so clear-cut an East-West difference: as in East Berlin, where *Schwarzwohnen* (Vasudevan 2015, 153-180) formed a significant force in alternative circles (Mitchell 2017, 277-302) (yet also extended into less oppositional areas of GDR society) or Poland's remote Bieszczady mountains where abandoned Lemko and Ukrainian farmsteads could be occupied without attracting much notice[36].

Nová Víska managed only a brief existence from 1979 to 1981, when the building was seized by the local authorities for reasons of "state security" and its residents forcibly dispersed. Yet it not only provided inspiration for several successors (for instance, the house in Skalice near Chrudim, central Bohemia, founded by two former Nová Víska residents (Stárek and Kostúr 2010, 344-367), but formed a major referent in both underground shared memory and its post-1989 commemoration. Primarily, the significance consisted in the activities: holding concerts, writing and printing *Vokno*, or even the day-to-day fellowship among the residents, yet further, more symbolic dimensions may also have been involved. The house itself, situated almost directly above the gigantic open-pit coal mine of Prunéřov (once the site of the demolished German village of Brunnersdorf[37]), could almost seem a visual metaphor for the post-1945 Sudetenland's peculiar mixture of careless industrialization and deliberate neglect. As much as metropolitan dissident authors began in these years to speak of a 'Sudeten homelessness' [*sudetské bezdomoví*] (Ortová 2006) for the social anomie of the region, a slightly deviating

36 For this information, I have relied on Laube (2006), along with personal testimony from several members of the Polish hippie scene in the 1970s, esp. Wojciech 'Tarzan' Michalewski, 119-164.

37 Viz.: http://www.zanikleobce.cz/index.php?obec=77.

(mis)translation could evoke a "Sudeten unheimlich" that — even if indirectly — encouraged and shaped a culture of instinctive opposition. In one significant sense, it provided the Sixties-influenced countercultural forms with a radically different punk-like, if not indeed punk-adjacent aesthetic; in another dimension, the holes and lacunae in the social fabric made space for deviant manifestations, both positive and negative.

With this knowledge in mind, we can invoke the idea of a specific underground spatiality — the physical network of 'safe' locations — as a map largely congruous with the immaterial (and, by necessity, quasi-secret) social network. In one sense, the community sites subsumed under the designation *baráky* are of especial interest as points of intersection between the underground's sociability (in terms of networks of personal friendships as well as cultural — primarily musical — events) and its spatiality (the radical, or arguably radicalised, spaces where they could bring this sociability into action) — in other words, a kind of police-state situationism[38]. Yet in another, they are only understandable, in other words only make sense, as part of this dispersed, indeed materially dissolved network of spaces both semi-permanent (dwellings) or highly ephemeral (town squares, public festivals), such that their isolation, perhaps even reification as specifically unique instances of aesthetics and sociabilities would in fact deprive the *baráky* of much of their significance. Following Stavridis, a thorough consideration of this spatiality as de-materialisation may well allow "dissident politics [to] escape the trap of the 'liberated enclave' imaginary and discover the power that the representations of common spaces-as-thresholds have" (Stavridis 2017, 7).

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Hence, an analysis of the *baráky* in their full dimensions, both as staging points for autonomous social action and as (material) actors themselves, would need to involve several broader frameworks outside of the communities themselves or even the general underground network. On one side, the analysis should take into consideration the context of post-1968 Czechoslovakia, not merely of police repression but no less the material conditions of state socialism and planned economies, and on the other their international position as part of a (semi-)globalised counterculture of the later 20th century, filtered as it was through the semi-permeable "Nylon Curtain" (Péteri 2004) of the system's final decades. And finally, it should attempt to understand the *baráky* as an

38 On various adaptations of Guy Debord's idea note, e.g., McDonough 1994.

articulated method of social critique, aimed not merely at significant aspects of 20th century modernity but even at less immediately noticeable questions.

To begin tackling this ambitious listing of investigative aims, it might be most fruitful to start with a positioning of the *baráky* against the spatial-architectonic practices of normalisation-era Czechoslovakia, as much on the level of state construction as well as the activities of outwardly conformist "mainstream" society. When invoking built space in the given setting, it is worth emphasizing that the massive state investment in large-scale prefabricated apartment construction[39], widely regarded as the determining feature of the era and the immediate reflection of state policy and ideology, was not the only change in the built and social environment. A parallel development of the 'normalization' era was the no less mass-scale increase in second-home ownership, essentially doubling in the 1970-1990 period (Schindler-Wisten 2017), though already a significant presence before. The role of the weekend cottage in Czech society post-1968 has, of course, been the subject of intense debate, both on a social and a scholarly level. Earlier discussions staked out positions between the interpretations of "cottaging" as mere social atomization (even a kind of system-stabilising repressive desublimation, though of course without invoking precisely this 1960s-vintage critical--Marxist phraseology) and as a conscious method of resistance; the latest consensus seems to view it through a more complex interplay of "micro--level processes… of rupture and continuity", between state authority and (non-oppositional) society (Alda 2020, 25). And, significantly, metropolitan dissidents did not on principle avoid cottage ownership, to look no further than, for instance, Václav Havel and his famed cottage in Hrádeček near Trutnov. Noting that the cottage genre itself reflected a distinct form of socialist class stratification — the '*chalupa*' (historic farmstead) as distinctly more prestigious than the mass-market, newly built '*chata*' — it should be no surprise that few urban intellectuals could reject the ownership of an attractive formerly German farmstead, if in a more pleasant region of the Sudetenland than the mining-ravaged Ore Mountains.

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Against the geographic-architectonic relations of panel block and weekend house, though, the underground *baráky* stand out as neither specifically conformist nor oppositional, but indeed an utter refusal of the surrounding world. In this refusal, not only the idea of the negotia-

39 Currently, the most extensive study is Skřivánková, Švácha, and Lehkoživová 2017. For a historical perspective, see Zarecor 2011.

tions and mutual manipulations between state and public is elided, but even the dichotomy of atomized — or more precisely familiarised — living spaces, whether apartment or cottage. The aspects that this refusal assumed could arguably be divided into two distinct areas: the rejection on one hand of what might be termed in a wide sense 'socialist materiality' and on the other, the Janus-faced practice of what might be termed 'socialist familialism' — the focus on the private, domestic sphere over the politically devalued public space.

My own employment of the term 'socialist materiality' aims to extend it beyond the current engagement with the now-historicised material culture of state-socialist economic production, whether in its popular--nostalgic mode[40] or its more analytical scholarly investigations[41]. Instead, it aims to work toward the inclusion of economic life, as much of relations as of objects, within the framework of contemporary revisionist- or post-Marxist critiques of economic and material restraints as a tool of social control in their own right, manipulated by state authorities rather than merely arising from inefficiencies or errors[42]. And a considerable feature of a specific 'Nylon Curtain' materiality, in turn, was shaped by the fetishization of objects from the (Cold War) West, ranging from the enormous efforts to make purchases through official foreign-currency retail outlets[43] up to the collection of even discarded packaging, drinks cans, or similar waste materials. A third possible category of material culture, lying somewhere in between the worlds of state production and Western fetishism, could be that of the homemade — from entire weekend cottages to household crafts up to the crafting of naïve 'domestic art' (Činátlová 2010).

Juxtaposed with the material economy of state socialism, or perhaps even the "hyper-materialized" economy as a system-stabilizing force, the inspiration of the Western counterculture of the 1960s (at least for some) did not appear a self-indulgence of the privileged, but in fact a form of resistance in its own right. Daily life in a rural *barák* — whether communally inhabited or largely private — could at least with some interpretive accuracy be described as itself a critique of socialist materiality through lived practice. As a form of opposition, it was directed

40 Examples of this genre — whether as in print or online — are multiple; simply within the Czech context, note e.g. Šťastná 2017, or among websites: expo58.blogspot.com (though largely with a focus on design and the applied arts).

41 For a survey of recent work in this area, note Fidelis 2017.

42 Viz. Fehér-Heller-Márkus 1986, also note Tharp 2018.

43 For an overview of the hard-currency market in socialist Czechoslovakia, note Havlík 2020.

not so much against the figure of *Homo sovieticus* as much as *Homo chaluparis*, the conformist forever oscillating between panel flat and weekend refuge. Or, for that matter, even the weekend independence of the long-established working-class outdoor subculture of "tramping" (Bren 2002, 127-133): the guiding principle of the underground, as repeatedly stated by its participants (at least retroactively), was for its cultural difference to be a 'life-stance' (*životní postoj*) — and hence it was crucial to achieve the establishment of an independent physical space where not only the unwelcome state repressive forces could be held, however briefly at bay, but no less the unwelcome presence of the state's economic and aesthetic hegemony.

Yet even beyond establishing the *barák* as continual residence, the question of these additional hegemonies brings up another dimension that tends more to separate the Czech communal living attempts from the Western, if predominantly North American, hippie communes. To be sure, the majority of US countercultural settlements, in parallel with the *baráky*, situated themselves in extant buildings — to cite Iain Boal, "either Victorians or empty industrial buildings in the urban context or abandoned farmhouses beyond the city" (Boal 2012, xix) — in this way, significantly resembling the 'time-radicalized' deserted or decrepit spaces of the Czech normalization era, if not perhaps even reaching back to an earlier pre-Modernist aesthetic against the sleek conformity of the postwar Machine Age[44]. Yet there was one visually striking (if perhaps somewhat over-medialized) trait of several communes: their creation of entirely new architectural forms, often with an eye towards economic and ecological self-sufficiency. Most notable in this area was Colorado's Drop City, with its geodesic domes compiled from scrap metal (Sadler 2006). Even beyond specific built spaces, American observers like Greg Castillo have noted an influence in design aesthetics and environmentally aware urban planning of a "hippie modernism [that] focused not on rigorous form but rather on a kind of socially inspired bricolage" (Castillo 2015). It is precisely in this bricolage, contrastingly, that the Western countercultural approach appeared against the backdrop of normalisation-era Czechoslovakia (as outlined above) less of an inspiration and

44 Undoubtedly, the psychedelic aesthetics of the US counterculture of the 1960s, reaching back to Art Nouveau or even late-Victorian prototypes, represent a clear reaction against post-1945 visual modernity. On a more spatial level, the decade also saw — even beyond the counterculture itself — an increased appreciation for pre-Modernist architecture and urbanism, often in direct opposition to the International Style hegemony of the first two postwar decades; for an intriguing early example, note the strongly polemical tone of Maas 1957.

more of a parallel — matching the tolerated private sphere of handcrafts and domestic art, of the many bestselling publications like *Vlastní výroba bytových doplňků*[45] or the DIY programs on Czechoslovak state television hosted by Přemek Podlaha. Indeed, in the latter case, with Podlaha's advice on what to do with chance or disused objects, "if in the woods you come across a discarded Škoda fender" (Činátl 2010, 159)[46] put out across thousands of TV sets, even Drop City seems at once less radical, perhaps even banal.

Here, the notably unaltered form of the Czech communal residences gains another interpretation beyond the harshly limited economic possibilities of the communities themselves, or the need to avoid police surveillance. The activities of the Czech counterculture, such that it was, were no less aesthetically oriented, but almost entirely in a de--materialised sense, looking towards the performative and interactive — primarily musical, of course, but even the production of samizdat periodicals and news-sheets could be interpreted as itself a kind of mutual 'performance' upon the typewriter (Tharp 2021, 189-204). And if the music famously looked toward the Velvet Underground over folk or psychedelic inspiration, the visual style, genuinely produced (to cite Dick Hebdige's formulation) 'in indecent haste' (Hebdige 1979, 111), lay far closer to punk than to any incarnation of 'hippie modernism'. Viewing the few surviving photographs of Nová Víska (after its domestic 'chronicle' was confiscated by the police upon the community's dissolution, never to be found again), or even of better--documented communities, the grainy black-and-white images of daily life have, for all the cheerful fellowship among the persons shown, a kind of post-punk starkness at odds with the swirling colours of conventional hippiedom. Or, for that matter, the official aesthetics of state-produced objects, whether consumer goods or publications, still within the confines of a persisting Machine Age look. It is indeed no accident that after 1989, the establishment of a legal, above-ground cultural sphere matched an explicit anti-Communist stance with a repudiation of the old regime's aesthetics. The physical artefacts and semiotic indicators of this era, from album covers through formerly samizdat journals (the short-lived legal *Vokno, Revolver Revue*, or even for its first decade the newsweekly *Respekt*) used precisely the same gritty

45 I.e., "Homemade Household Accessories", reprinted 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1983.

46 It should be noted, at least for historical accuracy, that Podlaha's career was no less successful after 1989, with his televised DIY advice broadcast up until only a few months before his death in 2014.

punk-flavoured look to defy equally the old regime and the new consumerist world[47].

The underground network of friendships and affinities not only rejected the commodity fetishism of socialist materiality, but even more the social atomization of the late state-socialist era.

At the same time, the underground network of friendships and affinities not only rejected the commodity fetishism of socialist materiality, but even more the social atomization of the late state-socialist era. In the case of Nová Víska, citing its main organizer (and co-owner) František Stárek, the creation of this community was directly inspired by his viewing of *Easy Rider* in Budapest in 1970[48]. That the hippie commune at the film's start, rather than the tragic romance of the open road, seemed the more compelling vision in the wake of 1968 and all that followed should come as no surprise. The enforced 'nucleation' of private life under socialist atomization only grew stronger, reinforced as much from above as spontaneously arising from below[49]. Consideration of this process of atomization in the service of power has been frequent in Czech social analysis ever since 1989. Familialism as a central factor of the era has been described by sociologist Ivo Možný in his analysis of the system's functioning and equally its eventual failure (Možný 2009: from the shift to private life after 1968 and continuing through the increasing detachment from collective institutions not merely within dissent but even among political and economic elites. From another angle, one recent study by Kateřina Lišková details the role of popular psychology and marital counselling in the same decades in enforcing both familial privatism and a notably retrograde shift back towards traditional gendered roles and hierarchies (Lišková 2016).

