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Drawing Borders: Images, Representation, and (In)Visibility of Migrants on the Balkan Route

Nora Hill
Colby College

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Drawing Borders: Images, Representation, and (In)Visibility of Migrants on the Balkan Route

Nora Hill
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Readers:
Maple Razsa
Nadia El-Shaarawi

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Introduction

It is a late night Google search that brings me—through a dizzying series of links and connections—to the Facebook page “I’m not a beggar. I’m a refugee.” I scroll through for close to an hour, examining blurry phone snapshots of men in the Barracks in the winter of 2016, more recent pictures of lines outside the asylum office in Paris, images with indistinct forest backgrounds. The captions contextualize each image in imperfect English, describing the setting, the cold, and the bureaucratic nightmare of asylum applications. Eventually, I send a message through the page, explaining my interest in images of the Route. Five minutes later, my phone buzzes. It is the page’s administrator, a 25-year old Afghan photojournalist, sending his phone number so we can talk on WhatsApp. We text late into the night, discussing my research and his journey and his training as a journalist and the photos he posts. Near the end of our conversation, I ask Èzat why he posts these pictures on a public Facebook page. He responds with an ordered list:

- 1 It’s for me not to forget what I went through
- 2 It’s for people like me back in Afghanistan to see what’s are they going to face on the ways
- 3 It’s for other people to see what’s going on with refugees
- 4 It’s my hobby to do stuff like that.

Èzat’s clear articulation of his three intended audiences—himself, people like him, and “other people”—keeps coming to mind as I look through the camera rolls of my migrant informants’ phones, the Facebook pages of Serbian NGOs, the archives of Western newspaper articles about the so-called European border crisis. Who are these

pictures for? What are they trying to say to these people? Does that message have an impact? What work do images do on the Balkan Route?

The Balkan Route. It conjures up adventure, a journey. Disorder, too—vague associations with the wars of the 1990s, the details of which have faded from memory since 10th grade World History class. More times than I can count, I’ve had to pull out a map to show friends and family where this research I’m doing is. Talk about “the European refugee crisis,” and people are more familiar: everyone saw the photo of the Syrian toddler washed up on a beach in the Greek Islands (figure 1), and the piece by high-profile British graffiti artist Banksy that it inspired. Most people heard about the ever-increasing flows of migrants in 2013 and 2014 and 2015, and saw the photos of overcrowded boats full of migrants being rescued by the Italian navy. The sea route to Europe is often the more spectacular one, the more dangerous one, and the higher stakes one. The sea route has stories like the shipwreck off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa on October 3rd, 2013, when 300 drowned. Those stories make good news.

In the summer of 2015, there is a shift. People are still making the crossing in precariously overcrowded boats from Northern Africa to Europe, but word spreads of a different way into Europe, a land route. The Balkan Route is ever-changing as countries open and close their borders, change their policies towards migrants; as information about the best ways to travel spreads through Facebook and WhatsApp groups as conversations along the way, a vast network of information sharing that is part of what migration scholars Dmitris Papadopolous and Vassilis Tsianos term the “mobile commons”: “innumerable uncoordinated by cooperative actions” that work to enable

migration (2013:190). Èzat's Facebook page, and the photos he posts there, are one example of information sharing in the mobile commons; as he says about his photos, "It's for people like me back in Afghanistan to see what's are they going to face on the ways."

More or less, the Route is this: First, get to Turkey. From there, you have two options: cross by land into Bulgaria or Greece (more difficult since both countries have built fences and started enforcing their land borders more heavily) or cross the short stretch of sea between Turkey and the Greek islands. Then you have to make it to the Greek mainland and head north, all the way to the border. From there, most go to Macedonia, though Bulgaria and Albania are also options (according to many of my migrant informants, Bulgaria is notorious for harsh treatment of refugees). Next is Serbia, whose reputation for treatment of migrants is good, relative to its neighbors. For a while, most people went from Serbia to Hungary (an EU country, in the Schengen zone of visa-free travel—once you're in, you can theoretically make it to Germany or Sweden or Denmark on regular trains and buses). Hungary built a fence and closed its borders in the fall of 2015, though; it is enormously difficult to get in clandestinely now, and as of January 2018 only two refugees per day are granted legal admission (Sarhaddi Nelson 2018). (There are some people who make it, still; a young woman I met in Belgrade tells me about her cousin, who made it over the border fence and was fast enough to get into the forest before border police caught him. He and his companions walked through Hungarian forests for a week to reach Austria.) The Route turned to Croatia after Hungary closed, moving through to Slovenia—another Schengen country. There is less of a clear route now, though. One of the researchers I work with, a Serbian anthropologist, describes it as an explosion: people travelling in every direction at once,

searching for any weak spots. From Serbia, some cross into Bosnia to loop around into Croatia or Slovenia; some go through Kosovo to Albania to try the sea crossing to Italy; some try Romania as a way to get around the fence on Hungary's Serbian border; some turn back and return to Greece through Macedonia—only to try again by another route, maybe by air or ferry with false papers this time. All along the way, there are choices to make: do you pay a smuggler to get you across the border or do you attempt it on your own? Do you travel alone or with a group? Do you register as an asylum seeker in each country you pass through, or stay off the radar? If (when) you are detained or pushed back, do you try again? Do you try a different border? Do you turn back? Do you give up hope?

The timeline of the Balkan Route can be roughly divided into four phases: clandestine, open, formalized, and closed (El-Shaarawi and Razsa n.d.). Prior to 2015, this path of clandestine migration is already well travelled; what becomes known as the Balkan Route has “a long history, marked by successive transformations in scope and visibility” (Beznec et al 2016: 4). In the summer of 2015, as migration through the Balkans increases exponentially, the Route becomes exponentially more visible, something of an open secret. Informal camps spring up at sites along the borders where people are prevented from crossing; landscapes and towns are transformed by the volume of people crossing through. Photographs of these camps pop up on newspaper front pages around the world, making people far from the Balkan Route aware that something is happening here.

In June of 2015, Macedonia passes an amendment to the Law on Asylums and Temporary Protections that creates the so-called 72 hours paper, a policy that allows

migrants to register their intention to seek asylum at the border in exchange for a temporary visa that permits them free movement through the country for up to three days. Serbia had already implemented a similar policy. In Macedonia, at least, the implementation of the 72 hours transit visa “can be considered a result of the increased national and international visibility of the severe conditions and consequences of transit through Macedonia,” coming public awareness of migration increased in the wake of media coverage of accidents involving migrants travelling clandestinely along railroad tracks (Beznec et al. 2016: 18). Macedonia and Serbia, as well as other Balkan states, begin running specialized trains and buses for registered asylum seekers with 72-hour transit visas, bringing them directly from one side of each country to the other. There are tradeoffs for migrants who make the choice to travel along this formalized corridor: while they can travel more efficiently, they also “become more isolated and their travels more tightly controlled,” losing some of their agency over their mobility (Beznec et al. 2016: 20).

The formalized corridor facilitates the transit of migrants along the Balkan Route for about 9 months, until one by one the Balkan states close their borders. It’s something of a chain reaction: Austria closes its borders, and then Slovenia does, and then Croatia, and then Serbia, and then Macedonia. People accumulate at the borders, unsure of where to go. Protests occur at key sites. The most dramatic images come from Keleti station in Budapest, where thousands of frustrated migrants walk along the highway toward the Austrian border in a movement that becomes known as the March of Hope, which I’ll discuss in chapter 3. The Route remains closed to legalized travel to this day, for the most part; while each state along the Balkan Route has its own system of asylum registration, it

is increasingly difficult to move between states as an asylum seeker. Movement along the Route has returned to what it was in the clandestine phase; most people moving between Balkan states do so by crossing borders irregularly, either with the help of smugglers or by making individual attempts to cross along green borders or through breaks in the fences.

There is another way to think about the phases of the Route, one that highlights the complex and shifting politics of traveling along it: visibility. Before the “long summer of migration” (Kasperek and Speer 2015) in 2015, the Balkan Route is largely invisible. Those traveling on the Route do so clandestinely, doing their best to remain undetected by the state. In this phase, invisibility is power: if you can stay invisible, if you can avoid detection, then you can claim freedom of movement for yourself. But when the numbers of people on the Route rise in 2015, invisibility becomes a lot more difficult. There’s a game my cousins and I used to play, called Sardines. It’s like hide-and-seek in reverse: one person hides, and everyone else tries to find them and hide with them, until the last person to find the hiding place loses. It gets easier the closer to the end you are; seven cousins under a bed together can’t hide nearly as well as one cousin alone can. The Route in 2015 is a bit like that: too many people trying to hide in the same places, but the hiding spots aren’t big enough to keep everyone out of sight.

Invisibility can give migrants the power to appropriate mobility, but what happens when there are too many people for invisibility to be effective? The points of greatest visibility are most often those where migrants are denied mobility—the train stations and border towns where hundreds and thousands accumulate as they wait for a way across the next border to open up. In many of these places, groups of migrants can turn that to their

advantage, using their collective visibility to claim the power of mobility. At Keleti Station, the thousands who have made it as far as Hungary on the partially formalized Route march towards Austria and Germany, and the striking images of all those people filling the highways appear in media all over the world. That same week, a photograph of Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi dead on a Greek beach shocks and outrages the world. As the marchers approach the Austrian border, there is a flurry of phone calls between top officials in the Hungarian, Austrian, and German governments. In German Chancellor Angela Merkel's cabinet, the German Federal Police's ability to hold the border closed by force is debated—would they use water cannons? Tear gas? “No one would have been able to bear images like that,” one official says, not with the damage they would do to Germany's reputation as a civilized humanitarian nation (Spiegel 2016). Austria and Germany open their borders. Concerns about the visibility of their bordering practices were not the only factor influencing this decision, but it was part of it. In the Route's open phase, the increased visibility of migrants simultaneously frustrates and enables their desires for mobility; it becomes harder for individuals to cross borders clandestinely as the increased numbers led to increased surveillance and enforcement, but the increased visibility and media attention large groups of migrants attract sometimes allow them to claim mobility in spectacular ways.

With the creation of the formalized corridor, states and border officials weaponize visibility to take power away from people on the move. The corridor grants limited mobility for a limited time in exchange for migrants making themselves visible—registering their names and other identifying information, giving up details about where they came from and where they are going. Technology helps, too—“the brave new world

of surveillance and omniscient visibility” (Amaya-Castro 2015:156). Some migrants struggle to remain invisible—refusing to register, avoiding the cameras, looking for new, as-yet-unsurveilled routes. Many, though, make the trade.

Then the corridor closes. One by one, the Balkan states stop letting people in. The problem, of course, is that the people are still there. More of those moments of high visibility occur as closing borders leave people stranded on the side they don’t want to be on, with more arriving every day—they were told they would be able to cross, and now that the borders are suddenly closed no one quite knows what to do. Some simply redirect; within 24 hours of the Hungarian border closing, migrants in Serbia know to go to the Croatian border instead. It works for a while, until Croatia also closes its borders. At Roszke, a town on the Serbia-Hungary border, peaceful protests break out the day after Hungary shuts the gates. Eleven people are arrested by Hungarian officials and charged with terrorism. At Idomeni, on the Greek border with Macedonia, thousands of migrants in an informal camp break out in protests (sometimes destructive) and then (inspired, at least in part, by the Hungarian March of Hope) march on the border. They are all pushed back. In this series of “border struggles” (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013), migrants sometimes succeed in using their collective visibility to claim the mobility states denied them, but they often fail; the Route is forced back into its clandestine state, but now there is greater surveillance and more intense efforts by states to deny people the freedom of movement. Invisibility is harder than ever.

Invisibility is power. Visibility is power, too. In the complex and ever-evolving landscape of the Balkan Route, both are used by, for, and against migrants as they appropriate, enact, and are denied mobility. A great deal can be (and has been) said about

the theoretical or metaphorical (in)visibility of acts of migration. Researchers working on borders on mobility talk about “invisible politics” of migration that “emerge out of everyday practices in the context of border and integration regimes. These practices tactically appropriate mobility and connect migration projects, thereby subverting and questioning the order and borders of nation-states...Such political practices are invisible as they are not captured as such by dominant regimes of visibility—they rather attempt to elude their gaze and seek to remain imperceptible.” (Ataç et al. 2015: 6-7). Others have described “imperceptible politics” of mobility, such as marriage migration and the destruction of identification papers to avoid legal registration (Papadopolous et al. 2008). In these senses, acts of migration and refusal of the state are defined as invisible or imperceptible because they are inconspicuous and individual acts of subversion—small refusals of the border rather than large-scale protests. Of course, visible and invisible acts of migration are not mutually exclusive; they are different strategies, employed separately or simultaneously in “unruly enactments of the freedom of movement” (Stierl 2017).

But it can get difficult to keep track of visibility and invisibility as abstract concepts. How do we know for sure when something is invisible? How do we measure degrees of visibility? What does it mean to say one event or group of people has higher visibility than another? And how do we differentiate between ‘good’ visibility that helps migrants to enact their desires for movement and ‘bad’ visibility that works to immobilize them? (This dichotomy brings in a host of other questions, too: are there unexpected benefits to ‘bad’ visibility and downsides to ‘good’ visibility?) There are no simple answers to any of these questions. Some of this work can be done through examining narratives, listening to what people have to say. But I believe we can also

learn a great deal about visibility and invisibility from the physical, visual embodiment of visibility: images.

My Global Studies major and background in anthropology are what brings me to research on Balkan Route migration, but it is my background in Art History that guides my work. I go to Serbia planning to research art created by migrants, but through my time there I find my focus shifting. I talk with young men who have been stuck in Serbia for months and they show me selfies taken in squats and on the road. I interview the public relations manager for one local NGO and she tells me about the quotas set by the organization for photographs of migrants in their aid center—at least five every day, so they can maintain their social media presence. I meet with a curator from a local arts nonprofit and she shows me the catalogue for an exhibition of photos taken from migrants' phones. I follow the NGOs and the solidarity groups and the activists on Facebook, and every day my timeline fills with pictures of migrants along the Route, updates on pushbacks and policy changes. On the plane back across the Atlantic at the end of the month, I start writing down moments and conversations and images and drawing connections. It starts to take shape: this is a story about representation of migrants, about when they are visible and when they remain hidden, about the power of images to enact or restrict freedom of mobility. In processing the images I collected during my fieldwork, I draw on the visual analysis skills of my art historical training and the questions I have learned to ask from my training in anthropology. I also draw on a wide range of background literature, including borders and mobility scholarship, historical and political contexts of Serbia, theorization of activist and humanitarian responses to the 'migrant crisis,' material culture studies and photography of migration,

and multi-disciplinary understandings of appropriation.

1. Borders & Mobility

In recent decades, the ever-increasing mobility of people, goods, and ideas between countries and regions have given rise to the interdisciplinary field of border studies, with scholars drawing on anthropology, geopolitics, and sociology to understand the importance of geographic, political, and social boundaries in the contemporary world. The current “refugee crisis” in the Mediterranean represents both the largest migration in Europe since the aftermath of World War II and the greatest challenge that the European border regime and Western understandings of borders have ever encountered; Mezzadra and Neilson, among others, claim that “the border has inscribed itself at the center of the contemporary experience” (2013:1). As such, the last five years have seen a great deal of new scholarship on borders.

One concept that has arisen from this recent surge in border research is the Autonomy of Migration, a phrase introduced by Manuela Bojadžijev and Serhat Karakayalı. From the perspective of the autonomy of migration, resistance is primary; migrants’ “myriad impulses, dreams, acts of refusal, escape and trespass do change the world” (Walters 2015: 483). I draw on this understanding, and the related shift in how we understand borders from thinking about them as specific physical boundaries to thinking about them as a series of related practices that create the border, to think about individual acts and representations can function as acts of resistance against border regimes. Other approaches to understanding borders focus on the “productive power of the border – of the strategic role it plays in the fabrication of the world” (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: vii). Approaching borders primarily through the lens of a changing labor regime – what

they refer to as “the multiplication of labor” – Mezzadra and Neilson consider how borders are used to regulate labor through selective inclusion. They argue that borders respond to the demands of the labor market not only by excluding, but also by selectively and hierarchically including: the labor markets of Western Europe are, in fact, dependent on a constant influx of cheap migrant labor, but as the border regimes force the majority of these migrants to enter illegally, they are kept in a position of insecurity, invisibility, and precarity, which enables the exploitation of their labor power.

Nevertheless, the powerful and far-reaching networks of anti-border activism which have become apparent through the current “migrant crisis” demonstrate that borders also have the power to unite people. From the multiethnic refugee camp that occupied Berlin’s Oranienplatz from October 2012 to March 2014 to the Facebook groups through which detailed information on how to execute each step of the journey from the Mediterranean to the Northern and Western European countries migrants hope to reach, we see examples of people coming together in opposition to oppressive border regimes. Borders, intended to divide and isolate, have become rallying points of protest and collective action, both at the physical site of the border and far from it.

