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В ожидании чего? Надежда и выносливость в ситуациях неопределенности среди соискателей убежища в Греции

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I discuss how transformations in the asylum management in Greece in 2019 led to the increased uncertainty about the future among asylum-seekers and refugees, altering their experience and interpretation of waiting amidst the bureaucratic procedures. Those in process of asylum application questioned their commitment to waiting, which culminated in the mobilisation of some groups of refugees and asylum-seekers in an attempted collective walkout. Critiquing the Greek state for its restrictive welfare policies and exclusionary practices of asylum, the participants of mobilisation acted on their own vision and ideas of future − elsewhere. Drawing on a year of ethnographic work in Greek borderlands, I reflect on the state's capacity to generate social hope versus how hope acts as a resource deployed in the future-making by people seeking asylum. Examining the emergence of the Glitter of Hope, a collective march of asylum-seekers and refugees in Greece in spring 2019, and the following response to it by the Greek state, I contrast hope as a medium for political projects, as opposed to it being a technique instrumentalised and manipulated by the state to create disciplined and inactive subjects, suspended in a state of hopeful waiting.

Выдержка

В этой статье я рассказываю о том, как изменения в политике предоставления убежища в Греции в 2019 году привели к росту неуверенности о будущем среди просителей убежища и беженцев с подтвержденным статусом. Эти изменения привели к изменению общего восприятия и опыта ожидания как такового. Люди, ищущие убежища, поставили под сомнение свою готовность ждать бюрократических процессов, мобилизовавшись в коллективное противостояние и оспаривание практики предоставления убежища в Греции в целом. Критикуя греческое государство за невыполнение социально-политических обязательств, участники мобилизации действовали, основываясь на свих идеях о лучшем будущем, используя надежду в качестве ресурса. Опираясь на год этнографической работы в приграничных районах Греции, я размышляю о способности государства генерировать социальную надежду в противовес тому, как надежда может быть ресурсом, используемым в мигрантами в процессе "создании будущего". На

примере "Блеска Надежды", марша соискателей убежища и беженцев в Греции весной 2019 года и последующей реакции на него греческого государства, я исследую, как надежда может быть коллективным активом, используемым для того, чтобы требовать и действовать для достижения желаемого, но недоступном в настоящем будущем. Я противопоставляю надежду как средство для политизации (использованное беженцами), с надеждой как инструмент для дисциплинирования и создания бездейственно "надеющихся" и лояльных субъектов (использованное государственными структурами).

Introduction

> You wake up, and lay down and watch how the sun moves in a circle, and then you see it being down. A day is over, camp ate it. I could not be there. (Camp resident on days in Chios hotspot camp)
> At least they have something to do. (Camp security officer on the hours long-lasting food lines in Chios hotspot camp)

Waiting, life on hold, 'stuckedness' (Hage, 2009) or 'protracted uncertainty' (Biehl, 2015) have been used to describe a specific kind of temporality in which the migrants, urban poor and other vulnerable groups live. 'Waiting patiently and then frustratedly for others to make decisions' is a dynamic applicable to all powerless groups (Auyero, 2012, p. 4). Making someone wait is an exercise of power, a relational process in which 'vulnerability and humiliation' associated with the loss of control over one's own time is generated (Bendixsen & Eriksen, 2018, p. 92). Waiting is inherent in the bureaucracy of asylum, with its paperwork, lasting procedures of assessment, validation and appeals. On the one hand, waiting establishes one of the methods of temporal ordering, in which people waiting for a decision on their asylum application have limited capacity to predict and create long-term life projects, and thus find themselves in uncertain present. On the other hand, the process is interpretive, as it is tied to the anticipation of the resolution of one's asylum claim and the linked ideas of an imagined future.

In this article, I discuss how the announcement of the Greek state to cease the humanitarian support and schemes of housing for recently recognised refugees in 2019 led to the increased uncertainty about the future among asylum-seekers and refugees, altering their experience and interpretation of waiting amidst the bureaucratic procedures. Protracted waiting for the resolution of one's legal status was counteractively and simultaneously perceived as a condition that ensures economic and physical survival but also as time and life opportunities wasted. Uncertainty about the meaning of asylum together with the loss of hope for the secure future mobilised both the asylum-seekers and the recognised refugees to collectively organise in the 'Glitter of Hope': an improvised attempt to contest the state and to demand inclusion in the welfare support. By welfare support and welfare rights I do not mean the welfare payment to refugees and asylum-seekers, neither the temporal access to housing, but the access to education, labour marker, medical health, social support, integration schemes – in general the means of socio-political inclusion of a state's non-permanent population.

