**206
Working Paper
January 2021**

Life and power in a hostile environment: an exploration of civil resistance to immigration policy in the UK

By Jonah Rudlin

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By Jonah Rudlin

Author
Jonah Rudlin

Supervisor
Dr Giovanna Astolfo

MSc Building and
Urban Design in Development

Development Planning Unit,
University College London

2nd September 2019 /
reviewed for DPU working paper
15th December 2020

Abstract

This research responds to a call by Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Berg (2018) for a greater inter-disciplinary approach to the governance of migration, and aims to fill a gap in literature identified by Lindley (2019) in regard to analyses of the growing resistance by civil-society to increasingly restrictive immigration controls in the Global North. The research focuses on the case-study of the UK 'hostile environment' policy framework created in 2012 that was led by the principle of 'deport first, appeal later', and which embedded a complex web of technologies of surveillance and control across public and private institutions. The first half of the paper develops a theoretical framework of governmental power using Foucault's notions of governmentality, biopolitics and the dispositif, alongside Agamben's state of exception and Mbembe's necropolitics. This framework is then applied to the case study of the 'hostile environment' policies, and explores their material effects on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the country. The second half of the paper then turns to a series of case study examples of civil-society resistance towards these policies, drawing on Foucault's notion of freedom as a limit-experience, Agamben's inoperativity of a dispositive, and Hardt and Negri's concept of the multitude. Such an approach seeks to articulate the differing approaches taken to counter anti-immigration policy, and the evolving role and ethics of an increasingly networked civil-society and grassroots contestation.

Content

This paper intends to respond to a gap in research in regard to civil-society resistance to immigration policy, as well as to Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Berg's call in the first issue of the Migration and Society journal for a more interdisciplinary approach to the increasingly complex politics of migration.

01. Introduction

"The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognise who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space."

Italo Calvino, 1974: 148

As of 2019, UNHCR reported 70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide: approximately 58% were displaced within their own countries, 36% outside as legally recognised refugees, and 6% in the process of seeking asylum. These numbers are higher than they have ever been, resulting from the increasing conjunction of global climate change, conflict and violence. Conflict in Syria, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Nigeria for example, accounted for 10.8 million new displacements in 2018, but extreme weather events contributed 17.2 million (NRC 2019). Such a relationship between climate change and migration was further highlighted by the UN IPBES global assessment (2019: 18) which reported 2,500 conflicts currently occurring over oil, water, food and land; all being related to the escalating collapse of ecosystem services. Therefore, with global temperatures indisputably predicted to rise as this century progresses, forecasts have predicted a further increase of between 25 million to 1 billion additional displacements by 2050, with 200 million being the most widely accepted estimate (IOM 2019).

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With such a context in mind, we turn to Europe, who's most dramatic exposure to such statistics occurred in 2015 with the beginning of a 'Refugee Crisis' sparked by a rise in ongoing conflicts across Middle Eastern and African regions. The huge number of displacements that ensued led to 4 million asylum applications being made to the EU between 2015-2018, with approximately 40% resulting in positive outcomes (Eurostat 2019). Many who did not qualify for asylum attempted entering the EU informally either through Turkey or fatefully across the Mediterranean, which resulted in a peak of 3,500 recorded drownings in 2017 (UNITED 2019). European governments were in a panic due to having ratified the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees which stipulated a legal obligation to determine the refugee status and then potentially host those attempting the journey, as well as due to what some have described as an ever-increasing contact with the consequences of 500 years of empire, colonial quest and slavery (Mbembe 2003, Danewid 2017). But despite such humanitarian obligations, there was a collective failure by governments to provide anywhere near the level of adequate provisions or support required (Davies et al 2017), and significant resources were instead redirected to fortify crossing points in Libya and Turkey.

In the UK, such events coincided with the continuing fallout of the 2008 financial crisis and the ensuing austerity measures and economic readjustment that followed. Such conditions had created a growing far-right nationalist movement of disenfranchised citizens who had been facing rising unemployment and falling wages (Gill 2018: 91), as well as an increasing mismatch between

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their skills and available work due to the spatial-economic restructuring of glo-balisation (Ford and Goodwin 2014). In the past, such conditions have been described as resulting in an amplified exclusionary politics of citizenship, which demands 'crackdowns' on individuals deemed 'unworthy' of support (Sales 2002, Bloch and Schuster 2005), and this period in the UK was no exception. Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants quickly became the figure of blame, and pressure rose on government to have a tougher approach to immigration enforcement (Greven 2016), culminating dramatically in a decision to leave the European Union entirely.

What followed was an increasingly draconian roll out of restrictive policies un-der the umbrella of a 2012 immigration policy framework dubbed the 'hostile environment', which had been designed to appeal to this growing isolation-ist voter-base. Theresa May, the Home Secretary at the time, described her aims as creating 'a really hostile environment for illegal immigrants' so that they would leave on their own accord, and stated the hard-line principle of 'deport first, appeal later' (BBC 2017). The policies were primarily implement-ed through the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts which installed a complex web of surveillance and control within education, housing, and healthcare infrastructures whilst heavily increasing raids, detainments and deportations (Liberty 2019).

Against such a dark backdrop of nationalist sentiments however, there has also been an unexpected and rapid rise in pro-migrant civic responses by citi-zens (García et al. 2016; Fleischmann 2019) coming from varied backgrounds with little previous history of social or political activism (Karakayali and Kleist 2016). In response to the 2015 surge of refugees to the EU, these citizens rallied under the slogan 'Refugees Welcome', and donated supplies, offered accommodation, and provided legal and medical support to the new arrivals (Barisione et al. 2017). Such a phenomenon has been importantly described by Mitchell and Kallio (2017) as shifting the issue of borders from a geopolitical issue framed by elite politicians, to a geosocial issue framed by networked citizens.

But as Lindley (2019) has highlighted, whilst there is a large amount of litera-ture mapping the spatiality of Western immigration detention and their sup-porting policy-frameworks, there is far less emphasis on this apparent growing resistance towards such, specifically in regard to a mobilising civil-society. This paper therefore intends to respond to this gap, as well as to Fiddian-Qasmi-yeh and Berg's (2018: v) call in the first issue of the Migration and Society jour-nal for a more interdisciplinary approach to the increasingly complex politics of migration, which posed questions such as:

'How do we, and could we, conceptualize and resist particular ways of fram-ing migration and mobility; whose vantage points are centralized and whose are erased from view and ignored in migration studies and policies; who counts as a migrant in the first place; and to what extent and how can a focus on migration stimulate more nuanced and engaged ways of being in and responding to the world around us?'

To do so, this paper utilizes a perhaps snaking theoretical path of analysis, beginning with Foucault's modes of governmentality and subjectivity accom-panied by Agamben's Homo Sacer, bridged by Mbembe's necropolitics and Fassin's critique of humanitarian reason, and finally ending with Negri and Hardt's Deleuzian concept of the multitude; being an array of literature justified in the methodology. Through such a trajectory, numerous UK case-studies of power and resistance will be explored through a multiplicity of theoretical van-tage points, which although contrasting, are all intimately connected in their analysis of life and the resistance that nourishes it.

This paper utilises a case-study approach in order to elucidate the 'why' and 'how' of the 'hostile environment' strategies, and the resistance to them by migrant related civil-society organisations.

02. Reflections on methodology

Schramm (1971: 6) sees the case-study method as seeking to 'illuminate a decision or a set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result'. This paper also utilises a case-study approach in order to elucidate the 'why' and 'how' of the 'hostile environment' strategies, and the resistance to them by migrant related civil-society organisations. Additionally, a central concept of this analysis is that of the dispositif, first developed by Foucault to articulate the permeating effects of power, and is a core tool in his self-described 'toolbox' created for 'users, not readers' (1974: 523). Such a 'toolbox' approach was echoed by Negri and Hardt in an interview following the release of Multitude (2006: 373), in which they justified having not provided a concrete political program of action, since they felt such a task would have been 'useless if their potential did not already exist in collective practice'. This paper attempts to follow in the same vein, in that suggestions are not necessarily made, but rather the potentialities that already exist are instead displayed in different combinations and then interpreted.

This method has also been guided by the representative dangers that comes with research on refugees and asylum-seekers, in which an unrecognised positionality of bias and privilege, although well-intentioned, can further subjectify those attempting to escape such a position (Canas 2015). Therefore in order to better ground this research into the everyday realities and experiences of those seeking asylum, five informal interviews with refugee

and asylum practitioners were carried out,[1] as well as a year of voluntary case work in South London Refugee Association (SLRA), assisting primarily East African (Eritrean and Somali), and a range of Middle Eastern and South Asian asylum seekers with the complexities of UK bureaucracies. A particularly interesting asylum case in Manchester shared by one of the interviewees is analysed in chapter 6, however the rest are not directly referenced, and served to provide a more grounded and contextual understanding that not only gave up-to-date information on the rapidly changing policy field, but also the emotive experience that shapes such realities.

Whilst on the subject of ethics, migrant related terminology used in this paper must be clarified due to the limited consensus on their definitions, which are often shaped by differing legal or political contexts, and which can often be manipulated to either promote or demonise migrants (JTM 2019). This paper will therefore define a refugee, asylum-seeker, migrant, regular-migrant and irregular migrant in line with the UN IOM Glossary (2019), which provides technical and concise definitions which are sufficient in providing us with a foundational understanding (see annex 1). However, since this paper will also be referring to classifications defined by either the Home Office or civil-organisations, there will also be varying references to descriptions such as legal/illegal/immigrant interspersed throughout the text, which ultimately serve to reflect the blurry landscape of such terms.

On the subject of ethics, migrant related terminology used in this paper must be clarified due to the limited consensus on their definitions, which are often shaped by differing legal or political contexts, and which can often be manipulated to either promote or demonise migrants.

The second clarification necessary concerning terminology is 'civil society'. This term has a rich history dating back to Aristotle's Politics, which referred to a political community of free individuals living under the same rule of law who held power equal to the state. More recently however, Habermas (1996: 367) has defined civil-society as a collective that limits the power of a state through 'networks of associations that institutionalizes problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres'. But in more practical terms, a definition by the World Bank (2008: 3) provides us with a more rigid definition of a civil-society organisation (CSO), as 'all non-market and non-state organisations outside the family in which people organise themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain'. The CSO's in this paper are usually relatively formalised in that they are either a registered charity or recognised by an institution, and so the term 'grassroots' will therefore be used to define those of a more localised and spontaneous nature with less formal institutional recognition.