While a great deal of work has been done on the practices and processes of bordering, relatively little has been written about the material culture of migration and borders in the current European border crisis. Walters (2015) is one exception, taking as subject the vehicles by which migrants travel to and through Europe; Rutvica Andrijasevic, writing in 2007, provides a useful model for considering representations of migrants in her work on posters from anti-trafficking campaigns in Eastern Europe. Even when they do not use visual and material culture as a framework for understanding

borders and migration, however, many scholars draw heavily on the ideas of (in)visibility and (dis)appearance to describe migrants' struggles at the border. Ataç et al., drawing on examples of collective protest and creation of common spaces by migrants in Germany and Austria, conceive of the politics of migration as a spectrum between invisible politics – “everyday practices in the context of the border and integration regimes” – and visible forms of protest – “those collective protest campaigns that sought to generate public attention national and transnationally and the visibilisation of protestors as political subjects” (2015: 6). The visibility (or lack thereof) and representation of migrants and border practices are key to what De Genova calls “spectacles of migration”, such as “a spectacle of enforcement at ‘the’ border, whereby migrant ‘illegality’ is rendered spectacularly visible” (2013:1). This conceptual focus on visibility in understandings of migration and bordering calls for a methodological focus on visibility, through analysis of the divergent ways in which migrants and borders are visually represented in by the migrants, state actors, activists, and NGOs whose actions collectively produce and challenge borders. This includes consideration of the mediums used (cell phones, drawings, the digital cameras of journalists, the high-quality film cameras of artists), formal analysis of images themselves (what is represented, and how? what is visually emphasized?) and analysis of the contexts in which these images are presented (what power does an image have when it is on the front page of the New York Times? what power does an image have when it is shared on Facebook? how do captions and contexts create a narrative out of and around images? who takes pictures of who, and who do they take those pictures for?).

The ways in which the migrant experience is recorded in images varies widely

with the mode of representation and the agenda of the artist. Posters created by the IOM as part of an anti-trafficking campaign in Eastern Europe depict the experience of female migrants as one of pain, misery, and entrapment, what Andrijasevic (2015) calls “the spectacle of misery”; these representations disguise the agency of the people they depict, confining them in the role of victim. Tazzioli (2016), in considering the representation of large groups of migrants by governments and media outlets, points to the images of crowded rail stations and marching masses as playing a role in the construction of migrants as unruly mobs. By contrast, the photographs taken by Afghan migrant Abdul Saboor during his time in the so-called “Barracks of Belgrade” showcase a migrant experience that is more mundane than spectacular, often capturing moments of surprising beauty in the abandoned warehouse which migrants turned into a common living and social space. In his photographs, a groups of men crouch around a homemade version of the board game Parcheesi; men sit around fires, hands outstretched for warmth; one young man shaves using a cellphone for a reflection; another receives a haircut with his back to a wall on which the words “Afghanistan is not Safe – PLEASE HELP” are spray-painted in orange (figure 2). These varying examples demonstrate the struggles of and for representation that play out between migrants, states, activists, and NGOs.

2. Situating Belgrade in the Balkan Route

Serbia has represented a crucial step for those following the Balkan Route from Turkey to Greece and then overland through the Balkan nations over the last three years. Cross the border from Serbia into Hungary, and you are in the Schengen zone, nominally able to travel across borders without visa checks to a more desirable destination in Western Europe. In part because of the overall increase in migration into and through

Europe, in part because of this crucial border crossing, and in part because of the Serbian government's relatively lenient attitude towards migrants, the number of migrants travelling through Serbia increases dramatically throughout 2014 and 2015. Belgrade, the capital city, is a hotspot; close to a thousand refugees at a time sleep in tents in two parks located between the city's train and bus stations, contributing to a very visible presence of migrants in the central district of the city (Belgrade Centre for Human Rights 2016).

Throughout 2015, the municipal government of Belgrade is fairly lenient toward the migrants; their presence is "simply tolerated" (Bez nec et al. 2016: 42). NGOs and humanitarian groups are generally allowed to provide food, medical attention, resources, and information to migrants, and municipal officials maintain that the migrants are the national government's responsibility, not theirs. In the summer of 2015, the Hungarian government to the north begins construction of a fence along the Serbian border. To the south, the Macedonian government implements the 72-hours-paper, the transit visa that allows migrants to travel legally on Macedonian territory for three days. The Serbian government develops a more formalized migration policy: a version of the 72-hours-paper already exists under Serbian asylum law, and they institute specialized train and bus transports to carry migrants directly across the country from the Macedonian border to the Hungarian one. During this period of summer and autumn 2015 (what Speer and Kasparek have termed the "long summer of migration"), the numbers of migrants in Belgrade dips; with the Serbian government and NGOs facilitating transport across the country, there is less of a need for migrants to stay in the capital long-term.

The closure of the Hungarian border in late summer 2015 forces Serbian border officials to change their strategy. When the sudden closure leaves thousands of migrants

stranded at the border, the Serbian government begins bussing people to the Croatian border, “prompted into action by the initiative of a few trailblazing refugees” (Kingsley 283). For the rest of the autumn, the so-called “formalized corridor” through Serbia transports migrants from the Macedonian border to the Croatian; once in Croatia, migrants can attempt to cross into Hungary or Slovenia, both Schengen countries. Over the course of the 2015-2016 winter, however, the formalized corridor is gradually closed – first, in November, shut to all who cannot prove that they are of Syrian, Iraqi, or Afghani origin, then to the Afghanis as well in late February, and finally closed altogether in early March of 2016. The closure of this legalized route leaves thousands of migrants stranded in Serbia, as some are deported back from Croatia or Hungary and many more continue to arrive through Macedonia and Bulgaria.

The routes that migrants follow, the responses of governments to migrant mobility, and the means migrants employ to cross borders change constantly, rapidly, and often in reaction to each other in Europe’s current landscape migration and border practices. In Serbia, the state response to migration is “alternately tolerant, democratic, securitized, authoritarian, present, and absent” (Greenberg and Spasic 2017: 319). The Serbian government’s approach to bordering takes a distinct turn in the summer of 2016, as pushbacks from Hungary and Croatia as well as continuing arrivals from Macedonia and Bulgaria leave ever-increasing numbers of migrants stranded in Serbia. Prior to this, Serbia has “obtained the image of a country which protects migrants and treats them in a decent in and humane way,” particularly in comparison to neighboring countries such as Macedonia and Hungary (Beznec et al. 2016: 55). In July 2016, however, the Serbian military mobilizes along the borders with Macedonia and Bulgaria, and the Commissariat

for Refugees and Migrants targets the highly visible migrant presence in centers such as Belgrade. In Belgrade, authorities evict the informal camps set up in parks and demolish the so-called ‘Barracks,’ an autonomous squat in an abandoned warehouse—in chapter 2, I will discuss the spread of images of these informal settlements in traditional and social media and how this visibility contributed to the eventual eviction. To this day, the Serbian government continues to target improvised settlements, both in Belgrade and at the borders; nevertheless, migrants continue to arrive in Serbia and to make repeated attempts to cross the borders into Hungary or Croatia.

The relatively humanitarian border regime in Serbia has been attributed to a number of factors, including the nation’s role in the separation of the former Yugoslavia, inheritance of the regional UNHCR office in that process of dissolution, a desire to gain entrance to the European Union, and its geographical location (Beznec et al. 2016: 29). In the years immediately preceding the current “migrant crisis”, a number of human rights violations committed by Serbian authorities are documented at both informal migrant camps such as the Subotica jungle and government-run asylum centers (Human Rights Watch 2015). In 2014 and 2015, however, local and national governments began to present an image of Serbia as humanitarian towards refugees. Their rhetoric often alludes to the refugee crisis that Serbians themselves experienced during the dissolution of Yugoslavia as a point of sympathy, suggesting that “similar experiences of disenfranchisement can generate shared ethical and political commitments that bring differently positioned social and economic groups into common struggle” and that “such vocabularies of resistance emerge across the joint terrains of violent conflict and inequality from the Middle East to the Balkans” (Greenberg and Spasic 2017: 321).

Bez nec et al. read this seemingly softer approach as an “appeal to the EU’s ‘humanitarian face’” (2016: 61). However, as Andersson demonstrates in his analysis of the Spanish border regime in North Africa, the so-called “humanitarian” and “securitarian” approaches to bordering, while seemingly opposed, “are in fact enmeshed and entwined at the borders, in complex and often mutually reinforcing ways” (2017: 65). As the securitarian approaches of surrounding countries increases the pressure and the presence of migrants in Serbia, the limits of Serbia’s “humanitarian” approach are tested; when this proves to be an ineffective method of reducing migrant presence in Serbia, the government changes tactics.

3. Activism and Humanitarianism in Solidarity and Opposition

It is impossible to talk about the migrant presence in Serbia—and in any of the other nodes along the Balkan Route—without discussing the local and international activists working with migrants in the struggle for freedom of mobility, united against borders. The Balkan Route and the European ‘crisis of migration’ have mobilized activists who have long been working on issues of direct democracy and antinationalism, as well as individuals simply doing what seems right to them, such as the Eric Kempson, a British retiree and “unexpected authority on Aegean smuggling networks” on the Greek Island of Lesbos who spends his mornings greeting boats of arriving refugees with food and clothing (Kingsley 2017: 178). Natasha King defines activism as “doing which either intentionally or otherwise potentially transforms or escapes the state” (2016:17), an intentionally broad definition meant to include all those working against borders, including the people trying to cross, in the category of activists. While I follow this

definition, I use the term ‘activist’ primarily to refer to European nationals supporting and advocating migrant mobility as well as larger political causes including anti-racism and no border movements.

Humanitarian projects and networks such as Moving Europe have been instrumental in facilitating information, services, and solidarity across borders, but at times they find themselves “in awkward alliance with the security regimes that alternately help and hinder the flow of migrants” (Greenberg and Spasic 2017: 318). In the Serbian context, one instance when these complex and conflicting goals become apparent occurs during the period of the ‘formalized corridor’ in 2015, when Moving Europe find themselves forced to provide two different sets of information, one to those migrants who are permitted to travel formally with 72-hours-papers and a second to those who cannot. They find that “those not allowed to travel on the corridor were rendered invisible...this was a difficulty [advocates] encountered, as by placing too much focus on the three ‘acceptable’ nationalities—even if [they] did so for purely practical reasons—[they] somehow became complicit in this segregation” (Moving Europe 2016). In a multitude of ways, “volunteer and activist groups are thus positioned in complicated ways to both challenge and work within securitized practices for managing often ad hoc humanitarian regimes” (Greenberg and Spasic 2017: 318).

In addition to the tensions generated by working simultaneously within and against state systems and border regimes, tensions arise from the disparate goals of activists, aid workers, and migrants. Natasha King, reflecting on fieldwork with the No Border network in Calais, notes that No Border activists “saw political action as first and foremost about visibility and recognition” (2016:145), which presented problems when

migrants whose survival and ability to reach their intended destination at times depended on remaining invisible were unwilling or unable to mobilize in a particular way.

Greenberg and Spasic, describing the migrant-organized hunger strike and “March of Hope” from Belgrade to the Hungarian border in July 2016 (which I discuss in chapter 3), notes that migrants involved in these actions refused the help and food offered Serbian volunteer groups in “a kind of recursive protest” as the volunteers and NGOs both stand in for and stand in opposition to the state and its border regime (2017: 322). These overlapping and opposing goals, struggles, and acts of solidarity are what draw me to consider not only representations of migrants and the border created by migrants, but also those created by non-migrant activists. How do each of the actors in this complex and shifting matrix of opposition to, protest against, crossing, and enforcement of borders imagine the border? How do migrants and activists draw (or photograph, or map, or record) borders and each other?

4. Material Culture and Photography of Migration

Jules David Prown, in a 1982 article surveying the recent development of the discipline of material culture studies, presents a six-part classification of the objects that constitute 'material culture'. He defines material culture as objects "made by man or modified by man", dividing these objects into art (paintings, drawings, photographs, sculpture), diversions (books, toys, games), adornment (jewelry, clothing, hairstyles, cosmetics), modifications of the landscape (architecture, town planning, agriculture), applied arts (furniture, furnishings, receptacles), and devices (machines, vehicles, instruments) (Prown 1982: 2-3). Similarly to Prown's division of objects based on their

function rather than their aesthetic qualities, Alfred Gell (1998) argues for a theory of art based on the effects a work of art produces rather than its aesthetics. Prown's methods of analyzing art objects, with their emphasis on closely looking and objective formal analysis, have generated debate; Dillon and Reed (1998) offer a strong critique of the potential for cultural biases to color analysis in the Prownian method. These critiques, however, do not extend to his schema for cultural objects. Therefore I choose to follow Prown's classification while aiming for a more nuanced and reflective version of his method of close looking—what Dillon and Reed call “the invocation to look differently” (1998: 49). In thinking about how to look at representations of migration, suffering, and conflict at the border, I draw on Ariella Azoulay's theorization of the ethics of spectatorship, calling on viewers “stop looking at the photo and instead start watching it” (2008:14).

Material culture is, in many ways, the natural overlap of the fields of anthropology and art history, combining the art historian's close visual analysis of manmade objects with the anthropologist's inquiry into what objects and their uses can tell us about a culture. Nevertheless, there has long been a separation between art history and material culture studies, resulting in large part from the narrow definition of 'art' used by most art historians. While the art historian studies only those objects which fall into Prown's first category, the material culture scholar studies all six; when art historians refer to 'material culture', they usually mean those objects traditionally known as 'minor arts' or 'decorative arts': furniture, ceramics, jewelry, textiles. However, as Yonan (2011) argues, the close visual analysis and emphasis on materiality that form the basis of art historical inquiry have much to offer the anthropological approach to material culture,

which at times forgets to consider the object itself in focusing on its usage. Indeed, the methods of analysis of both art history and anthropology are essential to a rich understanding of material culture.

In recent years, as issues of migration have become increasingly relevant to the contemporary world, a number of anthropologists have looked at migration and migrants through the lens of material culture. These studies range from analysis of the objects migrants bring with them to aid in their journeys (De Léon 2012); to inquiries into the use of materiality to construct migrant identity and a sense of place upon arrival in a new place, whether it be the ultimate destination or an intermediary site (Horst 2011; Rosales 2010; Savas 2014, Dudley 2012); to consideration of the very vehicles by means of which the action of migration is performed (Walters 2014). They are joined by scholars from both anthropological and art historical backgrounds who directly address photography of migration, examining the political work done by and represented in photographs of migrants through topics ranging from the May 2011 Palestinian 'March of Return' (Allan 2016), to collective self-representation of migrants through photography (Nair 2008), to the affective impacts of photographs of refugee children in social media and online marketing for NGOs (Zaraycka 2015).

Material culture offers an important lens through which to view the construction of migrant identity and relationships between migrants, activists, and state actors. Both anthropologists and art historians working in the field of material culture studies emphasize the materiality of objects as "a site of resistance...a pocket of occlusion within the smooth functioning of systems of domination" (Armstrong 1996: 28) and the inherent agency that comes with the creation of art and other objects, the inherent possibility of

impacting the thoughts and actions of others through the creation of objects (Gell 1998). Photographers can use the medium as "a creative outlet for self-representation to counter the grain of their otherwise disempowered and disaffected lives." (Nair 2008: 182); through representing themselves and their lives, migrants can assert agency and subjecthood. On the other hand, representations of migrants by others (state actors, humanitarian groups, activists, and media outlets) can serve to objectify, control, make visible, or hide from sight migrants' bodies, struggles, and mobility.

Images and representations of migrants – variously created and distributed by state actors, mass media outlets, activist groups, NGOs, and migrants themselves – play an essential role in constructing migrant identities and situating them in the political space of Europe. We have all been captivated and devastated by the images of migrant bodies and mobility that have filled both social and mass media over the course of the current 'migrant crisis.' While representations such as the photo of Alan Kurdi or pictures of overcrowded boats on the Mediterranean focus the viewer's attention on the victimization of migrants and often illustrate calls for humanitarian aid, in many cases images of migrants serve to assert state control over the subjects they depict. Tazzioli addresses how "the illustration of bodily presences as unruly multiplicities" in media representations of crowds of migrants serves to disrupt the understanding of migrants as victims for viewers as part of a mechanism of government control (2016: 11). Ruben Andersson's ethnography of the Spanish border regime in North Africa also takes into consideration the power of images of migrants in asserting government control, as various government and humanitarian agencies share photographs and video footage of boat rescues for use as both evidence and propaganda celebrating the 'humanitarian'

nature of border controls (2017: 82). Working in the same region, Laia Soto Berant notes the use of “border spectacles” in which the Spanish military police encourage journalists and photographers to record certain acts of border crossing and deportation as part of a “fear-mongering strategy” (2017: 123).

