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Trauma, Exile, and Cultural Displacement



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**Towards an Egalitarian  
Synchronicity of Displacement:  
Re-imagining Shared Temporality  
as Unifying Grounds for Social Solidarity**

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**Abstract**

The present article initially examines, in a comparative way, the theoretical contributions of Ayşe Çağlar, Janine Dahinden, and Georgina Ramsay, who equally problematize the dominant Western epistemology of the refugee crisis and, in particular, its heterochronic categorization of refugee and non-refugee subjects. As we demonstrate, the inscription of refugees within temporalities distinct from those of Western citizens reinforces entrenched logics of othering and exceptionalization, thereby obstructing possibilities of interactive coexistence and socio-cultural interchange. Within this framework, we attempt to reconceptualize displacement as a unifying analytical topology that highlights the shared rhythms of dispossession, precaritization, and alienation that shape both refugee and non-refugee lives. Building on these insights, the second part of the article explores the conceptual and epistemological affinities between displacement and precarity. We argue that, when critically reworked through feminist theory and brought into dialogue with one another, these concepts provide fertile anti-essentialist frameworks for re-situating heterogeneous subjects within a shared spatio-temporal and socio-political condition. Such a perspective enables the theorization of emergent non-identitarian forms of relationality, sociality, struggle, and solidarity observed among refugee, migrant,

and precaritized citizen populations in recent years, while also destabilizing the entrenched ethnocentric binary that opposes the autonomous Western citizen to the vulnerable, Orientalized refugee subject.

**Keywords:** *Temporal Displacement, Temporalities of Migration, Precarity, Citizen-Refugee Binary, Solidarity, De-exceptionalization of displacement*

## Introduction

As a transnational cross-cultural diachronic phenomenon, displacement has been systematically theorized, thematized, explored and reconstructed in terms of a profoundly interdisciplinary notion within multiple scientific fields in areas such as history, philosophy, politics and public policy, geography, human rights, international and public law, sociology, ethnology and social anthropology, psychology and psychoanalysis, as well as mobility, refugee and migration studies. At the same time, displacement has been constantly depicted, illuminated, and reimagined in poetry, literature, and art from classic ancient Greek literature to contemporary literary, poetic, cinematic, visual, and digital narratives on migration, diaspora, mobility, emplacement, memory, trauma, identity, alienation, and exile. The complex dialectic between trauma, exile, and displacement has been the object of numerous philosophical inquiries deriving from distinguishably different theoretical traditions from Levinasian<sup>1</sup> ethics and Arendtian political theory to post-colonial and critical race, mobility, and feminist studies. More specifically, the notion of displacement has been theoretically reconceptualized within modern philosophical thought in terms of both a macroscopic socio-structural product of complex political, economic and historical transnational processes of war, violence, neo-colonialism, systemic oppression, human rights violations, persecution, land occupation, climate change and geopolitical transformations *and* as an existential condition of self-alienation, rupture with the world,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Papacharalambous Charis, "Other's Caress and God's Passing By: Levinas Encountering Heidegger", *Dia-noesis*, 11, 2021, pp. 77-94, [https://dianoesis-journal.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/dianoesis-olo-t11\\_opt.pdf](https://dianoesis-journal.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/dianoesis-olo-t11_opt.pdf)

dispossession, exploitation, isolation and disorientation within the post-modern late-capitalist reality.

The notion of displacement is canonically associated or even conflated with refugeehood, forced migration, and involuntary movement, being often framed and represented in hegemonic Western public discourses in terms of a pathogenic dehistoricized and depoliticized exception from the anachronistic fantasy of a robust global Nation-State order. However, critical theoretical approaches emerging over the last decade, mainly in the field of social anthropology, reconstruct displacement under novel conceptual, epistemological, and methodological premises by detaching movement-through-space from the defining conceptual characteristics of displacement. At the same time, contemporary reconceptualizations undertake the complex epistemological endeavor to “de-exceptionalize” displacement and problematize its dominant articulation as an exceptional condition of radical dispossession, liminality, deprivation, and trauma experienced solely by refugee and migrant subjects in contrast to stable, secure, and well-ordered lives enjoyed by the citizens of the Nation-State.

