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ABSTRACT
This article draws on ethnographic fieldwork material from Greece to investigate the types of subjectivities migrants develop when they are confronted by the material border violence. It utilizes an aleatory materialist theory of subjectivity and mobilizes four analytical categories to illustrate the diversity of migrant subjectivities: abject, religious, nomadic, and dissident. The article further demonstrates that migrants might move from one category to another or belong to multiple categories at the same time. This article contributes to the critical literature that challenges the mainstream reductive representation of migrant subjectivity (either as victims or criminals) by developing an aleatory materialist framework and emphasizing the intersections and shifts among migrant subjectivity categories.

Introduction

Public debates on migrant[1] subjectivities remain hindered by short-sighted and polarized arguments. Those who sympathize with migrants present them as victims in need of humanitarian compassion, while those who are against migrants portray them as criminals violating immigration laws, as potential terrorists or as economic migrants abusing the asylum system (e.g. Crawley and Skleparis 2017; Kyriakides 2017). These categories act as what Foucault (2002) would term "discursive formations" in the sense that they define the boundaries of what could be said and done about migrants, therefore excluding other ways of saying and doing. The ongoing efforts to exclude migrants through militarized borders and deportation (e.g. Jones and Johnson 2016; Topak and Vives 2018) or include them through humanitarian practices without granting them equal rights (e.g. Ticktin 2011; Cuttitta 2017) are both consequences of the binary ways in which the discursive formations operate. However, as Foucault maintains, there is heterogeneity, dispersion

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and interplay of differences behind the manifest content of discursive formations (2002, 41).

This paper utilizes an aleatory materialist framework to move beyond the reductionist portrayals of migrants and to demonstrate the diversity of subjectivities migrants develop in response to the material violence of the border. Taking its cue from late Althusser's writings on aleatory materialism, this framework allows us to understand migrant subjectivity in relation to the material structure without being deterministic. That is, it allows us to emphasize that when faced with the material structure/violence subjects contingently develop subjectivities rather than following pre-determined paths. It also allows us to appreciate the intersections and shifts among subjectivity categories rather than treating them as fixed and isolated categories. Following this aleatory materialist framework, this paper draws on fieldwork data and mobilizes four different categories: abject, religious, nomadic, and dissident. It demonstrates that these four categories are not mutually exclusive and that a migrant could move from one category to another, or belong to multiple categories at the same time.

This paper also builds on the critical border and migration studies literature when mobilizing these four migrant subjectivity categories. Similar migrant subjectivity categories have been discussed in this literature and critical scholarship has already moved beyond the reductive view of migrant subjectivity in public discourse. However, there has been less emphasis on using these categories together, putting them in dialogue with another, and showing how migrants can shift between them. Another contribution of this paper is to develop an aleatory materialist theoretical framework to emphasize these complexities. While Marxist-materialist categories have long been used by critical scholars to analyze the material basis of migrant subjectivity, the rich insights of aleatory materialism for explaining the diversity of migrant subjectivities remains to be explored.

The material context that informs this article is the period preceding the 2015 Migrant Movement in Greece. I conducted fieldwork in 2012. The fieldwork data includes 58 interviews with migrants who irregularly crossed from Turkey to Greece and were living in Greece at that time (predominantly in Athens) and fieldwork observations in migrant community settings, including parks, coffee shops, mosques, migrant houses, and social centres. I also use data from interviews with representatives and fieldworkers from NGOs and secondary sources such as NGO reports. Despite having their origins in different countries of Global South, all interviewed migrants shared common characteristics. They all had precarious legal and economic status, were visible minorities and experienced some form of violence during border crossing, in detention centres and/or in urban contexts at the hands of border patrol, detention and/or urban police and/or racist groups. Furthermore, they were all men and, in a majority of cases, single young

men (aged between 16 and 26). Although attempts were made to reach women those attempts were unsuccessful.[2]

Similar to other researchers who conduct research in restricted settings with marginalized groups (Fili, Jahnsen, and Powell 2018; Maillet, Mountz, and Williams 2017), I encountered a number of challenges during the fieldwork, which included accessing the field, finding safe spaces for interviews, and suspicion and apathy towards researchers. In order to overcome these challenges, I initially built connections with gatekeepers, including pro-migrant rights NGO workers and political activists, and representatives from migrant community organizations. These connections allowed me to have a presence, or "being there and being seen in the community" (Sixsmith, Boneham, and Goldring 2003, 586), thus creating possibilities for in-depth interviews, follow-up interviews and participant observation in safe environments. In order to lessen the objectifying nature of the interview process (see Maillet, Mountz, and Williams 2017, 934) and to fully protect the confidentiality of the participants, I avoided asking and recording specific identity-related or other sensitive questions (e.g. name, city of origin, religious sect, socio-economic or family background, specific details about smuggling routes and smugglers) and focused more on understanding migrants' subjective experiences of border crossing and violence and how they try to cope with them. I also encouraged participants to ask questions to me (cf. Dempsey 2018), which many did (about my personal background, and my thoughts about migration, borders and violence). I constructed the main analytical dimensions of four subjectivity categories during fieldwork and developed them and the aleatory materialist framework later through engaging with related literature.

The absence of female participants and the data about the specific backgrounds of migrants make the fieldwork an example of "imperfect engagement" (Hyndman 2001, 265). Indeed, this paper lays no claim to representativeness of the data or providing the 'truth' about migrant subjectivities. It rather uses the fieldwork data to emphasize the diverse, intersecting and contingent nature of migrant subjectivity and to utilize an aleatory materialist framework. The remainder of this article is organized as follows. First, it develops an aleatory materialist perspective to understand migrant subjectivity. Second, it lays out the dimensions of border violence which provide the material context for migrant subjectivities to arise. Third, the article discusses how migrants respond to border violence and mobilizes four different yet intersecting types of migrant subjectivities: abject, religious, nomadic, dissident. The final section concludes by summarizing the main contributions of the article and emphasizing the need for further research.