If the social analyses of dissent stressed the political dichotomy between the emptied public sphere and the enclosed refuge of a strongly privatized family life, its physical-spatial parallel was undoubtedly the mirroring typologies of the prefabricated housing estate and the weekend-cottage colony[50]. The damaged space of the Sudetenland, or the quasi-situationist networks of underground refuge, all offered radical or radicalized spaces, yet still more radical as a social phenomenon was what these spaces hoped to encourage: a non-familial — or, considering

47 Regarding continuities over discontinuities in the transition from samizdat production to legal publication possibilities in the 1990s, note Tharp 2020.

48 Stárek, personal comment, 2016.

49 Again, note the analysis of Cohen 1972, citing the high-rise council flats of Britain in the 1960s as a destructive force on extant working-class community networks, thus driving the youth in the "nuclear" apartments to seek their own community through music- or fashion-based subcultures.

50 Note Bren 2002 for the most prevalent analysis, though also compare several contributions in Rollová-Jirkalová 2021 for a newer critique of earlier oppositions.

the birth of a new generation of children within the underground, more accurately extra-familial — sociability. Historically, this sociability was given only the slimmest chance: harassment, followed by the deliberate campaign to drive dissidents into exile, eventually the imprisonment of Stárek and Jirous for the 'hooliganism' of producing *Vokno* (Kudrna and Stárek 2017). And the question is open as to how congruent it may have been with the prevalent civil-society discourse of the 1990s — or alternately, how unassimilable.

Yet in a final, indeed somewhat bleakly ironic twist, a broader historical scope that includes the continuities between the pre-war world and that of state socialism would note that from the very start of Czechoslovakia's existence as an independent state, ideas for collective dwellings were prominent in expert, even public discussions. The architectural historian Herbert Guzik has discerned several distinct lineages of pre-Communist collective residential ideas: a liberal-feminist aim toward reducing women's household burdens through shared facilities (promoted inter alia by future Czechoslovak president T.G. Masaryk), a left-wing avant-garde tendency influenced by Soviet as well as German studies and realizations, and the 'industrialist' response immediately after the war (Guzik 2018)[51]. The result was the realisation of two actual buildings. One of these, the *Koldům* in the North Bohemian industrial town of Litvínov, has been intensively studied in the past decades not only for its architecture but equally for its social composition (Daňková 2014). And notably, it was mentioned to me personally by one former Nová Víska resident as a threatening monolith inescapable on the town horizon, indeed a physical embodiment of everything wrong with the current system[52].

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Guzik, of course, notes the common thread of a belief in technocratic expertise underlying all three collective-housing intentions, the faith of architects and planners in using physical environments to shape and guide society (ibid.) In this way, the Modernist collective dwellings planned or realized are hardly any more radical as spaces than the atomized unit of the prefabricated flat of the model socialist citizen; only, perhaps, more 'utopian' in their aims of effecting change rather than reacting (as in the latter case) to simple necessity. It is telling indeed that the only two realized Czech large-scale communal dwellings came about through the efforts of corporate enterprises (one private, one

51 For more on the Czech architectural avant-garde and its own relations to Marxism both theoretical and actual note Švácha-Dluhosch 1999.

52 Interview with Sylva Chnápková, Osvračín, 2017.

recently nationalized) prior to the implementation of a full command economy.

Perhaps more germane to the wider implications of Czech (Czechoslovak) collective living, though, might be precisely the longstanding Americophilia — from the First Republic up through the normalization years and beyond — that was able to take the idea of the utopian social imagination from across the Atlantic and adapt it in new conditions. And it is this question of imagination that brings up the final point of the present contribution: the conflict — emerging out of the moment of the Second World's end but reaching chronologically and geographically far beyond — between the idea of "things being different" and the hegemonic ascent of an antiutopian thinking notably more pervasive than merely its instrumental justification for marketist economics. The intellectual background of this historical moment has been described by Susan Buck-Morss: "the utopian dream that industrial modernity could and would provide happiness for the masses. This dream has repeatedly turned into a nightmare, leading to catastrophes of war, exploitation, dictatorship, and technological destruction" (Buck-Morss 2000, xiv). A parallel to this analysis, though, is the strong hegemony during the following two decades within the former Second World of a 'Cold War liberal' argumentation from such thinkers as Isaiah Berlin, Karl Popper, or Ralf Dahrendorf. The last-named thinker's oft-cited contention that "with the terrible dialectics of the non-rational,[…] utopia first requires and then glorifies suppression" (Dahrendorf 1967, 139) does not merely sum up the anti-utopian mood of the political or journalistic sphere in the post-1989 world, but indeed could be traced still further to many other areas of intellectual life. One outcome could be a certain reductiveness, if not even self-imposed restriction, in the effort to imagine social relations and structures as possibly different (Olssen 2003), or a deliberate rejection of any alternative social imaginations. Another could be — as the current contribution aims to rectify — a misunderstanding of alternative and/or oppositional social formations within the period consigned to the 'totalitarian-utopian' interpretation precisely through this prism of sceptical right-liberal understanding.

Without the normative-defensive impulse as a factor in the analytical process, in turn, the researcher — and here the positionality of a certain detached comfort is clearly an advantage — can examine a past commons not simply for its inspiring messages of 'outrage and hope' (Castells 2012) but equally for its limitations, drawbacks, even failures. Yet even this investigative process is not merely about pragmatic judgement: it should equally bring into its scope a final dimension, one that

marked (and continues to mark) the intellectual history of the past three decades since the 1989-1991 dismantling of the state-socialist order. Beyond all these wider questions, though, the crucial point for the present study is that the various Second World social imaginations commonly subsumed under the category of 'resistance to state socialism' can only be explained very imperfectly through the paradigm of an anti-utopian negative liberalism, turning any dissent into a future message of system-stabilisation. Even worse: to force all forms of imagining something beyond the extant state-socialist order into this single paradigm, as a bland assertion of negative liberty, is not only factually incorrect, but unjustly obliterates the possibility of their providing intellectual inspiration for the very different challenges of the present.

Hence, by way of conclusion, a comparison between late 20th-century subcultures across the 'Curtain' (whether the material metaphor is 'Iron' or 'Nylon'), is inevitably a pairing of the unequal, even considering the mutual knowledge and indeed admiration on both sides. Yet even with these conditions in mind, there are two matters in which the Czech underground's efforts genuinely stand out as making a contribution toward the future, rather than simply to the antiquarian reconstruction of the pre-1989 world. One is through their reaction to the social practices of cynical atomization in both command and market economies, regardless of how entrenched they may have become. And the second is, to return to Stavridis, in their status as the 'space-as-threshold': their rejection of the cosy refuges of Socialist Biedermeier in favour of a more significant network of action. Reading the 'mobile commons' of the *baráky* from 2022 is inevitably historicized not merely by the time distance, but all the more so by the arguments over the current state and future trajectory of the regions where state socialism once ruled: on one hand, the programmatic anti-utopianism of the 1990s, on the other, the paralysis of the social imagination that a closed society is likely to leave in its wake. The Czech underground offers us a 'utopian' commons precisely in its literal etymological 'placelessness' of the word, in its emphasis on activity over materiality, and its highlighting that more than any physical spaces, the central form of resistance lies in human sociability.

The Czech underground offers us a 'utopian' commons precisely in its literal etymological 'placelessness' of the word, in its emphasis on activity over materiality, and its highlighting that more than any physical spaces, the central form of resistance lies in human sociability.

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Tytuł: Zrepresjonowane utopie kontra utopijne represje: czeskie kontrkulturowe modele życia wspólnotowego w okresie „normalizacji" (1970-1989)

Abstrakt: Niniejszy artykuł stawia sobie za cel przeanalizowanie pewnego specyficznego zjawiska w „Drugim Świecie" – wspólnotowych modeli życia, wypróbowywanych przez kontrkulturowo zorientowanej, w większości pochodzącej z klasy robotniczej młodzieży w Czechosłowacji po 1969 roku, często (choć nie tylko) w byłym niemieckim Kraju Sudetów – obrazujących potencjał i ograniczenia związane z ustanawianiem „mobilnych dóbr wspólnych" w dwudziestowiecznym socjalizmie państwowym. Nie tylko dziedzictwo czeskich komun (*baráky*) pozostaje niewystarczająco zbadanym tematem historycznym, ale – co więcej – usytuowanie go pomiędzy refleksją nad amerykańsko komunalno-utopijną tradycją lat sześćdziesiątych, wyłaniającą się krytyką przemysłowej nowoczesności, wykwitem dwudziestowiecznych konceptów „społeczeństwa obywatelskiego" i mobilością doby „zimnej wojny" w poprzek „żelaznej kurtyny" dostarcza wysoce owocnego punktu dla dalszych rozważań. Przyjrzenie się czeskim kontkulturowym, komunalnym modelom życia w społecznym kontekście porządku „normalizacji" lat siedemdziesiątych i osiemdziesiątych – represji państwowych, socjalistycznej nowoczesności, anty-publicznego familiaryzmu – pozwala ukazać ich charakter jako społeczności ucieczki, bardziej niż celowo rozplanowanego eksperymentu i umieszcza je w wyjątkowym miejscu na osi debat między utopijnością a antyutopijnością, kwestionując same przesłanki stojące za tą opozycją.

Słowa kluczowe: życie wspólnotowe, społeczności utopijne, przestrzeń radykalna, dobra wspólne, opór, socjalizm, Czechosłowacja

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A Social History of the Ideas of the Paris Commune

Review of the book: Dupeyron, Jean-François. 2021. *Commun-Commune: penser la Commune de Paris* (1871). Collection „Philosophie en cours". Paris: Éditions Kimé.

Review of the book *Commun-Commune: penser la Commune de Paris* (1871), published on the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune. The author of the publication aims to reconstruct the entire spectrum of political ideas circulating in "Free Paris" in the spring of 1871. The analysis is carried out from the perspective of the political practices and participants of events. The content of the studied ideas is considered only through the methods of their use and the consequences which influenced history. In the review this is interpreted as a manifestation of thinking close to the theoretical concept of the "social history of ideas". Another important aspect of the reviewed book is the reflections on the politics of memory and legends, i.e. a mythologized approach to the past understood as a source of cognitive errors that hinder the proper understanding of events.

Keywords: Commune of Paris; social history of ideas; politics of memory; history of political thought

Spring 2021 marked the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune, a legendary event not only for the French left. The celebrations were limited, due to the sanitary restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, so the most visible places of remembrance turned out to be bookshop windows filled with anniversary publications. In addition to scholarly studies, there were also a number of popular science books and works of fiction, as well as comic books and music recordings.

An interesting feature of recent publications is the visible influence of the concept of the social history of political ideas[1]. This relatively new French current can be compared to the growing popularity of people's history in Poland in recent years. However, it focuses on a very specific aspect of the activity of 'the people', i.e. on finding in them the sources and the basic environment for the circulation of political ideas. This is very applicable to the studies on early socialist groups, which were mostly made up of workers rather than intellectuals. The great availability of sources (in France, numerous workers' newspapers were already appearing in the 1830s (Bouchet et al. 2015)) makes it possible to study the political activity of the working classes and their involvement in the formation of critical social ideas. Among the anniversary publications, alongside anthologies of texts by great writers commenting on the events of the Commune (Charentenay and Brahamcha-Marin 2021), there are also collected accounts and micro-histories of workers' participation in the events, sometimes even in fictional form (Bantigny 2021).

Although Jean-François Dupeyron does not make explicit theoretical declarations, in practice his book comes close to some of the assumptions that underpin the social history of political ideas. He aims to reconstruct the ideological panorama of a single historical event. His protagonists are not books or systematic theorists, but participants in the public life of the Commune, representatives of the Parisian popular strata. The object of the author's interest is how ideas acted during a particular moment in history, and how they indirectly determined its failure. It is thus a writing of the social history of ideas in line with the declarations of its theorists — 'from below', instead of 'from above', through their use among the popular strata for whom they were dedicated. According to this approach, it was not, for example, Marx who roused the people of Paris to an armed uprising with his views. It was rather quite the opposite — the Communards provided the theoretician with an

1 The main theorists of this current are: Chloe Gaboriaux, Arnault Skornicki (Gaboriaux and Skornicki 2017), Thibaut Rioufreyt (Rioufreyt 2019) and the research group HiSoPo (Histoire sociale des idées politiques).

image of what communism might look like in practice. Marx himself admits this in his *On the Civil War in France*.

Jean-François Dupeyron is a French historian attached to the University of Bordeaux. He works on political philosophy and education, and he wrote a book on school reform during the Paris Commune (Dupeyron 2020). The title of his book, *Commun-Commune: penser la Commune de Paris (1871)*, might be a play on words that suggests rethinking the Paris Commune in the category of common goods. Does the word "penser" — thinking — also mean political thought, the history of ideas? The main aim of this book is to seek the causes of events in the political views guiding their actors. The author aims to unravel the reasons for the failure of the Commune. They lay in the heterogeneity of views, in contradictory visions of action, and in the inability to mount an effective struggle. He does not accuse the Communards of ineptitude in political cooperation or military action. He sees their weakness in their consistent adherence to ideological stances that could not withstand competition from the brutal aggression of the Versailles government. The modest ambition of this book, the author declares, is to contribute to a study of the political philosophy and political practices that circulated in 'Free Paris' in the spring of 1871. A second point of reference is the contemporary memory of the Commune and the exploration of the political use of its legacy.

The book is divided into two parts. The first deals with the politics of memory and it is a dissection of the three 'legends' of the Commune: the black, the red, and the 'tricolour' — or republican. It thus touches on one of the fundamental problems of all historical anniversaries, that of getting lost in myths. The second discusses the political practices and ideas of the Commune.