Finally, concerning the structure of this paper, there is not necessarily a stand-alone literature review, but rather one that weaves through the analysis as the chapters progress. Chapter 1 will produce a theoretical framework that will allow us to understand the mechanisms of immigration control by a sovereign power, and in chapter 2 this framework will be used to analyse the UK's 'hostile environment' policies. Foucault's biopower and the dispositif will provide us with a foundation due to his continuing relevance in migration literature in

regard to the analysis of 'life itself' (Nasir 2016: 76). Pyykkönen (2015) has also noted the importance of Foucault's work concerning research on civil-society due to his multi-dimensional relations of resistance with power and the subject. Agamben's parallel work on the dispositif as well as his figure of the Homo Sacer will be developed in tandem due to their equal significance within migration studies, particularly in regard to the increasing states of exception used by governments to exclude the unwanted (Gregory 2006, Mould 2017, Boano and Marten 2012, Fleischmann 2019). More recent literature however will extend this framework by bringing to light the enhanced complexity of migration governance that international humanitarian frameworks produce through overlapping rationalities, meanings and values (Fassin 2009). This resulting complexity in the governance of life that biopower struggles to account for is then bridged by Mbembe's (2003) concept of necropolitics; being the antithesis but sibling to biopolitics, it will form a vital role in our resulting analytical framework, as well as responding to a call by Wallace (2018) for further research revealing necropolitical landscapes of refugee governance. Chapters 3 and 4 will then turn to theories of resistance which will be directly applied to a number of case-studies of UK based CSO's working to contest the UK Home Office policies. Chapter 3 will first explore Foucault and Agambens ideas of resistance, and chapter 4 will follow with Negri and Hardt's Deleuzian concept of the multiplicity, which will connect and develop these Foucauldian and Agambenian notions to contemporary contexts of neoliberal deregulation and privatisation, in conjunction with an increasingly networked civil society.

With Agamben describing the camp as the purest form of biopower, and Mbembe the colony as emblematic of necropower, we can view their convergence as useful in understanding contemporary refugee populations across Europe today.

03. A framework of life and power

Foucault provides us with a useful opening to understanding sovereign power with his notion of governmentality, which he uses to situate its development historically, and to refer to the increasing fixation by governments in the regulation of their populations and the means to do so. In Security, Territory, Population, Foucault defined governmentality as relating to a complex form of power which "has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument" (Foucault 2007: 107-8). The governmentality we see today he states, has emerged from two poles; disciplinary power and biopower.

Foucault develops an analysis of the first pole (disciplinary power) in Discipline and Punish (1975) and utilises the body as the focus of subjectification. For this form of power, Foucault recalls the Schmittian (2005) view on the decisionism that determines sovereignty, in that the characteristic function of a disciplinary sovereign power was 'the right to decide life and death' (1998: 135). It was of a 'juridical-discursive' form and could only be attested through 'the death he was capable of acquiring' (136). Foucault therefore defines it as repressive and negative; a power that took the form of 'limit and lack' (1992: 83), such as a King who simply taxed their subjects through the threat of death but left them to their own devices otherwise.

The second pole was biopower, which worked in tandem with disciplinary power to exert a positive influence on life alongside the threat of punishment and constituted a 'profound transformation of [the] mechanisms of power' (Foucault 1992: 83). Whereas the first pole aimed only to 'take life or let live',

biopower worked to 'foster life or disallow it to the point of death', working to 'incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it' (Foucault 1976: 136). This form of power arises in the era of modernity, when states began to take increased interest in the life of their populations concerning economic productivity and their ability to wage war, and therefore, biopower evolved as technologies to preserve and foster life, even at the cost of terrible suffering (Noys 2005: 54).

Foucault describes this new biopower as operating through dispersed networks at the 'level of life' itself (2004: 137), through a mechanism he calls a dispositif. Due to the specificity of the term, this paper will use the translation of 'dispositive' rather than the popular translation of 'apparatus'. This, as Bussolini (2010) has argued, maintains the crucial links of the term both legally (the force or finding of a decision in law), and etymologically (deriving from oikonomia; the Greek term for economy).

The relevance of the connection to oikonomia will be returned to in the next chapter, however its legal link is important for now since as Foucault describes, the dispositive allowed for a 'power that presupposed a closely meshed grid of material coercions rather than the physical existence of a sovereign' (2004: 36). This refers to Foucault's rejection of power as being exerted solely through a legal system, but instead, operating through dispositives that incorporate but transcend the law, extending through every dimension of any society in a 'net-like organisation' (1980: 198). This net encompassed 'discourses, institutions, architectural structures, regulatory decisions, administrative measures, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions; in short, as much the said as the unsaid' (2010: 85). Agamben (2009: 17) expanded the dispositive even further, calling it 'literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings.' In this way, Agamben saw dispositives as always having specific 'concrete strategic functions' that usually served to perpetuate hegemonic powers through diverse means (ibid: 7). As an example, Lazzarato (2012) saw the normalisation of debt in liberal economies as being a strategic dispositive, in that, as Harvey (2019) puts it: 'debt encumbered homeowners don't go on strike'.

Foucault however ultimately stated the goal of his work as being a historical analysis of 'the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects' (2000: 326), and therefore his view of the dispositive is inextricably linked to this process. Dispositives for Foucault organise fields of power and knowledge as a field of experience which transform a human being into both a subject, and an object, of power relations (Esposito 2012). Agamben similarly, views a dispositive as being 'which and through which a pure activity of governing with no foundation in being is carried out' (2009: 18), and therefore 'must always involve a process of subjectivation'. From this, dispositives can be understood as the ensemble of technologies that conform and control a population into certain subjects who adhere to certain favourable realities. For Foucault and Agamben, the dispositive therefore serves as a tool to understand power in a perpetually changing social field by allowing it to be articulated (Bussolini 2010: 90). This articulation thus renders dispositives visible, opening them up to the possibility of contestation, which will form the task of the next chapter concerning the 'hostile environment'.

To summarise all we have discussed so far in Agamben's words; 'we have then two great classes: living beings, and dispositives, and between these two, as a third class, subjects' (2009: 19). This figure of the 'living being' resisting subjectification by dispositives opens up an additional and important dimension of Agamben's work on 'the state of exception', which allows us to understand more extreme cases of biopolitical applications of power. Originally theorised by Karl Schmitt (2005), the state of exception defined a condition where a juridical order is suspended in response to an 'emergency', which allows a state to violate the laws and act beyond them. For Schmitt, 'the essence of sovereignty was understood to be a monopoly on the ability to decide on the exception' (Vaughan-Williams 2008: 329).

Agamben (1998) develops this concept through his reading of the Aristotelian distinction between life; zoe (natural life), and bios (political life). Agamben views such a binary as a foundational element of Western politics which embeds a political exception between life at its heart, allowing for the creation of what he terms 'bare life'. Bare life for Agamben emerges when zoe becomes politicised by a sovereignty, rendering it a 'life exposed to death' (1998: 88). These three concepts of exception – zoe, bios and bare life – can be better understood through Agamben's narration of the ancient Roman figure Homo Sacer (man the sacred), being a criminal whose punishment for a crime rendered them exempt from state execution, but able to be killed by another subject without it being deemed murder. This for Agamben, was a state of exception which suspended the juridical order over the individual whilst still including them as a subject to be controlled. The result was the creation of this bare life, being the element of the political subject's existence that is excluded, which in the exception, 'finds itself in the most intimate relation with sovereignty' (1998: 67).

For Agamben, 'no matter how paradoxical it may seem', modern democracies and totalitarian regimes become interconnected within the context of biopolitics; all that is required to transition between is the declaration of a 'state of emergency'.

Agamben defines contemporary examples of this exception as the camp (the most infamous being the Nazi concentration camp), a place in which detainees are divested of political status but still biopolitically controlled. Foucault also wrote of the extreme applications of biopower and sovereign power as found in Nazi Germany (2003: 259), however whereas he saw it as a historical aberration, Agamben viewed it as a fundamental condition of possibility within Western politics due to this zoe/bios sovereign distinction (Frost 2019: 153). For Agamben, with the advent of democracy, every person who received rights as a 'citizen' predicated only on their birth, became the excluded-included 'immediate bearer of sovereignty', as to define a citizen requires defining a non-citizen (1998: 128). This for Agamben (ibid: 130) means, 'no matter how paradoxical it may seem', modern democracies and totalitarian regimes become interconnected within the context of biopolitics; all that is required to transition between is the declaration of a 'state of emergency'.[2] Although Agamben's camp referred mostly to the concentration camp, it's form has since been expanded, for example, to Guantanamo Bay (Gregory 2006), the governance of migration (Fleischmann 2019), the Calais 'Jungle' (Mould 2017), and Jerusalem and the West Bank (Boano and Marten 2012).

As we have seen through the lenses of Foucault and Agamben, biopower functions through dispositives that create exceptions which separate subjects who 'must live' from those who can be killed; bare life. However, Foucault's biopower has been critiqued as being too confined to the specific regulation of a population rather than life itself (Fassin 2009, Mbembe 2003), and Agamben's Homo Sacer as neglecting any dimension of race (Whitley 2017; Lemke 2005; Mbembe 2003). As Fassin (2009: 44) argues, contemporary societies are characterised more by the 'legitimacy they attach to life', which means the

NOTE 02

A clear example of this in action could be seen in the UK in the aftermath of the 9/11 US terror attacks, when the Home Office declared a State of Emergency which allowed the UK to opt out of Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights. This allowed for the indefinite detention without trial of foreign nationals suspected of terrorism.

politics of life does not only relate to governmentality and technologies, but also to 'meanings and values'. This can be understood through Fassin's work on the critique of humanitarian reason (2012: 4), which he states governs 'precarious lives'[3] which it fits into categories such as the asylum-seeker, the refugee, the internally displaced person, or the stateless person; 'subject's humanitarian governments bring into existence by specifically protecting and revealing them'.

Such categorisations however produce subjects who fall under the protection of 'human rights' as declared by international law, rather than 'the rights of the citizen', which is an extremely rich debate since the post-war period which this paper has not got scope to develop (Arendt 1951, Butler 2004, Rancière 1992, Benhabib 2014). The important point from this literature however is that such a disjunction between different forms of rights opens up a grey space of contextuality which can serve to produce new exceptions in the case of the individual who finds themselves exempt from a former sovereign umbrella of rights. Therefore, through Agamben's logic of exception, declaring categorisations of subjects who are 'worthy' and deserving protection (i.e. a 'legitimate' refugee), inversely produces subjects who are 'unworthy', justifying their exclusion, marginalisation, and deportation (Fleischmann 2019: 65).