In Greece, there are different modalities of uncertainty that do not necessarily only relate to legal categorisation but are also interlinked with ambiguities and irregularities of the humanitarian infrastructures. In this article, I take the seeming clash of those modalities as a starting point for my analysis. To gain understanding of temporal and affective dynamics of waiting as well as the centrality of hope in the process, I employ the concept of waiting out and waiting for introduced by Hage (2009). Through the example of the Glitter of Hope and the following response to it by the Greek state, I contrast hope as a medium for political projects drawn upon by refugees and asylum-seekers to it being instrumentalised and manipulated by the Greek state as technique for creating disciplined and hopefully inactive subjects. Before I introduce the context of Greece as a site of waiting for

asylum and proceed with the analysis, I give the overview of the research and outline the taken approach and methods.

Methods

Ethnographic data for this article were gathered in Greece between July 2018 and September 2019, as a part of fieldwork for my PhD research. Employing the phenomenological approach, I followed people seeking asylum in their spatial, temporal and socio-legal trajectories, attempting to reach deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of their life situations as well as the asylum management practices of that shaped them. Following the experience rather than a site, I took on the call of Sarah Willen to view migration as 'a mode of being' in the world (Willen, 2007).

My PhD research started in Chios, the European hotspot in the Aegean, in summer 2018. Due to the increasing securitisation of the refugee spaces as well as the apparent policy of the Greek state to keep the asylum management as invisible as possible, my efforts to obtain the research permit for participant-observation in the camp from the camp administration were never successful. The Chios refugee camp management seemed to employ the strictly 'no researchers – no journalists' policy, even more so after the BBC report on the neighbouring hotspot Lesvos in August 2018, in which the representative of the NGO Médecins Sans Frontières gave a testimony on the suicide attempts done by children in Moria camp.[1]

Due to those limitations, my field research sites in Chios included primary public places: village and the non-securitised area in front of the camp, public squares in the main city of the island, language centres, hospitals, police offices, etc. An important entry point to the research was one of the solidarity educational centres on the island, in which I offered English and German classes. The research was of interest to some of the visitors of the centre, and through using the snowball method, I managed to recruit research-participants on the island and beyond.

As my connections in Chios grew, I included Izmir, Turkey, as my second field-site. This coastal city was mentioned to me by virtually all asylum-seeking interview partners in Chios as the place where they had stayed while waiting for the arrangement of sea-crossing. Finally, the field research was concluded in the mainland Greece, Athens region, where some of the asylum-seekers from Chios were transferred to. In that context, transfer refers to the logistical-administrative procedure entailing relocation from the hotspot islands to one of the camps in the mainland Greece. Unaccompanied minors, people marked as highly vulnerable and persons whose applications could 'reasonably be considered to be well founded' (article 39 of Law 4636/2019 'on international protection and other provision') were the candidates for the transfer. It was commonly shared by my interlocutors in Chios that the transfer implied not *probably* receiving a rejection and *probably* not being deported to Turkey in the aftermath.

Providing the reader with the ethnographic material as well as the discussion of relevant changes in refugee management in Greece in 2019, I want to reflect on the meaning and dynamics of waiting among asylum-seekers and its relation to hope. How does hope affect the experience and practices of waiting? What is the role of the welfare state in this process? Conversations and insights shared by asylum-seekers with pending refugee status, especially one of my closest research participants, Ibrahim, provide for the analysis of waiting for this article.