The starting point is a consideration of the problem of memory, which constitutes a pretext, a kind of justification, for taking up the subject of the Commune today. It allows us to look for traces of the Communist legacy in contemporary political practices and to find new inspirations for subversive collective action in the past. The three legends, which take up almost half of the book to dissect, are the three ways in which the memory of the Paris Commune operates today. Jean-François Dupeyron shows their limitations and the cognitive errors that impinge on contemporary interpretations of the events of 150 years ago, as well as on the shape of contemporary political disputes.

The most universal of these errors is the 'loupe effect', the simultaneous magnification and tightening of vision. This is expressed by focusing memory on piecemeal events that obscure the broader picture of

the era. In the case of the Commune, the most glaring element that attracts attention is the violence. Dupeyron points out that the focus on it also affects left-wing supporters of the Commune, who fall into martyrology. They forget all the positive dimensions of the popular government of Paris, its reforms — such as the introduction of the secular school — as well as the new forms of political life. For Karl Marx, this was the most important heritage of the experiment of 'dictatorship of the proletariat', not the glorious bloody defeat.

The black legend of the Commune exaggerates the scale of the violence on the Communards' side. The book shows the mechanisms that are created to deprive the opponent of a voice and thus of any political significance. It is enough to point to a few 'crimes' — such as the killing of generals on the day of the uprising, and the execution of hostages during the 'bloody week'. This criminalizes, and thus invalidates, all the political dimensions of the Commune. The refusal to recognize the opponents allows their political subjectivity to be ignored. In this light, the Communards are considered as rebels who use barbaric methods and who thus must be stopped and destroyed rather than negotiated with. The author shows that this mechanism makes it possible to simultaneously justify all the violence of the government troops. The brutal capture of the city and the crimes of the 'bloody week' appear, in the light of such arguments, to be the necessary means needed to restore peace. Social order, interpreted as the domination of the bourgeoisie, was treated as the supreme and non-negotiable good.

The author sees the reasons for this obsessive hatred in the central conception of the political philosophy of the Communards. It was a concept of popular sovereignty, totally rejecting the principles of the liberal order. As a political experiment, it was a mortal threat to the French bourgeoisie. This notion involved a radical concretization of democracy, no longer a surrender of political power to the people but an independent seizure by the people. It was the workers who took up most of the offices of the Commune, and Paris was ruled directly by its population not only at the political and municipal level but also in the workshops and factories, which posed an existential threat to the bourgeoisie as a class. Dupeyron argues that, for the privileged classes, this concretization of democracy was an assault on society and a 'forbidden political', unacceptable for inclusion in political discussion.

Some aspects of the Red Legend could be seen during the spring of 2021 in the windows of Parisian bookshops, or even more on the posters hanging around the city. These particularly emphasized the martyrdom dimension, showing scenes of heroic revolutionary struggle on the bar-

ricades. *Commun-Commune*, however, emphasizes above all the consequences of this legend for later socialist and revolutionary reflection and the cognitive dissonances characteristic of the leftist history of ideas. The Paris Commune is such a rich treasury of experiences, practices and ideas that everyone, as Dupeyron states, draws from it whatever they like. Sometimes much later ideas and practices were projected into the past, because political movements developing after 1871 traced their ideological roots back to the legend of the Commune. However, if we look at the facts, we find that the ideas of utopian socialism and conspiratorial revolutionism, characteristic for the first half of the nineteenth century, were evidently present. Among other things, the author analyses the problem of the concept of the proletariat. The character of the Communards cannot be clearly defined by this class. Dupeyron points out that even Marx referred to them simply as the French working class. His analyses can be summarized by the conclusion that the proletariat was a product rather than a decisive cause of the outbreak of the Commune. The historian notes:

> We saw that the initial victory of the Commune was not the product of a so-called proletarian insurrection, as the red legend sometimes tells us, but depended on the powerful emergence of a political force combining various sectors of the population and possessing two essential weapons: a momentarily dominant military force and a network of republican and socialist circles well established in a significant part of Paris.

The data published in the book testify against the thesis of the popular spontaneity and proletarian character of the Paris uprising. They show that the Assembly of the Commune was mainly composed of skilled workers and artisans of various ideological affiliations, organized in associations that had existed long before March 1871.

At the core of the republican legend is the dispute over legality and democracy. The republican critique of the Commune is the result of contradictions in the idea of the republic that had been growing during the 19th century. The differences between the bourgeois and the social republic, which appeared for the first time in 1848, became evident in 1870. Dupeyron distinguishes three competing conceptions of the republic of the spring of 1871: the Jacobin republic, the social republic and the republic of 'order'. The latter was pursued by the National Assembly in Versailles. It was composed, moreover, largely of monarchists unable to agree on a dynasty — Bourbon or Orleans, which resulted in the creation of a 'republic without republicans'. The party of order was

content with a formal change of power — from monarchical to republican, without linking it to any social reorganisation. It could be said that it succeeded in finally dominating contemporary reflection on the republic and democracy, for which the social question is no necessary complement. Starting from the conviction of the legitimacy of the bourgeois republic with an elected popular national assembly and the government of Thiers at its head, the republican opportunists or formalists, as their socialist critics called them, treated the Commune as an unjustified rebellion against the republic. Dupeyron recalls on several occasions that the participants in the Commune themselves were not free from doubts about the legitimacy of their enterprise and the extent of the prerogatives to which they could claim. This contributed to the paralysis of decision-making, especially on the question of offensive military action.

The differences between these concepts result from different understandings of the substance of the republic. The author writes that for the 'reds' the republic is a form of social life: "You do not live under the rule of the Republic, but in the Republic". In their opinion, true republican life is characterised by the real absence of all forms of domination in individual life (concrete freedom), real equality, and the dignity of participating in the common policies.

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Although Jean-François Dupeyron considers all three legends equally, which could create the appearance of objectivity, he makes no secret of which side he sympathises with. While he refutes the black and the republican as pointless — demonstrating, for example, the incompleteness of the bourgeois conception of the republic and the truly republican character of the Commune. In the case of the red legend, he is skeptical only of the martyrdom approach and the anachronisms that detach the Commune from its true ideological roots and class structure. He tries to highlight the positive achievements: in the sphere of institutions, ideas and political practices, and appreciates the value of memory and making political use of it today. That is why *Commun-Commune* can be called an engaged book that looks at the Commune as an ideological laboratory, examining how political ideas worked in practice.

The second part of the book abandons the question of the politics of memory and takes up the fundamental theme of the history of ideas. However, it is shown from an unusual position. It tells the story of political practices and their actors, when the ideas appear as tools used by the militants of the Paris Commune. This approach allows us to rethink the methodology of the history of ideas and intellectual history. In the history of political practices, we observe the relative independence

of ideas and their users. Ideas exceed the range their creators' causality. The thinker — creator of political, social, or economic ideas, after writing key works and creating a circle of disciples around him, retires into the shadows, but his ideas continue to evolve. This interpretative stance is admittedly atypical of the classical history of ideas, where the study of the author's intentions (Skinner) or changes in the meaning of key concepts (Koselleck) is advocated first and foremost. But it is useful in the study of political practices and the efficacy or the causality of ideas. The ruling ideas of a rebellious Paris were mostly 'orphaned'. The Proudhonists had lost Pierre-Joseph Proudhon a few years earlier, while Auguste Blanqui, the head of Blanquism, was currently in prison, and was thus unable to lead his partisans. On the other hand, there were very few Marxists in the Commune, and Marx himself, although he followed events, did not seek to direct them behind the scenes. In contrast, the International Workingmen's Association was acting more like a trade union. In Paris, they lacked a unified leadership and clear ideological programme. Dupeyron devotes a separate chapter to each group, but the emphasis is on action in practice, rather than dwelling on the thought of systematic theorists.

The longevity and susceptibility to transformation over time, even after the death of the founder, can even be considered a characteristic of the groups of the French Left in the nineteenth century. Dupeyron mentions Saint-Simonians and the phalansterian movement as the probable roots of the pacifism of certain Communards. These movements are examples of orphan ideas, developed after the death of their creators — Saint-Simon and Fourier, which had a great influence on the development of early socialism. Thanks to the author's focus not on the creators of ideas but on their users, he shows a very interesting tension between theory and practice, the verification of thoughts and the drawing of real consequences from them.

After describing innovative political practices, the author of *Commun-Commune* focuses on the actors of events and their ideological affiliations. He shows a mosaic of parties, ideological groups and associations: Proudhonists, Blanquists, neo-Jacobins, Freemasons, and members of the Workmens' International. Most interesting are the examples of selected activists and juxtapositions, which show that these groups were not homogeneous and closed. This was particularly characteristic of the International. Members of the other groups belonged in parallel to them. The tables presenting the results of the municipal elections show not only the ideological spectrum of the activists: the low voter turnout testifies to the fragile political legitimacy of those who were

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elected. Thus it confirmed their legitimate fears of overly bold and undemocratic revolutionary moves.

The ideological heterogeneity of the main actors of the Commune caused internal conflicts and, above all, different concepts of action. Dupeyron points here to one of the most important causes of the fall of the Commune. The defeat of the armed confrontation with Versailles' troops was not only due to military weakness. The disparity of forces turned in favour of Thiers' government only in early April. Reflexively, then, one asks: why did the Communards, after the outbreak of the uprising, allow members of the government and the National Assembly to leave Paris peacefully and then delay striking Versailles?

Dupeyron argues that such an action would have been incompatible with the deeply republican views of most members of the Commune. They were paralysed by discussions of legalism and strenuous attempts to gain legitimacy for their power. The belief in 'popular sovereignty' told the Commune's leaders to focus on municipal elections, that is, on confirming that the Commune was the authentic representation of the people of Paris. This did not entail the right to impose their regime by force on the whole of France. The revolt of Paris was intended to act as an example for other cities in France to introduce a sovereign popular republic. The author points out that the name of this regime was used in a way that was atypical of French political culture. Traditionally the republic is a universal idea in France, based on centralized power, directed from Paris. Indeed, for the Communards the republic should be federal, based above all on respect for regional self-government and local communes. In fact, they usually referred to themselves as 'fédérés' — the Federalists, while 'the Communards' was the name introduced later on — by their opponents.

Using this key example, the author shows how the republican ideas of its representatives were an important factor in the history of the Paris Commune. If it had nevertheless been decided to spread the revolution across the country, unleashing chaos (including seizing the Bank of France), then the uprising would presumably still have been crushed with the help of the Prussian army. However, it would not have been the same Commune, which the author values not for its military successes but for its examples of new political practices.

Revolutionary social practices are the themes the author focuses on in this part of the book. He shows where, at the level of which institutions, red republicanism differed from 'formal' republicanism. Concrete democracy reached as far as the workplaces and was maximally egalitarian — equating the salaries of government officials with skilled workers.

To explain the intention of the protagonists of the Commune, Dupeyron cites an interpretation in which Martin Breaugh (Breaugh 2007) compares popular uprisings with the plebeian uprising in Rome in 494 BC. At that time, the plebeians refused to participate in an unjust republic denying them political rights and left the city. Their rebellion was a way of creating equal positions from which to negotiate with the dominants. The hill of the Aventine where they settled is compared to the Parisian hill of Montmartre, where the Paris uprising began, caused by a feeling of deprivation of dignity, and not only at the level of economic inequality. The cannons of the National Guard, bought with popular contributions during the Prussian siege, a symbol of popular self-defence and sovereignty, were collected on the hill. An attempt to take them away became the incident that started the uprising. Like the Roman plebeians with the Senate, the Parisian workers also wanted to negotiate with the National Assembly, on an equal level, they demanded that their vote be recognized as valid. They repeatedly tried to start negotiations with the government, at least to discuss the exchange of hostages. Using this example, Jean-François Dupeyron tries to prove that the Commune council fought first and foremost for recognition and for the right to negotiate, rather than for the destruction of the government at Versailles through armed action.

Dupeyron is not a historian focused on military issues. His search for the causes of defeat is intended to show the importance of ideological motivations and their influence on historical events. Their consequence was the social policy of the Commune, sometimes incoherent but often innovative. For the author, this and the radically revolutionary practices constitute the most interesting political legacy of the Commune, which can still be relevant today. This is part of the 'activism' of a book that openly avoids neutrality. It is published, after all, in a year which, by virtue of its round anniversary, cannot be neutral for addressing such topics. Relating the experience of the Commune to modern times and finding political inspiration in it seems to me the weakest element of the book. The aim is interesting, but its implementation is not convincing; it lacks passion and lively commitment. The reminiscent declarations get lost in the book's narrative and seem haphazard. Perhaps this shows the natural limitations of the historian of ideas, who cannot effectively combine the temperament of a researcher and an activist.

Commun-Commune is not so much a synthesis of the main political ideas of the French left at the end of the Second Empire: Proudhonism, Blanquism and neo-Jacobinism; above all, it is a demonstration of these ideas in action. Ideas are revealed in the use of the popular class, the

workers, for whom they were intended. This allows us to see their causality, their dynamism, their transformations, and the social base on which they 'exist'. I consider this to be the greatest value of Dupeyron's book, in which he pursues a new French way of writing the history of ideas, especially in terms of examining the circulation and functioning of ideas in political practices.

Behind the stories of the actors of the Commune, there is, of course, solid source and archival work. What is particularly valuable is the predominance of collective shots. They depict the groups through which the figures in question passed, but always against the collective background. This shows their heterogeneity and dynamism, as well as their simultaneous participation in various decision-making bodies, parties and associations. Political movements are shown as networked structures, undergoing transformations and at the same time endowed with causality that exceeds the capacity of individuals. For historians, as well as biographers, it can be a valuable source of comparative information. Although Jean-François Dupeyron is not a methodological theorist, he shows how the history of ideas can be combined in practice with the description and explanation of events. This is an interesting direction that could prove to be an inspiration for both researchers of ideas and traditional historians. For the former, this would entail extending reflection to the sociological conditions of ideas and the consequences of their actions, for the latter, it would mean including ideologies as real actors.