Hence, for Mbembe (2003), to understand biopower further we must ask 'under what practical conditions is the right to kill, to allow to live, or to expose to death exercised?' (12). Mbembe creates the term 'necropolitics' to account for these new exceptions which he feels biopower does not sufficiently account for: when life is not so much governed, but rather death is being sanctioned (Davies et al. 2017). For Mbembe, such forms of power have arisen out of the colonial governmentality of Western imperialism that was predicated on the distinction between the political rationality and purity of the European sovereign state, and the 'savage' and thus exceptional colonial geographies abroad. This form of sovereign occupation, he says, relegated 'the colonised into a third zone between subjecthood and objecthood' (akin to bare life) in order to enslave, and extract productive value (2003: 26).

Wallace has described necropolitical forms of power as being found much closer to the UK such as in the Calais 'Jungle', where geographical spaces are used as a neo-colonial device to exclude 'others' in order to maintain borders 'against a culturally imagined 'threat".

Mbembe points to the case of Palestine as the contemporary example of necropolitical occupation which forms a 'concatenation of multiple powers: disciplinary, biopolitical, and necropolitical' (29). Such a combination creates total domination over inhabitants of a territory, allowing a modality of killing in which the 'external and internal enemy are not distinguished […] entire populations become the target of the sovereign', and 'invisible killing is added to outright executions' (30). However, Wallace (2018) has described necropolitical forms of power as being found much closer to the UK such as in the Calais 'Jungle', where geographical spaces are used as a neo-colonial device to exclude

'others' in order to maintain borders 'against a culturally imagined 'threat'' (9). In such cases, Wallace argues that since the UK did not recognise the camps inhabitants as suitably fitting within humanitarian categories deserving asylum, the 'letting die' approach was legally utilised through the inactivity of the state (13-14).

But despite necropolitics opening up our analysis to a new form of power, it is important to note, as McIntyre and Nast (2011: 1472) write, that necropower and biopower are not antithetical but constitute a 'spatial dialectical unity'. With Agamben describing the camp as the purest form of biopower, and Mbembe the colony as emblematic of necropower, we can view their convergence as useful in understanding contemporary refugee populations across Europe today (Wallace 2018: 12). This is particularly so in our case since we are interested in the Home Office's control of irregular migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, who are not simply confined to the space of a camp (besides those detained) but are also dispersed across the cities and towns.

Finally, then, figure 3.1 outlines a framework for analysis developed from the above literature which shows how dispositives, guided by a sovereign state's politics and law, produces subjects which are split into two different but interrelated states of exception; the biopolitical and the necropolitical.

FIGURE 3.1

Theoretical framework of bio and necro-political states of exception.

Source: author.
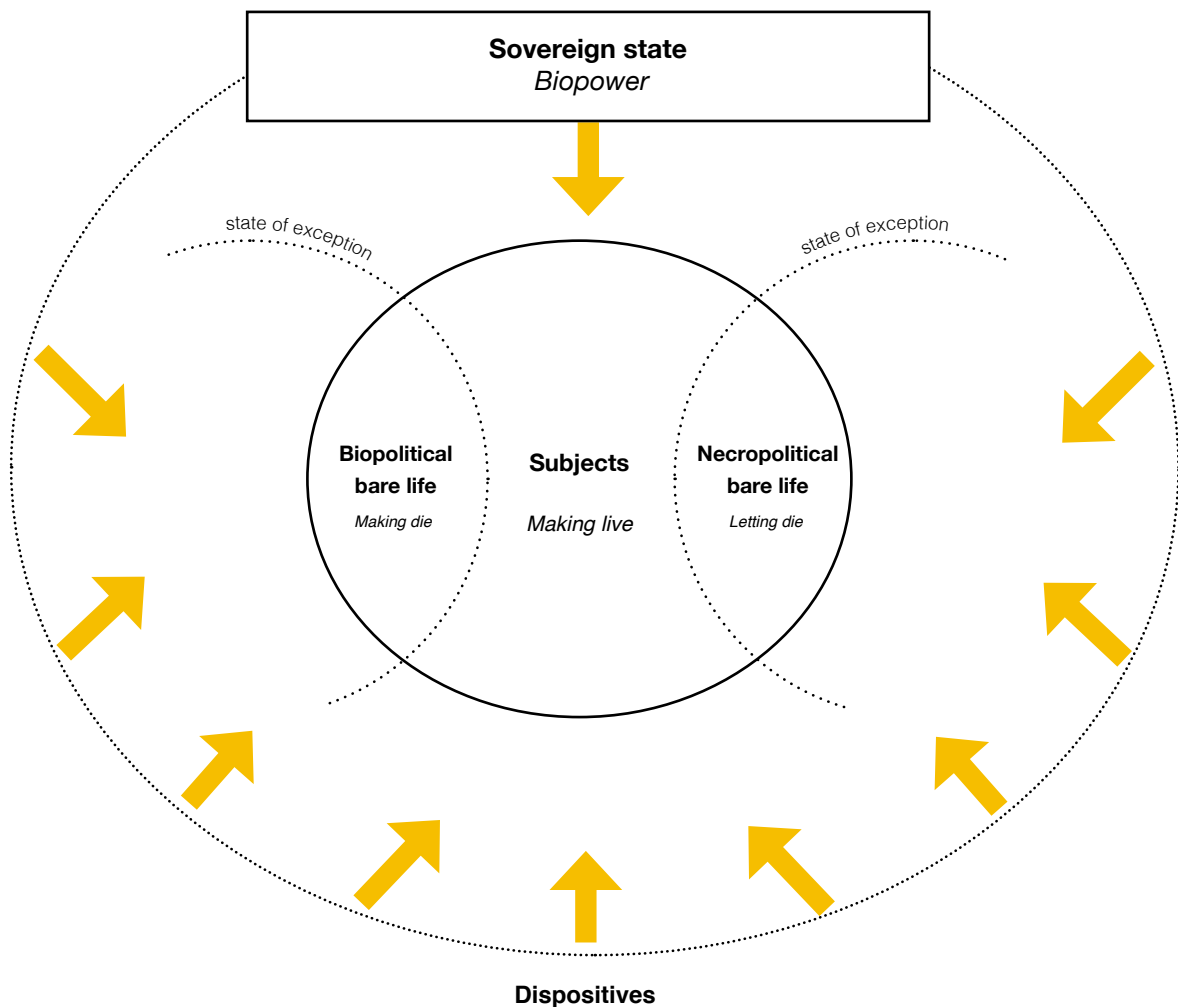
Bureaucratic complexity and duplicity represents an entry-point the Home Office has been using to reject legitimate claims, evidenced by the fact that they lost 75% of appeals against their immigration rulings between 2017-2018.

04. Dispositives of a hostile environment

NOTE 04

This Act incorporated law from the European Convention on Human Rights, being rights that would likely need to be worryingly re-legislated following the Brexit transition in 2020-2021.

It must be remembered that the 'hostile environment' did not only have the aim of reducing levels of irregular immigration into the UK, but also to reduce levels of legitimate asylum alongside. The irregular migrant is an easier subject to target however since they are mostly only protected by the UK Human Rights Act of 1998.[4] As such, they can be arrested, detained and legally deported without too many legal barriers, and therefore readily fall into a state of exception that can be governed by biopolitical dispositives of control as outlined in the previous chapter. Such instances will form the first part of this analysis. The asylum-seeker, however, falls additionally under the 1954 Refugee Convention, which stipulates that anyone in the UK has the right to seek asylum, and cannot be forcibly returned to their home country until their claim as a refugee has been determined. If a claim for asylum is successful, the individual becomes classified as a refugee with 'leave-to-remain' status which grants them, in most cases, the full rights of a citizen and access to the standard welfare system for at least 5 years, and so this subject will not be a direct focus in our analysis. However, if they are denied asylum, they obtain the same status as an irregular migrant and therefore become subject to the same biopolitical methods of control. The asylum-seeker still pending a decision[5] however, presents a trickier subject to control, since their inclusion within international humanitarian legislation prevents a direct biopolitical exclusion and guarantees them certain rights such as housing and financial support. But as we saw in the previous chapter, they can still theoretically be controlled by necropolitical dispositives of exception, and therefore an analysis of such will form the second half of this chapter.

NOTE 05

At the end of 2019, there were 61,968 pending asylum cases in the UK (UNHCR 2019).

Despite these two distinct categories however, we must continue to remember McIntyre and Nast's 'spatial dialectical unity' of necro/biopower. Since asylum-seekers must distil their inherently emotional narratives into bare facts in order for the legalistic approach to determine their legitimacy (Smith 2015), it is common for evidential 'contradictions' within the lengthy legal process to result in an arbitrary rejection of a claim (i.e. someone's middle-name is present on one form, but not another). This bureaucratic complexity represents an entry-point the Home Office has been using to reject legitimate claims, evidenced by the fact that they lost 75% of appeals against their immigration rulings between 2017-2018 (Guardian 2018). In this light, the line between a 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' asylum seeker is extremely blurry and must be kept in mind as we go.

We will first begin by looking at the core infrastructure at the heart of dispositives controlling the irregular migrant: the detention centres. Detention centres as we see them today first came into force in the 1971 Immigration Act which gave the Home Office powers to detain and deport primarily Commonwealth subjects who had recently become classified as illegal following the 1962 Commonwealth Nationality Act which had introduced a skill-based filter for immigration.[6] At this point however they were still used as a measure of last resort, but became more readily formalised in the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act, and finally renamed to 'Removal Centres' in 2001 in the aftermath of the 9/11 US terror attacks, situating them as a fundamental infrastructure underpinning the UK refugee and asylum system (Bloch and Schuster 2005). Although we are currently focused on the irregular migrant, this string of legislation gradually normalised the Home Office's discretionary power to detain any migrant at any point in their immigration process, regardless of whether they had just entered the UK, or were awaiting a pending asylum claim. Reasons to detain can be to establish a migrant's identity, to affect their deportation, or because they pose a 'threat to the public good'. These criteria are markedly vague since the detention system is separated from the criminal justice procedure and instead classified as an administrative process, which also means a migrant can technically be detained indefinitely. As well as this, detainees hold far less rights than a regular prisoner, and can be restricted to their cells, denied access to the internet, library and social spaces, and are often arbitrarily prevented from receiving visits (Bosworth 2014, Medical Justice 2015).