While critical scholarship on human mobility initially concentrated on the spatialities of displacement—engaging in depth with the topologies of the refugee camp, the maritime and terrestrial routes of migration and refuginess, the liminal zones of waiting, control, and surveillance, as well as the biopolitics of the border regime—over the past decade a systematic body of academic work has explored the complex relation between displacement and time. This emerging field of research examines the dialectic between migratory and refugee experiences and temporality, tracing the differentiated temporalities, “temporal regimes” and “chronotopes” within which migrant and refugee subjects navigate their every-day lives, envision their future and perform daily acts of planning, claiming, resisting and interacting at the camps, hot spots, detention centers, borders and checkpoints, while becoming regulated by decelerated, obscure and complex immigration bureaucratic processes, rules and mechanisms<sup>2</sup>. As Tsagarou-

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Griffiths, M. “Out of Time: The Temporal Uncertainties of Refused Asylum Seekers and Immigration Detainees”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40:12, 2014, pp. 1991–2009, Hage, G., “Waiting out the crisis: On stuckedness and governmentality”. In: Hage, G. (ed.) *Waiting*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2009) pp. 97–106, McNevin, A.

sianou interestingly argues, “such renewed interest in exploring migration through the perspective of time has indeed enriched migration literature and has provided a different understanding of processes of being, becoming, and belonging for migrants<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, Jacobsen and Carlsen observe that “foregrounding temporality as an analytical lens can provide critical new knowledge about the socio-cultural dynamics of contemporary migration.<sup>4</sup>

In our view, the exploration of the distinct and multi-layered temporalities of displacement is not merely descriptive; On the contrary it unravels, under a critical theoretical lens, the racialized and ethnicized power structures, governing techniques, subjectivation processes and categorization and normalization mechanisms that are equally involved in the normative production of displaced populations in terms of ‘illegal subjects’, as well as in their subsequent exposure to grave violations of fundamental human rights, socio-political marginalization, material deprivation and cultural othering under the securitization regimes of the West. An illustrative example of the close correlation between the exploration of the temporalities of displacement and the socio-political investigation of the systemic injustices entailed within the contemporary Western regulation of migratory and refugee flows can be traced in Tazzioli’s recent research, which conceptualizes the “temporality of control” as a central analytical category for the critical problematization of the functions of the EU border regime and the limitations of the right to seek for asylum<sup>5</sup>. In her analysis, this conception illustrates both the specific

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& Missbach, A., “Luxury limbo: Temporal techniques of border control and the humanitarianisation of waiting”, *International Journal of Migration and Border Studies*. 4:1–2, 2018, pp. 12–34, Jacobsen, C. M., Karlsen M.A., Khosravi S. (eds.) *Waiting and the Temporalities of Irregular Migration*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Tsagarousianou R., “Time and mobility/immobility: the chronopolitics of mobility and the temporalities of suffering and hope in situations of encampment”, *Mobilities* 18:2, 2022, p. 268.

<sup>4</sup> Jacobsen, C. M., and M. A. Karlsen. 2021. “Introduction: Unpacking the Temporalities of Irregular Migration.” In *Waiting and the Temporalities of Irregular Migration*, edited by C. M. Jacobsen, M. A. Karlsen, and S. Khosravi, (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), p.1.

<sup>5</sup> Tazzioli M., “The Temporal Borders of Asylum. Temporality of Control in the EU Border Regime.”, *Political Geography* 64, 2018, pp. 13–22.

temporalities embedded in techniques of migration government and the complex power tropes through which time itself operates as a medium and technology of control over displaced populations. As she argues by foregrounding the notion of temporal borders, -namely the normative imposition of deadlines, waiting periods and time limits that profoundly shape migrants' and refugees' lives and mobilities-, "the lens of the temporality of control enables seeing that time is not only object of mechanisms of control over time- but also a mean and a technology for managing migrant- control through time"<sup>6</sup>. In this regard, she observes the multiplication and stratification of temporal borders that constitute asymmetrical hierarchies of mobility across displaced populations through accelerated temporalities of control, which coexist with, rather than contradict, the prolonged waiting and legal limbo experienced in reception centers in South Europe, while forcefully disrupting migrants' autonomous temporalities and geographies of movement.