Furthermore, the means of representation becomes an important aspect in the power of images of migrants to enable government control when considering the surveillance technology used by both governments and activists to track migrant mobility; Heller and Pezzani, in their attempts to document migrant deaths at sea through the Forensic Oceanography Project, intentionally used relatively low resolution satellite imagery which “determined the frontier between the visible and the invisible, and separated the practice of a disobedient gaze from an uncritical act of revealing that risks complicity” (2017: 111). Maurice Stierl also addresses migrant deaths, focusing on grieving and commemorative practices, including activist attempts to lend visibility to the destruction and desecration of migrant lives by adding markers and commemorative plaques to mass graves on the Greek island of Lesbos (2016). Allan considers not just the medium by which images are captured but also the means by which they are distributed, thinking about how “images, once mobilized through social media networks, take on new functions and meanings” (2016: 300). The wide range of images these scholars address and their differing approaches and disciplines draw attention to the role of images in rendering migrants and their struggle for mobility (in)visible, and the political and social ramifications of that (in)visibility.

How do migrants use images to intentionally highlight their own invisibility, or to consciously make themselves visible in order to gain power and lay claim to mobility?

How do images and image-making contribute to strategies for movement?

Representations of migrants are as heterogeneous as the mass of people that make up the current “migrant crisis”, and therefore serve a wide variety of different purposes. The photograph exhibitions created by the Cameroonian Repatriated Migrants Association for the Struggle against Clandestine Migration, an NGO formed by former migrants who were forcibly deported, represents one extreme; they chose to represent migrant tragedies “with the aim of encouraging young people to conform to migration laws”, discouraging irregular migration (Lecadet 2017: 152). On the other end of the spectrum, the intentional visibility of the ongoing occupation at the former UNCHR camp at Choucha, which is still a destination for journalists and activists even after its closure as an official camp, calls attention to the plight of refugees abandoned by the international human rights organizations and living in the now illegalized space of the camp (Garelli and Tazzioli 2017). Images and video recordings can serve to valorize and encourage resistance, “cultivating insubordinate bodies” (Razsa 2014: 509), but also to criminalize it. This is notably true with videos from protests at Roszke, a site on the Hungarian border with Serbia, when the border was shut on September 15, 2015. Video footage from the protests that erupted as thousands of migrants were trapped by the sudden closure has been appropriated by activists as well as by the state, serving as evidence in the trial of eleven migrants arrested by the Hungarian government, one of whom is charged with terrorism. Invisibility and imperceptibility are essential for successful clandestine migration—but so is strategic visibility, such as the common practice among migrants travelling by boat across the Mediterranean of calling for help once they cross into

international or European waters so that they will be rescued by European authorities and brought to the shores they seek.

5. Representation of/as Appropriation

What does it mean to appropriate? The Cambridge English Dictionary defines appropriation as “the act of taking something for your own use, usually without permission”. In art history and literature, the term has traditionally been tied to notions of influence and reuse: a poet appropriates the style of another author, a painter appropriates a figure from the work of a different artist. Probing into this understanding of appropriation, Robert Nelson, in his essay on appropriation for the second edition of *Critical Terms for Art History*, emphasizes an important distinction between the concepts of influence and appropriation: while influence implies a passive artist acted upon by external forces that shape her artwork, appropriation is “active, subjective, and motivated” (Nelson 2003:162). The term “appropriation”, he argues, forces us to consider the changing contexts and significances of an object, and ascribes responsibility for those to individual actors rather than hiding behind “the privileged autonomy of the art object” (163).

Appropriation goes far beyond art historical discourses, however, and the concept is complicated when we apply it to more than just objects. In recent years, both scholarly and popular forums have devoted a great deal of discussion to the idea of cultural appropriation, the reuse or “borrowing” of clothing styles, music, rituals, or concepts from one culture by another, most often a dominant or conquering culture. Nelson’s use of Barthes’ semiotics to explain the process of appropriation is relevant here: using the

term “appropriation” to replace what Barthes calls “myth”, he defines appropriation as a process through which a sign “is transformed into the signifier of a new signified and a component of the second sign” (162). The original meaning of the sign – whether it be a work of art, a hairstyle, or a building – is lost, obscured by a new meaning as it is located in a new context. With this understanding, appropriation often carries a negative connotation – the dominant culture taking from and erasing the meanings of the dominated culture, one culture gaining control over the representation of another and appropriating the reality of the represented object, and therefore “by appropriating it, dominates it” (Owens 1982). Recent scholarship, however, influenced by postcolonial theory, has suggested that appropriation is “potentially a two-way process...aimed at creating and/or consolidating identity” (Ashley & Plesch 2002: 6). Highlighting the active and assertive nature of appropriation (especially as opposed to notions of influence or borrowing), we can argue that appropriations of things, places, and ideas *from* the dominant culture *by* the dominated are a means of asserting agency and a form of resistance.

The notion of appropriation has been used as a model for understanding migrant mobility in a number of ways. Stephen Scheel uses appropriation as “an alternative concept to theorize migrants’ capacity to subvert border controls”, examining the ways in which migrants make use of aspects of the Schengen visa regime to claim agency and mobility (2017: 39). Others have used it as a model for understanding migrant uses of technology and digital media (Aricat et al. 2015; Hepp et al. 2012) and the ways in which migrants lay claim to vehicles and means of transportation (Walters 2015). One model for understanding migrant mobility and images produced by and about migrants is that of

spatial appropriation, which can take a number of different forms. Two of the most relevant to the discussion of Balkan Route migration are the occupation of a space by people it was not originally intended for and the act of graffiti, which appropriates a wall by turning it into a surface for writing. Examples of spatial appropriations on the Balkan Route include migrant squats such as the Barracks, which I discuss in chapter 2, and the appropriation of highways—a space intended for vehicles rather than people on foot—by protestors in the Marches of Hope, which I discuss in chapter 3 (see figure 3). As Owens (1992) explains, the act of representation itself can be construed as an act of appropriation, as the artist claims the represented object for themselves and through their perspective by creating a representation of it. With this understanding, drawings, paintings, and photographs also become important sites for understanding the appropriation of mobility by migrants and the appropriation of migrant experience by states, media, and activists. In taking and sharing photos of migrants and borders, the many actors along the Balkan Route use visibility to appropriate migrant identities and experiences for purposes including appealing to donors, justifying policies, and resisting borders by drawing attention to the violence used to enforce them.

6. Fieldwork

The primary fieldwork research for my project took place during January of 2018, when I spent thirty days in Belgrade, Serbia. My initial and primary contact throughout the months was Marta Stojić Mitrović, an anthropologist based in the Institute of Ethnography at the Serbian Sciences and Arts in Belgrade who is a longtime colleague of my advisor Maple Razsa. We communicated over Skype and through Facebook messages

in the months preceding my arrival in Belgrade; she provided me with resources to help orient me to the current (and ever-changing) situation of migrants in Serbia. Through Marta, I arranged to volunteer with Info Park, a local NGO founded in 2015 to provide assistance and information to migrants in Belgrade. While in Serbia, I went to their aid center four or five days a week, sometimes to spend several hours volunteering and sometimes just for short meetings. Info Park provides information and logistical aid as well as food, language lessons, and free wifi to migrants living on the streets of Belgrade and in nearby state-run asylum camps. My work at Info Park allowed me to gain access to the network of activists and volunteers working with migrants in Belgrade; in addition to the staff and volunteers of Info Park, I met staff from several other NGOs, including Médecins Sans Frontières, Save The Children, and smaller local organizations. My time at Info Park also put me in regular contact with migrants; I conducted multiple interviews with migrants I came to know through repeated encounters at Info Park, documenting their journeys through Turkey and Southeastern Europe and their experiences while in Serbia – many have been stuck in this country for over a year, as neighboring countries have violently closed their borders.

I visited a number of other organizations throughout the city and conducted interviews with staff there. Among these were Refugee Aid Center Miksalište, a local NGO, where I spoke with the former public relations manager about how they make use of images of migrants in their social media messaging; and the Center for Cultural Decontamination, a nonprofit arts center, where the curator of an exhibition comprised of photographs taken from migrants' cell phones explained that project and the arts workshops they have organized inside the state-run refugee camps.

The bulk of my time was spent in Belgrade's city center, but I did make a day-long trip to the town of Šid on the Croatian border, where there are currently two camps run by the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migrants (a third, which was in the town proper, was closed in response to complaints by locals about crimes committed by migrants living in the camp). My colleagues and I were unable to gain access to the state-run camps, but did spend time at a nearby squat which is home to about eighty migrants at any given time and met with the solidarity activists from No Name Kitchen, an group that began in Belgrade but has been based in Šid since the summer of 2017.

While participant observation (through my work at Info Park) and semi-structured interviews constituted a large portion of my research, I also drew heavily on Internet-based archival research. My research draws heavily on images and the texts that support and contextualize them to create narratives about mobility, people on the move, activists and aid workers, and state bordering practices. Many of the images I consider come from news articles, blog entries, and social media posts created as the events I discuss were ongoing. While this online fieldwork did provide me with access to an immense amount of information and representations that I would not otherwise have found, it did present challenges. I reached out to many people whose photographs and stories I found through social media posts, explaining my research and asking them if they would be willing to share their stories with me, but few replied; it is harder to convince someone to trust you with an out-of-the-blue Facebook message to their public page than it is over a cup of coffee in the space you have shared with them for weeks. When I did find willing informants through my online fieldwork (like Èzat, the Afghan photojournalist I mention above with), the interviews I conducted via text or over video calls were generally

shorter, less rich, and did not flow as well as the ones I conducted in person. Still, these exchanges provided valuable insights and visual data, and social media has enabled me to stay in close contact with all of my informants.

A significant portion of my research process consisted of interrogating images. In this, I drew on the formal visual analysis that is foundational to art history as a discipline as well as theoretical approaches to understanding the social and political work that images do. Of particular importance was Ariella Azoulay's approach to 'watching' photographs, which I mention briefly above. By 'watching' photos, Azoulay means to actively consider and engage with each image's context, including the means by which it is produced, the events that come before and after the moment captured by the camera, and what goes on outside the frame of the image. This holistic approach to the image must also include reflexivity—asking myself what I bring to the image as a viewer, and how my personal experiences and biases may color my reading of the image. I worked to include this reflexivity not just in my approaches to images, but in all the work I did both in the field and in interpretation.

I use the words "migrant," "refugee," "asylum seeker," and "people on the move" somewhat interchangeably. None of these terms are perfect; each has connotations that exclude or limit some of the people they words seek to describe. Rather than choose one, I vary my usage of them depending on the context, aiming to use the best possible option for each case. When referring to the European "migrant/refugee crisis" I use quotation marks, recognizing that these are the most common ways the recent surge in migration to and through Europe is described in media and common parlance, but preferring to think

with De Genova of a crisis of Europe and the European border regime rather than a crisis of migrants (2016).

Chapter 1: The Game

While the striking images of thousands of people camped out in border towns or walking down the highway waving signs capture the world's attention and become the iconic images of Balkan Route migration, much of the movement along the Route occurs in less spectacular ways. Outside of the months in 2015 and early 2016 when the formalized corridor enables the legalized movement of hundreds of thousands through the former Yugoslav states, the majority of migration along the Route occurs clandestinely. In Serbia, attempts to clandestinely cross the borders into neighboring states are often referred to as 'playing the Game.' In general, images of this type of mobility are less arresting than those of large protests and overflowing camps, less likely to end up on the front pages of newspapers all over the world. That's kind of the point—to be successful at the Game, to succeed in claiming mobility, people on the move need to make themselves less visible. In this chapter, I explore the types of images that *are* produced of these attempts at clandestine mobility, thinking about which portions of the Game are captured in images, how migrant 'players' are represented, and what purposes those images serve. Which parts of the Game are intentionally made visible, and which parts remain hidden? What goals does visibility (as embodied in images) serve?

As the evening lengthens and the street outside grows dark, the tempo of Info Park changes. During the day, this is a bright, hectic, crowded space: toddlers chasing balls across the floor, men crowded around computers to watch YouTube videos and

check Facebook, German classes at the big table, and a constant flow of refugees, volunteers, and workers from the other aid organizations that line Street Gavriilo Princip coming in and out. At night, things get sleepy. A few men sit around the central table, chatting quietly. Once 5pm comes and the new rules allow us to start serving tea again, a small line forms by the kitchen counter. Seven of us, a mix of staff and volunteers from six different countries, lounge around the front desk, trading jokes and checking our phones—we all have loved ones in far-away countries who we are eager to contact.

Kari, a wiry young man from Afghanistan with wide eyes and a ready smile, nudges my left arm; when I turn to look, he holds up his phone to take a selfie of us. He tries several times before he is satisfied with the outcome. He briefly admires the picture, then opens Facebook and sends it in a message from the account I know and am connected to, a false name with a profile picture showing him in the hallway of a building at the state-run camp where he lives, to another account with his real name. I ask about this; he explains that this way, each time his phone is taken in a border-crossing attempt or stolen in the camp, he is able to retrieve all of his photos.

Unprompted, he begins to scroll through, showing me his pictures: this is my friend in line to receive toiletries at Krnjača camp. This is a workshop at Miksalište. These are men sleeping in the parks, all with the same thin grey blankets. This is me in the Barracks. This is a bus heading to the border. This is a selfie I took on the way to The Game (figure 4); his smile, like those on the faces of the men walking through the trees behind him, is hopeful. He selects twenty-three of the photos and sends them to me. It is a visual history of his time in Serbia (he has been here for well over a year). The only photograph in which he is smiling is that selfie on the way to the Hungarian border, taken

last November. He does not tell me what happened on that attempt, but the fact that he is still here in Belgrade, six weeks after that hopeful selfie, speaks for itself.

In this moment—safe and warm behind the locked doors of the Info Park hub, sipping black coffee and joking and looking over Kari’s shoulder at that selfie—the word people use for the risky process of clandestinely crossing the border into Hungary or Croatia almost seems appropriate. The Game, they call it, a phrase that defies normal English grammar as it pops up in the broken English conversations between Serbian activists and migrants from across the Middle East. I have never heard the noun without the definite article: you can talk about someone “going to the Game” or “doing the Game” or “playing the Game”. At times, it becomes a verb: “Gaming on the border”. Almost always, it seems like a cruel joke. People come back from the Game with bruises, cuts, frostbitten fingers, broken limbs, stories of officials on both sides of the border beating them and setting dogs on them and cutting their shoelaces. Invariably, money and cellphones are taken. This is not a fun Game, no light-hearted diversion. The incongruity of the name and the reality seems to suggest a bitter attempt at irony, a “cynical humor” (Oxfam and BCHR 2).

But Kari’s pictures suggest something else. There is hope in the smiling faces of the young men winding their way through a verdant landscape. At the back of the line, a pair of arms reaches for the sky, their owner straining to make himself visible despite the nine men in single-file who separate him from the cell phone camera. The men lean to the left and right, making sure nobody’s face is blocked—how long, I wonder, did they pause to arrange themselves? Did they take a couple, just in case someone blinked? Was this selfie executed with the same care and precision as the ones Kari took with me? You get

the sense that you have seen this picture before, that you've taken it yourself on a hiking trip with friends some summer day. In the smiles, the tilted heads, the outstretched arms of this selfie, there is no trace of the cynicism that usually accompanies accounts of the Game. This is hopeful, this is light-hearted, this is ten college-aged men out for a walk in the woods. The cruelty and cynicism come later.

What does this picture suggest about the nature of the Game, clandestine mobility, and the odd disconnect between the brutal violence many migrants experience at the border and the playful language used to describe it? Cynicism is certainly one way to understand the linguistic choice of the Game. But we can also understand it through the opposite emotion: hope. By framing attempts at clandestine border crossing as a “game”, migrants reclaim the narrative of what is happening. When they go to play the Game, they are protagonists setting off on an adventure, rather than victims of a violent border regime.

Mark Speer and Bernd Kasperek, who coined the term “long summer of migration” to describe the months in 2015 when migration was at its spectacular peak, talk about hope as “the most beautiful aspect” of the so-called crisis: “the original power and hope of the Arab Spring has come to Europe for a second time and challenged its boundaries” (2015). There is a certain danger in migration studies of romanticizing people on the move, of attributing to them grandiose motivations that idealistic activists would like them to have. But bearing that in mind, I believe it is impossible to talk about migration without talking about hope: why leave your home and make these long, dangerous, frustrating journeys, if not out of hope that eventually things will be better?