Dupeyron's interpretation, on the one hand, can fill us with hope. It shows the example of a well-organized and functioning commune which pursued democratic ideals. The demand to radicalize democracy to remove any form of oppression resulted in the extension of the common goods to the economic sphere as well. It was much further beyond the political field to which moderate republicans were limited. Thus, the Communards show us that democracy cannot exist as long as the common goods are limited to political rights and personal freedom. In this radical sense, it has not yet existed in any European country. The author does not claim this explicitly, but he encourages us to rethink the heritage of the Commune beyond the three legends and to analyse the potential of the political practices of the Communards.

On the other hand, there is no romanticizing of the myth of the Commune in this book. The author does not wonder why it failed, does not search for the guilty or speculate as to how it could have succeeded. By analysing the political ideas of the protagonists of the Commune, he shows their limitations, and the consequences of the positions they admitted. A community like the Paris Commune could work well in

a relatively small area, without the threat of external aggression. To cover a larger territory, it should form a federation with neighbouring communes. Dupeyron here articulates the core problem that the Commune faced at the macro level. This challenge has not yet been solved by anyone anywhere. Perhaps the ineffectiveness of communes internationally is the reason why so many revolutionaries treated democratic institutions with reluctance. The Bolshevik Revolution survived longer than the Paris Commune because of its renunciation of what was most controversial but also most revolutionary in Paris: federalism and radical democracy.

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Autor: Stanisław Knapowski
Tytuł: Społeczna historia idei Komuny Paryskiej
Abstrakt: Recenzja książki *Commun-Commune: penser la Commune de Paris (1871)*. Autor wydanej w 150. rocznicę Komuny Paryskiej publikacji stawia sobie za cel zrekonstruowanie całego spektrum idei politycznych krążących po „Wolnym Paryżu" wiosną 1871 roku. Analizy dokonuje z perspektywy praktyk politycznych i uczestników wydarzeń, rozważając treść badanych idei tylko przez sposoby ich użycia oraz konsekwencje, którymi zaważyły na historii. W recenzji jest to interpretowane jako przejaw myślenia bliskiego teoretycznej koncepcji „społecznej historii idei". Ważnym aspektem recenzowanej książki są też refleksje na temat polityki pamięci oraz legend, czyli zmitologizowanego podejścia do przeszłości rozumianego jako źródło błędów poznawczych, utrudniających właściwe rozumienie wydarzeń.
Słowa kluczowe: Komuna Paryska, społeczna historia idei, polityka pamięci, historia myśli politycznej

varia

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Całkiem zwyczajny kraj. Forum recenzyjne

Porter-Szűcs, Brian. 2022. *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj. Historia Polski bez martyrologii*. Tłum. Anna Dzierzgowska, Jan Dzierzgowski. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Filtry. 620 s.

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Kolejne forum recenzyjne *Praktyki Teoretycznej* mierzy się z syntezą najnowszej historii Polski pióra amerykańskiego historyka Briana Porter-Szűcsa. Praca pomyślana jako przeciwwaga dla narracji o Polsce i Polakach charakterystycznej dla ostatnich dziesięcioleci, martyrologicznej i skupionej na sobie, spotkała się z żywym odzewem. Za prowokacyjną uznali tę książkę nie tylko świadomi (lub nie) przedstawiciele „martyrologicznej" ortodoksji i wyznawcy politycznego czy też metodologicznego nacjonalizmu. Do zabrania głosu zaprosiliśmy historyków i historyczki z różnych pokoleń i środowisk naukowych, pracujących w Polsce i w obiegu anglojęzycznym. Uczestnicy forum podejmują kwestie kluczowe dla pisarstwa historycznego i pojęć polskiej historii. Są to m.in. wyzwania syntezy, granice porównania i skalowania punktu widzenia oraz zagadnienie pozycji, z której zabiera głos historyk, zanurzony we własnej wspólnocie językowej czy kulturze narodowej lub przeciwnie: opisujący je z zewnątrz. Na przykładzie omawianej pracy dobrze prześledzić można pułapki, wyzwania i korzyści

wynikające z pozycji przyjętej przez piszącego wobec wspólnoty odbiorców. Kolejne uczestniczki forum zwracają uwagę na niebezpieczeństwa związane z wykorzystaniem własnych doświadczeń i wspomnień jako drogowskazu w ocenie wydarzeń historycznych. Wskazują również na kłopoty dotyczące opisywania historii zwykłych ludzi, mimo woli autora często pozostających bezimienną masą. Forum zawiera też odpowiedź Porter-Szűcsa. W całości forum stanowi dobry punkt wyjścia do dyskusji na temat problemów kluczowych dla pisarstwa historycznego.

Słowa kluczowe: historia Polski, martyrologia, porównanie, historia zwykłych ludzi, historia globalna

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Z bliska widać gorzej

Całkiem zwyczajny kraj. Historia Polski bez martyrologii Briana Portera-Szűcsa to książka, która na polski rynek czytelniczy trafiła w zeszłym roku, siedem lat po swojej amerykańskiej premierze. Zazwyczaj autorzy korzystają z okazji, by dokonać w tekście zmian, dostosowując go do wiedzy i potrzeb nowej publiczności czytelniczej. Wiedza historyczna okazuje się w końcu wiedzą lokalną, zależną od erudycyjnego kapitału kulturowego, skryptów poznawczych, tożsamościowych punktów odniesienia w przestrzeni i czasie, wreszcie od zakresu wiedzy historycznej, która w znakomitej większości jest dziś pochodną edukacji szkolnej i konsumpcji kultury popularnej. Co ważne, również wiedza badacza i badaczki jest usytuowana w lokalnych dyskursach, tożsamościach, socjalizacjach, praktykach kulturowych, w efekcie czego będzie w niej miejsce na różne pytania i interpretacje historii Polski, czasem intrygujące, ożywcze, czasem obrazoburcze, zawsze pouczające. Amerykański historyk zaprezentował własną wizję przeszłości Polski i zaprosił nas do lektury i dyskusji. Właśnie nas, „tubylców" biegłych w posługiwaniu się martyrologicznym skryptem narodowym i przygotowanych do podjęcia rozmowy na temat fundamentalnych dla porterowskiej wizji konceptualizacji, epistemologicznych wyborów i użytych w wywodzie argumentów. Inaczej, niż w przypadku amerykańskich czytelników i czytelniczek, dla których książka jest atrakcyjnym (choć miejscami niezrozumiałym) wykładem o dziejach nowoczesnej Polski ostatnich dwóch stuleci, polskie

wydanie powinno prowadzić do debaty wokół kwestii fundamentalnych. Pierwsza z nich pojawia się w tytule, sugerującym, że wbrew powszechnej wśród „nadwiślańskich tubylców" opinii o własnej wyjątkowości wyrażającej się w bohaterstwie i ofierze, historia ich kraju wpisuje się w globalne procesy historyczne. Co więcej, z tytułowej zwyczajności czyni wartość najwyższą, dzięki której Polska zamiast „nigdzie", jak chciał Alfred Jarry, może być „wszędzie". Normalność i typowość, które służyć miały oswojeniu amerykańskiej publiczności z historią kraju nie tak znowu egzotycznego, jakby się wydawało na początku, w polskim wydaniu nabrały zupełnie nowego znaczenia, a mianowicie, polemiki z narodowocentryczną, by nie rzecz, nacjonalistyczną wizją historii Polski. Brian Porter-Szűcs, który jest znakomitym badaczem historii nowoczesnego nacjonalizmu w XIX wieku, doskonale rozpoznaje jego martyrologiczne tony i konteksty. I od pierwszych stron książki otwarcie polemizuje z polską historią niezłomną, podważając przy okazji niejeden z mitów, na których zbudowane są potoczne jej wyobrażenia.

To dość oczywiste, ale warte przypomnienia, że mowa jest o książce popularnej, a nie o naukowej monografii. Przywoływane w niej argumenty i konkluzje w dyskursie naukowym nie wywołałyby większego echa, bo też nie są ani nowe, ani kontrowersyjne dla historyków i historyczek zajmujących się badaniem dziejów Polski. Oddolna perspektywa i podążanie tropem życia codziennego nie jest też niczym nowym, ale wobec martyrologicznej hegemonii, każda praca o zwyczajności ma znaczenie. I ma sens.

Tytuł książki brzmi zachęcająco dla czytelniczek i czytelników zmęczonych, a może nawet zirytowanych wszechobecnością historycznego bohaterstwa, cierpienia i poświęcenia. Obietnica historii całkiem zwyczajnego kraju jest jednak wypełniona połowicznie, choć niekoniecznie winny jest tu sam autor. Przyzwyczajona do postrzegania historii Polski w kategoriach tysiącletniej (nie)ciągłości, szybko konstatuję, że w książce historia Polski zredukowana została do dwóch stuleci i zaczyna się „dopiero" w 1795 roku. I nie ma w tym nic dziwnego, zważywszy, że nowoczesne narody mają stosunkowo krótką biografię, nawet jeśli posługują się mitem tysiącletniej historii. Z niejasnych dla mnie powodów z polskiego tytułu znikła, istotna w tym wypadku, nowoczesność. Pojawił się za to, nieobecny w tytule amerykańskim, „zwyczajny kraj", kusząc obietnicą nowej, innej niż wszystkie, opowieścią. Im bardziej zanurzam się w lekturę, tym mniej zwyczajności. Można odnieść wrażenie, że Polska portretowana przez Portera-Szűcsa jest jednak na swój sposób wyjątkowa, nie tylko w skali europejskiej, czy globalnej, ale jest też niezwykła sama w sobie. Im bliżej współczesności, im mniejszy dystans czasowy

wobec opisywanych wydarzeń, tym rzadziej pojawiają się globalne porównania i analogie, jakby zabrakło punktów odniesienia, krajów podobnych swoją zwyczajnością i niemartyrologiczną naturą. Zachodząca w książce zmiana wynika w dużej mierze z transformacji samego autora, który z badacza z wolna przemienia się w świadka czy wręcz aktywnego uczestnika historycznych wydarzeń. W miejsce źródeł i historiografii jako podstawy wiedzy pojawiają się autobiograficzne wspomnienia przedstawiciela pokolenia historyków zafascynowanych Solidarnością i walką z komuną. Postawę zdystansowania zastępują emocje i osobiste zaangażowanie, co odbija się nawet na języku, coraz bardziej publicystycznym. Osobisty stosunek do przedmiotu badań, przyznawanie się do sympatii i antypatii nie jest niczym nagannym, zwłaszcza w przypadku prac popularyzatorskich. Szkoda jednak, że autor rezygnuje z postawy zdystansowanej sympatii i zrozumienia. W pierwszych rozdziałach Porter-Szűcs umiejętnie mierzy się z mesjanistycznymi mitami dotyczącymi „wyjątkowości Polski". Wychodzi przy tym poza najczęściej stosowany w literaturze kontekst europejski, sięgając po dane dotyczące także państw afrykańskich czy azjatyckich. Kwestią, oczywiście, dyskusyjną pozostaje, czy porównywanie np. średniego dochodu mieszkańca II Rzeczpospolitej AD 1925 z dochodami mieszkańców Nigerii lub Chin jest czymś więcej niż tylko ciekawostką, ale już zestawianie liczb dotyczących upowszechnienia szkolnictwa czy budownictwa mieszkaniowego na ziemiach polskich i np. w USA w XIX i XX wieku pozwala czytelnikowi i czytelniczce umieścić Polskę i historię jej rozwoju w kontekście nie tylko wąsko-regionalnym, polityczno-gospodarczym, ale przede wszystkim w kontekście cywilizacyjnym. W takim ujęciu widać wyraźnie dość mizerny punkt startu. Jednocześnie, opisując drogę i efekty owego cywilizacyjnego rozwoju, autor pozostawia czytającym samodzielną ocenę zachodzących zmian i odpowiedź na pytanie, czy ich efekty były rozczarowujące, wystarczające czy imponujące.

Wpisywanie dziejów Polski w szerszy kontekst i odejście od historii wojenno-martyrologicznej będą prawdopodobnie budziły opór sporej części polskich czytelników i czytelniczek przyzwyczajonych do narracji pełnej powstań, zesłań, „krwi-i-blizny". Tyle, że polska publiczność czytelnicza, choć ważna, nie jest jedyna.

Co jednak ciekawe – „rzucenie" Polski na tło nie tylko Europy, ale całego nowoczesnego świata nie skutkuje jakimkolwiek deprecjonowaniem: porównania (polityczne, geograficzne, gospodarcze) z Niemcami, Brazylią czy USA nie powodują, iż Polska zaczyna się jawić jako kraj mniejszy, biedniejszy, peryferyjny, upchnięty między Europą Środkową, do bycia częścią której sama aspiruje, a Europą Wschodnią, od bycia

częścią której gwałtownie się odżegnuje. Paradoksalnie to właśnie umiejscowienie Polski w kontekście ogólnoeuropejskim, a nawet światowym, pozwala odnaleźć (także jej samej) odpowiednią pozycję i charakter, jako kraju… no właśnie – całkiem normalnego, ani małego, ani wielkiego, ani szczególnie udręczonego przez dzieje, ani też szczególnie przez nie uprzywilejowanego. Nie chodzi tu, oczywiście, o sprowadzenie Polski i jej dziejów do protekcjonalnego skwitowania: „Ot, taki sobie kraik", a raczej o spokojną obserwację i porównania z innymi państwami (lub społeczeństwami), które miały swoje wzloty i upadki, swoje imperia i ich rozpady/rozbiory. O zestawienie z Hiszpanią, ale też z USA, z Bułgarią, ale także z Francją – ukazanie podobieństw i różnic nie wartościujących, ale ilustrujących, nie hierarchizujących, ale uwzględniających regionalne czy historyczne uwarunkowania na etapie przyczyn, na etapie skutków, podkreślających, ale przede wszystkim wyjaśniających specyfikę Polski. Specyfikę – albowiem w podejściu autora „zwyczajność" nie wyklucza specyfiki, a przeciwnie stanowi jej naturalny – w przypadku rozwoju każdego państwa, społeczeństwa czy narodu; jak klimat w przypadku państwa afrykańskich, multietniczność Stanów Zjednoczonych, wyspiarstwo Anglii itd. I to jest chyba największym atutem książki: odejście od opisywania wyłącznie przykładów potwierdzających polską specyfikę, rozumianą jako pozytywna „wyjątkowość", odarcie jej z prostej, wręcz prostackiej, mesjanistyczno-bitewnej martyrologii, i potraktowanie jej jako elementu większego obrazu.