The temporal regimes to which refugee and migrant subjects are subjected are frequently theorized in terms of exceptionality, or as a distorted mirroring of the normative linear temporality of an accelerating Western trajectory of unrestrained historical and cultural progress and unceasing capitalist productivity. Prolonged confinement within refugee camps, compounded by socio-political marginalization, juridical ambiguity, and the manifest impossibility of securing or envisioning a predictable future, often results in the depiction of migratory and refugee conditions through the lens of liminality, opacity, and a protracted status of existential and legal-political "limbo. Such a condition is designated as governed by a depoliticizing and debilitating normative regime of permanent waiting, emptiness, inactivity, non-productivity, indefinite suspension, and delay—a temporal state in which neither individual agency nor collective emancipatory action can be articulated. However, according to Rozakou's ethnographic studies<sup>7</sup> on the multiple and shifting temporalities of contemporary collective refugee experience—as these were shaped and transformed during the prolonged stay of refugees in

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Rozakou, K., "The Violence of Accelerated Time: Waiting and Hasting 'during the Long Summer of Migration' in Greece." In *Waiting and the Temporalities of Irregular Migration*, ibid, pp. 23–39.

reception centers on the Aegean border islands in the summer of 2015—the temporality of displacement cannot be reduced to the catatonic rhythm of existential suspension and indefinite stagnation. Rather, it continually alternates with temporal patterns marked by accelerated rhythms and processes of speed. By problematizing the normative association of accelerated mobility with intentionality and progress, and that of enforced immobility with passivity and decline, Rozakou argues that the temporal dialectic between acceleration and deceleration permeates the “shifting temporal rhythms on the border”, which are dictated by power mechanisms of border control and demand the constant vigilance and responsiveness of the refugee and migrant subjects who are inscribed within them.

This methodological, epistemological, and theoretical designation of the distinct temporalities that structure the collective experience of displacement—at once internally homogenizing yet simultaneously marked by radical divergence, liminality, and unmediated exception in relation to the normalized temporalities of continuous progress, linear continuity, and unbroken stability attributed to Western citizens—results, beyond its partial scientific inaccuracy, in the inscription of displaced subjects and Western citizens into discrete, hierarchical, non-relational, and non-communicating temporal frameworks. Such a conceptualization obscures, on the one hand, the vivid, complex, and antagonizing intentionalities, resistances, and emancipatory practices of refugee and migrant subjects, and, on the other hand, the radical precaritization of life for Western citizens under conditions of intensifying neoliberalization. As Cabot and Ramsay interestingly argue, “the exceptionalism entailed in dominant approaches to displacement involves a partitioning of time (‘normal’ time and moments of ‘crisis’); of space (borders and their transgression, the Global South and the Global North); of categories (the refugee or migrant as opposed to the citizen); and experience. As such, deexceptionalizing entails disrupting epistemological and political boundaries, and examining erosions in the capacity for flourishing lives and livelihoods unfolding across diverse categories of membership<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Cabot, H., & Ramsay, G., ‘Deexceptionalizing Displacement: An Introduction’, *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 12:3, 2021, p. 292.