Aleatory Materialism and Migrant Subjectivity

Materialist tradition has long emphasized the need to conceptualize human subjectivity in a dialectical relation with material structure. Marx wrote that due

to material exploitation and violence human beings are "suffering, conditioned and limited being[s]" (Marx 1992, 389). Subjectivity, therefore, does not have an essence; it is rather something constructed by material processes. Yet, Marx also emphasized the agency and political subjectivity of human beings, noting that human beings possess "vital powers" to resist and even transform the material context (Marx 1992, 389). In their different ways, scholars have used Marxism inspired materialist frameworks to understand the subjectivity of migrant workers in relation or in response to the material dispossession and exploitation they experience (e.g. Anderson 2009; Gardezi 1995; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Montero Bressán and Arcos 2017). While these frameworks have been instrumental in highlighting the material basis of migrant subjectivity, they have placed less emphasis on the contingent and intersecting modes of migrant subjectivities, many of which emergence in response to the diverse elements of the material context. Althusser's writings on materialist constitution of subjectivity, particularly when read from the perspective of his later work on aleatory materialism, could help develop a framework to better emphasize these complexities.

Following Marx's thesis of the primacy of being over consciousness, Althusser emphasizes that subjectivity is an effect of the material context. He defines the material context as a decentred totality (or decentred structure) that is composed of diverse economic, legal, cultural ideological as well as repressive and violent elements and practices (Althusser 2005, 2008). In his early and mid-career writings Althusser prioritizes the determining powers of the economic element, which he famously formulated as the "determination of the last instance by the (economic) mode of production" (Althusser 2005, 111). In his later writings on aleatory materialism, however, he refrains from establishing any hierarchy among the diverse elements of the material context, noting that "anything can be determinant 'in the last instance'" (Althusser 2006, 263). Althusser's aleatory materialist turn provides new insights to understand subjectivity, not simply as an effect of the material structure, but also as the outcome of a process through which subjects are formed in diverse ways in dialogue with the complexity of the material structure. Indeed, Althusser points out that there are "multiple interpellations in which the subject is caught up" (Althusser 2006, 241). Therefore, subjects could demonstrate the characteristics of multiple forms of subjectivities at the same time because they might be interpellated by several mechanisms at the same time. Furthermore, subjects could also have some options in adopting subjectivities, even though these options are still framed by the material context. In other words, while subjects they do not freely choose their subjectivities, they have "at [their] disposal a 'play of manoeuvre' [*jeu de manoeuvre*] between several positions, between which [they] can 'develop', or even, if you insist, 'choose'" (Althusser 2006, 241).

Even though Althusser's writings are in sketch form (e.g. Montag 2013), they could still be used to highlight the complex relationship between border

violence and migrant subjectivities. Migrants do not freely choose their subjectivities; rather the material processes of border violence (e.g. border crossing, racist attacks) frame the development of their subjectivities. Yet, despite being framed by border violence in the last instance, migrant subjectivities do not follow singular or fixed frameworks. Migrants experience border violence in different ways, have different coping and responding mechanisms, and therefore develop subjectivities in diverse ways. Some may (mis)recognize themselves as abjects and act accordingly, some could turn to religion to cope with border violence, some could perceive border violence as a challenging yet rewarding activity, and some could engage in a political activity to contest the systems of border violence. These subjective responses to border violence does not have to be mutually exclusive. A migrant may be 'caught up' by multiple subjectivity categories at the same time or might shift from one category to another category over time. Rather than trying to find a singular truth about migrant subjectivity, the aleatory materialist perspective encourages us to search for intersecting and shifting forms of migrant subjectivities in response to border violence.

Border Violence

Before discussing the dimensions of border violence, it is important to first define what is meant by 'border', 'violence' and 'border violence'. I follow the critical border studies scholarship and define borders as mobile and ubiquitous processes whereby individuals are sorted, controlled or excluded both at and beyond the states' territorial borders (e.g. Balibar 2002; Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012) although practices and effects of borders are often concentrated at states' territorial edges (see Topak 2014). I follow Galtung's broad definition of violence which incorporates not only physical violence but also processes which prevent individuals from realizing their somatic and mental capacities (Galtung 1969, 168). Border violence, therefore, includes the entire set of processes whereby migrants' somatic and mental capacities are repressed or destroyed at and beyond the territorial border. The processes of border violence operate within the framework of contemporary 'geopolitics of migration' (Hyndman 2012) which is characterized by the increasing efforts of states to contain migrant mobility through surveillance, detention, and rendering migrants legally and economically precarious.

The violent effects of the Greek borders are crystalized at the Greece-Turkey borderzones, spaces located at the edges of the territories of these two states (Topak 2014). There are two main routes used for irregularly reaching Greece from Turkey. The first one is the Greece-Turkey land border in the Evros region. Migrants try to reach the Greek side by crossing the Evros River, which separates the two countries. The second route is via the Aegean Sea. Migrants board inflatable boats and small ships on Turkish coasts and

attempt to make for the Greek Islands a few kilometers away, such as Lesbos, Chios, or Samos.

Both routes have been used by transit migrants from Middle East, Asia and Africa since 1980s and in particular early 2000s (İçduygu 2000; Baird 2016; Triandafyllidou and Maroukis 2012). The level of surveillance and violence has gradually increased as these routes became the main points of irregular entry into the European Union after 2009 (Triandafyllidou and Dimitriadi 2013, Topak 2014).

The Greek authorities and the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, established new surveillance systems, including surveillance coordination centres, the EUROSUR (the European Border Surveillance system), radar, satellite and aerial surveillance systems, and a fence, which was constructed on the 12.5km long land section of the Evros border.

Despite their extensive capabilities, these surveillance systems failed to stop migration. They rather displaced the migration route to riskier areas of the borderzones, where some migrants lost their lives or relatives and others were subjected to violent push-back, interception, and apprehension operations of the border police authorities (ProAsyl 2013, Topak 2014). Those who survived often suffered physical or mental injuries, or both. Common physical disorders included illnesses caused by cold and musculoskeletal problems. Migrants also showed symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder and suffered from stress-related psychosomatic problems such as sleep difficulties, stomachache, and lack of appetite (MSF [Médecins Sans Frontières] 2010, 2014).