Rewizjonistyczny potencjał opowieści snutej przez Portera-Szűcsa ma swoje korzenie nie w obecności globalnej perspektywy, czy zachodzącej na kartach książki epistemicznej transformacji autora, ale w radykalnym jak na polskie przyzwyczajenia przesunięciu punktu ciężkości i obsadzeniu w roli aktora historii nie narodu, ale wieloetnicznego społeczeństwa, zamieszkującego ów zwyczajny kraj. Książka w istocie opowiada historię Polski w nowoczesnym świecie, Polski rozumianej jako i państwo, i społeczeństwo, i naród podlegające historycznym zmianom. Każde z tych pojęć naświetla inaczej historyczne procesy, przy czym najsłabiej chyba wybrzmiewa w tej triadzie naród, co zrozumiałe, zważywszy na narodowościowo-religijne zróżnicowanie ziem polskich w wieku XIX i pierwszej połowie wieku XX i polityczne spory z tym związane. Bodaj najciekawiej kwestia „narodu" ujęta jest, choć niekoniecznie wprost, w końcowej części książki, najbardziej współczesnej, bieżącej wręcz, w czasie lektury której czytelnik sam może postawić sobie pytanie, czy obecna Polska pójdzie drogą rozwoju społeczeństwa otwartego, wielobarwnego (nie w sensie rasowym, oczywiście), czy też drogą

umacniania Narodu jako pojęcia nadrzędnego, zakładającego, a może nawet wymuszającego jednorodność tożsamościową i religijną. Odpowiedź nigdy nie będzie jednoznaczna, bo – jak pisze Porter-Szűcs – „»Polska«, choć jest rzeczownikiem w liczbie pojedynczej, zawsze miała znaczenie liczby mnogiej. To znaczenie się zmieniało, ale wielość pozostaje faktem".

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Nadzwyczajna historia

Całkiem zwyczajny kraj. Historię Polski bez martyrologii reklamuje się polskim czytelnikom jako książkę proponującą oryginalne, nieoczywiste i zaprzeczające utartym schematom spojrzenie na historię Polski. Tego typu retoryczny zabieg to stały chwyt amerykańskich historyków, którzy w przeciwieństwie do historyków polskich co do zasady zabiegają o uwagę czytelników. A jednak chwyt działa: książkę czyta się w napięciu, po każdym kolejnym rozdziale spodziewając się zaskoczenia – a może nawet skandalu, co Brian Porter-Szűcs niedwuznacznie zapowiada. Jako że – mimo iż trup ściele się gęsto – nie mamy do czynienia z kryminałem, pozwolę sobie ujawnić zakończenie: autor prowadzi narrację do wiosny 2020 roku i w ten sposób rządy PiS stają się kodą dwustu lat historii naszego kraju, a także, niestety, zapowiedzią dalszego ciągu. Warto, moim zdaniem, doczytać książkę Porter-Szűcsa do końca, bo jego analiza, jak do tych rządów doszło i co z nich wynika, wydaje mi się jedną z ciekawszych, jakie oferuje ta książka.

Pierwsza część tytułu sugeruje, że historia Polski nie jest tak wyjątkowa, jak nam się wydaje. I tu pojawia się pytanie, na które nie ma łatwej odpowiedzi: kim są domniemani czytelnicy, których poglądami na dzieje Polski książka zamierza wstrząsnąć? Tekst jest adaptacją wydania anglojęzycznego,[1] lecz autor często przyjmuje retoryczną formułę polemiki

1 Autor niniejszej recenzji ze wstydem przyznaje, że nie porównał polskiego

z poglądami utartymi, powszechnie przyjętymi pośród potencjalnych czytelników polskich[2]. Syntetyczny charakter wykładu oraz potoczny, gawędziarski styl predestynują książkę do roli podręcznika – gdzieś pomiędzy szkołą średnią a uniwersytetem. Mamy więc do czynienia z hybrydowym dziełem, stworzonym z myślą o hybrydowych czytelnikach – i jest to może tak zwany znak czasu. Oczywiście tytuł jest zwodniczy: zwyczajne kraje nie istnieją, a tym bardziej nie istnieją zwyczajne historie – każda jest pod pewnymi względami wyjątkowa, a pod pewnymi podobna do historii szeregu innych krajów (pytanie tylko, które niestety w książce nie pada: których?). Autor przekonuje nas raczej, i całkiem słusznie, że Europa Zachodnia, często traktowana w Polsce jako wzorzec „normalności", z perspektywy globalnej jest właśnie wyjątkiem. Polska i jej dzieje są więc o tyle zwyczajne, że, tak jak dzieje większości świata, odstają od, zwyczajowo uważanego za normatywy, Zachodu.

Zwyczajność Polski i jej dziejów w ujęciu Porter-Szűcsa sprowadza się w zasadzie do dwóch dość prostych spraw. Po pierwsze, oglądana z perspektywy szeregu generalnych statystycznych wskaźników zamożności i ogólnego rozwoju cywilizacyjnego – takich jak dochód na głowę mieszkańca, liczba lekarzy na tysiąc mieszkańców itp. – Polska nieustająco lokuje się wyraźnie powyżej globalnej średniej, choć zwykle dość daleko za Europą Zachodnią, do której rozpaczliwie aspiruje. Oczywiście pośród tych wskaźników da się znaleźć i takie, według których Polska znajduje się znacznie powyżej lub poniżej swojej „zwyczajowej" lokaty

wydania z amerykańskim. Być może zatem szereg krytycznych zastrzeżeń, która ta recenzja formułuje, jest rezultatem niedokładności w tłumaczeniu. Tłumaczenie nie odbiega niestety od aktualnego standardu przekładów z języka angielskiego, a więc pełne jest niezręczności składniowych i stylistycznych, utrudniających lekturę; co gorsza, zawiera szereg szkolnych błędów w nazewnictwie. I tak, wielokrotnie przywoływani „panowie ziemscy" (zapewne *landlords*) to nie potężni feudałowie, lecz po prostu właściciele ziemscy. Dwukrotnie przywoływany „gubernator Galicji" to po polsku namiestnik Galicji (chodzi o hrabiego Potockiego). „Wschodnie landy" Niemiec przed I wojną światową (s. 115) to po prostu wschodnie tereny Niemiec, prowincje Królestwa Prus (Land, czyli kraj związkowy, pojawił się jako jednostka administracyjna po II wojnie światowej). Słowenia, która rzekomo do 1919 roku była częścią Węgier (s. 134), to w istocie zapewne Słowacja (tę samą pomyłkę popełnił prezydent Bush). Premier w PRL-u nie był „głową państwa *de iure*" (s. 390) (tę tytularną funkcję pełnił przewodniczący Rady Państwa), lecz szefem rządu.

2 Wydaje się, że niektóre apostrofy do czytelników powstały jednak z myślą o odbiorcach amerykańskich; np. na s. 94 autor sugeruje, że dla jego czytelników będzie zaskoczeniem, iż Józef Piłsudski był w młodości socjalistą, a na s. 272 przestrzega, aby nie mylić polskiego rządu londyńskiego w czasie II wojny światowej z tym, „na którego czele stał Winston Churchill".

(czytelników zapewne zaskoczy, między innymi, porównanie odsetka osadzonych w więzieniach w PRL-u i USA, albo tzw. współczynnika Ginniego, obrazującego rozpiętość dochodów w Polsce i innych wybranych krajach). Ogólny obraz, jaki wyłania się z tych statystyk, i który chyba warto podkreślić, jest taki, że właściwie we wszystkich omawianych w książce obszarach, przepaść między Zachodem a Polską na dłuższą metę, a zwłaszcza w ostatnim trzydziestoleciu, wyraźnie się zmniejszyła. Innymi słowy, *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj. Historia Polski bez martyrologii* przekonuje nas, że jeśli idzie o postęp cywilizacyjno-gospodarczy nie ma tragedii, jest za to umiarkowana (ale czy przez to zwyczajna?) *success story*.

Drugim aspektem „zwyczajności" polskich dziejów, na który kładzie nacisk Porter-Szűcs, jest ideologia i praktyka głównych polskich ruchów i partii politycznych. *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* stara się je pokazywać jako lokalne warianty zjawisk szerszych, co najmniej europejskich, a czasem globalnych. To oczywiście kwestia perspektywy, ale też historycznego momentu. Zdaje mi się, że w czasach swego dzieciństwa np. europejskie partie socjalistyczne i nacjonalistyczne (a pół wieku później chadeckie) mogą się wydawać do siebie podobne, choćby przez swą „nowość", zachłyśnięcie się określoną doktryną i kontestowanie określonego układu społeczno-politycznego; z czasem jednak obrastają w koloryt lokalnych uwarunkować, fobii i doświadczeń. Bywają układy, gdy ideologiczne centrum wymusza ścisłą unifikację – tak było z partiami komunistycznymi w czasach stalinowskich – lub też gdy konstelacje polityczne determinuje ponadnarodowa sytuacja, np. transformacja ustrojowo-gospodarcza po 1989 roku. W każdym razie, gdy przychodzi do konkretów, takie międzynarodowe porównania mogą łatwo prowadzić do przesadnych uproszczeń. Moim zdaniem w książce mamy z tym do czynienia np. gdy międzywojenną PPS porównuje się „z grubsza" do brytyjskiej Partii Pracy, a endecję do „włoskich faszystów lub hiszpańskiej Falangi" (s. 175), natomiast Sanacja i partie mniejszości narodowych określone zostają jako zjawisko unikalnie polskie. Jeśli chodzi o ideologię, można by się z autorem „z grubsza" zgodzić, lecz spośród polskich ugrupowań lat dwudziestych to piłsudczycy stawiali na kult wodza i frustrację zdemobilizowanych bohaterów, co było typowe dla ruchów faszyzujących, a partie mniejszości narodowych były w regionie normą.

Wydaje się bowiem, że najwłaściwszą perspektywą ukazania typowości historii Polski byłoby właśnie ujęcie jej w kontekście dziejów Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Analogie między Polską a krajami takimi jak USA albo Chile mogą być ciekawe i pouczające, jeśli chodzi o konkretne, wyizolowane z kontekstu zjawisko bądź moment historyczny – i jako takie nadają się świetnie na przedmiot wyspecjalizowanych stu-

diów monograficznych. Natomiast z Czechami i Węgrami, Rumunią i Łotwą łączy Polskę długofalowa wspólnota, wyznaczana przez takie czynniki jak położenie względem kulturowych i politycznych centrów, doświadczenie wielkich transformacji polityczno-ustrojowych, i wiele innych. W ostatnich latach podejście takie zastosowali z wielkim powodzeniem np. John Connelly w *From Peoples into Nations. A History of Eastern Europe* albo autorzy zbiorowego studium *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe* (red. Balazs Trencsenyi). W zasadzie wciąż nie mamy takich opracowań w języku polskim i wypada żałować, że *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* zwyczajnie ignoruje tę perspektywę.

Niedostatek kontekstu regionalnego widać też wyraźnie, gdy Porter-Szűcs rozważa kwestie tożsamości narodowej i nacjonalizmu. Widocznie trudno mu się z tym problemem uporać, co dość dziwne w przypadku autora klasycznego już studium o polskim nacjonalizmie, zwłaszcza że wikła się przy tym w szereg niejasności. Książka przypomina nam, że historia Polski, nawet ostatnich dwustu lat (a tym bardziej wcześniejsza) w znacznej mierze nie jest historią społeczności złożonej z ludzi, którzy uważali się za Polaków oraz takich, dla których polskość była nadzwyczaj ważnym elementem ich tożsamości. Innymi słowy, narodowość jako kluczowa kategoria tożsamościowa i polityczna jest zjawiskiem nowoczesnym, które wywodzi się z elit społecznych i stopniowo obejmowało kolejne warstwy ludności. Rzecz jasna, był to proces nadzwyczaj złożony, którego w pełni nigdy nie odtworzymy, źródła historyczne dają nam bowiem wyraźny obraz świadomości i wyobrażeń tylko nielicznych jednostek, które pofatygowały się pozostawić wiarygodne świadectwa w tej materii. Nawet spisy ludności, w których padało pytanie o narodowość, są źródłem budzącym wiele wątpliwości, roztrząsanych po wielokroć w literaturze przedmiotu. Pozostają czyny: jeśli ktoś głosował na Narodową Demokrację albo szedł bić się o Polskę, można przyjąć, że uważał się za Polaka i patriotę (choć przecież motywacje takiego zachowania też mogą być, a raczej zwykle bywają, bardziej złożone). Porter-Szűcs zdaje się jednak tak właśnie zakładać, skoro deklaruje, że „tożsamość jest czymś, co *robimy*, a nie czymś, czym *jesteśmy*" (s. 28), i na tej podstawie twierdzi np., że masowy udział w wojnie 1920 roku oznaczał zwycięstwo „idei Polski" (s. 159).