Initiating from the above-described theoretical standpoint, in the first part of the present article, we will comparatively examine the significant theoretical contributions of social anthropologists and political theorists such as Ayşe Çağlar, Janine Dahinden, and Georgina Ramsay, which equally problematize the heterochronic categorization of citizens and refugee subjects within the realms of the dominant Western epistemology of the refugee crisis. As we will further analyze through the illumination of the above theoretical insights, the dominant epistemological inscription of refugee subjects within a temporality distinct from that of Western citizens in Western host states reinforces prevailing logics of othering and exceptionalization, which in turn obstruct the possibility of interactive coexistence and socio-cultural interaction between Western citizens and migrant subjects. Against this backdrop, the notion of displacement is re-explored in terms of a unifying analytical topology that illuminates the coeval subjection of both refugee and non-refugee populations to shared rhythms of dispossession, precaritization, and alienation. Building on this perspective, the article re-visits displacement as an innovative epistemological device aiming at the successful co-articulation of heterogeneous social subjects under a common epistemological prism and claim that the relocation of both refugee and non-refugee subjects under a conjunctive time-spatial and sociopolitical analytical trope could elucidate manifold, previously invisibilized, relational structures of cultural interchange, political communication and social solidarity between Western citizens and refugee populations. In the second part of the article, we will attempt to highlight the conceptual and epistemological affinities between displacement and precarity, suggesting that both displacement and precarity, when critically reworked through the lens of critical feminist theory and placed in dialogical relation with each other, can operate as critical anti-essentialist conceptual frameworks for re-situating both refugee and non-refugee subjects within a shared spatio-temporal and socio-political trajectory. In this regard, we will further explore how these co-examined conceptions can forge a nuanced and fruitful analytical platform for the theorization of emergent non-identitarian forms of sociality, relationality, struggle, opposition and solidarity between contemporary refugee and migrant populations and precaritized citizens of Western host societies in the last decade, as well as for



the deconstruction of the entrenched ethnocentric binary that normatively juxtaposes the autonomous Western citizen with the vulnerable, Orientalized refugee subject.

### **Exclusionary Temporalities of Displacement: Re-situating Refugee, Migrant, and Citizen Subjects in Shared Political Realities**

In her scientific study “Still ‘migrants’ after all those years: foundational mobilities, temporal frames and emplacement of migrants”<sup>9</sup>, Ayse Çağlar systematically problematizes the methodological nationalism that characterizes the dominant *culturalising, essentializing, homogenizing, racializing* and *ethnicizing* epistemological discourses on the study of contemporary migrant and refugee subjects. In this regard, she argues that the ruling state- and Western-centric epistemological emphasis on the national identity and ethno-religious origins of migrant populations not only invisibilizes the complex dynamics, relationalities, narratives, experiences, agencies and socio-political bonds of migrant subjects, but also obscures the manifold constitutive gender, class, religious, sexual and social differences of distinct migrant subjectivities, leading to the normative erasure of their radical heterogeneity, multiplicity and non-irreducibility. Interestingly, Çağlar claims that this hegemonic ethnocentric and essentialistic perception of the migrant condition in epistemic and representational frameworks, reflecting a normative separation between migrant and non-migrant subjects, invokes systemic mechanisms that locate migrant and refugee subjects into distinct, unbridgeable, and non-interlocking temporal realities and analytical paradigms than non-migrant Western populations. In her words, “such a prioritization of ethnic and/or national categories in analysis inscribes those who are designated as migrants and the ‘natives’ into different temporal frameworks”<sup>10</sup>. According to Çağlar, under the dominant paradigm of the integrationist perspective on migration, refugee and migrant subjects are positioned within linear temporal processes that require the gradual shedding of their ini-

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<sup>9</sup> Çağlar, A., “Still ‘migrants’ after all those years: Foundational mobilities, temporal frames and emplacement of migrants”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42: 6), 2016, pp. 952–969.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2