I met Ibrahim in July 2018 while volunteering in one of the solidarity educational centres in Chios. We established a contact and close friendship, and over the next years, I witnessed some of his experiences and dilemmas, shared his concerns and achievements. Like other people negatively affected by the asylum governance, Ibrahim taught me how tangible, discomposing and numbing the experience of living in constant uncertainty and doubting is. Ibrahim is a Syrian citizen in his late thirties from the north, he worked in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey in various construction projects. After 2016, with the failed coup in Turkey and with the start of mass deportations of Syrian citizens to Syria, he travelled to Europe out of hope to apply for asylum. By the time we met, he received two rejections of asylum request – on the basis of Turkey as the safe third country due

the previous years spent in the country. After the second rejection, he followed the legal advice to be seen by the island's psychiatrist. Being medically labelled as vulnerable, would have overruled the procedure of return to Turkey (the so-called fast track border procedure that was introduced on the Greek hotspots after the conclusion of the EU-Turkey deal in 2016). Ibrahim received a diagnose of PTSD, which allowed him to be channelled to the normal asylum process that would look at the merit of his asylum claim. This bureaucratic process took a year of his life. Meanwhile, the date given to him in summer 2018 for the refugee status determination interview was November 2020. As we met, he had more than two years ahead of him before the legal procedure would even start. Such protracted scheduling of refugee status interviews was not an uncommon phenomena on the hotspot. It was especially characteristic in 2018 for the Syrian citizens (specifically single men), and extended to citizens of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine in 2019. The bureaucratic making of legal limbo till 2020–2021 produced numerous rumours and explanations. Many of my Syrian inter-locutors shared the theory that postponing the interviews was a strategy of the state to 'wait out' the war in Syria, and thus to 'wait out' their asylum claim to become unfounded. Those attempts to 'make sense' out of the years lasting limbo occurred in the context of increasingly discriminative asylum policies in Greece.

Theory

The functioning of asylum management not only through the control of space but also through the control of time has been given increasing attention in migration research (e.g. Bendixsen & Eriksen, 2018; Biehl, 2015; Hage, 2009; Turner, 2015; Van Houtum, 2010). Immobilisation in time – through the creation of protracted waiting – has been recognised as one of the techniques of asylum govern-ance. To be subjected to waiting has been understood as to be disciplined, deprived of one's control for doing and proceeding. Van Houtum (2010), among others, argued that it is in waiting the power is constantly reproduced. Through agreeing to waiting the subject internalises the domi-nant order and agrees to terms that 'not yet include a destiny, a future, a promise, a life beyond the present reality, that can only be reached through training, devotion, honesty, working or even suicide, depending on whatever the promise consists of' (p. 287).

The unpredictable nature of such waiting, the possible interpretations about the 'life beyond the present reality' invite hope as a simultaneous disposition in this process. Early anthropological work on hope describes it as a 'temporal attitude', a capacity to 'reimagine the present from the perspec-tive of the end' Miyazaki (2006). Zigon adds to the Miyazaki interpretation the affective dimension, namely that it is necessary for the very activity of living a social life (2009, p. 257) or that it 'necessi-tates the courage to have the hope to keep going, to live life, and in doing so, to face the world' (2009). Turner agrees with the theorisation of hope as a means of navigating the uncertain present, but also argues for it being a form of 'commodity' distributed by various institutions (Turner, 2015, p. 177). That hope can be given in as much as it can be taken away, makes it a highly subtle and affective form of governing. The practices of waiting and hoping – as modes of navigating and experiencing the present as well as modes of temporal and affective ordering are thus highly interlinked.

In this discussion, the differentiation made by Hage is helpful. Hage distinguished two modes of waiting: the waiting *for* something or waiting *out* (2009). In his formulation, 'waiting out is a specific form of waiting where one is not waiting for something but rather waiting for something undesirable that has to end or to go' (2009, p. 102). Waiting *for* is the modality of waiting for the event that is anticipated or predicted to happen. Those two modalities are useful to give orientation in the tem-poral and affective dynamics of waiting: waiting the present to end, anticipating the future to arrive. Those two modes provide a frame to include the interpretive frameworks of time, both future and present, of those who are in the process of waiting. In the context of hotspots, the waiting *out* and waiting *for* form two modalities of experiencing time that are in flux, simultaneously conflicting and co-shaping each other. In Chios, waiting *out* means enduring the living conditions in the asylum

infrastructures for months and possibly years. Meanwhile the waiting *for* means the transition to a secure legal status, once legal and (anticipated) social inclusion. It is this modality that incorporates hope as affective practice as its backdrop.