So far, this system of detention is a clear a state of exception for those deemed illegal in the UK, with detainees being excluded from the rights of a citizen subject whilst still being included as a subject to be controlled; bare life. But as Martin (2015) has written, whilst the physical walls of detention are an obvious manifestation of such disciplinary power, these dispositives also importantly extend 'inwards' and 'outwards'. One such extending dispositive is surveillance, which is a key device for Foucault in his work on biopower, and which can clearly be seen in the 2014/2016 Immigration Acts. These Acts created legal requirements for multiple sectors of society to carry out ID checks on users of services in order to determine immigration status. One example of this in action came to light in 2017, when schools were discovered to have been mandated by the Home Office to share pupil's home addresses and nationalities to assist in tracking down undocumented parents. This policy operated for a year without public knowledge or parliamentary scrutiny showcasing another example of democratic exceptionality, and 18,000 children's records were shared before it became exposed (Liberty 2018). ID checks were also installed within the private sector such as for landlords; pushing irregular migrants into exploitative housing situations (JCWI 2016), and banks; condemned by official governmental regulators as blatantly inhumane (Bolt 2016). Furthermore, the pernicious nature of these policies of surveillance was even found to have entered civil-society, with the homeless charity St Mungo's being discovered in 2018 as having cooperated with the Home Office in helping locate undocumented rough sleepers.

Foucault's description of dispositives operating through dispersed networks at the 'level of life itself' (2004: 137) reveals itself here, with the policy frameworks of surveillance being articulated through multiple public, private, and civil

institutions besides simply the state. Furthermore, these dispositives navigate beyond institutions into the very streets themselves, such as with 'Operation Vaken', a Home Office van that displayed the message; 'In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest', which circulated London in 2013. As well as inducing a pervasive fear in any migrant irregular or regular, this has been seen as another example of the 'normalisation of exclusionary rhetoric' (Wodak 2015: xiii), which could be linked to the growing practice of public tip-offs to the Home Office on suspected irregular migrants. Research by Corporate Watch (2018) estimated these tips to number at around 50,000 a year, which they claim provide the bulk of the evidence for identifying suspects.

These dispositives of control navigate beyond institutions into the very streets themselves, such as with 'Operation Vaken', a Home Office van that displayed the message; 'In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest', which circulated London in 2013.

FIGURE 4.2

A protest against an immigration raid in Brighton.

Source: The Argus 2019.

Once surveillance and these supporting tip-offs have identified their targets, a whole additional set of dispositives are put into action in the form of physical raids. The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI 2015) reported a total of 36,381 raids on workplaces across the UK between 2009-2014, but crucially, that 68% did not lead to any 'illegal workers identified'. This low success rate could perhaps be attributable to the public tips potentially discriminating against a warped perception of illegality. However, a conference by the University of Oxford in 2017 revealed interviews from raid personnel who described conditions of overwork and fatigue and a general low morale amongst staff, which would likely further enhance such imprecision.

These poor working conditions are indicative of wider budget cuts across all governmental departments, which have created voids in capacity increasingly filled by waves of privatisation. For example, since 2010, all besides one detainment centre has fallen under private contracts (Silverman and Griffiths 2019) which equate to billions of pounds a year (Obeirne 2017), and represent a wider trend of austerity politics that have sought to reduce budget deficits through a reconfiguration of public services and the welfare state (Donald et al. 2014: 5). With governmental departments under increasing pressure to cut costs, asylum-seekers have usually been seen as low hanging fruit due to their inability to vote or work, as well as being frequently demonised within the press (Sales 2002).

These poor working conditions are indicative of wider budget cuts across all governmental departments, which have created voids in capacity increasingly filled by waves of privatisation.

FIGURE 4.2

A protest in London's China Town against discriminatory raids on Chinese restaurants.

Source: Sputnik News 2018.

From this we can begin to see the operation of a specifically neoliberal governmentality which has been generating new narratives on the issue of asylum which prioritise market ideology as its guiding logic (Peck and Tickell 2002; Brown 2006; Dean 2009). This brings us back to the connection between dispositive and oikonomia. Although never explicitly stated, Foucault was likely well aware of the link as his writing often sought to understand the ways dispositives took the form of economic 'material coercions' rather than through law. With this in mind, descriptions of neoliberal austerity reveal it as a particularly cunning dispositive of this form in that it emergently flexes and adapts to continually changing conditions (Peck 2010; Haughton et al. 2013), and supersedes 'normal politics' when an 'emergency' deems it necessary (Blanco et al. 2014; Blyth 2013; Stanley 2014). As such, although an asylum-seeker is legally immune to many of the biopolitical dispositives, it is through this readjustment of the economy that the Home Office can exert control upon them.

Such an approach can be most explicitly seen in 2012, when the legally stipulated provision of housing for asylum-seekers was separated from the mainstream benefits system and privatised under a program called COMPASS. Tonkiss (2013: 315) described this decision as the 'dual logic of cutback and crackdown' which demanded and justified austerity for housing the 'unwanted', and the effects of such a strategy were multiple. First, such privatisation, when coupled with the 1999 asylum policy enforcing geographical dispersal of asylum-seekers, had the effect of shifting asylum accommodation into the most nationally cost-effective geographies of the UK (Darling 2016b). These geographies usually contained the socio-economic groups worst hit by austerity measures, and therefore asylum-seekers are pushed into perceived 'rivalries' with locals 'rather than building solidarities amongst those who have little', further amplifying hostility and exclusion (Hogget et al. 2013: 567). Secondly, such isolation is reinforced by the continuing incapacitation of local authorities under this same pressure of austerity to do 'less with less' (Peck 2012: 630), and therefore many asylum support services are also deferred to private companies alongside housing. These support services were not necessarily mandated, but represented a discretionary space where moments of care could emerge through ongoing relationships between asylum-seekers and local authorities (Gill 2015). The private operators however have been described as having a stronger sense of 'contractualism', which increases the moral distance between themselves and service-users (Darling 2016b).[7]

NOTE 07

See also Astolfo (2020) for dwelling and the notions of care, repair and maintenance as a relational practice of 'inhabiting', rather than simply the delivery of a service.

Funding cuts have also hit the migrant CSO sector, which was already struggling to 'sustain their presence in a landscape of escalating need' (Williams et al. 2014: 2803). These cuts produce competition amongst CSO's, which limits the development of longer-term strategies of support due to increasing demands for basic case work (Gill et al. 2014). In both public, private, and CSO sectors, these cuts also increase the burden on support staff which amplify the emotional burn-out that comes from working with marginalised individuals further reducing available capacity (Gill 2016).

And finally, as of 2019, asylum-seekers only received £37.75 per-week by the state and are unable to work for the first year they await a pending claim. After a year however, they are then limited to 16 hours per-week in occupational-shortages which is a bureaucratically abstract list containing jobs such as 'ballet dancer' or 'nuclear medical scientist' (Home Office 2016). Therefore, they have no choice but to enter black and grey markets to seek employment, further exposing them to exploitation (Nobil 2008; Anderson 2010).

The confluence of these factors indisputably reflects Mbembe's notion of a 'death world' for asylum-seekers in the UK, where life is not so much governed, but death is sanctioned (Davies et al. 2016). Mbembe (2003: 30) succinctly summarises the necropolitical effects in his reading of the Palestinian occupation, which although far more extreme than our UK case, certainly reflects a paralleled trajectory of governmentality:

'The state of siege is itself a military institution [sprawling detention infrastructure]. It allows a modality of killing that does not distinguish between the external and the internal enemy [blurred lines of illegality]. Entire populations are the target of the sovereign [surveillance of legal citizens]. The besieged villages and towns are sealed off and cut off from the world [geographical dispersal]. Freedom is given to local military commanders to use their discretion as to when and whom to shoot [arbitrary Home Office decisions]. Movement between the territorial cells requires formal permits [mandatory appointments]. Local civil institutions are systematically destroyed [defunding of CSO/public sector]. The besieged population is deprived of their means of income [employment restrictions]. Invisible killing is added to outright executions [raids and deportations].'

To summarise, it is through the convergence of these bio/necropolitical dispositives that we can see their pervasive nature not only through a direct application of governmental legal and disciplinary powers, but also through their reorientation of society, culture and economy in order to coerce, shape, and govern those deemed 'illegal', 'unworthy', or a 'threat'. Our task now is to explore how these dispositives can be resisted, and whether such resistance is to be found.

The Anti-Raid Network deactivate immigration raids by organising communities to perform non-aggressive and legally disruptive acts such as filming, informing suspects of their rights, and drawing local and media attention in order to shame and scare off raid squads acting illegitimately.

05. Resisance through self-creation

As outlined in the first chapter, for Foucault and Agamben, it is the dispositive that articulates power and constitutes the subject, and as such, it is the dispositive that acts as the site for where resistance to such power can be conceived. Both however offer differing approaches to how such a resistance can manifest (Frost 2019).

The entry-point for Foucault begins from his view that the development of modern governmentality has been subsumed by the permeating effects of biopolitical dispositives, in that, "the king reigns but does not govern" (2007: 87). Due to this, the dispositive acts as a transcendent referent for the subject (Erikkson 2005) which operates 'outside' the material world (above a sovereign power which is immanent; material), imposing on the subject 'a law of truth' (Foucault 1982: 212). Possible contestation to this for Foucault stems from his view of resistance as being inscribed within the relation of power as a 'plurality of irreducible opposites', which means subjects can both affect and be affected by dispositives (Foucault 1998: 95).

Foucault however makes a distinction between resistance as either an act of liberation or freedom. Liberation referred only to 'mere' resistance against dispositives, in that it emerged in reaction and therefore would only form a new subjectivity attached to the former, thus recapturing the subject (Brown 1995: 27). Freedom in contrast escaped this through the production of new subjectivities guided by an ethos of self-creation (Foucault 2000: 298), which Foucault claimed required a strategic and innovative re-use of dispositives. And to do so, required a 'permanent provocation' of imposed subjectivities by operating at the limits of power (called a 'limit-experience'), by understanding its form, and producing creative and transgressive acts which would rupture and overcome power by 'folding' it back onto itself (1982: 221-2).

FIGURE 5.1
Material produced by the
ARN on how to disrupt a raid.
Source: ARN 2019.

HOW TO SPOT AN IMMIGRATION RAID

HOW DO THEY ARRIVE?

Vans marked IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT
Sometimes unmarked white/blue/black
vans accompanied by police car.
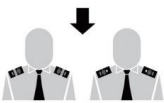
WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

Should be wearing ICE
insignia/numbers on shoulders.
They often hide them.

WHERE DO THEY GO?

Streets, Train & Tube stations,
Buses, Workplaces, Homes.

HOW DO THEY ACT?

Arrive in groups, sometimes
with plain clothes officers.
Often block entrances/exits.