tial cultural, national, religious, and ideological characteristics, alongside their progressive absorption of the hegemonic culture of the Western host state. Such processes are framed within a teleological conception of the future, imagined as the point of completion of an idealized, perpetually deferred, and ultimately unattainable project of total self-transformation. In this context, the presence of the refugee subject is reconstructed in terms of an autonomous temporal regime of ongoing, protracted, and fluid transition toward the uncertain ideal of absolute socio-cultural integration. From this perspective, the refugee present remains unable to synchronize—under the condition of this impossible completion—with the historical reality and the socio-economic and political transformations of the host society or the broader global order. Shifting her focus from the integration model to a more progressive critical perspective on migration, Çağlar explores a post migrant perspective mainly in the field of cultural production and further conceptualizes this perception's discourse on the relation between displacement and time. Çağlar initially aligns herself with the cultural radicalization introduced by the post-migration perspective. Within this framework, she argues that the de-stereotyping of migrant subjects, the recognition of the multiplicity and fragmentation of migrant and refugee identities, and their egalitarian, de-essentialized, and de-nationalized representation in art, culture, social life, community bonds, and the public sphere constitute subversive and transformative agonistic practices. These practices are capable of reconstructing plural alternative historiographies and narrativizations, as well as multi-identitarian socialities, political collectivities, and communicative practices that move beyond the dominant essentializing strategies of 'integration' and 'multiculturalism.' As she notes, "the aim behind the introduction of this concept is to counter the dominant and normative categories of migration industries, knowledge practices and the foreigner 'dispositive', by drawing attention to the subversive and the playful strategies this group of people deal with their ascribed positions in the society. These playful strategies are presented as forms of resistance to the ethnicized and essentialized logics of the majority of migration scholarship and public discourses on migration<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 3

However, the post-migration perspective likewise introduces an a priori temporal overdetermination within the very framework of the constitution of (post-)migrant and refugee identity. It does so by associating the multiple developments of social bonds, cultural practices, and political collectivities of contemporary migrant subjects with the past moment of their movement into a distinct nation-state. According to Çağlar, the inseparable entanglement of refugee and migrant presentness—whether linked to a future-oriented teleology of successful integration or to a decisive past point of departure—serves to de-historicize and homogenize complex refugee and migrant subjectivities. This, in turn, distances them from the non-refugee Western population through the hegemonic construction of two dichotomous and mutually exclusive temporal frameworks for understanding the lived reality. Borrowing the notion of the *chronotope* from Mikhail Bakhtin<sup>12</sup> and further drawing upon Johannes Fabian's seminal study *Time and the Other*<sup>13</sup>, Çağlar in particular explains that the normative dichotomous construction of different spatio-temporal and conceptual territories for native populations and migrant subjects employs epistemological devices of exclusion, while invisibilizing the vivid, heterogeneous and multiple social, cultural, financial, sentimental and political interconnections between migrant and non-migrant subjects and further hindering the epistemological endeavor of developing encompassing and mediating temporal modalities elucidating the interactions, socializations and relationalities between migrant and non-migrant subjectivities.

On the basis of the above theoretical reconsiderations, the constitutive temporal separation of refugee and non-refugee social subjects results in a politically paralyzing denial of the synchronicity and interactivity between migrant and non-migrant subjects—what Fabian has termed the “denial of coevalness.” From this perspective, we can see how the normative inscription of refugee and migrant subjects into a detached and mono-focal temporality—one governed by its own internal rules and disconnected from global systemic phenomena such as capitalist accumula-

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<sup>12</sup> Bakhtin, M., “Form of Time and Chronotope in the Novel.” In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, edited by M. Holquist, 1981. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 84–258.

<sup>13</sup> Fabian, J., *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press. 1983.

tion, labor deregulation, environmental risks, and the pandemic crisis—undermines the essential conditions for unimpeded and symmetric communicative exchange and mutually transformative dialogical encounters between migrant and non-migrant subjects. At the same time, it blocks the emergence of solidaristic mobilizations and political alliances between them. The radical suppression of this necessary dialogical contemporaneity —what Fabian names *Gleichzeitigkeit*, contrasting it with mere empirical co-existence—leads, according to Çağlar, to the following corrosive socio-political consequences: “Such a denial of coevalness disregards the experiences, norms and values migrants and the natives share resulting from their contemporary embeddedness in social, economic and political processes, networks, movements and institutions that exist both within and across state borders at a particular space and time. Locating ‘migrants’ and ‘non-migrants’ into different spatio-temporal frames in which the former is assumed to be subject to categorical and inscribed time, while the latter to historical time, creates an asymmetry between these frames of reference and action”<sup>14</sup>.