In 2019, however, this transition acquired the notion of an undesired event due to one's consequent removal from the humanitarian system, which ultimately changed the perception of waiting as a whole. I argue that this change occurred due to the failure of the Greek state to provide a narrative of a future that is secure and stable. The regime of governance of waiting relies on the dynamics of the governance of hope. The commitment to the mode of waiting *out*, the experience of endurance, cannot be maintained without the state providing a future the waiting subjects could hope for.

Background

The bureaucratic waiting on the Chios island, with the refugee status determination interviews scheduled up to 2021, meant conditioning to legal limbo lasting for several years. This indeterminacy occurred in the context of fixation in rather bleak camp structures and exposure to the politics of neglect,[2] and the related sentiments of resentment as well as anxiety about the future prospects. Ethnographic data demonstrated the extent of poor management of the hotspot, despite the deployment of additional labour of EU specialists, and the unprecedented $1.8 billion of financial aid from the EU allocated to Greece for migration-related costs (European Commission: 2020).[3] This included not only the continuously deteriorating conditions of the actual camp, but also the increasingly growing backlog of asylum cases.

Ibrahim, described the lived experience of this as follows

> Some people are just sleeping and not moving, they go to the information and stay there a bit, sleep. All the days are like this: wake up, between the morning, the food and the appointment. We passed a lot of bad time … sometimes no food, sometimes no water. Some months I have no cash card … Do you think you have space in your head to think about future? Or to have passion? What do we need? What we want? (Interview Ibrahim, 13 January 2019)

For those immobilised in the refugee camp on Chios island,[4] urgent matters of food and water shortages, withstanding heat or cold in canvas tents or not having any financial resources numbed the capacities for active and nuanced strategising. Rephrasing Ibrahim, 'there was no space in one's head to think about future'. This fixation of in the moment and daily survival is the structural condition of the most vulnerable groups (Day et al., 1999).In February 2019, the Greek Ministry of Migration Policy announced the gradual eviction of the refugees with a positive refugee status from refugee camps and housing schemes. The financial aid in form of refugee cash assistance was as well announced to be terminated. The first group of the humanitarian exit was to be those with a refugees status recognised before 31 July 2017. Two months after the announcement of the decision, it was not yet exactly known how many people would fall to this group due to a large number of people to be expected to live outside of state-approved housing schemes or even no longer be residing in Greece (interview UNHCR, 23 April 2019). The decision of evicting recognised refugees was not in fact a new policy, but the official declaration of reinforcing the policy that had already existed, but had never been systematically implemented. In accordance to it, the beneficiaries of the refugee status were scheduled to lose their access to granted accommodation and financial support[5] six months after they obtained the positive decision on their asylum claim. *De facto*, refugees with recognised status could remain in the provided accommodation and benefit from the humanitarian support long after their status was determined.

Alterations in practices of financial and social support for refugees in Greece were highly politicised. Greece was facing the national election on 7 July 2019 and the implementation of more drastic measures in migration management seemed to one of the strategies of the ruling SYRIZA party to respond the ongoing criticism and withhold its electorate. Mass protests and demands

from the local municipalities as well as from the asylum-seekers and refugees to decongest the over-crowded refugee camps on the islands were ongoing in Lesvos, Samos and Chios.[6] At the same time, the number of asylum migrants reaching the Greek islands fluctuated between 2000 and 4000 people per month. The government needed to provide a rapid solution to relocate a significant number of people from the islands to elsewhere, and this solution seemed to be found in a formula of establishing the 'evictable' (Van Baar, 2017) category of refugees on the mainland. People from the camps on the islands were to be relocated to the emptied camps on the mainland, while the refugees on the mainland were requested to leave the provided shelter and live 'autonomously'.