BORDER & IMMIGRATION AGENCY 0000
BORDER & IMMIGRATION AGENCY 0000

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you see someone being stopped by
ICE officers or police on immigration
grounds, and your immigration status
does not put you at risk,
we recommend you:

1. Immediately make the person aware they do not have to answer questions & they can leave
2. Remind the officers of the law
3. Film the incident, where possible asking the person stopped if that's ok, or just film the officers involved. This may be useful in making a claim in the event of an unlawful stop or arrest.
4. Record lapel numbers of officers involved
5. Make other members of the public aware of what's happening
6. Get witnesses' contact details if the stop leads to an arrest or the person wants to pursue it afterwards.
7. Attempt to pass on a phone number to the individual if you think the stop will lead to arrest
8. Do not get aggressive or physically obstruct officers if you want to avoid arrest for obstruction.
* If you want to refer to their guidance when speaking to Immigration Officers, everything can be found in Chapter 31 UKBA Operational Enforcement Manual: tinyurl.com/7b7s9yn

What to do if you spot an immigration raid

Tell the person, they do not have to
answer questions and can walk away.

If an arrest or raid goes ahead, alert
others to what is happening.
Call out for support.
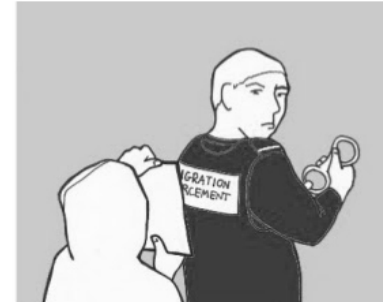
Remind officers of the law, as set out in
Chapter 31 of the Operational Enforce-
ment Manual.

With the permission of the arrestee, film
the actions of immigration officers.
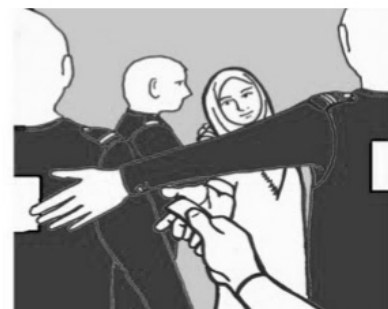
Pass on useful numbers to the person.

Be creative!

Agamben (2014) on the contrary, believed that such reliance on transcendent dispositives to achieve freedom was, as liberation is for Foucault, unfeasible due to the zoe/bios distinction and the oikonomic government that render dispositives completely totalising (Frost 2019: 152). And so Foucault's freedom could only ever represent a power that was constituent; one forever confined within pre-existing power relations and always recaptured. The only escape, Agamben stated, came instead from a destituent power; one outside pre-existing regimes, and was only possible through what he called the deactivation of a dispositive (Agamben 1993).

Before we explore deactivation further, we will first apply the above ideas to a case study of resistance by the CSO The Anti-Raids Network (ARN). ARN is a London based organisation self-described as a 'loose network of groups and individuals working to build the resistance to immigration raids since 2012 by producing and sharing information and materials' (ARN 2019). Their ethics comes from a rejection of binary subjectivities such as 'citizen/migrant, legal/illegal' produced by current discourses, and they are 'against all immigration controls' and 'believe that no one is illegal'. Their actions involve handing out multilingual materials either online or in neighbourhoods that clarify the 2010 Equality Act which stipulates immigration and police officers must have sufficient reason to suspect someone of an immigration offence before they can stop or question them. As we remember, many raids are based off weak evidence, and therefore often result in legal transgressions. This is a fact ARN leverage to disrupt raids by organising communities to perform non-aggressive and legally disruptive acts such as filming, informing suspects of their rights, and drawing local and media attention in order to shame and scare off raid squads acting illegitimately.

The success of these tactics can be seen in a 2018 report by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration which reported increasing 'incidents of disruption' and 64 successful protests between 2016 and 2018 with specific reference to the ARN (32-33). However, the report also described new measures in response to such resistance, which included enhanced 'de-escalation' training, and methods to 'pre-empt' resistance in order for officers to deploy new 'counter-measures'. Although we can see the ARN's resistance as displaying Foucault's relational effect on the Home Office's dispositives of power, such dispositives can also be seen to have strategically responded and reinforced themselves as Agamben had warned. And although the principles of ARN also reflect Foucault's notion of self-creation in their rejection of imposed binary subjectivities, individuals who disrupted a raid in 2015 became labelled by the tabloid press as 'extremist', 'Muslim gangs', and 'hoodies' (Daily Mail 2015). This shows that their strategy, although approaching Foucault's notions of freedom due to their constant manoeuvring at the limits of dispositives and self-creation, still fall prey to the trap of liberation in that their resistance manifests as a direct response to such dispositives, and therefore 'merely' reconstitutes imposed subjectivities. We can therefore view ARN's practices as a strategy of constituent power, in that they utilise the dispositive of law in order to leverage a resistance against, which for Agamben (2011: 259), is the reason why Foucault's language of 'rupture' and 'overcoming' is unsatisfactory.

NOTE 08
A form-of-life referred to a life that's form was predicated not simply on biological vocations or necessity, but one which pursued a higher goal which was always at stake, but always a possibility. For example, the pursuit of the 'American Dream' through an economically liberal political project hinged upon land-ownership.

So, let's return to Agamben's notion of inoperativity, which we can understand through his work The Coming Community (1993) and his interest in 'forms-of-life',[8] which emerged amongst debates at the time to this problem of imposed subjectivities and the resulting exceptions and violence that it enabled (Blanchot 1988, Nancy 1991). For Agamben, the 'coming community' got around such subjectification by producing a form-of-life based upon the Latin word quodlibet, defined as 'whatever being', which negated the very logic of belonging, identity and representation itself (Boano and Talocci 2017). In doing so, this quodlibet form-of-life would produce a community of 'singularities', with their only commonality as being such (Agamben 1993: 86), which would have the effect of dislocating individuals from the transcendent subjectivity of

Foucault's dispositive as well as Agamben's zoe/bios trap (Esposito 2012 :19). This would therefore open up an imminent realm of '(im)potentiality' for an individual not predicated on a 'romanticisation of the past, nor in the yearning for a utopian future,' but instead, in the 'realisation that the possibility/potentiality of change and transformation [was] within the present' (Boano Talocci 2017: 863).

Therefore, we can understand the inoperation of a dispositive as having the goal of opening up a new use and mode of politics detached from anything but itself. In more recent texts by Agamben (2007, 2009), such an operation is described as 'profanation', which implies returning something that is sacred (transcendent) to free use; restoring it's (im)potentiality. Agamben stated that in the same way Foucault's dispositive transcends the sovereign, and religion separates things from a common sphere through sacrifice, capitalism also created a transcendent separation through the commodification of all objects; exchange-value eclipsing use-value. To profane such objects to free use, was therefore to negate the bio-economic capture of individuals, which again brings us back to oikonomia, the dispositive we have seen that allows for the necropolitical control of asylum-seekers. Agamben believed that the profanation of the oikonomia was a condition of possibility due to the example of a form-of-life practiced by Franciscan Monks in 13th Century Italy (Agamben 2005a: 27). These Franciscans had refused all forms of property rights in favour of usus pauper (use without rights), in order to better emulate the teachings of the bible, which effectively deactivated economic dispositives for the Franciscans rather than being in conflict with them.

Turning to our next case study SLRA, we can see such a profanation occurring in their model which hosts support sessions for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in a church and community-centre which both come rent-free due to their charitable aims. The sessions are also primarily run by volunteers who provide advice and support to attendees navigating bureaucracies concerning asylum claims, benefits, housing and employment. Alongside this function, they additionally provide an English language class, a free lunch prepared by volunteers consisting of attendees themselves alongside locals from the surrounding community, and an NHS doctor and therapist who offers treatment without the need for documentation. This form of CSO is built on the principle that migrant services must be emotional as well as organisational (Gill 2018: 94) and reflects a growing body of literature stating the importance of hospitality in migration (Derrida 1997; LeBlanc 2000; Pratt and Rosner 2012; Mouradian 2015; Astolfo 2020).[9]

Through such a model of volunteerism, donations, and philanthropic rent negation, the necropolitical dispositives of neoliberal austerity we identified in the previous chapter can be seen to have been partially deactivated, since SLRA have been able to continue operating despite severe governmental budget cuts to the sector. In addition to this, the health and educational services not requesting documentation removes any reference to a subjected status, which also deactivates the biopolitical dispositives of surveillance embedded in public institutions. This is again reinforced by the general calm and friendly atmosphere of the space, where individuals of 'legal' and 'illegal' statuses interact unconcerned of such subjectivities, only making reference to such during the necessary casework, which would therefore approach Agamben's quodlibet form-of-life in that subjectivities for the most part become insignificant.

Despite this, however, individuals at the drop-in do not necessarily represent singularities with their only relation being such, since it is precisely the existence of such dispositives that have brought them together in the first place. As well as this, the core function of the sessions are to navigate the legal bureaucracies that sustain the necro/biopolitical dispositives, which in effect, acknowledges and legitimises such exclusionary devices, whilst also forming a constituent rather than destituent power. As such, the form of resistance

displayed by SLRA would still only be 'mere' in Foucault's eyes, and since it is still of a constituent nature, could not be classed as a pure act of profanation as outlined by Agamben.

But despite the ARN and SLRA falling short through the theoretical lenses of Foucault and Agamben, it would seem heavy handed to disregard their models as simply being ineffective or redundant. They are clearly organisations providing a meaningful response to the issue of migrant persecution, which although not totalisingly effective when taken alone, perhaps require being viewed in tandem; as part of a greater network.

Through a model of volunteerism, donations, and philanthropic rent negation, the necropolitical dispositives of neoliberal austerity can be seen to have been partially deactivated, since SLRA have been able to continue operating despite severe governmental budget cuts to the sector.

FIGURE 5.2
Casework at South London Refugee Association.
Source: SLRA 2019.

Neoliberal processes also present crucial opportunities, since the shift of responsibility to the sovereign subject to make 'informed decisions' also shifts a biopolitical capability along with it.

06. Resistance through multiplicity

Before we completely reject the examples of resistance as outlined in the previous chapter as ineffective, it is important that we recognise that Agamben's conceptions on profanation arose at a particular time in history, one which has since evolved into what has been called a post-Agambenian period. The critiques that led to such a transition can be understood as threefold: Firstly, with Agamben's statement that we are all susceptible to become bare life due to this foundational zoe/bios binary, his ensuing lack of conceptual clarity on differentiations within bare life have been described as 'disembodying' the homo sacer, removing any identity such as race, sexuality or gender, which as Butler (2004) has claimed, cannot be ignored in relation to subjectivity. Secondly, Agamben's descriptions of such a static and powerless Homo Sacer removes any agency from those deemed so, such as refugees; groups who have been widely viewed as having perhaps the most pragmatic, impressive characteristics to be found (Walters 2008; De Genova 2010; Rygiel 2010; Squire 2015).