1. Game Play: An Overview of Clandestine Migration in Serbia

At present, more than 8000 migrants are estimated to be stranded in Serbia – exact numbers are hard to come by, given the large numbers of people remaining outside of the formal asylum system and the constant ebb and flow as migrants arrive from and leave to neighboring countries. Legal means of moving forward are rare and difficult to achieve: in January 2018, Hungary reduced the number of asylum seekers permitted entrance each day from 10 to 2 (Sarhaddi Nelson 2017); Serbia granted refugee status to just 3 people in 2017 (Asylum Information Database). The lack of access to legalized means of mobility forces people on the move to turn to clandestine routes; in camps, in informal settlements, and at the borders where they play the Game, migrants are “repeatedly brutalized and neglected and ultimately made invisible by migration policies that push them onto more and more dangerous routes” (MSF 2017: 3). While it is certainly true that harsh migration policies make legal crossing of borders more difficult and increase clandestine crossings, we must be careful not to contributing to the invisibility of migrants by erasing their agency; the distinction between being made invisible and choosing to become invisible is difficult to discern, but significant. People on the move may choose to cross clandestinely even when legal means of crossing are (at least ostensibly) open to them, such as in Serbia where those who register their intent to apply for asylum can be placed on a list to be allowed into Hungary. The Game, despite its dangers, may be the first choice for people who wish to avoid the formal asylum system, thinking that by remaining invisible and off the record they stand a better chance of receiving asylum once they reach a more desirable country in Western Europe.

In my month of fieldwork, my closest encounter with the Game came on a visit to a migrant squat in an abandoned oil factory on the outskirts of Šid, a small town that became an important crossing point on the border between Serbia and Croatia while the Route was open because of its major railroad junction. I travel with Marta, the Serbian anthropologist who is my mentor and guide in Belgrade; Kia, a Serbian solidarity activist and member of No Border Serbia; and Elissa, an American anthropologist based in Budapest. Ten minutes of driving after we leave the state-run refugee camp at the small village of Adaševci, Marta indicates that we should pull over on a dirt track in front a tangle of trees and bushes, the spire of a former factory visible in the background. I am confused: the place looks deserted. Everything is a shade of brown-grey, from the crumbling concrete to the barren trees to the frozen earth. Marta leads the way down a path towards the structure. We turn the corner and suddenly, color and life are everywhere. About eighty men mill about a large rectangular area, what might have once been a factory hall when it had a roof and four walls. At the far end, folding tables are set up in front of a white van; several volunteers, a mixture of Middle Eastern, North African, and European, serve bread, beans, and plastic cups of steaming chai. Men line up to take their breakfast, while those who already have theirs stand in small clumps to eat and chat. The remaining walls are covered in graffiti: “open the border” in sky blue letters three feet tall; “I <3 MOM” written in red and green high up on one side; names, dates, towns, and countries from Algeria to Afghanistan; flowers and suns (see figure 5). “Fuck Croatia,” “fuck borders,” and “fuck the police” are frequent refrains.

Lilia greets us warmly; she is a volunteer with No Name Kitchen, the solidarity activism group that distributes food here twice a day. Like the majority of No Name

Kitchen's volunteers, she came from Spain. After a quick round of introductions, we venture further in, towards the tables where food distribution has just finished. A man offers us chai. Feeling a bit guilty in my warm winter clothes, but also feeling the cold in my fingers, I accept. While we sip the sweet tea, we talk with the group of three men standing nearest to us. They are Algerian, hoping to reach Britain or France; in a combination of broken English and French, they tell us about the times they have played the Game. Like most of the men living in this squat less than five miles from the Croatian border, they have attempted to cross many times. The stories they tell are sickening in their familiarity, the same stories I have heard from dozens of people in Belgrade: Croatian police breaking their cellphones, cutting their shoelaces or taking their shoes altogether, beating them. The last time he played the Game, the one who speaks the best English tell me, just last week, he made it all the way across Croatia to the Slovenian border—the Schengen Zone border—before he was caught and pushed back to Serbia. Another man joins us, introducing himself as Commando. He is from Afghanistan, spent seven months in Iran and another seven in Turkey before making it into Bulgaria and then Serbia. He has been caught in Croatia several times; he comes back here to regroup before trying again. He wants to make it to Spain, he says, but as soon as he secures legal status he will come back here to help those still on the Route, still playing the Game.

As the men I meet at Šid describe, violence, theft, and humiliation at the hands of police and border officials are frequent consequences of the Game. Reports compiled by various human rights organizations and based on interviews with migrants and border officials document “brutal tactics, such as attack dogs and forcing people to strip naked in freezing temperatures” (Oxfam, BCHR, and MYLA 2017: 2), as well as “beatings with

sticks, kicking and punching, robbery, and the destruction of personal items notably mobile telephones” (MSF 2017: 9). Just as significant as the physical impacts of the Game are its mental health effects and political ramifications. Psychologists from Médecins Sans Frontières and other NGOs document high rates of anxiety and depression in migrants all along the Route, particularly in children and teenagers. The traumatic violence experienced along the Route and the precarity migrants experience exacerbate these mental health issues (MSF 2017).

If migrants play a game when they attempt to cross clandestinely through the forests and fields (and more recently, the fences) along Serbia’s borders with Hungary and Croatia, it may be appropriate to think of border officials and police officers as the opposing team, the ones who have to be beaten in order to win. One effect of the linguistic choices associated with clandestine border crossing (“go to do the Game” rather than “go to the border”, for example) is to decentralize the physical site of the border and place the emphasis instead on the action of crossing. This mirrors recent developments in academic discussion of borders and migration, a conceptual shift from the border as a geographical boundary to the border as practice, constituted by the actions of both migrants and states—what Rumford (2008) calls “border work” and Hess and Kasperek (2017) call “doing border.” The stories migrants at Šid share with me, and those recorded in human rights reports on the Game, reinforce this way of understanding borders. When men who are 60 kilometers inside Hungarian territory (Oxfam, BCHR, and MYLA 2017: 7) or across Croatia at the border with Slovenia face violence from border officials and pushbacks to Serbian territory, the border is much more than a line on a map. Borders become a series of interactions between those who wish to cross and those who wish to

prevent them, spread out over multiple sites. Suvendrini Perara (2007) used the term *borderscape* in her work on the Australian border regime, which externalizes the border through the development of offshore migrant camps and the decision to invalidate asylum claims made on the outlying islands. However, the term also fits the changing European border regime, in which the borders of the European Union are outsourced to “third countries” on the south-eastern fringes of Europe and the Mediterranean coast of Africa through sovereign territories such as Ceuta, Melilla, and the Canary Islands; pushback agreements with countries like Turkey and Libya; and the Dublin Regulations which allow Western European countries to deport migrants back to the countries through which they first entered the European Union.

One approach to understanding borders and mobility that relies on this understanding of border as practice rather than place is through the concept of autonomy of migration. From this perspective, all acts of refusing the border regime, whether consciously or not, are acts of resistance; migrants’ “myriad impulses, dreams, acts of refusal, escape and trespass do change the world” (Walters 2015: 483). King summarizes autonomy of migration as “everyday and largely mundane strategies which people denied the freedom of movement use in order to keep enacting the freedom of movement” (2016: 30; cf. Papadopolous 2008). The Game is one such strategy. The migrants who play the Game simply refuse to accept the borders of Serbia through their insistence on crossing despite the risks, their own experiences of violence, and repeated pushbacks. For the Game, invisibility is essential to the project of refusing the border; winning the Game depends on quite literally not being seen by the ‘other team’ (border officials, police officers, surveillance technology, citizens who support the nation’s project of bordering

by reporting clandestine crossers to officials or enacting border violence themselves) and “being invisible is a way of remaining autonomous” (King 2016: 35). These acts of clandestine border crossing are one part of what Ataç et. al call “invisible politics”, practices which “are not captured as such by dominant regimes of visibility—they rather attempt to elude their gaze and seek to remain imperceptible” (2015: 6-7).

2. Face Cards: Representations of Migrants on The Game

The cover of one report on human rights abuses associated with the Game, (published by Oxfam, the Belgrade Center for Human Rights, and the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association in April 2017), shows three men standing around a fire in Belgrade (figure 6). It is a dark photograph: the men are silhouettes, their facial features recognizable only in profile. In the foreground, glowing red smoke rises from a barrel to the outstretched hands of two of the men. Behind them, bright neon letters spell out Eagle Hills, the name of the luxury development project that is taking over the Belgrade Waterfront district. In 2016, an abandoned warehouse housing over a thousand migrants was evicted and demolished to make way for Eagle Hills, along with a major refugee aid center and a No Border activist squat—I will discuss those squats and their eviction in chapter two. A similar report, published by Médecins Sans Frontières in March 2017, is illustrated with a photograph of a young man standing in a crumbling brick building, his back to the camera, looking out a broken window at a tangle of green trees (figure 7). Other photos included in this report show a man alone in front of a concrete wall, surrounded by trash and rubble; a pair of swollen and dirty feet being warmed by a fire; a dirt path through tangled brush littered with tarps; several young men standing amongst

trees with stark shadows across their faces. None of the photos in the MSF report are captioned; the one headlining the Oxfam report is captioned “Men in Belgrade, Serbia, sleeping in sub-zero temperatures, warm themselves while waiting for another opportunity to make the border crossing into the European Union.”

These human rights reports present an image of the Game that is quite distinct from the image presented in the photos my migrant informants show me, snapped with their cell phones in the moments before crossing. The images illustrating the human rights reports paint a bleak picture of migration that in fact diminishes the mobility of the subjects: they show migrants standing still, waiting, staring out a window onto nothing, resting feet worn by travel. In contrast, photos such as Kari’s selfie show people on the move, in the very act of migrating, winding their way through the trees towards Croatia, towards hope. Few of the photographs chosen for the reports show the faces of their subjects. They turn their backs to the camera, or are seen only as dark profiles, or cover their eyes with their hands, or stand in deep shadows. This is likely in part an ethical consideration. The European asylum agreement known as the Dublin Regulation specifies that asylum seekers must make their application in the country where they first enter the European Union. Most migrants, however, do not want asylum in frontline countries such as Italy, Greece, Hungary, and Slovenia, preferring to travel further into Europe towards wealthier countries such as Germany and Sweden. Fearing that public circulation of their images might harm their asylum applications in these destination countries by providing evidence of their earlier presence in a European country, many migrants are reluctant to be photographed by researchers and aid workers. In turn,

researchers and activists often shy away from photographing migrants so as not to potentially endanger their informants or lose their trust.

I experience this ethical struggle in my own fieldwork. On one of my first days at Info Park, I tentatively pull out my camera after the staff I am working with confirm that everyone in the space right now has consented to being photographed. It is a Saturday, when the hub is closed to men to create a safe space for women and children. Several of the children there are delighted by my DSLR, eager to try taking pictures themselves and to see their own faces appear on the screen. There is one young boy, though, about eight years old, who shakes his head at the sight of the camera and says “no photo.” These are the only words I hear him say in English that day. I save the photos by and of the children on my computer, but I know I cannot do anything with them, can never make them public for fear of violating these families’ privacy (if I haven’t already done that by taking the photos, by allowing children to take them on my camera?) and hurting their chances at asylum somewhere along the Route. I share my doubts with Sara, one of the staff at Info Park who often has her own digital camera with her; she confides that she has some pictures of migrants she knows are especially vulnerable, and she will not send these pictures over WhatsApp or Viber or even in an email for fear that they might spread farther than she intends, that they might accidentally make visible things and people she was trying to help keep invisible.

Solidarity groups, with less formalized structures and procedures, some of which are registered as NGOs and some of which are not, occupy a grey area in between groups like MSF or Oxfam and migrants themselves. No Name Kitchen, the Spanish volunteer-driven group that distributes food at the squat in Šid, has recently begun a series of posts

intended to humanize the migrant men who live in the squat on their way to the Game by sharing their stories. The approximately 5000 people who follow their Facebook page comprise a different audience than the friends who see the photos migrants take and share on their personal Facebook pages. It is a different audience, too, than the governmental agencies, human rights organizations, and international media for whom formal reports such as those discussed above are written. These are likely people already sympathetic to No Name Kitchen's cause, including some migrants who have worked with them in the past. Posts frequently appeal to this sympathy, asking for donations of money, supplies, and time. This series sharing the stories of the men who play the Game contains no explicit appeal, but functions similarly, aiming to evoke sympathy in the viewer through reminders that these men "are not a number, not a percentage... they are just human beings hit hard by life, but they don't lose the hope of a better future, nevertheless"(No Name Kitchen Facebook post, 6 March 2018; see figure 8). Although they say that they "want to make all the refugees, who are blocked in Šid, visible," the post quickly clarifies that this visibility is limited: "without faces or names, only their stories" (ibid). The picture that accompanies this post, while lower in quality than those used by MSF and Oxfam, is similar in composition: a man stands with his back to the camera, a dark silhouette against an indistinct outdoor scene, snow on the ground and bare branches. As with the more formal reports by larger NGOs, these activists consciously limit how much light they actually shed on the migrants they work with, illustrating the tension between the desire to make them visible and the need to protect them and their chances at mobility as they prepare for illegal border crossing.

This is one of the many tensions that organizations and volunteers all along the humanitarian spectrum face as they make choices about how to best help migrants along the Route. For NGOs both large and small, photographs of migrants can be essential in attracting donors and raising funds or finding volunteers to help them continue their work. Photographs that highlight the difficult conditions that migrants experience, photographs that make them look like victims, photographs of children—these are the images that attract the most attention and aid; they get more “likes” on Facebook, they spread more widely in international media, bringing global attention and visibility to the Balkan Route. In this sense, the images of the Game that NGOs like MSF use are doing their job; they attract attention and sympathy and hopefully donations, allowing MSF to continue their work treating migrants injured in the Game and putting pressure on governments to change the policies that force migrants onto ever more dangerous migration routes. On the other hand, these images frame migrants as victims, obscuring migrants’ agency and denying them the choice of how they wish to be represented. Organizations and individuals working to aid migrants face a multitude of difficult choices: is it worth using photos that downplay individuals’ agency and paint them as helpless victims if it will help you raise the money to buy them food and clothes? What if those same photos could potentially hinder the individuals’ ability to move forward and receive asylum? How do you do the most good and the least harm? These questions and many others inform the types of images NGOs and solidarity groups capture and publicize—and there are no easy answers.

Regardless of the reasons for the difference, the visual contrast in how migrants’ faces are represented is striking. The photographs taken by migrants on the Game and

shared through Facebook and WhatsApp messages often focus on the subjects' faces quite heavily: broad smiles on faces turned to face the camera; selfies, which are an art form intrinsically designed to show the photographer's face. While these pictures make migrants visible at the very moments when they are enacting their right to mobility, the effect of the photographs used by human rights organizations in their reports on the Game is to make invisible and anonymous the migrants they depict. This is a distinction necessitated by the different roles of the agents involved; migrants have a right to make themselves visible in a way that organizations aimed at helping them cannot, not without potentially compromising their mobility, and the more limited spread of migrants' images means that their invisibility is not compromised in the way that it would be by pictures in a human rights report. It is also important to note that they none of these pictures explicitly depict the Game itself. The caption on the Oxfam/BCHR report notes that the image shows men in Belgrade, 70 miles from the nearest border. The images in the MSF report are uncaptioned, and while some of them (the shot of five men standing in the shadows of the forest, a dirt path through the brush) suggest the journey across the "green border", the rest show (at least temporarily) immobile men in unidentifiable locations. Even No Name Kitchen, while closer to the Game than the others, shows men in a space of immobility, the squat where they wait for their next chance to attempt the Game. Why do human rights advocates fail to show directly the very phenomenon they seek to describe? The answer, of course, is simple: researchers and human rights workers do not play the Game. The Game itself, these transgressive and hopeful acts of mobility, are made visible only through the work of migrants themselves, in the snapshots they capture on cell phone cameras and the testimonies (both visual and verbal) they offer up

afterwards. Through the images that migrants capture, “the largely invisible political practices of appropriating mobility can become visible political acts, even dominating public discourses and controversies in Europe and beyond” (Ataç et al 2015: 7). They make themselves invisible to cross the border, and at the same time make their own invisibility visible. These photos make sure that they get to tell their own stories.

3. Beyond the Frame: What Remains Unseen

With their cell phone cameras, migrants perform appropriative and liberating acts of documentation. They make visible what no one else can. They represent and share the acts of migration that intentionally evade the gaze of state border officials and mass media with both the networks of the mobile commons and the larger media-consuming world (as Èzat put it, for others like me and for the rest of the world). The Game is dangerous, hopeful, desperate, cruel, and invisible by nature, if it is to be successful. Migrants play the game alone. Western solidarity activists, volunteers, and aid workers may help them prepare for the Game and welcome them when they succeed or return defeated. Border officials may seek new and better ways to see people in the act of clandestine migration and take their photographs before abusing them and turning them back, so that they will be recognized if they try again. But the only people who can see and record and represent the act of clandestine crossing are migrants. And this is why it matters so much what choices they make in those representations. This is why it matters that they take selfies, that they document the hardships of the road, that they smile, that they make pictures of hope. These are the images outside the frames of both the pictures

of desperate victims on the covers of human rights reports and the surveillance images of the state.