The sudden change of practice and the rapid implementation of the withdrawal from humanitar-ian support led to significant arbitrariness and lack of transparency in its implementation. Partly this can be explained with the ongoing transition of refugee management from the humanitarian 'crisis management' of 2015 to the fully state-run response. Three years after the so-called European migration crisis, the efforts on the ground in Greece remained to be fragmented and contingent on a concrete site. In the context of shelter provision, depending on the exact type of accommo-dation (refugee camp, apartment, rented hotel, house) and its location, a specific non-governmental organisation (UNHCR, IOM, INTERSOS, Norwegian Refugee Council, among others) was responsible for site management support. Since no single database was in use to coordinate accommodation, financial support and the determined status, miscommunication and delays in information sharing were the 'regular irregularity' (Rozakou, 2017) of asylum management. Therefore, even though the first 'evictable' group was to be refugees with a status recognised before August 2017, the empirical evidence showed that the reaffirmed policy concerned all refugees with a granted status.

Inconsistent information about evictions and termination of financial support was shared among networks of refugees and asylum-seekers, causing turmoil and unrest. Uncertainty about the prac-tical meaning of the announcement was a shared concern of most of my refugee interlocutors. Evic-tions were rendered unpredictable. Within the same camp setting refugees with the status of approximately same length could be given different information about their housing and cash support. Some were explicitly informed about their 'coming' eviction as early as the announcement was officially made, however, without any timeframe specified. Others were given rather vague and incomplete information.

For instance, one refugee informant from Afghanistan who resided in an urban camp Eleonas in Athens shared how the UNHCR officer while renewing her cashcard[7] showed three fingers, which left her wondering if it had been implied that there were three months of financial support (and housing) that remained. Eleonas camp was referred to me as one of the best camps in mainland Greece: reach-able with public transport from the centre of Athens, it was a wished destination for a transfer for many asylum-seekers I met in Chios. For the same reasons outlined at the beginning of this paper, I was not granted access to the inner part of the camp. However, I was able to observe another aspect of the camp management that can shed light on the scale of confusion in regards to its functioning as a humanitarian tool of sheltering. In July 2019, I visited Eleonas after hearing there was a sit-in protest organised by several families of homeless refugees who demanded to be sheltered in the camp. As I reached the camp, I saw three families on the opposite side of the entry to Eleonas, sitting outside of camping tents. Due to the language barrier, I could only converse to the one family that was from Syria, the remaining two were from Afghanistan. The husband of the family, Khalid*, explained that they had come from another camp in the northern part of Greece, and feared the lack of medical assistance in the camp – he pointed to his pregnant wife – and decided to come to Eleonas following the advice from a friend. Since three weeks, they had been asking the administration of the camp to allow them to tent inside, but were told that the camp was full, and that they needed to go back to the place they had been initially registered. Almost a month they had been staying in a tent outside being supported by Eleonas residents, who shared water as well as food, and also helped them to enter to take a shower. I suggested to accompany the

family to go to the city municipality, where they could register as homeless and be put back on accommodation (refugee camp) programme. Khalid* replied that he didn't want to leave and that perhaps there would be a place available next week.

Such ambiguity in regards to economic and humanitarian support formed a part of the daily engagement of both the accepted refugees and the asylum-seekers in Greece with the state. For many recognised refugees, the continuation of housing and financial support became a game of chance, in which they hoped for monthly extensions of humanitarian aid and housing without knowing the criteria and logic of those extensions. Meanwhile, other refugees avoided explicitly asking about the timeframe of their cash or accommodation assistance, fearing that questioning would lead to them losing it. For asylum-seekers attempting to change their immobilisation in a specific camp of hotspot, 'camp hopping' became a method of endurance. They as well relied on the spontaneous opportunities emerging out of the irregular and fragmented asylum management. This informality of orders and lack of official documentation created an environment of confusion and mistrust as well as the uncertainty of the coming future.

Analysis

In the following weeks, rumours about the evictions and termination of financial support for the refugees became a topic among various groups of asylum-seekers and refugees. Paradoxically, some of those in with pending asylum status perceived themselves to be in a more secure position than those whose legal procedure was in the finalised stage. Legal uncertainty and time in waiting gained ambivalent interpretation of a resource that ensures economic and physical survival.