The detention process was further worsening the health situation of migrants (MSF [Médecins Sans Frontières] 2014). Following their apprehension, migrants were transferred to detention centers where they stayed in deplorable conditions without access to health support (ProAsyl 2013). Some also experienced physical and verbal abuse by police authorities (MSF [Médecins Sans Frontières] 2010, 14; ProAsyl 2012A, 75–80). Following the identification procedures, the Greek authorities were often releasing migrants who cannot be deported back to countries of origin or transit due to a lack of third party cooperation (such as nationals of Afghanistan and Syria). These migrants were given a 30-days leave paper, which instructed them to leave the country voluntarily in one month.[3]

Upon being released from detention centres, migrants ended up in big Greek cities, primarily in Athens, hoping to reach other European countries from there. Most, however, were stuck inside Greece due to border controls at the country's exit points to Europe: airports, Greece-Italy sea routes, and the Greece-Macedonia land route (e.g. Fotiadis 2013; ProAsyl 2012B). Most were staying after their 30-days-permits expire, living as 'illegalized migrants' (Schuster 2011) and continuing to experience border violence in urban contexts. Some were trying to apply for asylum, lining up in front of the Aliens Police Directorate overnight. But most were not able to register their claims because the Greek authorities were accepting

only 20 asylum applications per week. Among the interviewed migrants, only a few possessed the asylum application card, also known as "the pink card"; the remaining majority did not have any legal documents.[4]

Being stranded in Athens, migrants were trying to find work and earn money so that they can pay for the smugglers who can take them out of Greece. However, the economic downturn in the post-2009 period severely constrained the already limited employment options for migrants. Those who were able to find work were doing so in precarious and low-paid jobs in construction, agriculture, tourism, and care services. Some were selling cheap imitation products, tissues, or flowers, or clean car windscreens in urban centers. A few of them, out of desperation, were getting involved in the drug trade, petty crime, or sex work (Maroukis 2012, 2). The majority of migrants, including most interviewees of this study, were relying on the food provided by charities and local churches and the minimal amount of money they were receiving from their families (e.g., around 50–60 euros per month) and/or from their friends.

Many migrants were living in parks, squares, and streets when they first arrive in Athens and were later finding a spot in guesthouses (such as the 'Afghan Hotel', a well-known location for Afghan migrants) or in shared flats using social connections in their ethnic community. These units were often extremely overcrowded, hosting 5–7 people in one room. Some migrants were sleeping in shifts and share their mattresses in order to reduce costs or to help their friends. Overall, there was substandard hygiene, inadequate heating, and a lack of hot water and proper ventilation in these places. There were also migrants for whom their stay in parks, squares, and streets became permanent because they were not able to afford any form of accommodation. Living outside, however, posed many risks. Some migrants became targets of a police operation, a racist attack, the drug and sex-work mafia, or individual abusers. Homeless unaccompanied minors were particularly vulnerable. Occasionally, they received some help from philanthropic organizations, such as Child Smile, but there was no systematic assistance.

Racist violence, both physical and verbal, was an everyday reality for these visible minority migrants. While migrants have been targets of racist attacks since the 2000s, following the 2009 economic crisis, there has been an escalation of racist violence perpetrated by far-right groups and the police in Greece (Dalakoglou 2012; HRW [Human Rights Watch] 2012). The rising popularity of Golden Dawn, a neo-Nazi party whose emblem resembles the Nazi swastika, played a major role in the rise of racist violence (Lazaridis and Skleparis 2016). In 2010 regional elections, the party got 5.3% of the vote in the municipality of Athens. Its popularity grew further in the 2012 national elections and 2014 European Parliament elections, when it respectively received 6.92% and 9.40% of the votes.

Despite a plethora of evidence linking Golden Dawn members and supporters to racist attacks since 2011, the Greek government did little to

investigate the allegations and instead presented the attacks either as "isolated incidents" or "regrettable, yet understandable" reactions of ordinary Greek citizens to migration (Karamanidou 2016, 2002).[5] Encouraged by the lack of government scrutiny, racist violence against migrants surged. According to a survey of 419 randomly-sampled migrants, more than 60% of migrants stated that they experienced some form of racist violence, and more than 50% stated that they limit their activities due to fear of being attacked (MDM [Médecins Du Monde] and GCR [Greek Refugee Council] 2014: 11). Migrants typically did not file official complaints about racist attacks because of their precarious legal situation. They also perceived Greek police and Golden Dawn as on the same side against them and did not believe that the police would effectively investigate the actions of the members or supporters of Golden Dawn.

Police carding practices constituted another sphere where racial violence against migrants was inflicted. Identity checks based on racial profiling were an everyday reality for migrants in Greece. In an interview, one migrant stated: "Almost every day they check my identity. Any time they see you, they just call you, because you are black. They stop you and ask you what are you up to. They ask you to bring your passport and your ID card" (Interview, 2012). Because this particular migrant had an asylum application card, the police would normally let him go after checking his identity documents. However, with the launch of the police operation "Xenios Zeus" in August 2012, the Greek police began to detain even those migrants with asylum application cards and those who were practically non-deportable (such as nationals of Afghanistan and Syria). The detention centers where they were sent lacked basic standards and further contributed to migrants' suffering (MSF [Médecins Sans Frontières] 2014). The rationale behind these carding and detention practices was to discourage migrants from staying in Greece so that they would 'voluntarily' return, or self-deport back to their home countries and others would be deterred from arriving to Greece (see also Cheliotis 2013, 735–736; Dimitriadi 2017, 67).

The above summarized processes of border violence constitute the material framework upon which migrant subjectivities emerge. Migrants develop subjectivities based on their differential experiences with border violence and individual coping mechanisms. Below, I mobilize four different yet intersecting modes of migrant subjectivities, each developed in response to border violence.

Migrant Subjectivities

Abject Subjectivity

As a result of their encounter with mechanisms of border violence, many migrants become hopeless, desperate, and inaudible. They begin to perceive themselves less than subjects, or as abjects. Abject is defined as "wretched, hopeless, miserable, submissive, despicable, rejected, cast out" (The Free

Dictionary). It was Julie Kristeva who first theorized the abject as a socio-political category, beyond its everyday usage. According to Kristeva, abject is neither subject nor object; yet it constitutes the subject (Kristeva 1982, 1). The subject differentiates her/himself from the abject and defines the boundaries of her/his own subjectivity through this very process of differentiation. As Kristeva puts it, "Abject and abjection are … safeguards. The primers of … culture" (Kristeva 1982, 2). In Butler's words, abjects form the "constitutive outside to the domain of the subject" (Butler 1993, 3). They are those who do not "enjoy the status of the subject" and who dwell in "'unliveable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life" (Butler 1993, 3).