But there are things that remain even further outside the frame, things that are never made visible. Every migrant I spoke with had stories of their cellphones being taken or broken by police after being caught on the Game. There are many other acts of property destruction and theft that people on the move report (damage to their shoes, their clothes, their legal documents) but this is one of the most consistent. Once caught, border officials are careful to take away migrants' means of communication, connection, and documentation, their tools for creating images that would render this border violence visible. This is the most truly invisible part of the Game: what happens when you lose. There are stories of the violence experienced during pushbacks, and photographs of the injuries people come back with, but officials take care that no photographs or videos will make the rounds on Facebook. There are few, if any, images of what happens when those hopeful groups of young men lose all hope.

This is where human rights organizations come back into the picture. NGOs like Info Park and MSF document extensively, with visual as well as written records, the physical injuries sustained by migrants who have been pushed back from the border. They may not be able to capture the events as they happen, but they can and do make visible the impacts of border violence. Large-scale NGOs like MSF have more power than individual migrants do to make this violence visible in ways that can contribute both to changes in bordering policy and to funding that enables the doctors of MSF to provide medical care to the victims of border violence. These images may emphasize migrants' role as victims, but they also do important work. While NGOs and solidarity

organizations may often contribute to problematic and victimizing portraits of the so-called ‘migrant crisis’ that take agency away from migrants, the images they distribute also make important contributions to improving conditions for migrants, exposing border violence, and resisting border regimes. As I’ll discuss in chapters two and three, images taken by aid workers and spread through mass and social media can at times have significant impacts on bordering policies.

Chapter 2: The Barracks

For long years leading up to the fall of 2016, the large wooden structures next to Belgrade's main train station sat empty, former warehouses slowly deteriorating. Now they are gone, the place where they once were a wide, flat lot ringed by debris, an odd oasis in the center of a busy and growing city. For a brief period in between—from the fall of 2016 until early May 2017—they come alive, with more than a thousand men at a time claiming them as a temporary home. In conversation and in media reports (and there were many reports, from many media sources) the buildings occupied by migrants stuck in Serbia on their journeys to Western Europe are called the Barracks. Looming large in the landscape of migration long after their eviction and demolition, the Barracks and the nearby parks that precede them as public spaces occupied by migrants raise questions about visibility and power. Why do so many migrants choose to live in autonomous squats and public parks rather than in the state-run asylum camps outside the city? What power does the very visible presence of hundreds of people in the center of the city lend them, and how do images recording that presence extend that visibility and amplify that power? How, when, and why does the state act to reassert its power by trying to reduce the visibility of immobilized migrants? Tied up in these questions and their answers is a different kind of image, the non-visual sense of the word that refers to reputation: what is Serbia's image on the global stage, how does that line up with the image Serbian officials want to project, and what are they willing to do to preserve or alter that image?

The bars to which Marta brings me to meet with her activist friends always have a certain secretive vibe, like the places themselves and the people who meet there are trying to hide from watching eyes: look for the smiling sign advertising a dentist on a quiet street downtown, ring the doorbell, pass through the entryway and across the courtyard, down a flight of stairs and you're there. Dim lighting and bathroom stalls covered in stickers of anarchist symbols and feminist slogans. The ubiquitous haze of cigarette smoke. Groups of people huddle around wooden tables, conversing intently, gesturing emphatically, and making makeshift diagrams out of books, menus, and cigarette cartons.

On this particular Tuesday night it is Idiott Bar, through a small gate and down a steep flight of stairs near the botanical gardens. We make an odd group: the Serbian mother who researches migration at the Ethnographic Institute, the Italian doctor who works in the local MSF clinic, the middle-aged Serbian No Border activist, and the twenty-two year old American university student. The conversation ranges widely. When Marta and I arrive, the others are discussing a collective squat in Italy. After introductions have been made, there are the requisite questions about my research and my impressions of Belgrade and a spirited cross-comparison of the Serbian, Italian, and American school systems. Inevitably, though, we end up at the same information-sharing these gatherings always seem to come to, a sort of collective story-telling in which we piece together the tale of the Balkan Route from 2015 to this very day, each person offering what statistics and anecdotes and analysis they can. As we discuss the ever-changing flows of migrants and the Serbian state's ever-changing reactions, the other three assure me that there are really only two ways to pressure the government into doing anything: getting a larger

power, like Russia or the European Union, involved, or reaching international media.

Marta's tone is ironic as she explains the sensitivity of Serbian politicians to bad press, their concern over "the ruined image of beautiful Serbia."

1. Serbian Migration Policy at the Humanitarian-Securitarian Nexus

Marta's sentiment is echoed through my fieldwork. Migrants, activists, aid workers, reporters, anthropologists—everyone seems to agree that Serbia's image on the international stage is critical and anything that threatens to ruin that image is sure to provoke a response from the state. Many go on to explain this concern with the country's image in terms of Serbia's desire to gain acceptance into the EU. Like other countries along the Balkan Route, Serbia is part of the European Union's externalization of the border regime; the EU's power in the region allows them to shift the onus of keeping migrants out of "Fortress Europe" onto poorer EU countries like Croatia (not yet a member of the Schengen Zone) and Greece, as well as aspiring EU countries like Serbia and Macedonia. These countries "strategically position themselves in furtherance of their geopolitical prospects," shaping their border policies in terms of what they think will best impact their campaign for EU member status (Beznec et al 2016: 61). The EU-Turkey deal finalized in March of 2016 is a crucial instance of European border externalization; the deal allows Greece to return all irregular migrants to Turkey in exchange for visa liberalization for Turkish citizens, increased financial support for Turkey's refugee population, and increased resettlement of Syrian refugees in Turkey. This type of strategic positioning takes the form of bordering practices that are alternatively (and sometimes simultaneously) relatively humanitarian and brutally securitarian. These are

the “crimes of peace” Maurizio Albahari describes in his discussion of the overlap of military and humanitarian governance as both work to maintain borders (2016).

In the years immediately preceding the current ‘migrant crisis’, a number of human rights violations committed by Serbian authorities are documented at both informal migrant camps such as the ‘jungle’ at Subotica, a town near the Hungarian border, as well as at government-run asylum centers (Human Rights Watch 2015). In 2014 and 2015, however, local and national governments begin to present an image of Serbia as humanitarian and welcoming towards refugees. They highlight policies and events that illustrate this reputation and let evidence to the contrary (such as ongoing border violence, poor conditions in state-run asylum camps, and pushbacks into Bulgaria and Macedonia that continue to this day) fade into the background. Their rhetoric often alludes to the refugee crisis that Serbians themselves experienced during the dissolution of Yugoslavia as a point of sympathy, suggesting that “similar experiences of disenfranchisement can generate shared ethical and political commitments that bring differently positioned social and economic groups into common struggle” and that “such vocabularies of resistance emerge across the joint terrains of violent conflict and inequality from the Middle East to the Balkans” (Greenberg and Spasic 2017: 321).

It is worth noting the recent history of Serbia here; in the eyes of much of the world, Serbs were seen as one of the key causes of the Balkan refugee crisis in the 1990s, coming as it did as a result of ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Serbian militaries and paramilitaries. Beznec et al. read Serbia’s seemingly softer approach to refugees now as an “appeal to the EU’s ‘humanitarian face’” (2016: 61); this could be a chance to rehabilitate Serbia’s image, a way to show that Serbia has changed since then, repainting

it as a humanitarian country now worthy of becoming part of Europe. However, as Andersson demonstrates in his analysis of the Spanish border regime in North Africa, the so-called “humanitarian” and “securitarian” approaches to bordering, while seemingly opposed, “are in fact enmeshed and entwined at the borders, in complex and often mutually reinforcing ways” (2017: 65). Governments, NGOs, and other actors at times seize the mantle of humanitarian work in order to add moral legitimacy to practices that in fact restrict migrants’ agency and mobility; these “border humanitarians” maintain their reputations through claims of humanitarian motives while failing to enact or demand real change in European border regimes (Stierl 2017). As the more securitarian approaches of surrounding countries increase the pressure and the presence of migrants in Serbia, the limits of Serbia’s supposedly humanitarian approach are tested; when this proves to be an ineffective method of reducing migrant presence and visibility in Serbia, the government changes tactics.

Almost everyone I meet during my month of fieldwork—migrants, staff and volunteers at local NGOs, researchers, activists—is eager to tell me their version of the history of three years of intense migration flows through Serbia. In bars popular in left-leaning activist circles, in cafés throughout the riverfront Savamala district, at the front desk of Info Park during quiet moments, on long walks ranging from the train station to the parks, we rehearse and rehash the story, everyone interjecting with more details and different viewpoints. There are as many versions of the story, I think, as there have been migrants and activists and volunteers and aid workers in Belgrade since 2015. But certain themes and events remain central, no matter who is telling the story. And one event in particular stands out as an example of both the shift from a (relatively) humanitarian to a

(more) securitarian approach to dealing with migrants on the part of the Serbian state, as well as the important influence of foreign media in making conditions visible and the impact of the need to maintain the country's image on Serbian migration policy. That singular event is the eviction and demolition of the Barracks of Belgrade.

2. “At least here you are free”: Life in the Barracks

The so-called “Barracks” house about 1500 migrants at their peak. Consisting of several abandoned warehouses near the bus and train stations in the Savamala district, they are settled beginning in the late summer of 2016. Several factors contribute to their occupation; one is the announcement by officials at the government asylum camp closest to the capital city, Krnjača, that they will no longer accommodate people who are not registered asylum seekers (Bjelica 2017: 3). Another important factor is the increasing number of migrants stuck in Serbia since the passage of the “8 kilometer” law in Hungary in July 2016, which legalizes the pushback to Serbia of any migrants found in Hungarian territory within 8 kilometers of the border (Ruff 2017). For several months, the unofficial, autonomous camp is a source of shelter, food, and information for migrants travelling through Belgrade. In May of 2017, the inhabitants are forcibly evicted and the buildings torn down to make way for an upscale waterfront development—an eviction that is highly visible: it is caught on camera by multiple agents, the video spread online and the story picked up by international news outlets. The Barracks lack many of the resources of the government-run migrant camps—drafty and unheated, with no regularized distribution of food or other supplies. But it is a space run by and for migrants, autonomously managed and centrally located next to the city's main train and bus stations. It represents an appropriation of space and a way of taking back control,

allowing migrants to hold onto a degree of control over their lives that the government camps denied them.

Numerous researchers have applied autonomy of migration theories to discuss how migrants appropriate mobility through their insistent and persistent movement towards and across borders, appropriation of legal means of border crossing and transportation (Walters 2015), and illegal crossing of borders both conspicuous and clandestine. But what about when they aren't going anywhere, when circumstances leave migrants stuck (at least temporarily) in one place? The occupation of Belgrade's parks and the Barracks are an example of how even when immobilized, migrants' "myriad impulses, dreams, acts of refusal, escape and trespass do change the world" (Walters 2015: 483). As long as migrants fill the public spaces of central Belgrade, they hold a certain power over the state; their living conditions and treatment by officials are made visible to the city and, through mass media coverage and social media sharing, to the whole world. In choosing to live in the Barracks or the parks rather than in the state-run camps in more remote areas, migrants assert their autonomy and reject state bordering practices that render them relatively invisible and restrict their mobility.

The first people to break into and sleep in the empty warehouses behind the train station likely do so for the invisibility it offers: a place to sleep away from the streets and parks that are patrolled by police and filled with other migrants. As more and more people move in, they must find a way to organize the space, to live together. Solidarity activists are regular visitors; members of No Border Serbia begin a squat in a nearby building. As the number of people living there continues to grow, the Barracks and their inhabitants become more conspicuously visible. The Barracks themselves are still tucked

away behind the train station, but the men who live there spend their days in the nearby parks, walking around the neighborhood, visiting the various NGOs. Hundreds of men suddenly living and moving about in one of the central districts of the city are hard to ignore; even harder when they all have the brown skin in a country as white as Serbia.

Various reasons are cited for the choice to live outside the official camps. Some are linked to the asylum procedure—after November 2016, migrants could no longer enter the state-run camps around Belgrade without registering an asylum application in Serbia, a step that many avoid so as not to leave a paper trail of their movement through/to Europe that might later be used to justify their deportation back to Serbia or another transit country. Some reasons are practical: the location of the Barracks and the camps in the center of the city allows access to information, resources, and transportation that are harder to reach even from the closest of the camps, Krnjača, which lies across the Danube on the outskirts of the city. Bjelica cites a man living in the Barracks who is also registered as a resident of the asylum center at Obrenovac, 30 kilometers from the capital: “I go to the camp about once a week to have a shower. Otherwise conditions are exactly the same as here [in the squat]. Okay, it’s warmer in the camp and there is electricity, but at least here you are free” (2017:8). This attitude was surely helped by increasing restrictions on migrant mobility within the official camps; at Obrenovac, for example, authorities imposed restrictions in February 2017 forcing camp residents to apply for permission before leaving the camp and limiting their movement to and from Belgrade to a special bus chartered for migrants “to avoid mixing” with their Serbian neighbors (Reuters 2017).

“At least here you are free.” This declaration gets at the heart of the more abstract

reasons migrants make the choice to squat in the Barracks and in the myriad other spaces they occupy outside of the official camp system, from the oil factory near Šid to the Belgrade parks to empty houses near the town of Subotica on the Hungarian border. In refusing the spatial confinements imposed by the state and claiming their own space, the residents of the Barracks assert their agency. The Barracks are a clear example of appropriation of space. It is a way of taking back control; while the Barracks lack some of the resources of the government-run migrant camps, it is a space run by and for migrants, enabling them to hold onto a degree of control over their lives that the government camps deny them. In photographs taken inside and around the Barracks, we catch glimpses of the means used to claim the space and make it a home. Abdul Saboor's photos shows groups of young men clustered around makeshift fire pits and washing clothes by hand in large tubs; in some images, blankets hanging from bits of rope divide up the open, industrial space of the former factory, creating small havens of privacy (figure 9). In one particularly poignant image, a man stands several feet in front of the camera with his back turned, eyes cast down at a makeshift cardboard altar. In the background, four men crouch around a fire; behind them, bright sunlight filters into the dim, cavernous space of the warehouse (figure 10). Through their modifications and additions to the building, their use of the space in a radically different way from its intended purpose, the migrants who lived in the Barracks claimed the space as their own.

The path of migrants through Europe is covered in graffiti, in dozens of languages and expressing sentiments opposing migrant mobility as well as supporting it. Saboor's photographs of the Barracks show spray-painted messages in Arabic, English, and Serbian. Some are pleas for support and compassion on behalf of the migrants occupying

the space: “The PROBLEM is BORDERS”, “I am a person too”, “FOOD not BOMBS”. Others are more practical: on the wall near a central space for the distribution of food, black letters spell “PLEASE RESPECT THE LINE & THE PEOPLE”, followed by a smiley face (figure 11). Still others are merely the name of the writer, tags that carry the simple yet powerful declaration that the writer was here. These graffiti play an important role in the appropriation of the space; graffiti is an inherently appropriative process, since “the surface it was placed on was not originally meant to receive it and thus was turned into a surface for writing” (Plesch 2002:168). Within the Barracks, graffiti is a way of marking territory. But here and elsewhere, graffiti also serve to render visible migrants and their struggle for mobility. Even a simple name, when written on a wall in large, colorful letters, can be a powerful intrusion into public space and public perception.

Through their occupation of public spaces such as the Barracks and the parks, migrants enact the power of visibility. The migrants who live in these public spaces in the winter of 2016 suffer publicly, in the center of the city, where Serbian citizens and foreign journalists cannot avoid seeing them, where it is inevitable that pictures will be taken and circulated. This draws attention to conditions for migrants in Serbia in a way that is not possible from within the camps.

Migrants living in the official camp system do not fare much better than those sleeping rough or living in squats. During the third week of my time in Serbia, food distribution at Krnjača runs out before everyone is fed on several consecutive days; stories abound of violence and theft in the camps; and the facilities, while less derelict than the abandoned warehouses, apartment buildings, and factories those living outside the camps squat in, are far from ideal. Most importantly, whether they live in the camps,

in squats, or on the streets, migrants in Serbia face the same problems of immobility and precarity. They cannot work, cannot legally live anywhere but the camps, cannot access state services. They have limited access to health care and virtually no access to the mental health care that so many desperately need. They are at risk of detention and deportation back to Bulgaria or Macedonia if caught by officials without the right papers. And unless they have the money to pay a smuggler or the courage and physical ability to attempt a clandestine crossing on their own—plus a lot of luck—they cannot move forward. The state policies that manufacture this uncertain limbo for migrants “forces them to remain invisible...by preventing access to a normal life” (Amaya-Castro 2015: 156).