The material dimension of the international protection regime in Greece was perceived by many asylum-seekers as futureless if not meaningless, since even though it provided the status holder with the 'rights to have rights' it did not anymore include even the very physical protection and sheltering, let alone pathways for socio-political inclusion, At the same time, the commitment to waiting requires trust in the project that is waited for. Van Houtum (2010) argued that through agreeing to waiting the subject internalises the 'promise of final appreciation by the Other' (p. 290). In the context of Greece, there was no 'promise' the access to the welfare support, neither of guarantee of access to social or economic rights for the recognised refugees. Even if no such promise existed pre-2019, the governmental directive of 'evictability' after legality disrupted the 'loyalty' and tolerance to the existing order for many refugees, regardless of their position in legal procedure. The announcement led to the re-evaluation of the social reality and weakened the acceptance of 'waiting out' in camps and other accommodation sites. Rather than to remain committed to waiting, groups of refugees mobilised to visibly critique the asylum management as practiced by the Greek government and to act on the uncertainty in regards to both their present and future. Shortly after the announcement of the coming evictions, calls for a massive mobilisation of asylum-seekers and refugees in Greece started to circulate among various networks and social media.

The mobilisation was to take form of a march under the name the 'Glitter of Hope': a collective movement that aimed to bring together asylum-seekers and refugees in Greece in an attempted collective walkout towards better elsewhere. The march referred to and aimed to recreate the situation of 2015, when the so-called Balkan route, the *de facto* humanitarian corridor, provided a quasi-legal pathway for asylum-seekers from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq through Europe. The inadequacy of asylum management in Greece in 2019 and the humanitarian logic of caring for refugees in a dire state of destitution were presented as the reasoning for other EU states to agree with the reopening of the corridor. Numerous Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups and other social media channels referred to the event and circulated messages, written predominantly in Arabic and Farsi, but also in English, about the borders to be 'opened' in early April.

In the advertisement of the march, it was as well stated that the action was coordinated with 'international humanitarian organisations'. There could be several explanations for this humanitarian

labelling: the immediate one is to interpret it as a strategy to convince more participants to join under the false promises. The second one is, reflecting on the kind of hopes involved in the making of the march, is to analyse the rumours of the NGOs presence as the means to establish the 'fixed mutual expectation' (Rosnow, 1988, p. 16) of the future involvement of international organisations. Through the reference of this participation, the possible scenario of this participation was scripted.

The advertisement of the march started late February, and within few weeks attracted thousands of followers on social media. Despite it being called by the unknown and unverified source, Glitter of Hope became a hot topic among the refugees scheduled for eviction, as well as other legally or socially vulnerable groups. As one participant of the march explained to me:

> Everybody was expecting this eviction decision, as a matter of fact they are informed once they are registered that they have the cash card and accommodation only for 6 months. So why this event <the march> was so big was because it was started after the eviction decision from the ministry of migration. People were scared to be on the streets and saw it as a chance to leave this country, as they are going to be kicked out anyway. < … > Everybody who is a migrant saw it as a chance. And people had hope. (Interview Mustafa 15 September 2019)

Hope, in its theorisation as a commodity (Turner, 2015; Hage, 2003), is not only an individual asset, but it may also be collectively shared. In the context of march, the hope for 'open borders' and the unrestricted movement to other European countries can be analysed as a kind of radical or utopian hope, for it aimed to make the desired and potentially accessible future the reality of the present. Instead of waiting for the eviction order, asylum-seekers and refugees collectively opposed the migration policy and practices of eviction and took on a political project that would give them autonomy and direct engagement with the course of their life situation.

By March 2019, Ibrahim's extended waiting on the hotspot that lasted approximately two years. In contrast to recognised refugees facing eviction, he admitted being in a 'more safe' (fieldnotes 17 March 2019) position, but repeatedly critiqued the passive state of encampment. He ultimately decided to join the march: 'I really need to change my situation after 1.5 years even if I don't succeed. I am so excited it could be the end of sleeping and the beginning of life' (interview 25 March 2019). The motivation to end the dormant temporality, which could refer to the overall state of passivity, encouraged him to embark on a journey that he hoped to have a chance of improving his present circumstances. In Miyazaki (2006) reflection on hope, he describes it as the 'temporal attitude', a capacity to 'reimagine the present from the perspective of the end' (p. 157). In Ibrahim's case, there was no concrete perspective of the 'end': he and his fellow refugee friends who decided to join the march were not sure where exactly they would go. There was no plan of a specific route, neither a point of destination. They *defiantly* abandoned the planning altogether and committed to find meaning and hope in the very act of moving.