Kristeva's formulation of the abject rests on a psychoanalytical foundation; the libidinal separation of the child from the maternal body being the original act of abjection (Kristeva 1982). However, following Butler's intervention, the concept of the abject could be reworked from a sociological perspective (cf. Hepworth 2012) so that it could shed light on the subjectivity of those who are degraded to a lower status in a society. Building on Kristeva, for instance, Nyers points out how refugees and migrants are rendered abjects and how they stand, in contrast to citizens, as "speechless victims, invisible and apolitical" (Nyers 2003, 1074). In their work on the experiences of undocumented Latino migrants in the U.S., Gonzales and Chavez (2012) similarly deploy the concept of the abject to emphasize how the lack of legal status limits the life chances of these migrants, leaving them little room to 'negotiate' their subjectivity (cf. Latham 2010) and causes them to perceive themselves as lesser subjects of the U.S. society.

Both Nyers (2003) and Gonzales and Chavez (2012) maintain that being an abject does not necessarily preclude articulating resistance. This argument applies to migrants in Greece, as well, who resist border violence in diverse ways. These include inventing basic survival strategies (such as avoiding going to neighborhoods where there is a higher likelihood of becoming a victim of a racist attack), forming social and solidarity groups and taking part in political protests. This paper will examine these forms of resistance under the following subjectivity categories. Abjectivity should be illustrated in detail first. Confronted by the material violence of the border, many migrants in Greece end up perceiving themselves as passive and speechless beings. While they do not necessarily see themselves as 'hominis sacri' (Agamben 1998), or objects of power devoid of agency, they do not consider themselves subjects worthy of public existence either. Neither subjects nor objects, these migrants become abjects; invisible and inaudible beings.

The following story of an unaccompanied minor living a park is illustrative of this condition. Migrant-support NGOs in Athens occasionally provide some assistance to minors living in parks, who constitute the most vulnerable group of migrants. On one such occasion, a fieldworker from the GCR (Greek Council for Refugees) encounters an Afghan minor and tells him

that the he could get free legal assistance from the GCR, which may help him to obtain refugee status. However, despite the fact that the migrant in question is in desperate need of help, he never shows up at the GCR office. The GCR fieldworker becomes concerned and reaches out to the minor in the park and asks him why he didn't come. The minor responds by stating that even though he ended up on a street that is very close to the NGO building, he couldn't find the exact building. The fieldworker inquires as to why he did not ask for anyone to help him, knowing that the minor could speak basic Greek. The minor responds by noting that he avoids any form of communication with Greek people because he thinks they perceive him either as a thief or murderer, or they want to beat him (Interview, 2012). This experience of the unaccompanied minor migrant is generalizable to many other young migrants. In an interview, a psychologist from the ARSIS (Social Organization for Youth Support), who had provided psychosocial support to minor and young migrants since 2001, pointed out that these migrants are very hesitant to ask for help because they fear everyone (Interview, 2012).

While abjectivity is strongly associated with being an unaccompanied minor, regardless of their age, most migrants in Greece demonstrate a similar condition at different levels. They prefer to remain invisible and inaudible and try to minimize their public presence as a result of their experiences of racist victimization. See for instance the following migrant narratives:

> There was a basketball ground close to the park. We were 20-30 Afghan people playing football. There were also Greek children playing there. Sometimes we were using [the field]; sometimes the children [were] using [the field]. Four, five times the police came and they said, 'Go from here, it is not your place. Children should play here'. Then the police c[a]me again and beat us. Then we c[a]me back to play again. Then there were 15 Greek people. They all came with motorcycles. They [had] sticks and everything. They beat us very badly. You can still see the injuries. They were swearing and they were shouting, 'Go, never come here again'" (Interview, 2012). [6]

> In 2011, I went to Crete to work. At night, there were ten young people with motorcycles. They said: 'If I see you, I will beat you'. It is a big problem. At night, if you are a black man, if you came from Africa, you don't go out. You only go to your house to sleep (Interview, 2012).

As noted earlier, migrants try to minimize their chances of being victims of racist attacks. In this sense, they articulate a form of resistance, which could be understood as "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985) – small yet significant acts of defiance. Most assert agency and try to continue their journeys, despite the difficulties (see the nomadic subjectivity section). However, it is important to not overstate such forms of resistance. Not only are there many migrants who fail to avoid racist violence (such as the first migrant above), but also most feel hopeless, miserable, stigmatized, and constrained as

a result of adopting these survival strategies, such as the second migrant above who says that he only goes to his house to sleep at night.

Furthermore, while migrants have some room for maneuver in urban contexts, circumventing violence is difficult, and often impossible, in borderzones. Many migrants die, lose their relatives, or sustain physical or mental injuries while crossing the border. The story of a family of six illustrates the difficulties of avoiding abjecthood. The family in question lost one of their children while crossing the Evros River at night in an overcrowded boat. The father stated that their boat was capsized, and he had to save his wife and four children from drowning. While he managed to save three of his children and his wife, he failed to help his daughter, who disappeared in the river. He was deeply distressed while telling the story, blaming himself for not being able to help his daughter and adding that he cannot forget the image of his daughter disappearing in the river. His trauma was further exacerbated by the fact that he could not recover the dead body of his daughter to organize a proper burial. He stated that even though he contacted various NGOs, and various media organizations, no one seemed to help him in Greece (Interview, 2012).