3. “Ruining the Image of Beautiful Serbia”: Images of Migrant Immobility

The winter of 2016-2017 is a particularly brutal one in Serbia, with temperatures dropping to -20 degrees Celsius and snow piling high. The migrant men living in the Barracks, lacking proper winter clothing, food supplies, access to medicine, heating, and with barely any shelter from the wind, suffer more than most. These conditions are made worse when, in November 2016, the Serbian Ministry of Labor, Social, and Veteran Affairs (which is also responsible for refugees) sends an open letter to local NGOs, asking them to stop providing food, clothes, medical aid, and shelter to migrants, especially within the city of Belgrade. (“Asking” is a strong word; while the letter has no legal status, it amounts to a “distribution ban,” which is how my informants generally referred to it.) The rationale is that handouts from the NGOs are essentially enabling and supporting a large population of homeless migrants in the center of the capital city; if the

free handouts stop, the migrants squatting and sleeping rough will give up and go to the government-run camps. It does not work: the NGOs keep finding ways around the ban or outright ignoring it, and the migrants do not go away.

This harsh winter and the resulting conditions in the Barracks are well documented in a variety of media. The first Google search result for “Barracks of Belgrade” points you to the crowdfunding campaign for a photobook compiled by Austrian photographer Robert Altermoser during his two months in Belgrade at the end of the Barracks’ time; his photographs are black and white, shot on medium-format film, figures blurred by the slow shutter speed (see figure 12). Images from migrant photographer Abdul Saboor have been exhibited in galleries in Belgrade, Krakow, Paris, and Columbus, Ohio. German photographer Maria Feck’s photos, displayed on the website of the solidarity group No Name Kitchen, capture many of the same things Altermoser’s and Saboor’s photos do: the cavernous ceilings and dramatic lighting, the difficult conditions, the appeals for aid written on the buildings. The eviction and demolition of the Barracks mark a turning point in Serbia’s migration policy in the minds of many of my informants. In speaking about when, how, and why the Barracks were evicted, they insist that media representations of life in the Barracks had a significant impact on the actions of the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees in choosing to evict them when they did.

The Barracks’ role as a living space for hundreds of migrants enables their continued presence in the center of the city, where they are insistently visible. Actions by solidarity volunteers and NGOs to improve conditions—the additions of stoves, running water, some access to medical care—further enable this presence by making life in the

Barracks more sustainable. And the proliferation of images from the Barracks makes them visible not only to residents of Belgrade, but also to the entire world. Many of these images, especially the ones that circulate the most widely, paint pictures of migrants as victims. As I will discuss later in this chapter, these victimizing portraits of migrants deny their agency. At the same time, however, they make migration and border work in Serbia visible in a way that migrants and solidarity activists are not able to do on their own. It is yet another difficult choice: wanting to draw attention and hopefully aid to conditions that are objectively terrible during a harsh winter, recognizing and understanding the reasons why migrants have chosen to live here, hoping to improve conditions by making them more visible and putting pressure on the government through its international image, considering the possible negative consequences of drawing so much attention to this space and the people who have made it their home.

There is a surprising lack of photos from this winter in the Barracks on the Facebook pages of local NGOs Info Park and Miksalište, usually so prolific in their posting. This is in part one of the impacts of the November distribution ban. The NGOs go on providing food and clothes to migrants in the Barracks, and the Commissariat is well aware they are (“you cannot just give almost \$200,000 without the knowing of the state for clothes,” one former Miksalište volunteer laughs to me as she describes an Oxfam-run distribution project she worked on that winter), but they refrain from publicizing visual documentation of their efforts so as not to publicly defy the Commissariat. These aid workers perform a constant balancing act, torn between wanting to help migrants as much as their resources will allow and fearing that if they directly defy the Commissariat they will be forced to stop their operations. As a result of these

conflicting impulses, they sometimes find themselves acting in unsettling complicity with the Commissariat's securitarian policies.

On social media, grainy camera-phone photos appear on migrant-run Facebook pages such as "I'm not a beggar, I'm a refugee," which is run by my contact Èzat, the Afghan photojournalist. These amateur images capture the harsh conditions in the Barracks—the cold, the long lines for food—but they also capture moments of daily life—a teenage boy posing dramatically in an armchair in traditional Afghan clothing, a group selfie of friends made in the Barracks (see figure 13).

The images of the frozen Barracks that seem most significant in the minds of Serbian aid workers, though, are those that appear in the pages of foreign newspapers, tarnishing the image Serbia has cultivated as a relatively humane place for refugees. The photos used by news outlets who pick up the story, from Serbia to Ireland, are often similar in their formal qualities to Altermoser's and Saboor's images: many are black and white, high-contrast so as to capture the smooth rays of light streaming through the roof and the inky black of the corners, men captured in profile, dramatic angles (figures 14 and 15). Maria Feck's photos of migrants in Serbia, with the same high-art aesthetics and dramatic tone, are published in *Der Spiegel*, a German weekly magazine with a circulation of 840,000. These images spread across Europe and the western world, accompanied by dramatic titles and captions that highlight the harsh conditions: "Life in a warehouse: Serbia's stranded migrants and refugees" (McLaughlin, *Irish Times*, 10 April 2017); "Thousands of refugee children sleeping rough in sub-zero Serbia, says UN" (Slawson, *The Guardian*, 23 January 2017); "The Desperate Conditions Inside a Serbian Migrant Camp" (Specia, *The New York Times*, 24 January 2017). Notably, these titles

implicate the Serbian state, referring to the migrants as Serbia's and identifying the informal camp in the Barracks as a "Serbian migrant camp" without clarifying that the camp is not run by the Serbian government. These (not-quite-accurate) implications make the images even more threatening to Serbia's reputation; at the same time, they frame migrants as helpless victims of the state, overlooking the agency that migrants claim when they make the choice to live outside the official asylum system.

When winter finally ends, things improve somewhat—at the very least, the occupants of the Barracks no longer have to contend with sub-freezing temperatures. The overall situation is "slightly more settled, although no less desperate", as the rates of successful clandestine crossings into neighboring countries decrease while new migrants continue to arrive in Belgrade (Bjelica 2017:1). Perhaps most distressing is the instability of the situation: while police raids are less frequent than they were early in the settlement of the squat, the warehouses have long been slated for demolition to clear space for the luxury high-rise buildings of the Belgrade Waterfront development. By April 2017, skeletal frames of new skyscrapers tower over the yards where migrants play cricket and pray in an outdoor mosque. On May 5th, Serbian authorities announce that they are going to evict the Barracks; 5 days later, they begin to move people out. The eviction is chaotic, to say the least.

4. Visibility and Power: The Eviction of the Barracks

There are many factors that contribute to determining a country's bordering policies, and many individuals involved in those choices; 'the state' is not a monolithic, homogenous entity. There were many reasons the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees evicted the Barracks when and how they did: the land was already promised to the Belgrade Waterfront development project, the fact that so many migrants were living outside the state-run asylum camps potentially jeopardized the funding the government was receiving from the EU, large populations of squatters have never been welcomed in the center of Belgrade, especially when they have dark skin—just ask the city's Roma population. But clearly, in the eyes of many of the actors involved, the photos were one of the reasons. Why do the photos matter so much? Why are people so certain that the proliferation of images of the Barracks through the winter and early spring of 2017 are a direct cause of their eviction and demolition? Why do pictures in newspapers thousands of miles away have such influence on Serbian politicians?

One way to talk about the impact of the eviction of the parks and the Barracks is by talking about the link between visibility and power; as long as migrants are visible on a local and global stage, they have a certain amount of power to assert their own autonomy and to point out the poor conditions for migrants in Serbia. Analysis by migration researchers active in Serbia points out that given Serbia's current position in the process of applying for EU member status, with specific directives for Serbia to bring its bordering practices in line with EU standards of "justice, freedom, and stability", "the visibility of suffering migrants in the city center...is not very supportive" (Ruff 2017). This is a bit of an understatement. The spectacle of thousands of migrants living in

squalid conditions in the middle of Serbia's capital advertises to the rest of the world that they cannot control migration to and through their country, taking power away from the Serbian state.

The global spread of images of the Barracks has direct, concrete impacts in addition to the more nebulous effect on the "ruined image of beautiful Serbia." The first volunteers who form No Name Kitchen, the solidarity group I meet in Šid (see chapter 1), come to Belgrade from Spain in February 2017 after seeing photographs and stories from the Barracks in Spanish media. The first task they take upon themselves is to find sources of clean firewood for the men in the Barracks, who have been burning the chemical-soaked wood of old railway pikes to stay warm. They soon turn to food distribution, and after the eviction of the Barracks they move to Šid to continue their work. Of course, volunteers cycle through: some stay for only a few weeks, others for months. But images remain crucial to their recruiting strategy: on their Facebook page, No Name Kitchen posts almost-daily updates, always with photographs (of migrants, of the snow, of activities organized in the squat, of piles of donated clothes, of food distribution—the series of anonymous portraits of migrants I describe in chapter one is just one example; see figure 8) and often accompanied by appeals for aid. The Spanish solidarians are not the only ones drawn to Belgrade by international news of the Barracks; a small group comes from the UK and used their welding skills to equip the space with better stoves for heat and cooking, and volunteers from various other countries—both individuals acting alone and those coming to work with specific NGOs or activist organizations.

Of course, the eviction and destruction of the Barracks was the most significant and concrete impact on the migrants living in the Barracks attributed to the spread of

images of conditions there on traditional and social media. On May 5th, 2017, the Ministry of Labor, Social, and Veteran Affairs (under which the Commissariat for Refugees operates) announces that the Barracks will be evicted and demolished and all migrants in the city will be relocated to official asylum centers. Two days later, they announce that all those in the Barracks can choose and register for a camp; despite official communication that the state is opposed to smuggling and will not cooperate with any smuggling organizations, the lists for registration are distributed in a portion of the Barracks that is generally known to be where smugglers congregate (Ruff 2017). On the 10th, the Barracks are sprayed with a pesticide; this is supposedly done to protect the workers coming in the next day to complete the eviction from scabies. Occupants of the Barracks are given little warning about the spraying. A British solidarity activist who goes by the name Direct Action Volunteer shares video footage on social media: several men in hazmat suits and gas masks walk through the mostly empty buildings, spraying a visible haze of chemicals over tents and piles of belongings from tanks strapped to their backs. Groups of migrant men stand near the entrances, milling about, most of them in t-shirts and jeans with no facial protection (Direct Action Volunteer 2017).

Early the next morning, May 11th, officials from the Commissariat enter the Barracks, some of them with axes in hand. Within half an hour, all of the 400 or so migrants still living in the Barracks are forced out; most are put on buses and sent to asylum camps around the country. Aid workers and volunteers from many of the NGOs actively working with refugees in Belgrade assist with the eviction, nominally in an attempt to prevent the Commissariat from using excessive force through their presence; they are “occupied with the question of how to evict the Barracks justly and in a humane

manner rather than questioning the strategy or policy behind it” (Ruff 2017). By 11am, destruction of the space begins: the kitchen built by migrants and solidarity activists destroyed, valuables and personal belongings gathered up. At Info Park, there is a stack of notebooks in the storage room collected from the Barracks during the eviction—some with drawings, some used for practicing English or German, some journals. This is one example of humanitarian groups in Serbia becoming “susceptible to co-optation and capture by official strategies of policing and control” (Walters 2011:148); they end up working with border officials to take away migrants’ autonomy, helping to reassert the power of the state.

While the eviction itself draws some media attention—outrage over the videos of pesticides being sprayed with people still inside the buildings makes it as far as the British tabloids—within a few days interest dissipates. Later, people who were in Belgrade at that time tell me about how empty the streets of the ‘refugee quarter’ were in the weeks after the eviction. I experience this on a smaller scale when a squat housing just over a hundred migrants is evicted during my time in Serbia, all of them sent to Preševo, the camp closest to the Macedonian border. The next day, the streets around the stations are empty; fewer than ten people come into Info Park’s aid center. I make the rounds with a couple of Info Park staff and it is the same everywhere: a noticeable lack of people, a subdued atmosphere.

Attempts by the Serbian state to keep migrants out of public spaces—out of sight—are not limited to the eviction of the Barracks. The two parks near the stations where thousands of migrants slept during the ‘long summer’ of 2015 and where many migrants still hang out during the day have been repeatedly plowed, and are filled with

signs that declare, “It is forbidden to retain and stay on the green areas. Keep of the grass.” in Serbian, English, Arabic, and Farsi (figure 16). While I am in Belgrade, I watch over the course of several days as workers use green mesh fencing to close off the sides of a small open-air parking garage at the end of one of these parks. One day, as I walk past with one of Info Park’s protection officers, she stops to ask the workers why they are doing this and they confirm that it is to keep refugees from using the garage for shelter. Raids on other squats, both in Belgrade and elsewhere in Serbia, occur periodically; the migrants displaced by these raids are sent to camps far from the city.

By forcing migrants out of the most public spaces and into state-run camps or more secluded squats, the Serbian government regains some control over the narrative of their treatment of refugees. This strategy of “detaining people in camps in remote areas in order to invisibilize and immobilize them” is common in contemporary border regimes (for an extreme example, look the confinement of migrants on islands—geographically distanced from society—by Australian border agencies), and it is a powerful one (Ruff 2017). By literally removing migrants from the public’s field of vision, states take back the power those people may have gained from visibility. Border officials can restrict access to the camps, only allowing images that depict Serbia in a positive light—and they do. At the small camp off the highway in Adaševci, near the Croatian border, my colleagues and I are stopped and interrogated by camp officials as we stand outside the gates, taking photographs of the buildings, laundry lines, and a few stray dogs. You cannot take pictures of the camp without permission, we are told. We argue that we are not entering the camp, only standing outside—looking at what anyone in a car passing along the highway or filling their tank at the neighboring gas station would see. It does

not matter. No photos.

The migrants living in the Barracks gain global visibility through the spread of images on traditional media outlets and social media. Many of these images emphasize the miserable conditions experienced by migrants in the Barracks: the cold, the lack of food, and the minimal access to medical services. Take for example a New York Times article from January 2017, which includes several short videos (in its online version; see figures 17 and 18). In one, a line of men stand in falling snow, hunched into their jackets; the line extends to a vanishing point somewhere beyond the frame, suggesting that it might go on forever. The camera focuses on a young man with a grey blanket draped around him, covering his face so that only his eyes are visible. Snowflakes land on his dark hood. Panning back to the line, we see a white woman handing a steaming bowl and some bread to one of the men (Specia 2017). In portrayals like this, the emphasis is placed on the material suffering of the migrants represented, showing them patiently waiting to accept aid from Europeans. While the suffering is very real, these representations do not show the full picture. They take agency away from migrants, creating ‘spectacles of misery’ that “are inadequate to convey the complexity and contradiction of the [migrants’] lived experiences” (Andrijasevic 2007: 171).

We must look at these images critically, bearing in mind what is outside the frame—‘watching’ them, in the sense that Azoulay uses to mean carefully examining the physical and social contexts of an image and the ‘civil contract’ of power relations they create between photographer, photographed, and viewer (2008). The New York Times video does not show the kitchen where migrants cooked for themselves alongside solidarity activists, or the informal language school organized within the Barracks, or the

weekly ‘Chai No Border’ gatherings where solidarians and migrants drank tea together. Representations are examples of what Evalina Gambino refers to as the “pietistic spectacle of the destitution of migrants, captured by the camera lens of a ‘good-hearted’ journalist” (2017: 265); they dehumanize migrants and fix their identities while denying them agency or self-determination. There is no denying that material conditions on the Barracks are bad, “but still there were reasons why people stayed in Belgrade and did not deliberately go to the camps: connection, collectivity, solidarity, visibility, some sort of liberty” (Ruff 2017). There are things outside the frame. The images of the Barracks that circulate most widely rarely show the work of solidarity activists like No Border Serbia and No Name Kitchen, highlighting instead global organizations like Oxfam, the UNHCR, and local NGOs like Info Park. The aid workers and activists of these groups certainly mean well in their attempts to alleviate the suffering of migrants, but they also contribute to these ‘spectacular narratives’, although perhaps in less objectifying ways. When photographs taken by and documenting the aid work of a Western NGO are the ones that document life in the Barracks for a global audience, who is being made visible? Who gains power?