As we argue, the foregoing analysis elucidates the necessity of developing novel epistemological, methodological, and conceptual tools for the re-synchronization of the historical realities of migrant and refugee subjects and native populations. At the same time, such a theoretical perspective underlines the epistemological significance of situating refugee and non-refugee populations within shared analytical frameworks, by highlighting their mutual subjection to broad systemic processes of neoliberal governance, socio-economic precaritization, the collapse of the public care system and welfare infrastructures, capitalist accumulation, environmental and health crises, as well as far-reaching sociocultural transformations and political struggles. Within this epistemological horizon, the systematic illumination of common challenges, interests, and aspirations across distinct population groupings is in a position, in our view, to dismantle the constitutive hierarchical binary between refugee and non-refugee subjects and open up new communicative channels, political alliances, and social interactions among heterogeneous forms of social subjects. Çağlar, in particular, reconceptualizes the notion of *displacement*

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<sup>14</sup> Çağlar, *ibid.*, p. 9.

in conjunction with the concepts of *emplacement* and *dispossession*, seeking to employ it as an analytical lens for the reconstruction of a co-temporal, namely a synchronic, epistemological framework aiming at the re-theorization of the social relationalities that unfold within the urban context between migrant and native Western populations under the term of *coevalness*. The notion of displacement captures the multiple forms of responsiveness, reaction, and resistance enacted by urban inhabitants—migrants and non-migrants alike—against systemic processes of capital accumulation and the restructuring of cities; As she eloquently claims, “highlighting these processes of dispossession, displacement and emplacement that encompass all the city residents allow us to set aside the binary difference between migrants and non-migrants as our starting points”<sup>15</sup>.

While not explicitly associating displacement with temporality, Dahinden<sup>16</sup> similarly problematizes dominant epistemological mechanisms that discursively constitute the category of the displaced subject in terms of an absolute exception from the national order and a mirroring incorporation of divergence from its binary opposite, namely the citizen/part of the general population subject of Western normality. This institutional reproduction of unbridgeable migration-based differences between displaced subjects and native citizens is incubated within a purely ethnocentric normativity and gets constantly re-enacted through normalizing and naturalizing mechanisms, subjectivation processes, scientific discourses, communicative practices, institutional policies and juridico-political categorizations that are part of the modern Nation-State’s migration apparatus, which Dahinden describes as “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble of discourses, institutions, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements”<sup>17</sup>, that is inextricably interconnected with the very function of the Nation-State. Claiming that migration and integration research, theory, discourse and epistemology are deeply rooted within the nation-state migration apparatus, Dahinden investigates how such epistemic fields uncritically and unreflectively adopt, reproduce and normalize the naturalized, essentialized,

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.10.

<sup>16</sup> Dahinden J., “A plea for the ‘de-migrantization’ of research on migration and integration”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39:13, 2016, pp. 2207-2225.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 2209

racialized categories of migration- and culture/ethnicity-related differences as core analytical units in applied methodologies, as well as in both empirical and theoretical research of broader socio-structural phenomena. On this basis, she advocates an alternative epistemological approach that entails the denaturalization and denationalization of the subject of migration and integration studies, advancing the development of novel methodologies for the “de-migranticization of migration.” One such methodological strategy of de-essentializing migration, as she terms it, involves dismantling the epistemological framing of migrant and refugee populations as an internally homogeneous yet analytically isolated and exceptional category, set apart from the general population, a hegemonic tactic, which, as we have previously observed, is strongly linked to the inscription of displaced subjects and Western citizens into different and non-interlocking spatio-temporal realities.