This story is perhaps an extreme case of abjecthood, but it is hardly an isolated one. Many migrants suffer from psychosomatic problems as a result of their border crossing experience. Their conditions worsen inside Greece due to a lack of access to healthcare and poor material conditions. They demonstrate symptoms of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep problems, skin problems, and lack of appetite (MSF [Médecins Sans Frontières] 2010, 2014). Minors and young migrants suffer most from these symptoms. The ARSIS psychologist stated that minors wet their beds a lot (Interview, 2012). Some migrants also engage in substance abuse, which further deteriorates their mental health. As noted by a migrant:

> Some of my friends lost their minds. They became drug addicts. They fight with each other. When you meet them and say hi, they fight with you. All people get mind sick here (Interview, 2012).

Migrants who become destitute and hopeless due to lack of employment prospects could also be included under the abject subjectivity category. The subjectivity of these migrants share similarities with the subjectivity of the 'deportable migrants' who experience labor exploitation (see De Genova 2002). Both groups face harsh economic conditions and cannot imagine a future for themselves in host societies. However, migrants in Greece not only live under conditions of extreme precarity, but most also rely on the basic support of their social networks or charities, which deepens their level of abjection:

Since one year, I am jobless. Here all people are watching us [as if we are] strange. They think we are thief or we are dangerous … I had some money from my family, I spent [it]. I don't know what will happen to me … In Greece your life is destroyed, no future here (Interview, 2012).

I worked in a building construction and iron company. I also did gardening in Greece … I lost my job 2.5 years ago. It's very difficult. My friends help[ed] me [so far]. But now they also became unemployed. It's very difficult … I am like a slave here. I can't find a job here. I can't return back to Afghanistan [either] … I am very tired. I don't know what will happen in the future (Interview, 2012).

Religious Subjectivity

The role of religion in constituting migrant subjectivity has long been emphasized in the literature. Scholars demonstrated that migrants turn to religion in all stages of the migration process: planning the journey, surviving the hardships encountered during transit, as well as in adapting to the unwelcome conditions in countries of arrival (e.g. Horstmann and Jung 2015; Straut-Eppsteiner and Hagan 2016). Migrants in Greece similarly use religion[7] as a guidance and support system throughout the different stages of their migration process. Most migrants described how they make the decision to undertake such dangerous journeys with religious motifs. They stated that they trusted in God or their faith to guide and protect them. Religion continues to play a role in shaping the experiences of migrants during border crossing. Most migrants stated that they succeeded because of God's will. As noted earlier, the majority of migrants in Greece attempt to undertake another border crossing to reach Western and Northern European countries. When I inquired how they find the courage to attempt another crossing, they again responded by using religious idioms, such as saying "Inshallah (if God wills), I will make it."

Migrants also turn to religion to cope with the material conditions in Greece. Many interviewees stated that their religious beliefs gave them the power to survive in Greece, one migrant adding that, "without Islam, I would have lost my mind" (Interview, 2012). Many migrants also stated that they resisted getting involved in the drug trade and criminal activities because of their faith in Islam, which bans such activities. More so than these ritualistic and doctrinal aspects of religion, however, the social aspect of religion plays a powerful role in helping migrants to cope with various effects of border violence, from racist attacks to destitution. Migrants socialize in their communities and interact with fellow members with similar experiences and backgrounds. They receive psycho-social as well as material support (such as food or a place to stay) from their communities. The social aspect of religion helps migrants to regain their voice and presence as subjects, thus serving as a shelter that protects them from being falling deeper into abjecthood, or helps them to move out of abjecthood.

Before we continue, a note on how religion is theorized is needed here. Rather than a narrow view of religion that concentrates only on religious beliefs and idioms, I follow a Durkheimian perspective on religion, which puts a strong emphasis on the collective and integrative dimensions of religion. According to Durkheim, religion serves as the ontological ground of human interaction because the categories through which human beings understand themselves as social beings "are born in religion and from religion; they are a product of religious thought" (Durkheim 1995, 9). Durkheim defines religion as a "collective thing" (Durkheim 1995, 44) with a material existence. Through capturing individuals into its collectivity, religion enables individuals to form collective beliefs, establish social solidarity and create a collective identity. Durkheim's broad definition of religion not only involves a belief in God or a particular religion; it could also involve beliefs in collective ideals such as a country or community. Understood from this perspective, social interactions within a migrant community, even when they do not involve direct references to religious idioms or rituals, can be understood as religious practices, for they help members of the community to find meaning, form social bonds and stand in solidarity.

Religion as a 'collective thing', indeed plays a major role in shaping migrants' experiences in Greece. Migrant populations in Greece are organized around communities based on countries of origin and/or along religions or religious sects. When they first arrive in Greece, migrants often reach for their community. They receive material support in these communities, as well as finding a safe space to share their sorrows and pain. In an interview, one migrant stated: "I come to park to speak with people because in the house you are thinking a lot alone. Very bad memories … " (Interview, 2012).

There are also large social gatherings where community members get together and socialize through sharing food, listening to music, and sometimes dancing. In my fieldwork, I witnessed these events multiple times. One such gathering took place in one of the large parks in Athens, known for being a hub for homeless migrants. The Afghan community slowly gathered in the park in the evening. They brought food and drinks to share. Later, a group of Afghan boys started playing music and singing songs. The people in the audience participated, some through singing the songs and clapping hands, others through dancing. The gathering evoked feelings of melancholy and hope at the same time. One particular song, 'Afghanistan Salaam', was illustrative of how these two conflicting feelings were intersecting. My interpreter friend explained that the song is about the Afghan refugees, adding that "from this bad situation of being a refugee, they are sending hi to Kabul and hope for a day that they will return" (Fieldnotes, 2012).

These socializations protect migrants' subjectivity from disintegrating. Having been denied the right to exist in public as speaking beings in Greece, migrants reclaim their right to speech and existence in their

communities. Hence, abject subjectivity and religious subjectivity can be adopted by the same subjects at the same time in different spaces of the city. Despite the extreme amounts of violence they had to endure because of their cultural backgrounds, migrants get more attached to their cultural identity, and use it to differentiate themselves from other cultural groups. They perceive themselves as a dignified community that is a fallen victim of other communities, often described as violent and treacherous. As one migrant stated in an interview, "I am proud to be an Afghan. We are poor people, but what can we do? We are human and we are proud of ourselves. It is because of war. Who makes war? It is all the other countries. They always use their politics in my country. America, Pakistan, Iran, Russia ... " (Interview, 2012).