However, their plans, as well as the plans of others to be participants, could not be realised due to the drastic and restrictive mobility control. Several days before the planned start of the march (April 5th), two key asylum actors, IOM and UNHCR, made a joint official statement, warning about the likely dangers of the journey, including 'potential unwanted legal consequences' (UNHCR, 2019). Intended participants of the march were reminded of the 'right of the states to manage their borders to prevent irregular movement' (UNHCR, 2019), and encouraged those in need to ask for support and assistance from the Greek authorities, as well as UNHCR and IOM. The Greek Migration Ministry issued the statement as well that the border control would not be stopped. Those statements were followed by a range of military-humanitarian measures. The UNHCR monthly cash transfers scheduled for April were delayed, preventing some of the to-be participants from being financially able to reach the gathering point of march. Despite the freedom of movement guaranteed by the Greek Law, all movement directed to the north of Greece was restricted. Urban train and bus stations were racially profiled and migrants, despite having boarding tickets, were physically removed from the vehicles. Likewise, refugees and asylum-seekers could not access the ferry service operating between the island hotspots and the mainland. In this situation, Ibrahim and his friends, as well as expected thousands of willing

participants, could not join the march. Lastly, during the first day of the march the train transportation from Athens to Thessaloniki was interrupted fully, causing demonstrations and sit-in protests by refugees and asylum-seekers in the train stations of bigger cities.

Forced immobilisation interrupted many participants on their journey to the starting point of the march, Diavata. Ultimately, approximately 2000 people formed by groups with diverse legal background managed to reach the site. Encircled by the Greek police and army, the participants could not carry on their marching project and instead organised a make-shift camp in the point of gathering. In Athens, Thessaloniki and Larisa hundreds of asylum-seekers were protesting their immobilisation and inability to join the event.

In almost full absence of media, journalists and humanitarian organisations, many of the march participants broadcasted the developments in Diavata online. Videos of refugees giving testimonials about their social and economic marginalisation in Greece, as well as of parents with terrified children roaming around fields with suitcases, were circulated in Facebook and Twitter. Some of the authors used the hashtag 'where is UN', evidently mocking the passivity and non-involvement of the international organisations and humanitarian actors in the ongoing conflict. The demonstration of the march participants, including their strategies to mediatise the situation online, turned into a political platform, in which the critique of Greek asylum management and the limited access to social and economic rights for refugees was raised. The mobilisation in Diavata can be seen as an endeavour to take on active relationship with the Greek state and its practices of asylum. Dormant state, therefore, was replaced with active future-making.

The mobilisation, however, lasted only for a couple of days. Continuous interruption of public transport made the Glitter of Hope impossible to be joined. With the absence of humanitarian organisations, the number of actors present in the field was limited to the asylum-seekers on one hand and the Greek police and army on the other. After three days charged with tear gas, rubber bullets and other forms of violence, increasing number of march participants gave up their efforts and with the assurance of the state representatives of no sanctions left the site. Those who were facing immediate eviction were promised to remain accommodated for *some* extended period of time.

> The speaker from the ministry said that the eviction decision is not how it is presented, there will be still some beneficiary for the housing, some people can still be put in houses. And that is how he got people back. (Interview Mustafa 15 September 2019)

While some of the refugees and migrants realised the futility of the border crossing at least in the collective and thus visible form, others internalised the idea that their status quo, including the legal status and unstable but yet available humanitarian assistance was an asset too valuable to risk. The promises of the Greek state representatives that the practices of evictions were not as they were rumoured to be reestablished Greece as the place of possible future. Finally, the amount of violence and the scale of logistical techniques employed by the state worked to suppress the growing mobilisation of refugees and asylum-seekers across the country – potentially preventing their further attempts to contest their fixation in time, space, and as well as on the margins of the Greek state.