Chapter 3: Marches of Hope

It is a photograph of a paper airplane that first catches my eye, coming up the broad stone steps to the second floor of the main building of Sciences Po. The folds are crisp, and Arabic words adorn the wings: blue crayon on one side, orange on the other (figure 19). Paradoxically, it is taped to a pole—an object made for flight held in place. I am early: even though I lingered over my coffee before leaving the house, there are still fifteen minutes until my two-hour lecture on “Systèmes Internationaux et Comparés des Droits de l'Homme” (Comparative International Systems of Human Rights). So I take the time to examine the photograph, and the next one, and the next one. One shows a page of drawings done in crayon, ripped a bit at the top, the words “Afghanistan is my hart [sic]” written in careful, curlicued print with a blue pen. A stretch of barbed wire against a grey sky. A crowd of people—mostly brown-skinned young men—crushed together, the location indeterminable. They are beautiful photographs; my art history brain kicks in immediately, analyzing composition and line and qualities of color. With two minutes until class, I turn to the panel describing the installation: photographs by Hungarian artist Gabrielle Csoszó and her students, of refugees trapped in Budapest’s Keleti Station in the fall of 2015. These are my first images of the Balkan Route.

It is a lovely bit of serendipity that an exhibition of photographs of refugees in Hungary is put on display in this grand old French university building where I come every Tuesday during my semester abroad the same week that I receive an email from my advisors asking whether I would be interested in linking my honors project to their ongoing research on migration along the Balkan Route. Within days, we agree that my

research will somehow bridge my art history and global studies majors by looking at art of and by migrants; within weeks, I am submitting a proposal for National Science Foundation; nine months later I am in Serbia. The photograph of the paper airplane in Keleti Station sits on my computer desktop the whole time, and I look at it often. There is the sentimental value, of course: the first image of Balkan Route migration in a long, strange year full of images of Balkan Route migration. But there's more than that. It is a bright, playful image, conjuring up memories of lazy late-spring days in elementary school classrooms. It doesn't quite fit the context in which the image was captured: Keleti Station in the chaotic days of September 2015, when thousands of migrants pouring into Hungary from the formalized Balkan corridor fill Budapest's central train station, unable to move forward towards their destinations legally unless Austria and Hungary open their borders. Like the airplane taped to a pole: made for motion, but trapped in one place. Until they aren't. Until in a spectacular act of appropriating mobility, thousands of people simply start walking towards the border. It is part protest march, part unruly mob, and part practical migration. They call it the March of Hope.

1. Spectacular Movement: The Marches of Hope

For clandestine migration, invisibility is key. Whether people travel with or without a smuggler, alone or in small bands, there can be no hope of successful crossing unless they remain unseen, unheard, undetected for as long as possible. But on several occasions over the three long years of unprecedented migration through southern Europe, groups of migrants have taken an entirely different tactic: frustrated by the lack of legal border crossing options and the difficulty of crossing clandestinely, large groups have set

out for the border on foot, en masse. These movements rely on the power of visibility. Movements of hundreds or thousands of people through public spaces, along public roads, towards the borders that have repeatedly denied them are a refusal to hide, a declaration of “the profound and inextricable presence of migrants” (De Genova 2010: 103). As De Genova argues in reference to mass mobilizations of migrants in the United States in 2006, the insistent and highly visible presence of marginalized groups has great power to disrupt the social and political order that seeks to marginalize them and make them invisible; they “literally conjure themselves into existence by making an unseemly appearance within the now disrupted and newly unstable order” (2010: 108). Group mobilization “challenges the invisibility that the political economy of the illegality regime imposes on these irregular migrants,” and the larger the group the safer they are—while one migrant walking down the highway towards the border would quickly be detained, it is much harder to arrest several thousand (Amaya-Castro 2015: 163).

The most prominent March of Hope occurs in September 2015, when more than a thousand people who have been encamped in Budapest’s Keleti train station but prevented from boarding trains to Western Europe simply start walking down the M1 motorway, the main highway leading to the Austrian border. The images that make their way into mainstream media are striking: a wide highway cut down to a single lane of car travel while a colorful mass of people fill the rest of the route, flanked by police (see figure 3). Writing shortly after the march, Bernard Kasperek and Marc Speer declare that “the images of this march will surely find their place in the iconography of this long summer of migration” (2015). In their view, these images of the spectacular failure of the European border regime to contain and control migration exercise a similar power to that

which pictures of the Barracks of Belgrade will the following winter: it is in part “under the impression of these images” that Germany and Austria agree to open their borders. The march is successful, to an extent: within days, the Hungarian government organizes a convoy of buses to take the thousands walking down the highways and those still in Keleti station to the Austrian border. At least ten thousand reach Germany, the land of their hopes.

In the wake of the successful March of Hope from Keleti that opens Germany and Austria’s borders, this becomes a recognized tactic for attempting to claim freedom of movement. The name is taken up again and again. At Idomeni, along the Greek-Macedonian border thousands attempt to cross into Macedonia on March 14, 2016. Geographically, this is a very different march from the one that started at Keleti Station: from Budapest to the Austrian border along the M1 highway is a journey of 175 kilometers, at least two days walk. The marchers from Idomeni are already at the border; their route takes them along it for several kilometers to a place with no fences as of yet, where they hope to be able to cross. “With courage fueled by desperation,” and likely with the knowledge of what happened in Hungary the year before, people start walking (Anastasiadou et al. 2018: 61). This march, however, ends in more disappointment. Although the group does make it over the border into Macedonia, Macedonian border officials quickly detain them. Notably, these officials separate out the journalists who have joined the marchers before pushing the migrants back into Greece. The act of pushing back cannot be made visible through media presence.

In the second half of 2016, migrants in Serbia organize multiple similar, though somewhat smaller, ‘Marches of Hope.’ In the last week of July, a group of about 300 left

Belgrade and march north towards the Hungarian border. Their march is also a hunger strike. For seven days, from the time they leave central Belgrade until after they arrive at the town of Subotica on the Hungarian border, the men refuse food, tents, and medical aid from volunteers. They demand increases in the number of asylum seekers allowed into Hungary each day (then set at 15, now down to 1). Their numbers shrink over time, ending at about 60, and their demands are never met (Freeman-Wolpert 2016). In the first week of October, a group of about 350 start out on the same journey, but turn back before reaching the border. The next month, a group of 150 head in the direction of Croatia, a journey of 125 kilometers. They are stopped at the border.

Media coverage of the Serbian Marches of Hope is thin, relative to the highly mediatized narratives of larger marches in Hungary and Idomeni. Where they are covered, however, the visuals that accompany the story fit the same mold as images from Idomeni and Keleti (see figure 21): young men holding homemade banners with messages like “PLEASE OPEN THE BORDER” and “NO MORE WAR”, zoomed-out shots that show the road they walk receding into the distance, and always the crowd—often flanked by police as they walk down highways, always crammed close together: a disobedient mob.

2. Picturing the Mob: The Construction of Unruly Migrant Multiplicities through Images

Many of the visual and rhetorical narratives about the arrival of migrants in Europe since 2015 hinge on the construction of migrants as unruly mobs, a term that “is disqualified as amorphous and non-political and that, at the same time is feared for its troubling potentialities” (Tazzioli 2017: 483). Images and stories warning against

invading hordes of non-European, non-Christian, non-white migrants circulate widely on social media, many of them sensationalizing and few of them really accurate. A survey of widely shared images and news stories about migrants conducted by the France 24 Observers news team documents 162 ‘fake news’ items, with “crimes supposedly committed by migrants (30%)” and “the idea of a migrant invasion (19%)” as two of the most common themes (Mas 2018). One particular set of images, depicting large ships overflowing with people, circulates widely on extreme right sites such as the French *Riposte Laïque*, in conservative circles in the United States, and also in more mainstream politics, including on the Facebook page of the vice president of the Italian senate (figure 22). The captions accompanying these images generally describe them as crowds of migrants leaving Libya on ships bound for Italy, part of “the conspiracy theory that migrants from Africa will replace Europeans, not just in terms of population but also in terms of culture and religion” (Mas 2018). But the photographs in question actually depict Albanian refugees en route to Italy in 1991. It is a cruel irony that just as “televised images of misery, violence, and confinement” of those asylum seekers 28 years ago informed the reactions of the Italian citizens who received them (Albahari 2015: 42), the same images continue to provoke negative sentiments towards refugees arriving in Italy and the rest of Europe today.

Do the facts really matter, when the images are so powerful? An overwhelming mass of humanity, so many that it hardly seems possible for them all to be there.

Individual figures are indistinguishable. Dark dots against a medley of bright colors mark heads, but one could never count them all. There is a desperation in the way they cling to ropes and metal, plunging through the water, the crowd on the docks throbbing outwards

towards the boat—anything to make it onto the ship before it leaves, anything for mobility. And while these particular images are false representations of current migrations to Europe, the photographs that fill more reputable news sources are not dissimilar; “the overcrowded vessel has become a visual type” in representations of migration, with the contemporary examples consisting of small boats making the crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands or being rescued (and captured) Frontex ships en route from Libya to Italy (Walters 2014: 475; see figure 23 for example). As Walters argues in his call for a focus on the vehicles and roads with which migrants appropriate mobility, the physical spaces of cars, trucks, trains, train stations, boats, and ports through which travel matter—and images of these spaces matter—because “these spaces stage scenes in which migrants appear in and out of place” (Walters 2014: 476). Pictures of overcrowded boats emphasize both the sheer number of migrants (and because they are framed by the confinements of the vehicle, they appear all the more numerous) and the actual act of migration. The viewer sees people on the move; against the ambiguous backdrop of the ocean they might be coming from anywhere, going to anywhere. That is why the falsely captioned images of overcrowded ships are effective: they suggest that the ship might be headed for your port, your city, and what will happen when all those people are freed from the confines of the ship to run loose in your home?

Photographs of the Marches of Hope—whether in Hungary, Greece, or Serbia—contain many similar visual cues. Crowds of people are shown in a place where they seem distinctly out of place: walking down the highway, a space normally reserved for people in vehicles. They are caught in the very act of migration, unlike those photographed in camps or in the Barracks of Belgrade, waiting patiently or desperately

for a chance to move forward. There are too many people for the space they fill—the crowd extends beyond the frame of the image, the police on side seem to barely contain them from swelling into the one remaining lane of vehicle traffic. This is a different type of “mob”, though, an “ungovernable motley multiplicity”, a group that refuses attempts to control their mobility (Tazzioli 2017).

3. Visibility as Threat: How and Why States React to Images of Migrant Agency

The Marches of Hope in Hungary, Idomeni, and Serbia all have the same essential structure, all look similar in pictures. Yet one was successful in achieving its goals (the opening of the Austrian and German borders) while the others failed. So what makes the difference? Of course, this dichotomy of success and failure may be too simplistic—what are the criteria for evaluation? What are the goals that each group of marchers is hoping to achieve? One report on the first of the three Marches of Hope in Serbia quotes an organizer of the protest march saying that they “just wanted to tell global leaders that securing only yourselves does not lead to security,” drawing attention to conditions for migrants in Serbia so they might be treated with more “dignity and respect” (Freeman-Wolpert 2016). One might argue that these goals are partially achieved—given the news coverage of this March, it is likely that at least some world leaders became aware of their message. It results in no material change, however, no direct response to the calls for increased dignity and respect.

Is it about size? More people undeniably lead to greater visibility. Comparing the images that accompany news stories about the Serbian Marches of Hope to the Hungarian one, it is visually evident that the ones in Serbia are much smaller; the photographs are

not as overwhelmingly full of people appropriating spaces where they should not be, not quite as visually striking. From a simple logistical standpoint it is more difficult for officials to hold off thousands of migrants marching on the border than just a few dozen. As the example of Idomeni shows, however, it can be done. The numbers in the March of Hope from Idomeni are similar to those in the March from Keleti, and they are all pushed back into Greece. Size certainly has something to do with it—smaller groups are less dramatically visible, draw less attention, are easier to control. But numbers alone do not guarantee success for an ‘ungovernable migrant multiplicity’ (to reuse Tazzioli’s phrase).

The experience of the occupation and eventual eviction of the Barracks (discussed in chapter 2) offers an interesting comparison here. The people living in the Barracks are a different type of migrant multiplicity. They are less insistently present in public space, occupying a series of warehouses that no one was using hidden away behind the train station; while they do go out into the city, it is alone or in small groups, not all thousand of them moving at once. But they are similarly ungovernable, actively refusing attempts by the state to contain and immobilize them through their choice to live outside of the official reception centers, many without registering for asylum, in an autonomously organized space that facilitates their freedom of mobility through proximity to resources and means of transportation. Much like the Keleti March of Hope, the Barracks are widely covered in international media, accompanied by striking and dramatic images: a mob walking down the highway, men standing outside in thin sweatshirts surrounded by piles of snow. So why does the spreading news of the March of Hope lead to an acquiescence to the migrants’ appropriation of mobility while the news of the Barracks and other Marches of Hope lead crackdowns?

In both cases, the high visibility of the migrants in question poses a threat to the states whose border regimes they refuse, and images of them highlight those acts of refusal by illustrating their occupation of spaces not intended for them (the highway, the warehouses, the parks) and the government's failure to control them (their material suffering, the protest signs they hold, the police who hover at the fringes of the mob in photographs from the Marches of Hope). In Serbia, the stakes involve acceptance into the EU, which requires officials to broadcast both that they are capable of controlling migration within their borders and that they contribute to the narrative of a humanitarian, civilized Europe—the seemingly contradictory and actually interwoven goals of humanitarianism and securitarianism. Photographs of cold, injured, malnourished migrants living in a dilapidated warehouse and outside government control threaten both of those narratives. For Germany, the bastion of Europe, the need to preserve the image of humanitarianism is a strong motivator; as I described earlier, part of the conversation between high-level German officials as the March of Hope approached their borders had to do with the political impact images of German police beating back migrants at the border might have. The other Marches of Hope similarly threaten the images states involved have built up of themselves. Macedonia, like Serbia, is in the process of applying for EU membership. The smaller Marches in Serbia—in particular those accompanied by hunger strikes—also threaten to disrupt Serbian narratives about the country's ability to control migration flows and protect human dignity.

There are, of course, a great many factors at play in how each country I discuss chooses to address each of the acts of protests I have described. Momentarily keeping the focus on the comparison between the Barracks and the Hungarian March of Hope for

simplicity's sake, I argue that when threatened by moments of high visibility of migrants that threaten the country's image, each of these countries reacts with the course of action that most efficiently and effectively dissipates that high visibility. In the case of the Barracks, rather than allowing the squatters to remain and keep drawing journalists with their cameras (and volunteers who saw the journalists' photos and more journalists who want to tell the story of the volunteers, and so on, all through a summer that would bring miserable conditions of a different sort and another fall and another brutal winter), the state opts to evict them from their centralized location and relocate them to camps in remote locations where the state has more control over who sees them. Germany and Austria, faced with a rapidly approaching migrant mob, opt to open their borders and allow the thousands to spread out across their territory, rather than hold the borders closed and risk the formation of a camp at the border that would remain for months or ugly scenes of confrontation that, if captured on camera, could provoke outrage from their own citizens and those of other Western countries. Notably, Germany does not wait long before taking steps to re-close the border: increasing controls on the Austrian border just two weeks later, expanding the list of 'safe countries of origin' to which asylum seekers can be deported in October, suspending the right to family reunification for some asylum seekers in November. Once the highly visible threat is taken care of, bordering practices can resume as normal.

The Serbian Marches of Hope do not achieve their goals because their visibility does not pose enough of a threat to the state. For one thing, they are much smaller. News and images of them do not spread as much or as far as news and images of the Barracks and the Keleti March of Hope do; the only major Western news organization to report on

all three of the Serbian Marches of Hope is Reuters. Much of the coverage that is available comes from smaller news sources—local or specialized in their coverage of migration—and blogs or social media posts. Lower visibility on a global stage means less of a threat to Serbia's image. Furthermore, in each instance, police and border officials' relatively minimal interventions are enough to defuse the situation before the visibility of the protest increased. The July protest, which begins with three hundred hunger strikers and marchers, dwindles to fewer than one hundred by the time they reach the northern border; after a week, the migrants give up their protest on their own. The October March of Hope from Belgrade turns back before reaching the Hungarian border. The November March, beginning with an even smaller number than the first two, similarly dwindles of its own accord.

When is visibility threatening, and when is it empowering? When does remaining invisible enable migrants to appropriate mobility, and when do states frustrate migrants' efforts at mobility by making them invisible? There are no easy answers here. So much depends on context, on the ever-shifting matrix of migrants' desires; states' agendas; internal, local, and global politics; the images states wish to present of themselves. For Hungary, a country that has recently seen national politics shift to the right, towards nationalist, populist, conservative ideologies, images of national police violently pushing back migrants may be less threatening than they are for Germany.

Conclusion

Èzat and I talk fairly often, every other week or so. He keeps me updated on his life in France, his frustrated and frustrating attempts to gain asylum, the sub-par teaching at the school where he is learning French. I tell him about my research, my school work, my job search, and help him practice his French. This is always a bit funny to me: a young woman from the United States and a young man from Afghanistan texting each other in French, neither a first nor a second language for either of us.