While migrants primarily socialize within their communities, there are also intra-community interactions. There are open kitchen events where migrant communities get together and socialize. Another socialization medium is prayers. Muslim migrants from different ethnic backgrounds share some of the makeshift mosques in Athens and gather together during Eid prayers.[8] These interactions play a role in establishing solidarity among migrant communities. For instance, diverse migrant communities could join forces to protest against the racist attacks (e.g. RT News 2013). This is not to claim that there are no conflicts among migrant communities in Greece and religion only operates as an inclusionary mechanism. Occasionally fights do break out, and some migrants abuse others. In a few interviews, migrants from one community stated that they were beaten and robbed by migrants from another community. Abuse within a community also exists. Some migrants stated that some unaccompanied minors were being abused or taken advantage of by older members of their community. Some migrants also expressed concerns about religious conversions from Islam to Christianity. They were particularly suspicious of Christian relief organizations and Churches that provide some support to migrants for having a secret agenda of religious conversion, and they described those who converted as immoral human beings.[9]

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to claim that Islam often serves as a source of unity among Muslim migrants. The unifying role of Islam can also be observed in how migrants experience Turkey, a predominantly Muslim country. In interviews, most migrants, even those who had negative experiences with Turkish police authorities, stated that they miss Turkey because the local populations were predominantly Muslim and they were able to hear the sound of *ezan* (call to prayer). A migrant noted that: "there are no Mosques here [in Greece]. I cannot hear ezan. In Turkey you hear ezan all the time. Its voice makes me relaxed and I feel better. It is very beautiful in Turkey. I wish I could have stayed" (Interview, 2012).

Nomadic Subjectivity

Nomadic subjectivity is particularly common among younger migrants. These migrants perceive themselves as courageous and bold individuals who are not afraid to face violence. They understand their migration journeys, in particular border crossing, as adventures – risky yet rewarding challenges. The difficulties of border crossing are opportunities for them to show their courage and strength. In interviews, these migrants used a theatrical language to describe how they were able to overcome the difficulties of border crossing against all odds: how they survived a sinking boat, how they hid themselves from border police and avoided being detained, how they walked for hours in adverse weather conditions without food, and so on.

These migrants' previous encounters with violence play a major role in making them fearless. They have survived wars and poverty in their home countries. Their initial escapes were difficult. Some had to flee quickly, without resources and planning. The majority had to use smugglers to help them in their exits. All had to cross multiple state borders before reaching Greece. For instance, Afghan migrants cross not only the borders between Turkey and Greece but also the Afghanistan-Pakistan, Pakistan-Iran, and Iran-Turkey borders. During their long journeys, they face the risk of being abused, kidnapped, arrested, tortured, and even killed by smugglers, bandits, militia groups, and/or border guards, in addition to facing the risk of death due to harsh geographical and climatic conditions.[10] Some migrants cross the same border multiple times. For instance, those migrants who are pushed back by Greek authorities to Turkey had to make multiple attempts before successfully arriving Greece.

As a result of these past experiences, by the time they arrive Greece, these migrants become somewhat desensitized to violence, which helps them to attenuate the negative effects of violence on their subjectivity. Despite experiencing abjectification and demonstrating elements of abject subjectivity, these migrants do not fall deeper into abjecthood; they rather accept violence as a normal part of their lives. Some of them even find value and meaning in their struggle with violence. They begin to define themselves as independent and capable human beings who possess essential survival skills to cope with violence. In interviews, these migrants stated that they are not discouraged by the racist attacks in Greece or the risks of another border crossing, adding that they endured greater hardships in the past and learned how to deal with them. For instance, one migrant stated:

> I was scared of these journeys. But as Afghans, we don't care that much, because we had fights in Afghanistan. We are not much scared of getting beaten by police, by fascist, by thieves. We passed lots of problems in Afghanistan … I still hope for better life … To achieve my goals, I will fight … I am happy now that I have a life story. I was living with my family for 22 years. It is a good experience to be alone. At this age, it is a good experience. Now I am hopeful (Interview, 2012).

There is a close connection between the religious and nomadic subjectivity. Migrants' belief in religion and God helps them to overcome the fear of death, providing them the confidence to continue their journeys despite the risks (cf. Hernandez-Carretero and Carling 2012). When I inquired of them about the risks involved in another border crossing from Greece to Italy, these migrants stated that they will survive again with the help of God, as they did in the past.

Interviewer: How do you plan to go to Italy?

Migrant: I will walk to Italy from Macedonia and Serbia. It's cheap, you just walk.

Interviewer: Isn't it dangerous?

Migrant points above, smiles and says, "Allah knows! He helped me before" (Interview, 2012).

Another effect of religion, understood broadly as a source that shapes social interactions within communities, on nomadic subjectivity is through providing a communication network for migrants. Migrants are connected to their friends who have successfully made their ways to Northern European countries and send money back to their home countries. These few successful migrants serve as role models in the community. Their stories motivate the remaining members to undertake dangerous journeys and to carry on despite the hardships. Similar to migrants taking the West Africa-Spain route (see Andersson 2014; Hernandez-Carretero and Carling 2012; Johnsson 2008), these migrants perceive migration as a means to provide support for their families and to achieve independence. The risks involved in the migration process are tests of courage for them before they fulfill their potential.

Deleuze and Guattari's theory of nomadism could shed theoretical light on the subjectivity of these migrants. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), Deleuze and Guattari describe an ontological struggle between nomadic individuals and the state: the former carves an existence outside the reach of the latter, while the latter reacts to the former through developing new strategies of control (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 351–423). Here the concept of 'the state' should be understood from a Foucauldian perspective, in that it includes various practices of power undertaken by multiple state and non-state actors to control nomadic individuals. The state operates through use of what Deleuze and Guattari term 'apparatuses of capture', which are mechanisms that contain and channel the desires of nomadic individuals (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 424–473). In response, nomadic individuals continuously invent new strategies – what Deleuze and Guattari term 'war machines' – to subvert state controls and to create a new form of existence beyond the state's reach.