Promises of continued inclusion of the refugees to the schemes of accommodation provided some of the march participants with the means to cope with the perceived risks of social and economic marginalisation. Encouraging statements made by the Greek authorities, however, ambiguous, generated hopefulness and perception of being included in the welfare state among the asylum-seekers, ultimately motivating them to end the protest. The disciplining effect of those statements points out on how hope can as well be instrumentalised as tool of governance, shaping individual as well as collective behaviour, and in this case, mobility. Besides, it also allows to reflect how hope should be approached from the perspective of it being a part of the social. Sense of possibilities and perception of being included or excluded from the social welfare is not a process solely induced by an individual, but it generated in the social and political context. Social routes by which individuals can define a meaning for their lives, futures and social opportunities are

distributed unequally. In other words, hope is distributed unequally (Hage, 2003). It is useful there-fore to differentiate between hope as a (personal) disposition and as kind of symbolic capital gen-erated by the state. It is symbolic because, as Hage points out it is about the 'experience of the possibility of upward social mobility' and better future (Hage, 2003, p. 13). As long as this experience of the possibility for better future is maintained, the present experience of marginality can be endured. Hope, as 'a carrot on a stick' (Biehl, 2015, p. 69) establishes the process of waiting as mean-ingful and worthy.

Conclusion

In this article, I argued that in order to understand how people experience incertitudes and what kind of actions and strategies they may undertake it is useful to differentiate between different mod-alities of waiting: the anticipation of a specific future moment (waiting for) and the endurance of the present as an open-ended activity (waiting out). Asylum-seekers in Greece are exposed to different states of uncertainty that are intertwined with legal categorisation as well as with the particularities of the humanitarian support of the refugees. Out of this nexus, new meanings and paradoxical interpretations of the state of waiting emerge, which simultaneously and counteractively mark it as a resource that ensures economic survival but also as time and life opportunities wasted.

Transformations in the asylum infrastructure in Greece in spring 2019 and the absence of schemes of provisional housing or economic integration left many refugees with the feeling of deep existen-tial uncertainty, altering the dynamics of waiting. Asylum migrants questioned their commitment and the general meaning of waiting, mobilising in collective opposition and contestation of the Greek asylum regime as a whole. Critiquing the Greek state for not attending its obligation of care and inclusion, they acted on their own imaginary futures deploying hope as a resource. Through the example of the Glitter of Hope, a collective march of asylum-seekers and refugees in spring 2019, I examined how hope can be a collective asset used to demand and act upon the desired but yet unavailable future. I further contrasted the usage of hope in the establishment and mobilisation for a political project, such as mobility within open borders, with its instrumenta-lisation in governing and disciplining, as exercised by the state. In as much as forcing someone to wait is a method of governing and an exercise of power, so are the tactics of creating hoping and hopeful subjects.

Notes

1. MSF was denied access to Moria camp for 10 days after this report (interview MSF, 14 May 2019)
2. if not *necropolitics*, taking into account the scale of inadequacy of the shelter infrastructure to protect the inhabi-tants from even most basic environmental hazards, the regular shortage in water and food supply, as well as regular absence of medical aid – to name a few.
3. Which became a subject of EU's Anti-Fraud office investigation in 2018.
4. In accordance to the Greek law, migrants reaching hotspots via sea are subjected to the geographical restriction. This restriction of movement emerged in the context of the EU-Turkey Agreement. According to Article 7(3) of Law L4540/2018, the violation of the geographical restriction measure leads to the withdrawal of the material reception conditions (right to accommodation and financial support), detention and potential criminal prosecution.
5. Either 90 or 150 euro per individual per month, depending if the food catering was or was not provided in the place of accommodation. Family cash support is increased by 50 euro for the subsequent four persons, then 20 euro for each subsequent person to a limit of 330 euro for a seven adult household (UNHCR, 2018)
6. According to official data, more than 15,000 people resided on the Aegean islands in February 2019. Meanwhile, the accommodation capacity for the islands was a half of this number: 6480 people (General Secretariat for Infor-mation and Communication, 2019).
7. Cash card renewal happens on a monthly basis (for the discussion of the financialisation of humanitarian support and its relation to the refugees' spatial control – see Tazzioli, 2019). The renewal constitutes a technical trans-action, in which the UNHCR officer top-ups the debit card of the asylum-seeker.

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Margarita Lipatova is a PhD researcher in the field of anthropology and migration studies at Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany. Her doctoral research aims to ethnographically examine the workings of the European border regime between Turkey and Greece. Her project analyses how the technologies of mobility control along Europe's border are mobilised and enacted, as well as responded to and contested by the asylum-seekers.

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