Niestety, usiłując uprościć historię o rozszerzaniu się polskiej świadomości narodowej na kolejne warstwy społeczne, Porter-Szűcs jednocześnie komplikuje ją poprzez odwołanie się do niezbyt jasno wyartykułowanych wartości i pojęć. Po pierwsze, w książce wielokrotnie pada stwierdzenie, że samo posiadanie tożsamości narodowej nie jest czymś *naturalnym* (ten przymiotnik zawsze wyróżniony jest kursywą, zapewne aby podkreślić jego nienaturalność), a już przynależność do zaledwie

jednej wspólnoty narodowej to wymysł czystej wody nacjonalistów, którzy „ciężko się nad tym napracowali w ostatnich trzydziestu latach XIX wieku (a w niektórych regionach nawet dłużej)" (s. 111). Zapewne w związku z powyższym autor deklaruje, że „naród to pojęcie pozbawione spójności, przedmiot historycznych sporów, sam w sobie nie stanowi jednak podmiotu dziejów" (s. 20); oraz: „ani istnienia, ani znaczenia polskiego narodu nie możemy uznać za oczywisty przedmiot naszej opowieści" (s. 12); i dlatego: „to nie jest opowieść o aktorze zbiorowym »Polska«, ale o konkretnych ludzkich istotach" (s. 19). Niestety, nie dowiadujemy się, co właściwie jest nienaturalnego w posiadaniu tożsamości narodowej (albo czy bycie chrześcijaninem, robotnikiem lub warszawiakiem jest jakoś bardziej naturalne?). Przekonanie, że posiadanie tylko jednej takiej tożsamości to rezultat kreciej roboty nacjonalistów, wydaje mi się nieporozumieniem, wynikającym z przywoływania jako analogii Stanów Zjednoczonych, podczas gdy w Europie taka sytuacja była normą, jeszcze zanim narodowość stała się kategorią polityczną – i wciąż normą pozostaje. Co oczywiście nie unieważnia licznych wyjątków, którym sprzyjały niejednolite narodowo pogranicza, twory polityczne w rodzaju imperium Habsburgów, albo wielkie metropolie przyciągające imigrantów – i które z tej racji od dziesięcioleci cieszą się wzmożoną uwagą badaczy. Pytanie, czy szeroki pas polsko-ukraińsko-białoruskiego „pogranicza" (czy też „polskich Kresów") a także część pogranicza polsko-niemieckiego były takimi wyjątkami, w książce nie pada, bo przeczy założeniu o narodowości jako „nienaturalnej" tożsamości narzucanej niejako z góry, przez jakichś innych (w czym notabene przypomina cały szereg „obcych" ideologii tak piętnowanych przez nacjonalistów wszelkiej maści).

Stanowisko Porter-Szűcsa mieści się w szerokim nurcie badań nad Europą Środkowo-Wschodnią, inspirowanych takimi teoretykami nacjonalizmu jak Ernst Gellner albo Eric Hobsbawm, których aktualnie znanymi reprezentantami są np. Pieter Judson i Larry Wolff, uznający tożsamość narodową za produkt na szerszą skalę rozpowszechniony w tym regionie dopiero w XX wieku i następnie retrospektywnie projektowany na przeszłość przez „nacjonalistów". Polemika z tym stanowiskiem zajęłaby osobny tom, do napisania którego nie czuję się najbardziej kompetentny; w tym miejscu warto natomiast wskazać na te jego słabości, które niechcący obnaża *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj*. Po pierwsze, książka bynajmniej nie opowiada o „konkretnych ludziach" (jest ich tu bardzo niewielu, głównie politycy z tzw. pierwszego szeregu; pierwszą postacią, o której biografii dowiadujemy się czegoś konkretnego, jest Róża Luksemburg, obiekt ewidentnej fascynacji autora, może właśnie ze względu

na swoją ponadnarodową tożsamość). Wbrew deklaracjom, bohaterem tej książki jest zbiorowość, której autor odmawia nazwy narodu, ale która do złudzenia go przypomina – najzupełniej zwyczajny przedmiot historii większości krajów (przynajmniej w Europie). W tej opowieści w XIX wieku o niepodległość Polski walczą jeszcze tylko „nacjonaliści" wywodzący się ze szlachty, ale już władza w Księstwie Warszawskim „pozostawała w rękach Polaków", a i potem „zarządzanie polskimi sprawami" zaborcy pozostawiali „w polskich rękach" (s. 44–46). W niektórych miejscach Porter-Szűcs zamiast o Polakach pisze o „polskojęzycznych mieszkańcach" albo „ludziach w Polsce", generalnie jednak nie potrafi uciec od historycznego konstruktu, jakim jest naród – czemu trudno się dziwić. Podobnie pusta pozostaje deklaracja (dotycząca II RP), że termin *mniejszość narodowa* „pozostaje sensowny, tylko jeśli ktoś uważa, że etniczność powinna stać się konstytucyjnie znaczącą kategorią" (s. 159). Problem w tym, że w okresie międzywojennym tym „kimś" były wszystkie liczące się stronnictwa polityczne i ośrodki opiniotwórcze, że pojęcie mniejszości narzucała konstytucja, podpisany przez Polskę tzw. mały traktat wersalski, Liga Narodów itd. Stąd też autor bardzo słusznie sam nie bierze serio swoich zastrzeżeń i analizuje sytuację mniejszości narodowych w II RP oraz tożsamość narodową jako istotny czynnik życia społeczno-politycznego, pozostając w tym znacznie bliżej głównego nurtu polskiej historiografii, niż to daje do zrozumienia czytelnikom.

Nieporozumienie to bierze się stąd, że Porter-Szűcs naśladuje autorów, którzy postawili sobie za cel zminiaturyzować znaczenie narodowości dla dziejów, na złość nacjonalistom jako takim – postrzeganym przez pryzmat ich działalności w XX wieku. Założenie to ma dwie zasadnicze słabości. Po pierwsze, sugerując, że tożsamość narodowa jest *produktem* agitacji nacjonalistycznej, przypisujemy nacjonalistom iście diabelską moc sprawczą i oddajemy im walkowerem we władanie pojęcia takie jak „patriotyzm", „tradycja"[3] czy „niepodległość",[4] stanowiące kluczowy element dziedzictwa wielu nurtów ideowych. Po drugie, myli się tu przyczynę ze skutkiem. Nie jest prawdą, że narodowość jest produktem nowoczesnego nacjonalizmu, którym Porter-Szűcs brzydzi się

3 Znaczącą, choć chyba nie do końca przemyślaną ilustracją tej konsekwencji jest twierdzenie autora, że nie ma „nic bardziej mylnego" niż potocznie stosowane pojęcia takie jak „polska tradycja" lub „polska kuchnia" – ponieważ nie oddają one różnorodności zjawisk, jakie się za nimi kryją (s. 198).

4 Próbując temu zaradzić, autor formułuje tezę całkowicie fantastyczną: „Dmowski nie mógł odczuwać żadnej patriotycznej więzi z Polską, którą tworzył Piłsudski, przy czym dokładnie tak samo byłoby, gdyby sytuacja była odwrotna" (s. 148).

z powodów, których łatwo się domyślić. Narodowość jest wytworem nurtu zrodzonego w zupełnie innym kontekście i o odmiennej dynamice, z czego autor zdaje sobie zresztą sprawę, skoro zauważa: „Ruch niepodległościowy był przez większą część XIX wieku ruchem rewolucyjnym; nawet wówczas gdy nacjonalizm zaczął w późniejszym okresie dokonywać zwrotu w prawo, wciąż pozostawał otwarcie modernizacyjny" (s. 64). „Rewolucyjny" w tym zdaniu należałoby intepretować jako „emancypacyjno-demokratyczny": idea narodowa bowiem (jak wszystkie idee polityczne wywodząca się ze społecznych elit), nie tylko w Polsce przecież, jako pierwsza ujęła społeczeństwo jako całość, tym samym znosząc bariery stanowe. Można, jak Porter-Szűcs (i cała masa autorów przed nim) rozwodzić się szeroko nad faktem, że polskość przez długi czas pozostawała tożsamością społecznej elity (choć nie samej szlachty, jak twierdzi Porter-Szűcs); nie zmienia to faktu, że jak chyba każda ideologia narodowa, miała inkluzywny charakter i dążyła do objęcia całego społeczeństwa (początkowo nawet nie tylko „polskojęzycznych mieszkańców" – polscy patrioci długo wyobrażali sobie przecież, że protoplastów dzisiejszych Białorusinów, Ukraińców i Litwinów też da się przerobić na Polaków). Działacze narodowi pierwszej połowy XIX wieku (nie tylko polscy) często nawet nie zdawali sobie sprawy, że sukces ich idei musi doprowadzić do konfliktów o etniczne pogranicza z sąsiadami. Dopiero gdy polskość stała się tożsamością obejmującą także proletariat i chłopów, mogli się pojawić nowocześni nacjonaliści ze swoją ideologią „zdrowej nienawiści". Historiografia anglosaska, niestety, bardzo często określa mianem „nacjonalistów" wszystkich Polaków (albo Czechów, Węgrów itd.), którzy uważali, że ich ojczyzny zasługują na niepodległość. Oczywiście tego kryterium nie stosuje odnośnie do polityków francuskich, brytyjskich, rosyjskich itp.

Stanowisko Porter-Szűcsa jest tu wyjątkowo niejednoznaczne. Na początku XIX wieku dostrzega „polskich nacjonalistów", którzy jakoby nie mogli się pogodzić, że w 1815 królem Polski został car Aleksander (s. 43). Jest to kompletne nieprozumienie, projektujące w przeszłość antagonizm będący wówczas w głębokim letargu: polska opinia publiczna doskonale wiedziała, że utworzenie Królestwa Polskiego było efektem usilnych starań Aleksandra, a nadanie mu liberalnej konstytucji jego osobistym kaprysem – i przez dobrą dekadę był on z tej racji wynoszony pod niebiosa (o czym po powstaniu listopadowym skutecznie zapomniano). Jeśli mowa o pierwszej połowie XX wieku, Porter-Szűcs różnicuje nacjonalistów (czyli głównie Narodową Demokrację) i innych, np. twierdząc, że piłsudczycy i socjaliści „pragnęli zbudować wielokulturowe państwo, w którym każdy byłby równy, niezależnie od języka,

religii i tożsamości etnicznej" (s. 227). Jest to gruba przesada: ugrupowania te ani w praktyce, ani w programach nie postulowały przyznania innym językom statusu równego polszczyźnie, a przedstawicieli mniejszości bynajmniej nie traktowały jako kandydatów na wysokie stanowiska. Porter-Szűcs idzie jednak o krok dalej: aby ocenić zamach majowy 1926 roku, twierdzi, „musimy wziąć pod uwagę to, co radykalna prawica zrobiła w Europie w latach trzydziestych i czterdziestych. Te właśnie siły Piłsudski starał się utrzymać w Polsce pod kontrolą" (s. 180–181). Endecja podsycała obrzydliwą antysemicką propagandę oraz przemoc, co jednak trudno porównać z wyczynami Hitlera, a poza tym to nie antysemityzm najbardziej przeszkadzał Piłsudskiemu w endekach. I wreszcie snuje Porter-Szűcs kontrfaktyczny scenariusz (takie scenariusze to fantazje historyków o przeszłości, która nie mogła, ale powinna się była zdarzyć): II wojna światowa się w nim nie wydarza, a II RP kwitnie zgodnie z marzeniami ministra Kwiatkowskiego, w związku z czym „wspólna edukacja, życie gospodarcze, zeświecczenie i mieszane małżeństwa (…) stępiłyby ostrze polityk tożsamościowych", tak jak się to dzieje w USA (s. 230–233). Też bym tak chciał, ale zdaję sobie sprawę, że jest to marzenie polskiego imperialisty, w którym Ukraińcy, Białorusini, Niemcy i Litwini godzą się ze stopniową polonizacją i statusem obywateli drugiej kategorii. Porter-Szűcs najwyraźniej zapomina, że w tej części świata mieliśmy już swoje Stany Zjednoczone, które uparcie tępiły ostrze polityk tożsamościowych – nazywały się Austro-Węgry, a część Polski wchodziła w ich skład pod nazwą Królestwo Galicji i Lodomerii.

W ten sposób dobrnęliśmy do podtytułu, który obiecuje *historię Polski bez martyrologii*. Niestety, realizację tego postulatu można streścić w formie trzech dość kontrowersyjnych tez: (1) że mieszkańcy ziem polskich niespecjalnie cierpieli z powodu braku niepodległości w XIX wieku, a (2) obywatele PRL-u niespecjalnie cierpieli z powodu życia w systemie komunistycznym (choć, jak się dowiadujemy na s. 460, w latach osiemdziesiątych XX wieku „różnym ludziom nie podobały się różne rzeczy"). Ponadto, (3) zgodnie z tezą, że wszelkie konflikty etniczne i międzykulturowe są wynikiem agitacji nacjonalistycznej, autor dowodzi, że do początku XX wieku „normą" w stosunkach polsko-żydowskich była „codzienna życzliwość" (s. 102), a nawet w II RP i w wykonaniu kardynała Hlonda antysemityzm był wciąż „umiarkowany" (s. 246), a „ludzie mówiący różnymi językami i wyznający różne religie przez większość czasu całkiem dobrze się dogadywali" (s. 234). Do tej listy należałoby dodać wielokrotnie podnoszony przez autora postulat łagodzenia ocen i wyroków, jakie często zbyt łatwo wydajemy w stosunku do ludzi, którym przyszło żyć w pełnych orkiestrowanej z góry przemocy

dekadach dwudziestego stulecia: że w tych czasach kaci często bywali też ofiarami, a ich zbrodniami nie należy obciążać całych społeczności, które reprezentowali. Trzeba mu przyznać, że w swej bezstronności – która może się wydać kłopotliwa czytelnikom, oczekującym wyroków i amnestii – jest konsekwentny.