The third critique is the most fundamental and relates to Agamben's view of sovereignty as falling closer to Schmitt than Foucault. As we remember for Schmitt, sovereignty was all powerful in its ability to decide on the exception, whereas for Foucault, such sovereign power was more of an illusion hiding the fact that the sovereign was in fact the result of complex social processes (resistance entwined with power) driven by transcendental dispositives (Genel 2003). Agamben's combination of the binary of zoe/bios driven by the all-powerful sovereign oikonomia therefore removes any space for differentiations in power and its differing values of life (Braidotti 2002), as the first two critiques also contest, and which Mbembe and Fassin eluded to in chapter 1.

Agamben's notions have therefore ultimately been critiqued as being too 'state-centred', and no longer applicable to the recent transformations of

deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation we are witnessing today (Lemke 2005: 9). Fassin's 'meanings and values' that now more than ever determine the value of life and death beyond simple biopolitical productivity, are decisions that are increasingly being determined not by the state, but by 'scientific consultants, conferences, expert commissions, and ethical counsels' (Lemke 2005: 11). Such institutions perform as private or non-governmental entities, which governments have increasingly come to rely upon for guidance (Rose and Miller 1992). Therefore, such neoliberal processes, although being outlined as a negative strategy of necropolitical dispositives in chapter 2, also present crucial opportunities, since the shift of responsibility to the sovereign subject to make 'informed decisions' also shifts a biopolitical capability along with it (Lemke 2002b).

Such capitalist dynamics have therefore been viewed by Hardt and Negri (2000) as representing a positive potentiality in biopolitics, where the 'political, social, economic, and the vital all dwell together' (405-6). Such a combination, claim Hardt and Negri, represents a constituent power, which does not define, as for Agamben, those who already have power and the ability to decide on the exception, but those who 'seek it, want it, or want to destroy it' (2004: 364). From such a logic, Hardt and Negri outline an optimum democratic form which is based on this constituent power, as being one that is composed of decentralised networks of independent groups working collectively in what they call the 'multitude' (ibid).

Such a concept is importantly developed from Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of a 'plane of immanence' (1987), a work intimately related to that of Foucault and Agamben. Although being an enormously complex body of ideas, it can be described as shifting the analysis of dynamical systems theory of self-organising material networks, to the social, political and economic processes of humans. Such a theory posits that self-organising systems (like eco-systems, ant-colonies, coral-reefs etc.) have no transcendent organising referents such as kings, deities, leaders, or dictators, and therefore such systems know only 'longitudes and latitudes', and are formed only by 'subjectless individuations that constitute collective assemblages' (ibid: 266). In short, such a 'plane of immanence' can in a way be seen to represent an end trajectory of Foucault's plurality of resistances entwined within power, which reveal a delimited, monistic world in which a sovereign power is nothing but the emergent result of its constituent parts; all social life.

Through such an understanding, Hardt and Negri challenges the 'accepted truth' of a sovereignty as consisting of a political 'head' which reduces and conforms the political 'body' to one identity (2004: 100). Instead, they argue that for democracy to succeed, it must operate through a multitude of 'singularities' acting collectively, which although remaining 'multiple and internally different, [are] able to act in common and thus rule itself' without succumbing to any one transcendent dogma (2004: 100). This sounds very similar to Agamben's quodlibet form-of-life, however the key difference here is that such a community need not act only destituently to achieve their goal, but must also work constitutively through diverse networks penetrating all levels of society in a way that is neither based upon an imperial sovereignty, nor on anarchy (Reynolds 2006).

If we look back to the ARN case of the previous chapter, we can begin to see such a philosophy as underpinning their manifesto: 'Individuals or groups involved in ARN can act for themselves without seeking permission or consensus from the whole network […] we are against hierarchy: that is, we don't want to have leaders, rather we should all take responsibility to organise ourselves as equals'. Through the lens of the multitude, the strength of such a strategy can be seen as allowing the ARN to not simply perform actions itself, but to also network with diverse groups and institutions such as SOAS[10] Detainee Support (a group with strong academic links) alongside grassroots

South London Refugee Associaton represents an example of a multiplicity, with concerned grassroots volunteers, professionalised case-workers, and NHS doctors defying surveillance, all working towards a similar goal through different means.

community action, who may be galvanised by similar goals but very different means. And if we look back to the SLRA case, we can also see another example of a multiplicity in action under the same logic, with concerned grassroots volunteers, professionalised case-workers, and NHS doctors defying surveillance, all working towards a similar goal through different means.

But Hardt and Negri's multiplicity could not simply remain at the level of civil-society, but needed to penetrate all scales including the state. The Detention Forum in the UK is an example of a CSO that could be seen to achieve this, which is a platform which networks with the International Detention Coalition to share and develop policy-alternatives to the state detention of migrants. Their network aims to connect the individual agency of community and CSO migrant practices (such as the case work of SLRA) with the bureaucratic legal and economic frameworks of state governance, with the effect of appeasing state shortages in capacity alongside the ethical intentions of individuals who contest migrant detention. Such negotiations could be viewed as truly constitutive, and it's results were seen in 2018 when the Home Office announced a community alternative to detention to be trialled for vulnerable women detained in the detention centre Yarl's Wood (Detention Forum 2019). This shows that a resistance without antagonism can sometimes be highly effective, reflecting a growing literature that questions whether efforts that entirely abandon the state as hopeless may be to 'cede too much' (Martin and Pierce 2012: 67), and that maybe the progressive elements of state should be nurtured alongside critique (Cooper 2017).

Such a coordination between a resistant civil-society and a potentially domineering state is not without its dangers, however. As addressed in chapter two, it was the homeless charity St. Mungo's who's position of trust in society was co-opted by the Home Office to identify irregular migrants. As such, recent literature has also begun to explore such cases of governmental commandeering, particularly in relation to the CSO response to the European Refugee Crisis of 2015 (Mitchell and Kallio 2017, Barisione et al. 2017, Fleischmann 2019). In the case of Germany for example, the state produced a 'handbook' of 'good practice' on refugee related volunteering, which Fleischmann (2019: 64) described as an attempt to 'order, coordinate, influence, and enhance volunteering', in order to '(re)gain control and power over the conduct of committed citizens'. Such a response would validate Agamben's view that any constitutive resistance is fated to be recaptured, however Fleischmann also noted that despite such attempts of control by the state, volunteers routinely contested governmental control and their 'ascribed roles' en masse, thereby remaining, to many degrees, 'ungovernable' (ibid: 64).

This then brings us to our final case of analysis which comes from an interview with a grassroots activist working in the city of Manchester. The story begins with a Gambian born woman who had been requested to come to a Reporting Centre to confirm her immigration status. She had been living in the UK for

16 years, and had a daughter studying in university who had recently acquired British citizenship, and so had expected the meeting to simply consist of an innocuous bureaucratic procedure. Upon arrival however, she was told she held an illegal status, and that she would therefore be immediately deported to her 'home' country Gambia. At the same time this was taking place, a group of friends and sympathetic organisations such as local Quaker church members had decided to go along with her to show support, and upon realising she had in fact been detained, quickly mobilised and surrounded the centre with the aim of stopping any Home Office van that attempted to leave with her inside. In response, officers decided to transport the woman in an unmarked van out the back entrance, but as she banged and screamed from the inside the supporters quickly noticed and surrounded the vehicle, attaching themselves under the bonnet. After a 9 hour stand-off, officers said they were concerned for the woman's welfare, and that they would take her to a facility that could offer beds, meals and showers. After the officers had repeatedly promised on camera that they would do just this, the protestors let the van leave, which then proceeded to drive straight to the deportation facility. In response, this group of individuals quickly assumed the role of activists, and sought the help of dozens of other CSO's proceeding to first; organise a hunger-strike for the woman in detainment in order to render her a health-risk thus slowing down deportation procedures, and second; to inundate the political system through any channel of communication possible (local Members of Parliament, councillors, surgeries, journalists, institutions etc.), with claims that her detainment was illegitimate. In two weeks, her charges were dropped, and she was released from detainment.

The organisation of a hunger-strike deactivated the politicised bare life of the detained woman by activating her human rights once her health subsequently became classified as 'at risk', effectively using Fassin's critique of humanitarian reason in her favour.

NOTE 11

The hunger-strike has been readily analysed in literature in relation to resistance towards bio/necropower and bare life; see Ziarek 2008; Purnell 2014; Ibrahim and Howarth 2019.

This case is so fascinating since it reveals the entire diversity of resistant techniques we have explored in the past 2 chapters in relation to each other. First, the fact that the woman and her friends rejected through their own reasoning that the subjectivity imposed on her by the Home Office was illegitimate represents Foucault's freedom through subjective self-creation. Secondly, the physical blocking of the van with 'legitimate' citizen bodies at risk of injury also represents Foucault's limit-experience comprised of 'folding' power relations back onto themselves thus rupturing the biopolitical disciplinary dispositives of detainment. Third, the organisation of a hunger-strike deactivated the politicised bare life of the detained woman by activating her human rights once her health subsequently became classified as 'at risk', effectively using Fassin's critique of humanitarian reason in her favour.[11] This both represents Foucault's contestation, but also Agamben's profanation, in that her decision to not eat resembled the quodlibet form-of-life; her decision to not be, to be (im)potential, and resulted in the deactivation of a biopower which utilised death as its threat. And lastly, the mobilisation of disparate social groups (singularities), into organised action (collectivities) which directed its power into the political sphere, displays a clear example of Negri and Hardt's multiplicity. As such her detainment was not only contested through a destituent power through sheer anarchy and profanation, but also through a constitutive power which utilised multiple institutions alongside the legal and political system to her favour.

Through such a case, we can see that Agamben and Foucault's forms of re-sistance are not necessarily redundant, but rather constitute just one strategy amongst many, which when performed in conjunction maximise the condi-tions of possibility of successful resistance. If any one of the actions that led to the release of the detained woman was performed alone, it is very unlikely she would have had the same positive outcome that resulted. And it is through this understanding where Negri and Hardt's intention with multiplicity becomes most visible, and most powerful.

Through Negri and Hardt's view of the multitude, we are able to see such acts of resistance as explored in the case studies as not lying in isolation to each other, but instead forming far larger constellations of ethics and action.

07. Conclusion

At the very beginning of this paper, one of the first points emphasised was the relationship between the escalating climate crisis and the prediction of around 200 million additionally displaced people by the end of the century. Although the causes and effects of climate change are indisputably political, the intention of this opening was to attempt set in stone a perhaps neutral acceptance of the fact that first; the movement of people between borders will continue to rise, and therefore second; that the only way the current status-quo of increasingly austere and paranoiac immigration systems will be able to cope, will perhaps be to approach Orwellian levels of control.