On a late April afternoon, I tell him about my upcoming graduation and he asks what my degree will be in. Art history and anthropology, I tell him—global studies always takes too much explanation. He laughs (“lol”) and says he has no idea what anthropology is. “I didn’t either until I started at university,” I text, and give my best brief explanation of the discipline. This is even funnier to him—it even merits an emoji. “A bit strange you started to study something you did not know about before ;P,” he sends, “usually people have a plan.”

He’s right, of course, but not just about my major. It is a bit strange that I committed to writing a thesis about the Balkan Route about two hours after I heard the phrase ‘Balkan Route’ for the first time, a bit strange that I ended up in Serbia, a bit strange that my proposed project about artmaking as a social practice used to construct home for people in transit turned into a project about how visibility and invisibility alternately (and sometimes simultaneously) frustrate and enable migrants’ desires for mobility, as demonstrated through images and representations of migrants in various acts of refusing the border. Usually people have a plan, and I did, and then like any good research plan it went out the window once I figured out the right questions to ask.

Questions like “Why did officials at the Adaševci camp get so upset about my camera?” and “Why are so many of the photos on Miksalište’s Facebook page of children, when I know that most of the migrants they serve are single adult men?” and “Why do Abdul Saboor’s photos of the Barracks paint such a different picture of life there than the pictures in the New York Times do?” and “How can everyone I talk to be so sure that the Barracks were evicted *because* there were pictures of them in the New York Times?”

I don’t have concrete answers to those four questions, let alone all the others I have asked in the course of my research. But I have started to answer the larger question they all hint at: what power do images have? In the context of Balkan Route migration, the power of images is tied up in the politics of visibility. Of course, as I’ve discussed, (in)visibility is a murky and complex thing. Maintaining invisibility allows individual migrants to move across borders, but it also prevents them from claiming rights. When they are invisible, clandestine migrants cannot work or live legally, lack access to social services like healthcare, and live in a precarious position: if discovered, they can be deported. Invisibility empowers them to migrate, but it also disempowers them in important ways. But visibility is often used as a tool to deny migrants freedom of movement; for example, images of individual migrants taken by border officials or posted on social media can be used to justify their deportation under the Dublin Agreement. I have brought to light some of the many ways in which visibility is a power struggle between people on the move and those who seek to deny them mobility. States work to make migrants more visible through practices ranging from incentivized registration (as occurred during the formalized corridor) to high-tech surveillance cameras. But migrants and solidarity workers watch the state in turn; by releasing images

and videos of the impacts of violent border practices, they make these practices visible and put border officials on the defensive—examples of this type of visibility include the video of the fumigation of the Barracks, or the photos Info Park posted in the harsh winter of 2016 of frostbitten fingers and toes.

At times, the high visibility of large groups of migrants offers a large enough threat to a given state's reputation that they are able to get what they want; at other times, states find ways to reduce the visibility of those groups without empowering them. Images are the evidence and the impetus of all these shifting visibility power plays. Images on newspaper front pages and in Facebook timelines draw the gaze of millions of people towards violent border practices or desperate conditions—but many of these images are victimizing and take agency away from migrants. Images shared privately provide information that empowers the recipient—when Èzat talks about sharing photos for people like him back in Afghanistan so they will know what to expect if they come, he is talking about giving them a degree of power through knowledge that he did not have when he made the decision to leave home and set out on the road to Europe. Because of image-sharing in the mobile commons, those who come after know what (parts of) the Route look like, what conditions may be in different places along it, what successful protest might look like. Because of the public proliferation of images from key moments of high visibility on the Route, the world knows what (parts of) Route look like, and that knowledge can cause change—whether it's as small as convincing a single solidarity activist to go share their skills and resources in a place like the Barracks or as large as convincing Germany to open its borders to migrants.

Power is a multi-faceted thing: to give power somewhere, you generally have to take it from somewhere else. So invisibility has power to enable migration, but it takes away the power to lay claim to rights or publicly object to abuses. Taking invisibility away—forcing visibility—takes power over freedom of movement away from migrants and gives it to states. It gets messy, because there are no absolutes here: nothing is ever perfectly invisible or perfectly visible, no one entity ever has all the power. To gain a better understanding of the Balkan Route, of migration, of the struggle for freedom of mobility that will only become more relevant as global migration continues to increase, we have to be willing to puzzle through that mess. And that starts with simple questions, the first questions you learn to ask in any introductory art history class: what do you see? who made it? who did they make it for? It is with questions like this that we can start to make sense of the power of images, thinking about what they make visible, what they allow to remain invisible, who is creating narratives through the production of certain images, and who they're creating those narratives for. Once we make sense of these things, it becomes to disrupt the power relations that images create, to destabilize the narratives they illustrate, to make visible the things they work to hide.

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Images

Figure 1:



Nilüfer Demir, 2015. Photograph of Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi.

Figure 2:



Abdul Saboor, 2016. Photo from the Barracks.

Figure 3:



Associated Press, 2015. Image accompanying coverage of the 'March of Hope' from Keleti Station in Hungary.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2015/sep/05/hundreds-migrants-walk-from-budapest-austrian-border>

Figure 4:



Kari, 2017. Photo taken during an attempt to clandestinely cross the border from Serbia into Croatia.

Figure 5:



Author's photo, 2018. Graffiti in the migrant squat near Šid.

Figure 6:



Oxfam, BCHR, and MYLA; photo by Miodrag Ćakić, 2017. Cover of a report on the Game and migrant pushbacks.

Figure 7:

SERBIA

GAMES OF VIOLENCE

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE REPEATEDLY
ABUSED BY EU MEMBER STATE BORDER AUTHORITIES



MSF; photo by Marko Drobnjakovic, 2017. Cover of a report on the Game and border violence.

Figure 8:



No Name Kitchen, 6 March 2018. Photo accompanying Facebook post; full caption below:

Todos tenemos una historia... por eso, desde la NNK nos hemos propuesto visibilizar a los refugiados que permanecen bloqueados en Šid, a las puertas de una Europa que los rechaza. Sin caras y sin nombres, pero con duras historias a sus espaldas. No son un número, no son un porcentaje... son seres humanos a los que la vida les ha golpeado duramente, pero no pierden la esperanza de encontrar un futuro mejor, a pesar de todo.

Hoy les presentamos a este profesor que tuvo que abandonar Afganistán por una guerra y por amenazas de los talibanes. Desde hace dos años trata de entrar en Europa para pedir asilo en Francia. Desafortunadamente, aún sigue estancado en Serbia.

All of us have a background... that's why, from the NNK, we want to make all the refugees, who are blocked in Šid, visible. All the ones that the European Union reject. Without faces or names, only their stories. They are not a number, not a percentage... they are just human beings hit hard by life, but they don't lose the hope of a better future, nevertheless.

Today we introduce you to an Afghan teacher, who had to flee from Afghanistan because of the war and the threats from Taliban people. He's been away for two years trying to reach France and get asylum there. Unfortunately he's still stuck in Serbia.

Figure 9:



Abdul Saboor, 2016. Photo from the Barracks.

Figure 10:



Abdul Saboor, 2016. Photo from the Barracks

Figure 11:



Abdul Saboor, 2016. Photo from the Barracks.

Figure 12:



Robert Altermoser, 2017. Photo from the Barracks.
<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1841400485/the-barracks-of-belgrade>

Figure 13:



Kari, 2016. Photo of young man in the Barracks.

Figure 14:

Life in a warehouse: Serbia's stranded migrants and refugees

Derelict buildings in Belgrade house 1,000 of those forced back from western border

□ Mon, Apr 10, 2017, 01:00



Daniel McLaughlin in Belgrade



Men shaving in a temporary shelter behind the main train station in Belgrade. Photograph: Szymon Barylski

Irish Times, photo by Szymon Barylski. Cover photo for news coverage of the Barracks. 10 April 2017. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/life-in-a-warehouse-serbia-s-stranded-migrants-and-refugees-1.3040900>

Figure 15:

Thousands of refugee children sleeping rough in sub-zero Serbia, says UN

Refugee facilities in Belgrade, where it is -15C, have been described as 'worse than the jungle in Calais' by aid workers



The Guardian, photo by *Andrej Isakovic*. Cover photo for news coverage of the Barracks. 23 January 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/weather/2017/jan/24/thousands-refugee-children-sleep-rough-sub-zero-serbia-un>

Figure 16:



Author's photo, 2018. Signs in Bristol Park, Belgrade.

Figure 17:



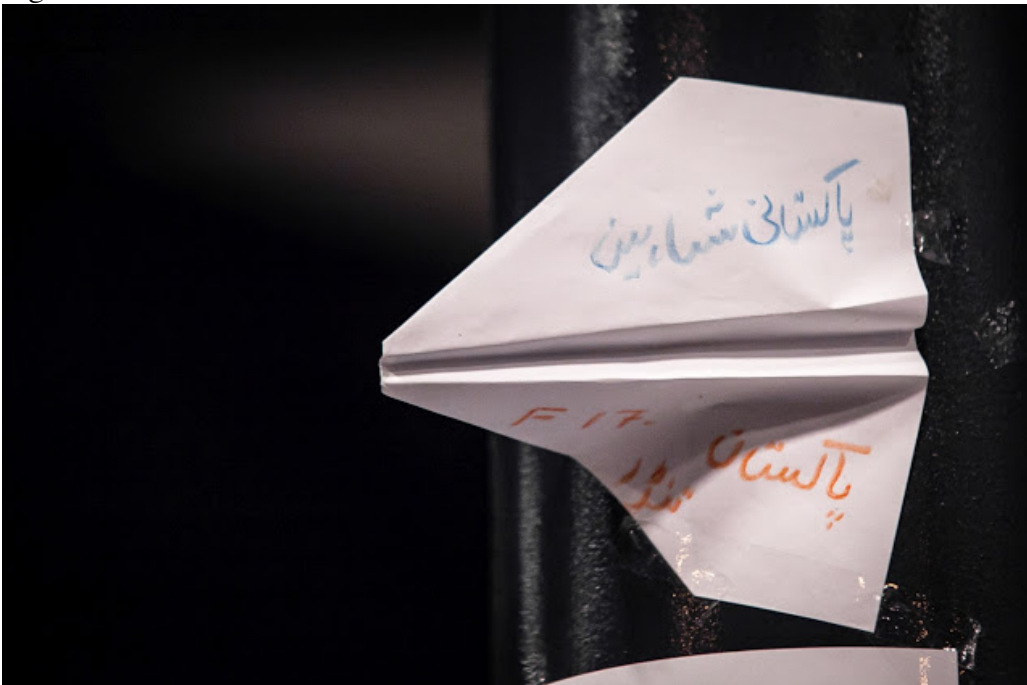
The New York Times, 24 January 2017. Still from video depicting conditions in the Barracks. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/01/24/world/europe/belgrade-serbia-migrant-camp.html>

Figure 18:



The New York Times, 24 January 2017. Still from video depicting conditions in the Barracks. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/01/24/world/europe/belgrade-serbia-migrant-camp.html>

Figure 19:



Zsófia Börcsök, *Photography and Activism: Children's Drawings from Keleti Station*. http://freedoc-gabriellacsoszo.blogspot.fr/2015/09/refugees-childrens-drawings-at-keleti_10.html?q=keleti

Figure 20:

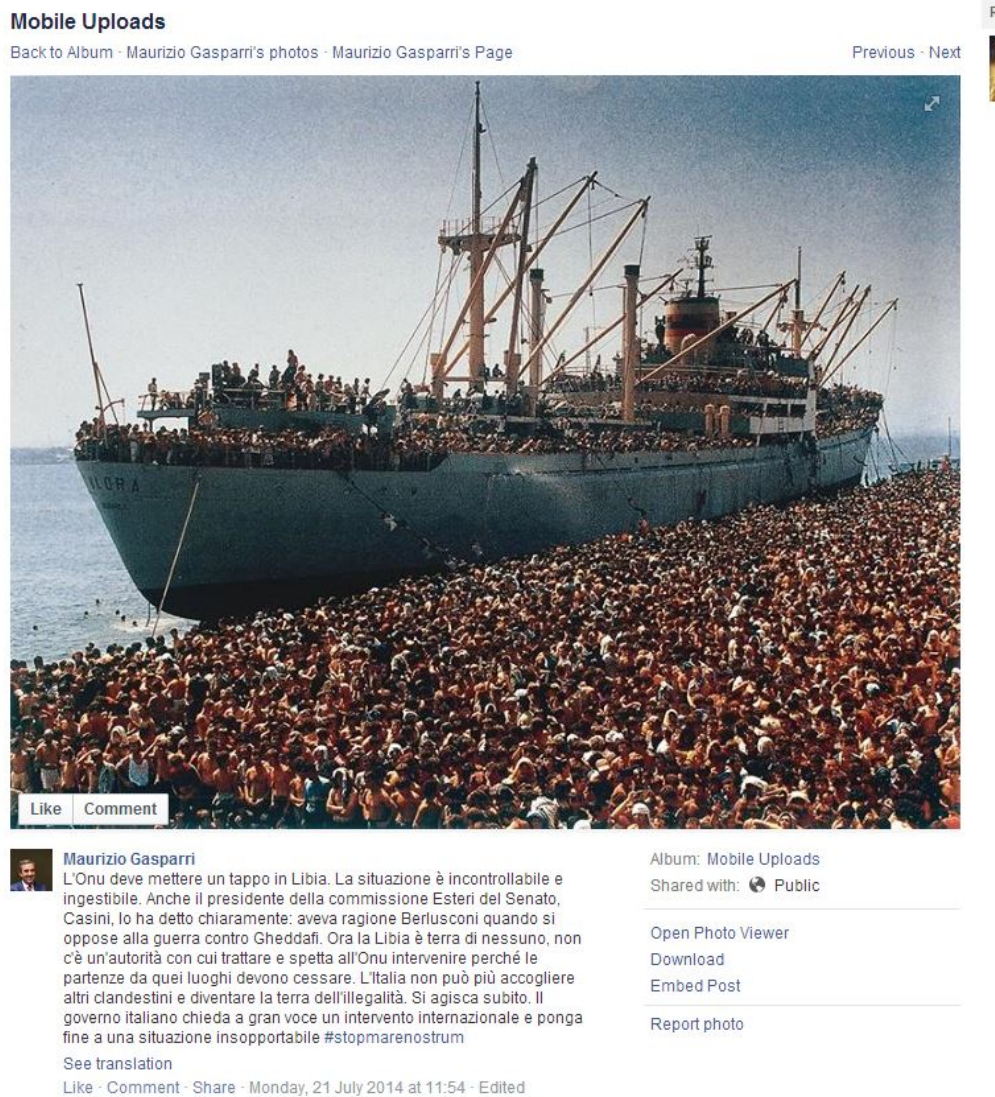


Moving Europe. March of Hope from Idomeni, March 2016.

Figure 21:

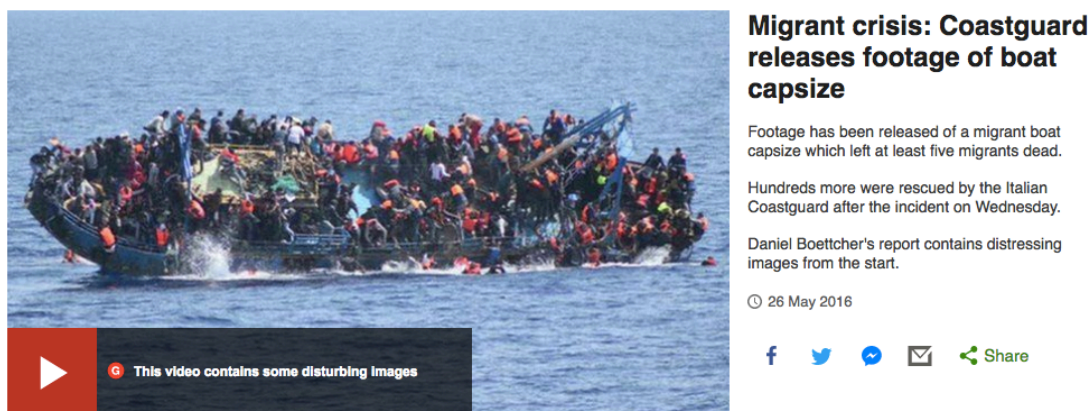
Reuters, photo by Marko Djurica. Photo from the November 2016 March of Hope, Belgrade. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-iran-security/israel-will-hit-tehran-if-iran-attacks-tel-aviv-minister-idUSKBN1HX15P>

Figure 22:



Facebook post from Italian politician Maurizio Gasparri, incorrectly describing a photograph of Albanian refugees en route to Italy in 1991 as a photo of Libyan refugees en route to Italy in 2014.

Figure 23:



BBC. Cover still from video of capsizing migrant boat, 26 May 2016.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-36386559/migrant-crisis-coastguard-releases-footage-of-boat-capsize>