Podtytuł *historia Polski bez martyrologii* jest jednak zdumiewająco przewrotny. Samo słowo „cierpieć/cierpienie" pada w książce trzydzieści razy, co w tego typu publikacji jest chyba rekordem. Jakby przestraszony, że czytelnik mógłby serio pomyśleć, że książka będzie w jakiś sposób umniejszać cierpienia Polaków, autor wielokrotnie zapewnia, że były one przeogromne i pod żadnym względem nie gorsze, niż czyjeś inne (zob. np. s. 189: choć w wielu miejscach na świecie poziom ubóstwa był wyższy niż w II RP, „nie umniejsza to jednak skali cierpienia w Polsce"). Niedostatki martyrologii narodowej zastępuje tu martyrologia nierówności społecznych, przy czym standardy autora są naprawdę wyśrubowane, jako że panujące dziś w Europie Zachodniej stosunki majątkowe uważa za „straszliwe zło" (s. 194) i w związku z tym uznaje za „niezbyt zachwycający wynik", że nierówności dochodowe w Polsce (w 2017 roku) były nieco niższe niż w Niemczech i Francji (s. 535). Martyrologia występuje tu też jednak w wersji à *rebours*: książka komplementuje np. w sposób przesadny polski wysiłek wojenny w 1920 roku (s. 159), a opis kampanii wrześniowej (s. 272) popada w zupełną fantastykę w duchu polskiej megalomanii narodowej. Autor wydaje się też zafascynowany postacią Jana Pawła II (s. 472–473) niczym prawdziwy polski patriota. Warto więc czytać *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj*, książkę napisaną z prawdziwie polemiczną swadą, choćby po to, aby się przekonać, ile cierpienia, ubóstwa, heroizmu oraz narodowej specyfiki i wyjątkowości wydobywa z historii Polski wybitny amerykański historyk, który bardzo nie chce ich dostrzec.

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ANTONI PORAYSKI-POMSTA

Całkiem zwyczajny kraj i wyzwania historii ogólnych

Brian Porter-Szűcs zaznacza, że jego praca nie jest tekstem polemicznym. Mimo to nie ulega wątpliwości, że autor stawia ją w opozycji do sposobów, na które historia jest wykorzystywana przez środowisko, które nazywa „wspólnotowcami". Historia bez martyrologii, którą proponuje jako alternatywę, nie jest formą „kształtowania świadomości historycznej społeczeństwa… w kierunku pielęgnowania więzi narodowych" (s. 575), a próbą rekonstrukcji i analizy złożonych doświadczeń ludzi zamieszkujących tereny, które na przestrzeni ostatnich trzech stuleci postrzegano jako polskie. Należy ją więc zaliczyć do rosnącej w ostatnich latach grupy publikacji podminowujących polityczno-narodową wizję historii Polski.

W odróżnieniu od większości z nich *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* jest w dużej mierze konwencjonalną historią ogólną. Autor nie polemizuje z powszechnie przyjętą chronologią, tak jak to robi na przykład Adam Leszczyński (Leszczyński 2020), ani nie przyjmuje radykalnie odmiennej metodologii bądź perspektywy, jak choćby Kacper Pobłocki w niedawno opublikowanym *Chamstwie* (Pobłocki 2021). Porter-Szűcs czerpie wprawdzie z mniej popularnej w Polsce historii globalnej, ale trudno *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* nazwać historią globalną *per se*. Jest to raczej historia „nowoczesnej" Polski wzbogacona o interesujące, lecz krótkie i skupione na historii gospodarczej porównania z innymi częściami świata, przede wszystkim Stanami Zjednoczonymi i Ameryką Łacińską.

Dzięki znakomitej narracji, którą zawdzięczamy zarówno autorowi, jak i tłumaczom, *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* w sposób przystępny przybliża czytelnikowi gospodarczą, społeczną i polityczną historię Polski. Jej odniesienia do licznych trendów historiograficznych ukazują znajome polskiemu czytelnikowi wydarzenia w nowych barwach. To właśnie w tym kontekście inspiracja historią globalną jest szczególnie pomocna – pozwala ujrzeć historię Polski jako typową, a nie wyjątkową. Dotyczy to znaczącej liczby wydarzeń malowanych w polskiej historiografii i polityce historycznej jako wyjątkowe, na przykład rozbiorów czy okresu stalinizmu.

Jednocześnie, mimo że nie jest to publikacja skierowana przede wszystkim do czytelnika akademickiego, *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* odnosi się i polemizuje z wpływowymi interpretacji historii Europy Wschodniej. Warto na przykład wspomnieć, jak umiejętnie i przekonująco autor polemizuje z tezami Yuriego Slezkine'a (2004) – szczególnie tymi, które dotyczą dużej popularności partii komunistycznej wśród społeczności żydowskich. Rosyjsko-amerykański historyk twierdzi, że komunizm (tak jak zresztą syjonizm), oferował ucieczkę od brzemienia etniczności. Porter-Szűcs, posługując się danymi statystycznymi, pokazuje natomiast, że przed wybuchem II wojny światowej odsetek osób pochodzenia żydowskiego popierających partie komunistyczne nie odbiegał znacząco od normy i argumentuje, że większość Żydów, tak jak i zresztą Polaków, w znacznym stopniu dystansowała się od polityki. W ten sposób *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* mierzy wyżej niż sama polemika z mitem „żydo-komuny" i wzbudza zainteresowanie również historyków.

Kolejną cechą wyróżniającą książkę Portera-Szűcsa spośród licznych historii ogólnych jest jej wrażliwość na losy zwykłego człowieka, które często nikną w wielkich narracjach historycznych. Autor wielokrotnie zaznacza, że cierpią ludzie, nie narody (s. 19) i przypomina czytelnikowi, że to właśnie ci pierwsi powinni być dla historyka najważniejsi. Jest to cecha wyraźnie inspirowana obecnym zainteresowaniem tak zwaną ludową historią Polski, chociaż *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* nie jest częścią tego nurtu.

Szczególnie godne uwagi są te fragmenty książki, w których autor odwołuje się do własnych badań. Czytelnikowi trudno będzie znaleźć bardziej spójne i przejrzyste wprowadzenie do historii narodów i nacjonalizmów niż *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj*. Nie utrudniając lektury odniesieniami do teorii, Porter-Szűcs tłumaczy osiągnięcia konstruktywizmu i przedstawia naród jako niespójny i zmienny przedmiot sporów. Tak jak w swojej najbardziej wpływowej publikacji, doskonale tłumaczy,

w jaki sposób polski „nacjonalizm zaczął nienawidzić”[5] (Porter-Szűcs 2002). Być może szkoda, że autor nie spróbował przybliżyć czytelnikowi swojej fascynującej tezy, że odejście od diachronicznej do synchronicznej wizji narodu było integralną częścią tej przemiany. W interpretacji tej, myślenie o narodzie jako bycie, który będzie się w przyszłości rozwijał, pozwala na większy stopień tolerancji niż przekonanie, że dojrzałość musi osiągnąć on (naród) tu i teraz, tak jak to robiła już przed I wojną światową Narodowa Demokracja. Byłoby to tym bardziej wartościowe, że analizy oparte na roli postrzegania czasu w historii społecznej i politycznej zdobywają coraz większą popularność wśród zachodnich historyków (Fryxell 2019).

Równie sprawnie *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* przedstawia zmienną i trudną rolę Kościoła i katolicyzmu w historii Polski. Ponownie czerpiąc z własnych badań na ten temat (Porter-Szűcs 2011), autor analizuje zacieśniającą się współpracę hierarchii Kościoła katolickiego z Narodową Demokracją, jego stosunek do społeczności żydowskich oraz ważną rolę w okresie PRL-u. Rezultat z pewnością jest odświeżającym odejściem od jednostronnej i nużącej narracji dominującej w Polsce. Doświadczenie i wiedza autora pozwalają mu również na przedstawienie interesującej tezy, że podłożem dla współpracy Kościoła z rządem Prawa i Sprawiedliwości po 2015 roku jest nie tylko zbieżność interesów, ale przede wszystkim słabość kościoła wynikająca między innymi z procesów sekularyzacyjnych.

Należy również zwrócić uwagę na tytułowy cel książki, jakim jest demartyrologizacja historii Polski. Jest to zamiar cenny, a może nawet konieczny, biorąc pod uwagę rosnące naciski na historyków ze strony polskiego rządu oraz jego redukcjonistyczną politykę historyczną. *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* wielokrotnie i niezwykle sprawnie burzy mity znane każdej osobie uczestniczącej w polskim życiu publicznym. Jest to szczególnie widoczne przy okazji omówienia szerszego kontekstu wybuchu powstania warszawskiego. Nieczęsto wykorzystywane porównanie z powstaniem w Getcie Warszawskim efektywnie ilustruje atmosferę strachu i desperacji, w której podjęto decyzję o walce zbrojnej; decyzję bezwarunkowo gloryfikowaną przez jeden koniec spektrum politycznego oraz bez namysłu potępianą przez drugi. Nie znaczy to jednak, że demartyrologizacja jest potrzebna tylko w środowiskach nieakademickich. Mimo wybitnych dokonań, polska historiografia, jak wszystkie historiografie narodowe, ma tendencję do izolacjonizmu i swego rodzaju ekscepcjonalizmu.

5 Odnoszę się tutaj do tytułu owej książki: *Gdy nacjonalizm zaczął nienawidzić*.

Pozostaje jednak pytanie, czy można napisać historię Polski bez martyrologii przy zachowaniu jej konwencjonalnej struktury. W końcu narodowe mity nie tylko wpływają na wybiórczą pamięć o pewnych wydarzeniach, ale również wykluczają niektóre grupy z historycznej narracji. Chociaż spojrzenie globalne pomaga, *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* zdecydowanie nie jest radykalnym odejściem od konwencji. Czytelnik poznaje w gruncie rzeczy te same osoby, jakie przewijają się w innych dziełach poświęconych historii Polski, począwszy od Adama Mickiewicza, Józefa Piłsudskiego i Romana Dmowskiego, a kończąc na Edwardzie Gierku i Lechu Wałęsie. Owszem, w książce pojawia się Róża Luksemburg, lecz całokształt pozostawia niedosyt pod kątem zmiany wiodących postaci. Innymi słowy, trudno nie zwrócić uwagi na paradoks, że mimo wspomnianej wcześniej wrażliwości autora na losy zwykłego człowieka, nie poznajemy żadnego z nich z imienia. Choć autor wielokrotnie zaznacza, że pisze o ludziach, a nie o ludzie, sam tekst tego nacisku nie odzwierciedla, bo przecież okazjonalne przytoczenie popularnego żartu bądź piosenki funkcji tej spełnić nie może. Czytelnik nie ma możliwości poznania nawet powszechnych w historiach ogólnych krótkich biografii, które mają ilustrować przemiany społeczno-polityczne danego okresu (np. Evans 2016).

Całkiem zwyczajny kraj jest książką o ograniczonej objętości i sporych ambicjach chronologicznych oraz tematycznych, niemniej warto ją wykorzystać do szerszych rozważań na temat tego jak niemartyrologiczna historia Polski mogłaby zostać przedstawiona. Zważywszy na rosnącą popularność „historii oddolnej", trudno nie zwrócić uwagi, że taki projekt powinien nie tylko mówić o „ludzie", ale ludowi chociaż w pewnym stopniu głos oddawać, a także kłaść nacisk na jego dziejową sprawczość. Przykładowo, zwrócenie uwagi na różne nienarodowe tożsamości lokalne i społeczne mogłoby wzbogacić omówienie konstruowanej natury narodu i nacjonalizmu i zarazem jeszcze efektywniej usunąć go z piedestału. Podobnie przytoczenie jednej lub dwóch biografii „ludowych" (a takich przecież istnieją setki, między innymi dzięki Towarzystwu Przyjaciół Pamiętnikarstwa) byłoby niezwykle wartościowym kontrapunktem dla ogólnych i (co nieuniknione) abstrakcyjnych dyskusji o gospodarce.

Jest to szczególnie istotne z perspektywy historii społecznej, gdyż pozwala odejść od postrzegania zwykłych ludzi jako ofiar bądź zwycięzców nowoczesności czy modernizacji, a przybliżyć się do przestawienia ich jako ich integralnej części. Na przykład migracja do miast czy też do Stanów Zjednoczonych była nie tylko konsekwencją zmian gospodarczych, ale też czynnikiem skutkującym przyspieszeniem tempa uprzemysłowienia. Kwestią pominiętą przez autora są również powroty migran-

tów do kraju i na wieś. Zarówno „Amerykanie", jak i robotnicy chłopskiego pochodzenia odegrali kluczową rolę w rozprzestrzenianiu nowych praktyk społecznych, ideologii, mody oraz innych czynników, które historycy kojarzą z nowoczesnością (Duda-Dziewierz 1938). Być może krótkie spojrzenie na Polskę z dala od Polski przy użyciu opublikowanych listów migrantów z Brazylii i Stanów Zjednoczonych lepiej przyczyniłoby do opisania motywacji migrantów niż nieco abstrakcyjne refleksje na temat czynników, które badacze migracji nazwaliby wypychającymi i przyciągającymi (Assorodobraj-Kula et al. 1973).