Migrants included in this section could be understood as nomadic subjects: they struggle against apparatuses of capture, which includes police authorities, racist groups, surveillance technologies and exclusionary discourses, to realize

their desires. They exercise their 'right to escape' (Mezzadra 2004; see also Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008) and refuse to be contained or put on hold by border violence. However, we should be careful to not overstate or uncritically celebrate migrants' nomadism, because migrants often adopt a nomadic subjectivity temporarily to find the courage to face violence. Their eventual desire, however, is to become sedentary. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, migrants move in order to settle down, while for true nomads movement is a continuous, never-ending process: "if the nomad can be called deterritorialized par excellence, it is precisely because there is no reterritorialization afterward as with the migrant" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 381).

The temporary nature of migrants' nomadism is also reflected in the transition from nomadic subjectivity to abject subjectivity. Many migrants appropriate nomadic subjectivity to survive violence. However, when they rest in a relatively safe environment, many of them realize that their hopes are illusory and fall into abjecthood. An example here is migrants who receive money from their families in their countries of origin. They started their journeys to realize their dream of helping their families but they ended up creating more burden on their families. Migrants who were motivated by the personal development rewards of border crossing experience a similar frustration. In an interview a migrant noted: "I came here to have a good education, to continue my education. But now I lost my hope" (Interview, 2012). Another example is migrants who experience psychosomatic symptoms despite being nomadic during border crossing. In an interview, an ARSIS psychologist stated that when migrants are focused on crossing the border, their bodies work in survival mode, which helps them to avoid traumas and keep on moving. But those traumas strike back eventually. He stated:

> When we are under direct threat, our bodies do not allow for symptoms to occur … But once they find a safe ground where they have the time to rest, problems start to occur in very intense ways. Psychosomatic symptoms start to rise, such as difficulty in sleep, a lot of headaches, tiredness, skin problems, fear (Interview, 2012).

Dissident subjectivity

Migrants belonging to the dissident subjectivity category engage in political activities to register their dissent to the policies and practices of border violence, such as prolonged detention and deportation, racist attacks, or harsh labour exploitation. They take part in protests, including marches and demonstrations, hunger strikes, lip-sewing actions, and oppositional artistic expressions. Through political activity, these migrants problematize the hierarchies of the border regime and contest their assigned roles within it, and by doing so they move away from abjecthood. The very moment they engage in political acts, they turn themselves into political agents who lay claim to belonging to a political community, despite not having formal

citizenship status. They enact 'the right to have rights' (Arendt 1951) when they show that they are capable of creating a political discourse similar to citizens.

In opposition to perspectives that present migrants as passive and helpless beings, critical scholarship emphasized the political agency of migrants and demonstrated how this agency could be articulated even in the most difficult situations (see Ataç, Rygiel, and Stierl 2016; Marciniak and Tyler 2014; Nyers 2003). I follow this scholarship and turn to Rancière's theory of dissensus to theorize migrants' political subjectivity, which I term dissident subjectivity. According to Rancière, dissensus is about subverting the hierarchical logic of the social order (or 'the logic of the police') with the logic of equality. Dissensual politics, which for Rancière is the only politics proper, necessarily involves a process of equality, defined as "the open set of practices driven by the assumption of equality between any and every speaking being and by the concern to test this equality" (Rancière 1999, 30). Crucially, Rancière argues that the agents of politics are not those who occupy higher roles within the social order but rather "those who have no specific qualification for ruling, except the fact of having no qualification" (Rancière 2010, 70). This is because only the unqualified members of the community, those 'who have no part' can reveal the arbitrary hierarchies of the social order by way of political action. When these groups engage in politics, they construct a dissensus and enact 'the right to have rights'. They constitute themselves as political subjects through their public action and claim "the rights that they had not" (2010, 69).

In my fieldwork, I encountered a number of migrants who engaged in political acts such as riots in detention centres and anti-racist marches. It was my visit to the 2012 Athens Anti-Racist Festival, however, that provided broader opportunities to meet politically active migrants and understand how they engage in politics. At the festival, I met some participants and organizers of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event, which is one of the most significant migrant protests held in recent years in Greece, and in the whole of Europe, for that matter (Walsh and Tsilimpounidi 2012). In early 2011, 300 migrants started a hunger strike simultaneously in Athens and Thessaloniki. Their goal was to protest against increasing labor exploitation and racial violence targeting migrants in Greece and demand regularization of their status. After 44 days of struggle, and with the support of Greek solidarity groups (see Rozakou 2018; Skleparis 2017), the migrants' regularization demand was accepted by the government. A greater gain of the strike was however to show the Greek public that migrants are active political agents, not abjects or criminals, as often portrayed in mainstream media (Topak 2017: 8).

Using a Rancierian terminology, migrants claimed 'the right to have rights' through staging a hunger strike, and in so doing they shaped the social order despite being excluded by it. On the one hand, they showed that they do not

have the rights that Greek citizens have. By means of turning their exclusion into a public spectacle, migrants underscored and challenged the hierarchies of the social order. On the other hand, through the act of demonstration, migrants constituted themselves as political subjects, showing that they could also have public presence and speech, similar to citizens. The moment they rejected being abjects and became political agents, they achieved the rights they were denied, as evidenced by the governments' acceptance of their regularization demands.

Dissident subjectivity is the opposite of abject subjectivity. Whereas migrants belonging to the latter category internalize their exclusion from the public sphere and become inaudible and nonexistent beings, those belonging to the former category reclaim their right to exist publicly as speaking beings through political activity. These two categories are not mutually exclusive. For instance, the hunger strikers accomplished moving from abject subjectivity into dissident subjectivity via political action. The relationships between dissident subjectivity, and religious and nomadic subjectivity, however, are more complex. Migrants turn to religion and adopt nomadism to survive border violence rather than to engage in an attempt to challenge or transform it. Yet, these categories do not exclude each other either. For instance, the participants of the hunger strike event held religious beliefs, even though religion was not their main source of motivation. The hunger strike event itself also included a sacred-religious dimension for it strengthened the collective bonds among migrants and gave them the power to continue the protest despite the risk of death (see Topak 2017: 12-14). Similarly, nomadic and dissident subjectivity intersect. Migrants who protest prolonged detention or deportation do so in order to regain their right to mobility, hence to enact nomadism.