Recourse to humanitarian or national legislation to remedy such ills, as this paper has shown, has not proved entirely effective. This is on the one hand due to the governing humanitarian 'reasons' Fassin warned us about allowing for an inhumane use of legal grey-areas, and on the other, due to the existence of Agamben's zoe/bios distinction which continues to allow for legal exceptions nationally. For example, an individual with AIDS may be legally classified as vulnerable and therefore granted asylum, whereas as we saw in our final case study, a Gambian woman fully integrated into UK society for 16 years can be excluded and marked for deportation to a country she no longer knows.

Mbembe wrote that this situation the West had found itself in was primarily born from a foundation of colonial imperialism, which had nurtured and maintained the necessary 'social and imaginary significations' at the time of the 'other', which dehumanised those pillaged in order to offset the ensuing moral guilt (2003: 13). But it is within such imaginary significations that Agamben and Foucault, although through different means, ultimately offered us a way out of these binds of power. Through either the transgression or inoperativity of the dispositive, Foucault and Agamben's resistance consisted of an exercise in the self-creation of subjectivities independent from such collective social imaginations which were always at risk of being captured. However, both their modes of resistance, although being seen in glimpses and providing us with effective tools of analysis, were not to be entirely found in our UK case-studies of CSO contestation.

This could be pinned down to the fact that Agamben's writing was more of a linguistic experiment; a theoretical exploration of alternative forms-of-life that could redeem such political and barbaric tensions we see today. Foucault also,

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as we saw in our methodology, was interested not necessarily in outlining practical solutions, but rather in providing an array of tools which may allow for such solutions to be found. Therefore, both their theories could be seen as approaching a perhaps utopian end-goal which may be difficult to identify in our current, increasingly distorted global context. However, it is through Negri and Hardt's view of the multitude that we are able to view such acts of resistance as seen in the case studies as not simply lying in isolation, but instead forming far larger constellations of ethics and action. The effect of such a view is to reveal the power to be found in the diversity and adaptability of responses, and crucially, the articulation between them. Through this lens we are reminded affirmatively, as Deleuze and Guattari's 'plane of immanence' sought to show, that power is simply the culmination of all social life – and therefore is never totalising, but always malleable and subject to rearrangement.

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Natasha Lennard (2019) in her recent book exploring 'non-fascist life' contributes to this view nicely through a Deleuzian and Foucauldian lens, as she believed that 'fascistic-habits' in-fact dwelt within all of us; even those who identified as specifically non-fascist. Therefore, for Lennard, the solution to such a condition was only to be found in practising anti-fascism not as a noun or adjective, but as a perpetual verb; 'anti-fascisting against the fascisms that even we ourselves uphold' (16). When such a practice is viewed through Hardt and Negri's concept of the multitude, we can see in all our case-studies of resistance by civil-society to the 'hostile environment' a practice of just that. Not necessarily the generation of a revolutionary state of freedom within their own individual actions, but rather the constant exertion of a networked resistance against practices they each have decided are wrong, unethical, and that must be stopped.

Whilst SLRA provides the knowledge and support for an asylum-seeker or irregular migrant who has become ensnared in the Home Office bureaucracies, the ARN disrupt the raids to their homes, local friends surround the detention centre which detains them, and Liberty formulates the legal challenge championing their release. These organisations and grassroots movements are just a handful of the hundreds that have appeared in the UK over the past decade,[12] and although the 'hostile environment' and the conditions that birthed it are still well in place, these networks have launched significant resistance whose effects have echoed across the halls of power, for example, producing results such as the resignation of the Home Secretary Amber Rudd in 2018 for her role in the Windrush scandal.

Finally, to return to the passage by Italo Calvino that opened this paper, I feel his sentiments succinctly reflect such ideas on how to escape these 'inferno's' of exception we have explored, whilst also providing us with a suitably dramatic and apt conclusion to our analysis of CSO resistance; 'seek and learn to recognise who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space' (1974: 148).

Annex 01

Migrant terminology

Refugee

'Someone who owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country'. (UN IOM 2019: 169. Adapted from the 1951 Refugee Convention of refugees)

Asylum-seeker

An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on in the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will be ultimately recognised as a refugee, but every recognised refugee is initially an asylum seeker. (UN IOM 2019: 12)

Migrant

An umbrella term, not defined by international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across international borders, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. (UN IOM 2019: 30)

Regular migrant

Migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination

Irregular migrant

Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination. (UN IOM 2019: 114)

Annex 02

List of UK migrant civil-society organisations which influenced the research

Acorn

Was founded in Bristol in 2015 in order to build an organisation that serves communities in the same way a trade union serves the workplace. They therefore organise grassroots resistance to issues such as rogue landlords, employers or corporations, usually through campaigning and protests. For example they recently forced the bank TSB through mass-shaming to drop a new policy which prevented customers using their buy-to-let mortgage service from renting to people on state-benefits.

Anti-Raids Network

Is a primarily London based organisation formed in 2012 self-described as a loose network of groups and individuals working to build the resistance to immigration raids. They reject all binary notions such as citizen/migrant, legal/illegal, genuine/bogus, and are against all immigration controls. Their core actions involve producing a multi-lingual handbook on the rights granted by the 2010 Equality Act, alongside actions that communities can use to disrupt and prevent raids occurring in their area.

Corporate Watch

Are a non-profit co-operative founded in 1996 that do investigative journalism into the social and environmental impacts of corporations and capitalism. Due to the opacity of the Home Office, their experience and work in investigating governmental bodies provides a vital source of information and statistics for organisations contesting detention and raids. They have recently published an excellent book titled the UK Border Regime: a critical guide (2020), which presents a decade of detailed research on UK immigration policy, including a critical history, and most interestingly, the complex of private contracts which form the current internal and external borders and infrastructure between the UK and France. Available: corporatewatch.org/product/the-uk-border-regime/

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

Is an independent governmental regulatory body that monitors and reports on the effectiveness of the immigration, asylum, nationality and customs functions as carried out by the Home Office. As with Corporate Watch, they provide a unique insight to internal governmental operations as well as publishing vital statistics not shared by the Home Office.

Jesuit Refugee Council

Is a faith-based charity that works to provide care and support for refugees and asylum seekers. Their London chapter specialises specifically with 'Exhausted Appeals Rights' Asylum Seekers, which are those who have used up their maximum number of appeal for asylum without success. Such work is immensely challenging, and requires creative legal approaches.

Legal Action Centre for Women

Is an anti-sexist and anti-racist legal charity founded in London in 1982 and has since spread to San Francisco. They work with all vulnerable women who are in need of legal support, including asylum seekers and refugees, and use a case-work co-learning strategy which teaches the client the law during the process. The effect of this is to enable those they help to be able to legally understand and manage their own case, which enables the client to then perform such activism themselves.

Liberty

Is a legally orientated civil rights organisation founded in 1934 that doesn't align with any political party, are self-funded, and believe in evidence-based legal resistance through case litigation, Parliamentary work, and policy analysis. Their work ranges from contesting the use of facial-recognition in the UK, to challenging the Hostile Environment policies such as surveillance in schools.

Migration Observatory

Is based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford. The research group provide impartial and independent evidence-based analysis on migration in the UK in order to inform public policy and the media.

North East London Migrant Action (NELMA)

Brings together activists from across London to campaign on issues relating to vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers. Their manifesto outlines a disbelief in anyform of mirant illegality, and a belief in the freedom of movement for all people. Their campaigns coordinate with a wide range of organisations including Liberty and Soas Detainee Support, and their current focus is on migrants with 'No Recourse to Public Funds' – i.e., no state aid.

NIAMOS Centre

Is a radical arts and cultural centre in Manchester, which hosts a wide range of community activities and projects. One project that is currently being instituted intends to set up an informal citizens advice bureau which networks individuals from across the community to provide any kind of support, from finding housing to contesting an asylum rejection. In addition to this, they contest imposed subjectivities by providing a platform to socially isolated individuals (from refugees to the homeless) to develop businesses or publish poetry, without parading them as such.

RAPAR

Is a human rights organisation based in Mancteser founded in 2001 which campaigns on behalf of displaced peoples as well as working on community development, and acting as a facilitator for participatory action research. A current project involves a co-learning casework project which performs a 'Moot Court' for those going through the asylum and immigration system in order to get them more familiar and knowledgeable with the process.

Sanctuary City

Is a global network of cities who are against the increasing criminalisation of migrants by national governments. In the UK, they form a huge network of cities, towns and villages, and run a wide range of activities such as advocacy and case work, political campaigns, or cultural projects. For example the chapter in Ireland runs a project with asylum seekers and refugees that provides insight to the UK political system, inviting local politicians to come and discuss their work, and ultimately normalising political participation for migrants.

Scottish Refugee Council

Are an independent charity formed in 1985 who provide essential information and advice to those seeking asylum in Scotland. They also run political campaigns, and coordinate with local communities to reduce stigma and raise awareness. For example their investigations and campaigns revealing the poor quality of asylum housing under the private COMPASS contracts was crucial in getting the issue into the national media.

SLRA

Are an independent charity based in South London that run two weekly drop-ins for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants providing casework, counselling, advice and support. Alongside this they host a wide-range of community activities such as day-trips out for families, group cooking sessions, and the general facilitation of a safe space twice a week during the drop-in sessions.

SOAS Detainee Support

Was founded in 2005 by SOAS University students initially working to prevent the detainment of two Ugandan twins, which was ultimately unsuccessful. Off the back of this experience however, the group has since grown enormously, and work to break the isolation of immigration detention by visiting those detained and supporting them to take control of their case and resist deportation. They define themselves as a solidarity rather than a charity, and maintain visitations are essential in what they do in order to provide emotional support as well as practical. Projects routinely use getting cases into national media streams, and earlier this year they helped organise a mass hunger-strike at Yarl's Wood.

The Detention Forum

Is a UK based network of organisations that challenge the UK's immigration detention system and seek to provide policy alternatives. They strategically target parliament through the production of policy reports assisted by campaigning, and reciprocally share their findings and work with the International Detention Coalition.

Annex 03

Stories

01 **Excerpt from transcript of interview with Jamil, a grassroots organiser from Manchester**

Q: What strategies did you use in your work with RAPAR to champion the legal rights of asylum seekers and refugees?

At RAPAR we take lead from the Case Work Co-learning Collective, which includes organisations such as the All African Women's Group, Law Action Centre for Women, and Women Against Rape.