Jednostkowe biografie i „mikrohistorie" są potrzebne do rozbijania binarnych kategorii, z którymi historie ogólne zawsze mają problem i które są ważną częścią martyrologicznej wizji historii Polski. Kategorie nowoczesności i przednowoczesności, miejskości i wiejskości, polskości i niepolskości, wydają się najbardziej płynne wtedy, kiedy są ukazane przez pryzmat doświadczeń jednostek zwyczajnych, a nie „wybitnych" (z perspektywy historii politycznej). Przykładowo, *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* ukazuje późno dziewiętnastowiecznych migrantów jako ofiary niezrozumiałych dla nich przemian społeczno-gospodarczych, dla których miejski styl życia był „dezorientujący" (s. 74). Nie jest to oczywiście błędem, a pewnym uproszczeniem, ale też takim, które umacnia binarne postrzeganie relacji wieś–miasto, a samych chłopów – jako nieświadome ofiary dziejowych okoliczności. Jednak spojrzenie na przestrzenną i społeczną naturę przedmieść wielkich miast przemysłowych (przykładowo na łódzkie Bałuty), dokąd przybywała większość migrantów, utrudnia takie myślenie. Chłopskie (czy też chłopsko-robotnicze) listy zamieszczone w czasopismach na przełomie dziewiętnastego i dwudziestego wieku przedstawiają przedmieścia w sposób zaskakująco podobny do rzeczywistości wiejskiej w uprzemysławiających się regionach. Przestrzeń miejska, do której przenosili się chłopi nie musiała być zupełnie obca i dezorientująca. Jednocześnie takie (ego-)dokumenty pozwalają docenić niezwykłą zaradność i przedsiębiorczość migrantów wobec nowych wyzwań, co ułatwia ukazanie ich w sposób inny niż jako ofiary. Żeby rzeczywiście pokazać, że cierpią ludzie, nie lud, ci pierwsi muszą zostać potraktowani w sposób bardziej jednostkowy i przez to całościowy. Pozwala to też odejść od punktu widzenia elit starających się lud unowocześnić, unarodowić, wyedukować, uratować. Obraz historii, który otrzymalibyśmy w zamian jest wyjątkowo odporny na martyrologię.

Grupą w szczególności pominiętą w *Całkiem zwyczajnym kraju* są kobiety. Istotne byłoby spojrzenie na ich historie nie tylko w różnych kategoriach intersekcjonalnych (kobiety-chłopki, kobiety-robotnice), ale również omówienie kwestii istotnych z kobiecej perspektywy, na

przykład reprodukcji oraz, w późniejszym okresie, praw reprodukcyjnych. Skala protestów związanych z ograniczaniem dostępu do aborcji w ostatnich latach pokazuje, że stanowi to wyjątkowo ważną kwestię społeczną dla kobiet w Polsce. Co prawda autor poświęca kilka stron na opisanie tych zagadnień w okresie wczesnego PRL-u, niemniej trudno nie zauważyć, że omówienie tak zwanego kompromisu aborcyjnego powinno się znaleźć w rozdziale o transformacji.

Być może powinniśmy traktować martyrologiczną naturę dyskursu o historii Polski jako złożony problem, z którym warto polemizować równolegle na dwóch poziomach: na poziomie historii narodowej i historii społecznej. Porter-Szűcs, skupiając się na historii narodowej Polski, pokazał, że można ją napisać bez martyrologii. Wydaje się jednak, że *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* otwiera pole do tego, aby historia ta mogła zostać przedstawiona bardziej satysfakcjonująco również z perspektywy społecznej. Jest to książka, która zadaje trudne pytania i podważa to, co wielu Polakom wydaje się oczywiste. Nie ograniczając się do polemiki z najprostszymi przykładami narodowej martyrologii, Porter-Szűcs umieszcza historię Polski w szerszym kontekście w sposób zarówno precyzyjny, jak i przystępny. Mimo że trudno ją nazwać książką heretycką, jest to publikacja, która z pewnością dołączy do grona najczęściej polecanych przez historyków wprowadzeń do historii nowoczesnej Polski.

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Response to Book Forum

When I was just starting my career, I was given some good advice: never argue with a book review. The risk of sounding overly sensitive to criticism is too great, and if a claim isn't sufficiently supported in a book, then a mere essay cannot rectify the problem. With that in mind, I won't even attempt to respond to all the excellent points made by Dobrochna Kałwa, Adam Kożuchowski, and Antoni Porayski-Pomsta. I only want to thank them for their close and careful readings, and for taking the time to discuss my work with such a generous spirit. Insofar as there are disagreements between us regarding historiographical or methodological claims (and in the case of Adam Kożuchowski's review, there are several important ones), I will allow the assertions made in *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* to stand or fall on their own merits.[6]

I do think it would be useful, however, to consider a point made by all three reviewers regarding a gap between the book's argument and its mode of presentation. Antoni Porayski-Pomsta summarizes the problem astutely by observing that "it hard not to notice the paradox, that despite

6 In particular, disagreements about the concept of "nation"—and of collective identity more broadly—would pull us into a conversation that dates back at least half a century, and which we won't resolve here. I've addressed this issue more fully in Polish in "Podzwonne dla badań nad nacjonalizmem" (Porter-Szűcs 2005, 79–89), as well as in my book *Gdy nacjonalizm zaczął nienawidzić* (Porter-Szűcs 2011). More recently, I examined these themes in "Polish Intersectionality" (Porter-Szűcs 2021).

the aforementioned sensitivity of the author for the fate of „common people" we do not get to know any of them by the name". As readers here and elsewhere have noted, *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* is a resolutely macrohistorical work that repudiates the macrohistorical gaze. This is indeed paradoxical, but intentionally so.

For several decades now, there has been an expanding gap between the sort of history found in academic publications and the sort enjoyed by the broader public. Among professional scholars, popular works of history are typically dismissed as out-of-date, simplistic, and tendentious, whereas in the general-interest media, scholarly works are often described as impenetrable, hyperspecialized, and irrelevant. This issue is somewhat less acute in Poland, but it exists there too, where it is often characterized (mischaracterized, in my opinion) as a divide between scholars influenced by international trends and those more firmly grounded in the Polish context, or as a split between younger researchers and more established professors.

It is certainly true that scholarly writing is often characterized by atrocious prose, but I don't think the main issue is the quality of the writing. For every jargon-filled thicket of obscurantism, I could cite tantalizing storytelling that nonetheless fails to significantly change popular historical understanding. The problem, I think, lies with an antipathy within academia against works of synthesis and grand narrative, even in the face of an urgent need for such frameworks.

Research in educational psychology emphasizes the importance of "scaffolding": a cognitive structure that allows students to mentally organize what they learn.[7] If I gave you a list of the 20th century prime ministers for an unfamiliar country, you would probably find it hard to memorize; if you already knew the broad outlines of that country's history, the task would be much easier. With this in mind, educators are urged to provide students with the framework they need make sense of new information, before expecting them to assimilate and understand the information itself. The same advice applies (or rather, should apply) to any scholarly writing that we hope to extend beyond our immediate peers.

Since the 1970s and 1980s in the US, and somewhat more recently in Poland, historians have been neglecting the cognitive infrastructure of our field, focusing instead on microhistorical studies, usually about those who were marginalized by older grand narratives. This has sparked an exciting (and still ongoing) wave of scholarship in which historians have used new methodologies to challenge old assumptions. From the

7 For examples from higher education, see Lang 2016 and Miller 2014.

pioneering work of people like Carlo Ginzburg (1976; polish translation 1989), Natalie Zemon Davis (1984; polish translation 2011), or Robert Darnton (1984; polish translation 2012), all the way down to recent authors like Tara Zahra (2008) or Tiya Miles (2021), historians have been allowing the so-called "subalterns" to speak in ways earlier generations thought impossible.[8] In Polish historiography, this trend is represented by people (not always trained as historians) like Małgorzata Fidelis (2022), Aleksandra Leyk and Joanna Wawrzyniak (2020), Adam Leszczyński (2020), Kacper Pobłocki (2021), Wiktor Marzec (2016), Agata Zysiak (2017), and so many more. This decades-long process of historical rescue has brought to the center that which was once marginal, and in doing so, it has transformed our discipline for the better.

And yet, once we leave the confines of our university halls, we get the impression that little has changed. Both textbooks and popular culture perpetuate interpretive frameworks long since debunked by specialists. Revisionist writers sometimes even break through with best-sellers, but even as these are celebrated, they have minimal impact on the broad categories of historical interpretation circulating among the public. Part of this is undeniably political: by its very nature, the act of recovery at the core of microhistory has radical implications. But something deeper is also at work here, because one also encounters a gap of mutual misunderstanding between scholars and general readers regardless of ideological orientation.

I think this is because even the most successful challenges mounted by microhistorians have turned out to be *additive* rather than *transformative*, despite the intentions of the authors. I see this acutely in the United States, where my children are taught a vastly more inclusive history than I learned back in the 1960s and 1970s. They learn about the horrors of slavery and the crimes committed against the indigenous population of North America. They celebrate Martin Luther King and Harriett Tubman alongside George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. But the main story-lines of their textbooks do not really differ much from the dusty old books that I read as a child. In Poland, the most recent round of curricular reforms and the political exploitation of history is starkly reactionary, but prior to 2015, there were a few promising trends, particularly regarding the inclusion of Jews in Polish history (the Polin Museum is a shining example, but it is not an isolated phenomenon). Yet here too the process was mostly additive, with "the Jews"

8 I picked those two newer examples because both authors are recent recipients of the extraordinarily prestigious MacArthur Prize.

usually tagged on alongside "the Poles" in a state- and nation-centered narrative.

When most people encounter microhistories that challenge their broad preconceptions, one of two things happens: the new information either slides right by them or they find a way to squeeze it into what they already think they know. This is not some sort of intellectual defect or the product of lazy thinking; rather, it is a natural cognitive process that we all use when encountering new information. This is why it has proven insufficient to offer microhistorical narratives "from below" as a challenge to hegemonic understandings of the past. If we want to change how people assimilate new voices from the margins, we need to offer a new synthesis that creates a new scaffolding. We cannot assume that adding complexity or uncovering previously unheard voices will accomplish our goals.

The importance of macrohistory became evident three years ago in the United States when the *New York Times* published a monumental report by Nikole Hannah-Jones called "The 1619 Project."[9] This text provoked so much outrage that lawmakers in many parts of the United States have passed legislation prohibiting its use in schools, and a few states are even trying to block its central arguments from university classrooms. The significance of the work was not that it introduced new voices into the story of the United States. Instead, it proposed a new framing device for the stories that we already (mostly) know. The title captured the key challenge: what if we centered American history not on the Declaration of Independence in 1776, but on the arrival of the first African slave in 1619? Work detailing the brutality of slavery, including countless popular histories, novels, and films, have been accruing for decades, and mostly they passed without much public commentary. However, when faced with the suggestion that we reconstruct our historical scaffolding, the backlash was intense. Some of the specifics of "the 1619 project" have been challenged by historians, but in broad outlines, the undertaking achieved its objective in a way hundreds of more thoroughly researched works of scholarship have not. Indeed, the title alone was responsible for much of the impact.

This is what I was hoping to accomplish with *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* (including the deployment of a provocative title). I deliberately

9 See https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619--america-slavery.html. This was subsequently published as a book (Hannah-Jones 2021). For a summary of the scholarly criticisms of this undertaking, see Wilentz 2020. The debate has been strikingly similar to the controversy in Poland surrounding Jan Gross's *Sąsiedzi* (2000), which similarly made an impact that stands.

wanted to stay at the macro level, keeping details to an absolute minimum and using microhistorical anecdotes sparingly. I did not even want to mention *any* names unless they were so significant that I couldn't avoid them—that's why the people I did include are so familiar. I wanted readers to focus on the large arc of the story with as few distractions as possible. I opted not to provide more nuanced accounts from "common people," although I certainly recognize the crucial importance of such information in the long run. For this book, I wanted readers to see the intellectual infrastructure clearly, stripped as much as possible of the finely drawn anecdotes that could be domesticated and assimilated, or (worse) exploited by critics to challenge the larger arguments. In hindsight, I wish I had thought of an inventive way to disrupt the familiar chronological signposts in the spirit of replacing 1619 for 1776 in US history. Instead, as reviewers have noted, the chapter structure of the book is rather banal and unsurprising. On the other hand, maybe it was important to maintain some familiar road-markings in order to emphasize more clearly that I was trying to re-pave the road. Moreover, the point was never to deny the importance of political history, but instead to reframe it. The inclusion of the conventional gallery of elites was therefore unavoidable, as a means of providing metonyms for time periods (e.g., "the Gomułka years") or political movements (e.g., the "Piłsudczycy"). So perhaps it is not a paradox after all that my attempt to turn away from the "lud Polski" and towards "ludzie w Polsce" did not include more tales about individuals. My hope is that *Całkiem zwyczajny kraj* might assist readers outside of academia in constructing a new scaffold in order to better appreciate the exciting new work by so many talented scholars who are already rewriting Polish history.

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Title: Poland and the Modern World. Review Forum

Abstract: The new *Theoretical Practice* review forum deals with the synthesis of the recent history of Poland by the American historian Brian Porter-Szűcs. The work, conceived as a counterbalance to the martyrological and self-centered narrative about Poland and Poles in recent decades, has provoked lively reactions. We invited to debate historians of various generations and academic circles, working in Poland and in the English-speaking world. They take up key issues for historical writing and the key concepts of Polish history. These are, among others, the challenges of synthesis, the limits of comparison and the scaling of the point of view and the position from which a historian, immersed in his own linguistic community or national culture, speaks. The work in question brings into view perks and perils of various positions of the writer towards the community of recipients. The forum participants point out the risks of using one's own experiences and memories as a signpost in assessing historical events and the problem of writing history of ordinary people, often despite the author's will, remaining a nameless mass. This forum is a great starting point for a discussion on these key issues of historical writing.

Keywords: history of Poland, polish studies, martyrology, comparison, people's history, global history