Dissident subjectivity is the only political mode of subjectivity in a Rancierian sense, thus it holds the key for "cosmopolitanism from below" (e.g. Ingram 2016), which is necessarily "transgressive" (Baban and Rygiel 2014). Yet, we should not exaggerate this mode of subjectivity. After all, its political potential eventually relies on external social factors. The changing socio-political context in the aftermath of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event is illuminating in this regard. Despite initially accepting migrants' regularization demands, the Greek government later denied legal documents to migrants, using the lack of supporting documents as an excuse (Karyotis and Skleparis 2014). Furthermore, in contrast to the atmosphere of 'hospitality' during the event, shortly after the event (see Topak 2017: 9-12), racist violence against migrants rose dramatically. Thus we could observe a general shift from dissident subjectivity back to abject subjectivity due to the changing material context.

Conclusion

This article contributed to the critical scholarship that challenges the mainstream representation of migrants either as victims or as criminals. It did so through drawing on ethnographic fieldwork data from Greece, mobilizing four different subjectivity categories (abject, religious, nomadic, and dissident) and emphasizing the intersections and shifts among these migrant subjectivity categories, all of which were developed in response to the material border violence migrants experience. While similar subjectivity categories have been used in the literature, less attention has been devoted to mobilizing these categories together, putting them in dialogue with one another and demonstrating how migrants could move from one category into another and belong to multiple categories at the same time within a material context. The article developed an aleatory materialist framework to emphasize these complexities and to provide a nuanced understanding of the relationship between material processes of border violence and migrant subjectivities.

Having its roots in Marxist materialism and inspired by Althusser's aleatory materialism, this framework maintains that human beings do not freely choose their subjectivities and that subjectivities are constrained and constructed by the complex processes and practices of the material structure. It also rejects the model of a simple determination of subjectivity by the material structure, and rather highlights a gap which allows the possibility of an aleatory formation of diverse subjectivities in dialogue with the material structure. Furthermore, by means of emphasizing the existence of a range of possibilities or options for subjects in response to material processes and practices, this perspective allows us to appreciate the ways in which subjects can have multiple subjectivities and/or shift from one subjectivity category into another category.

All migrant interviewees of this study experienced border violence (from border crossing and racist violence to economic and legal precarity) at different levels which shaped the ways in which they developed subjectivities. They filled the gap in their subjectivity in dialogue with the materiality of border violence and in diverse ways, through adopting abject, religious, nomadic and dissident subjectivities. A majority of migrants responded to border violence by becoming hopeless, desperate, and voiceless. They began to perceive themselves as less than a subject, or an abject, thus adopting abject subjectivity. Many others found some refuge in their religion and community and used them as mechanisms to protect their subjectivity from disintegrating, therefore developing religious subjectivity. There were also many others who perceived facing border violence as a challenge for personal growth. These migrants became fearless during their migration journeys, acquiring a boldness which helped them to move on despite the evident risks. This mode of subjectivity was conceptualized as nomadic

subjectivity. Finally, there were migrants who undertook political action in order to register their opposition to the policies and practices that make up the border violence. This mode of subjectivity was theorized as dissident subjectivity. The paper emphasized that these subjectivity categories should not be understood as mutually exclusive. It demonstrated how these categories could intersect, how some migrants could show characteristics of multiple subjectivity categories and how they might shift from one category to another category.

The specific material conditions of Greece (and irregular migration to Greece) in 2012 and the limitations of the fieldwork (among other limitations, the absence of a gender dimension) shaped the ways in which the migrant subjectivity categories were constructed in relation to border violence in this paper. In other contexts and with other participants, other migrant subjectivity categories might be observed. Future research should take into account how a different material context (in Greece or elsewhere) might frame the development of similar or different forms of migrant subjectivities. The main purpose of this research should not be to search for a universal form of migrant subjectivity, but rather to focus on the complex and multi-faceted ways through which migrants develop subjectivities in response to the material context.

Notes

1. In this paper, I use the term 'migrant' in order to avoid making distinctions (and therefore establishing hierarchies) among different forms of mobility. It should, however, be noted that all migrants in this study, regardless of their legal status, are subjects of forced migration due to war, conflict, and/or poverty.
2. A similar difficulty was noted by Dimitriadi (Dimitriadi 2017, 59) who was able to interview only 5 women in her fieldwork in Greece (2012–2014). Most of Dimitriadi's research participants were similarly single young men.
3. Interview with a GCR representative (2012).
4. For further analysis of the Greece's dysfunctional asylum system and the legal limbo in which migrants found themselves in Greece, see Cabot (2014). While the Greek government restructured the asylum system in 2013, as Dimitriadi (Dimitriadi 2017, 66) notes the system has remained inaccessible and inefficient for most migrants.
5. The murder an anti-fascist Greek citizen by a Golden Dawn supporter in 2013 led the Greek authorities to take action against the party. The leader of the party and its 69 members were charged with running a criminal organization and organizing attacks on migrants, leftists, and the LGBT community. At the time of writing, the trial is in progress. Despite these steps, however, racially motivated violence against migrants continues. Anti-migrant protests and attacks are on the rise again (see Holman 2016).
6. The contrast between the experiences of these migrants and those cited in Alexandrakis (2013, 94–98) is worth mentioning. Alexandrakis' fieldwork covers the period of 2006-2011 where violence against migrants was relatively low. Within this background, as Alexandrakis explains, football game provided migrants the opportunity to build social bonds and express agency. While these dimensions were not totally absent during my

fieldwork (see also the religious subjectivity section), the changing material context made it increasingly difficult for migrants to exercise such collective agency in open public.

7. All included migrants in this section are Muslims.
8. In Athens, despite the existence of a large population of Muslim migrants, there is no official mosque, making Athens the only European capital without a Mosque and demonstrating the level of "fear of Islam" (Sakellariou 2017). Muslims pray in underground makeshift mosques that are converted from basement apartments. There are over 100 makeshift mosques in Athens, which are run by unofficial imams.
9. No interviews were conducted with migrants who converted to Christianity.
10. For a detailed analysis of Afghan's journey to Turkey see Kaytaz (2016).

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