Case work co-learning is basically breaking down the service-user/service-provider divide in that, you don't come here explicitly for legal advice from someone who's going to take your case on from you, rather, the idea is that the person who's the expert in your case is the person who's actually been through the asylum system (you). That's because you know your entire immigration story from the point of departure, your first screening interview, every interaction you've had since, your first rejection, tribunal, whatever. The entire process which you go through, I will never witness, because I'm a British citizen and not allowed inside a reporting centre. The person who's an expert on their case is the person who's been brutalised by the British state, and our job is to provide an understanding of the legal landscape, they provide an understanding of their personal landscape, and then we stitch the two together.

So we sit there and we actually teach the law to people, so in the worst case scenario, say they get dispersed to Birmingham, or Glasgow, and their entire case-work team is based somewhere else, at least they know the basic skills, and have a case report they can refer to themselves, or pass over to a solicitor or another activist wherever they've been dispersed. So ultimately the idea is – which I think is really radical – is not just providing free legal advice, but actually giving people a deep and thorough understanding how their case fits within the legal landscape themselves.

It's legal, but it's radical in that you end up training a bunch of people who are seeking asylum to become asylum activists themselves.

Q: You were involved with trying to stop a deportation, can you describe this experience?

There was one woman in particular who it kicked off with, which was my introduction to asylum politics. Ellen was a Gambian woman who had been living in the UK for 16 years, and had a daughter who had just received British citizenship who was studying at Lancaster University. Ellen was a friend, I danced with her, I cooked with her, we knew each other well, and then one day she got snatched after being summoned to report at Dallas Court Reporting Centre. We had a feeling that this might happen, but she thought she'd have been able to leave after 10 minutes. So we all went down just in case anyway to provide support, and next thing you know, an hour went by, two hours went by, and she still hadn't come out, so we were like shit, they took her.

So we decided to block the road outside the reporting centre. There were around 13 of us, and the majority were pensioners and Quakers over the age of 50. Four different people took over a corner of the reporting centre each, and stood there for probably about 9 hours in the rain, making sure they could see if any of the vans attempted to leave the centre with Ellen inside. But what we didn't expect, was that they'd decided to put her in the back of a white van and not an immigration enforcement van and sneak out the back entrance so that we wouldn't notice. Luckily though, because she was banging from the inside of the van and screaming, somebody heard and we all rushed to the van and blocked it. A few of us lay underneath the actual bonnet of the engine and attached ourselves to it.

Q: How long did the stand-off last for?

This stand-off lasted for about 4 hours, and then the police said, because they were concerned about her welfare, that if we removed ourselves from the van they would take her to Pennine House which is an overnight registration centre where she would have access to showers, toilets and a bed, which Dallas Court didn't have. So on camera, we made the police and the home office promise, several times, that they would actually take her to Pennine House, and not to Yarls Wood detention centre. Then we asked Ellen in the van, what do you want to do? And she said look, you've been out here all night, your freezing, don't worry - I trust them, it's fine. And so we let the van go, and it proceeded to drive her straight down to Yarls Wood.

So then Ellen went on a two-week hunger strike, we had a massive campaign, contacted her MP, and managed to get her out in those two weeks, as we absolutely badgered Lucy Powell, Azfal Kahn, David Lammy, the entire Labour party structure, and MP's from every party in fact, saying look, they've just kidnapped this woman with no grounds.

Q: How did you go about getting the support of the MP's?

You contact them, you attend every surgery, and you make sure that the next day their email inbox is just full of this individuals Home Office reference number and lots of angry messages from disgruntled citizens. You use any angle of communication that is possible, and completely clog up their inboxes so that the only thing their assistant or case-workers are hearing that morning is this person's name from a wide range of constituents from Doctors to Quakers to local tenants to activists, and you make them aware that citizens are watching.

We had a similar one with Owen Haisley, who was MC Madrush, who had been here for 41 years - since he was 4 years old. Because of a criminal offence, he was detained, and again, we had a massive campaign, and we just did the same thing. We sat in Kims [the cafe we are in], wrote a petition up which over 6-7 days ended up getting to 100,000 signatures, as we mobilised a lot of people in the music industry as he was a rapper. Skittles from Levelz was here, and he was like wait, you only have 3,000 signatures are you taking the piss? So he just went to town through his little black book just contacting everyone. Mike Burgess, who's a music producer, contacted everyone he knew and all the press, and in the course of 5 days we had different teams of people advocating nationwide.

Q: Could you tell me about your new project at the Niamos centre?

Our aim to institute a bunch of different community productions working on a local scale to try and create an economy and a culture that refers only to itself so that it's not always seeking funding. This would involve multiple elements such as setting up an informal Citizens Advice Bureau that could do case-work for asylum seekers, but also any project someone is keen to get going, particularly for socially isolated individuals who want to create things but are only ever asked to create things in reference to such a status. i.e. a refugee poet who is only asked to come read their poetry at an event showcasing refugee poets - who are only asked to share work if they are put on a platform infront of policy makers to talk about their experiences as a refugee, rather than being engaged as artists and human beings themselves.

Our plan is to offer 50% of our time free to community organisations, and 50% to those who can afford to pay, and try and take expensive institutional contracts on in order to try and put that money back into community production. So that if someone needs a house, we'll work with you get a house, if someone wants to put on a gig, we'll work with you to put on a gig. We have already been reaching out to multiple institutions such as Manchester University who are already interested in hosting a series of humanities lectures.

It's just being like producers, but in a very ad-hoc way, developing cases as we go along as in, we ask who needs help, and then ask how can we help.

02   **The Windrush generation**

A pertinent case study to symbolise the history of UK immigration controls over the past century is the departure of Jamaican workers aboard the Empire Windrush in 1948 to the UK. The Windrush was a commandeered German ship, and had been charted to return Jamaican soldiers back to the Carribean. However since it was a private-charter, the Captain, keen to not waste a trip, decided to advertise a return-journey to the UK at a discount price in the local newspaper. Roughly 300 passengers bought tickets, motivated by a recently revised British Nationality Act of the same year which declared that all British subjects could move freely throughout the Commonwealth. Most of them had just fought for the UK in WWII, and therefore were highly skilled, were familiar with British culture, and were optimistic at the prospect of rejoining the country.

British policymakers however had only expected white British subjects to utilise this legislation and migrate, and a telegram to Parliament from the Jamaican British embassy warning them of the Windrush's approach set off a whole series of panicked internal discussions. One letter for example, addressed to Prime Minister Clement Atlee by 12 of his MP's, firmly warned of how the British were 'blessed in the absence of a colour racial problem', and that 'an influx of coloured people domiciled here is likely to impair harmony' (National Archives 1948). The letter went onto caution that the experience of the Windrush migrants 'may attract others to follow their example', and that the British Government must; 'by legislation if necessary, control immigration in the political, social, economic, and fiscal interests of our people'. Clement Atlee's first suggestion was to redirect the boat to West Africa for those onboard to be employed in the nut picking industry, however despite all odds, the boat arrived, and the passengers settled in Brixton, South London.

After over a decade of political uncertainty on how to prevent this continuing 'influx', being an imperative primarily championed by Winston Churchill and his 'Keep Britain White' slogan, the solution was finally found in 1962 under Conservative Prime minister Harold Mcmillain through the introduction of a skill-based system for immigration. This system primarily excluded 'coloured' migrants since they did not have access to institutions that could provide suitable documents proving their qualifications, and was described by the Chairman of the policy committee assigned to the matter as 'the only workable method of controlling immigration without ostensibly discriminating on the basis of colour' (Spencer 2002: 123).

This story not only reveals the blatant, and whole-heartedly racist British establishment of a not too distant past, but also acts as a clear example of a dispositive in action. In that, through significant trial-and-error, a strategy emerged that responded to this 'emergency' by enabling the legal exceptions of a 'culturally imagined threat', through the utilisation of 'neutral' technologies of bureaucracy (Wallace 2018, Mbembe 2003).

Today, the Conservative Home Office today under Theresa May, and continued under Boris Johnson, have redrafted the same skill-based filter as developed in 1962 to be reimplemented once/if Brexit is finally achieved (Home Office 2018).

Red doors

One example of the ethical negligence that resulted from the privatisation of Asylum accommodation as outlined in Chapter 2, involved a number of neighbourhoods in the towns of Stockton and Middlesbrough in 2016. G4S, a global company that deal primarily with security matters in prisons, airports, or borders, had taken up the contract for Asylum housing and were looking to make some cost-efficiencies. One idea they had, was to make the job of their building maintenance team easier by painting all the doors of the Asylum housing bright red to allow contracted building-maintenance to easily identify the houses under their remit. However, this also had the effect of making it immediately clear to anyone which houses contained Asylum-seekers, and which didn't, resulting in a number of aggressive attacks and vandalisms on the homes by extremists. The practice was quite quickly condemned as dangerously exclusionary, but serves as quite a visual example of a prioritisation of fiscal efficiency completely over-shadowing any consideration of ethics or care.

Khalid Shazad

In the Spring of 2013, a Pakistani asylum-seeker by the name of Khalid Shazad was detained in Colnbrook Immigration removal centre, which had recently been acquired and was operated by the private company Serco. During this time he had a series of health complications, and after 3 months was eventually deemed 'unfit for detention' and released. Later that same day, he was found dead on a Virgin train from Euston to Manchester. This case is so revealing since despite Khalid having officially being identified as having extremely poor health, rather than being taken to a hospital, he was instead shown the door in order to, as Williams (2014) has put it; 'die elsewhere'. The supremely simple case of negligence this story describes reveals quite explicitly what Mbembe (2003) sought to define with his notion of necropolitics. When restrained by law but faced with an undesirable, the legal solution of simply 'letting die' is often the path of least resistance.

'Insufficient evidence'

This final story involves a case I shadowed during one drop-in session at SLRA, which involved a Sri Lankan man who was seeking to appeal his rejected asylum case. He had first arrived in the UK ten years ago fleeing the civil war in which his political party, the Tamil Tigers, had lost. For the year following this defeat, he was required to report to a police station once a week along with 1000's of other suspected supporters, but after some time, many of those who did began to not come out again, causing many to flee the country. This was his reason for asylum which he put forwards to the Home Office, however his case was rejected since he lacked sufficient evidence to prove such a story.

The Home Office was right, this man did have practically no proof that any of this had taken place, at least involving him. However, the suggested evidence he should provide, was a note confirming such a story from the police station which he claimed had began murdering those who, like him, had supported the opposition political party. Therefore, in the circumstance that the man's story was completely legitimate, such a task of returning to the police station to get an official statement would be quite absurd.

This therefore shows quite clearly what Fassin (2009) had despaired at in the logic of humanitarian reason, in that the legally rationalised system with which it directs its energies often consist of unrealistic and occasionally ridiculous requirements for those it seeks to protect.

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