In this regard, Dahinden explores three specific methodological strategies that could lead to the production of de-essentialized and de-ethnicized scientific discourses on displacement and migration, namely the distinction between analytical and common-sense categories, the fruitful inauguration of systematic dialogue between migration research and social theory and the investigation of macroscopic social processes and the specific role that migration plays within them through a shifting of the object of scientific study from the migrant to the general population. As far as the first strategy is concerned, Dahinden more specifically calls for a rigorous differentiation between *common-sense categories*—such as “migrant,” “foreigner,” or “refugee,” which originate in policy, law, and everyday discourse and serve to normalize migration—and *analytical categories*, which are conceptual devices developed within the social sciences. Conflating the two, particularly by uncritically employing policy-driven or politicized categories in research, reproduces the logic of the state-centric migration apparatus and entrenches ethnicized or “migranticized” difference as predominantly given. According to her argumentation, these categories should be studied as social realities with concrete material and discursive effects, rather than taken as explanatory tools in themselves. Under these premises, Dahinden highlights a clear separation between common-sense and analytical categories that enables researchers to translate socially or politically framed

“problems” (e.g., integration, trafficking, refugee crises) into sociological research questions, by adopting a critical lens that perceives migration and ethnicity not as a priori essentialist categories of difference, but as contingent dimensions of broader social processes.

The second methodological attempt at de-essentializing migration research focuses on forging a closer connection between migration studies and broader analytical categories of social sciences, as well as on progressing epistemological developments in social theory. Reconstituted as an epistemological project of critical reflexivity and methodological expansion, this endeavor entails drawing upon conceptual devices and theoretical conceptualizations from fields such as mobility studies, social anthropology, social theory, ethnic theory, and social network analysis. According to Dahinden, these epistemic paradigms offer productive, nuanced, and critical innovative frameworks that re-imagine the concepts of race, ethnicity, displacement, and citizenship, along with historically and socially contextualized reconsiderations of human mobility and systematic studies of the relationalities, networks, and interactions of contemporary refugee and migrant subjects. As a result, their creative application within the field of migration studies can contribute to the critical reconstruction and systematic problematization of the normalizing, ethnocentric “apparatuses of migration.” At the same time, such a methodological approach can facilitate the de-essentialization of the subject of contemporary mobility and the emergence of mediating topologies of convergence between the formerly non-communicating social categories of displaced subjects and Western citizens. It is noteworthy that Dahinden seeks new conceptual frameworks for the de-stereotyped re-signification of political actions, subjective identities, and social interactions of migrant subjects beyond the dominant narrative axis of constitutive difference. In this pursuit, she privileges the concept of *mobility*, understood as a fundamental aspect of social life, as a unifying and de-essentialized analytical category through which migrant populations can be re-situated within a shared socio-structural continuum alongside native populations—analogue to the way in which Çağlar conceptualizes displacement as a central analytical tool.

A third proposed strategy for “de-migranticizing” migration research entails shifting the unit of analysis away from “the mi-

grant population” as a discrete object of study and instead focusing on segments of the overall population, within which migrants and displaced subjects are included. This reorientation aids in the gradual subversion of the constitutive dichotomy between migrant and non-migrant populations, while still allowing an analytical examination of the significance of migration and ethnicity for the respective phenomenon under study. In practice, this approach has been applied in diverse contexts: exploring everyday ethnicity in neighborhoods; investigating boundary-making processes in schools; or analyzing how categories of diversity are produced through bureaucratic practices in institutions such as civil registry offices.

In her article “Time and the other in crisis: How anthropology makes its displaced object”<sup>18</sup>, Ramsay conceptualizes displacement as follows: “I define displacement here as an existential experience of contested temporal being, in which a person cannot reconcile the contemporary circumstances of their life with their aspirations for, and sense of, the future. That is, displacement is a fundamental disruption to the teleology of life: an experience, whether acute or chronic, that pulls a person out of the illusory comfort of a life with stability and into a reality of a future that is not only uncertain, but which is determined by forces that are outside of their direct control.”<sup>19</sup>

More specifically, Ramsay critically problematizes the observed tendency within migration and refugee studies to characterize the temporalities of forced migration and refugeness as inherently distinct from those experienced by citizens of Western states. While acknowledging the hegemonic tropes and power structures through which refugee and migrant subjects are often normatively inscribed into alternative temporal trajectories, she cautions that describing displacement solely as a form of forced migration and involuntary mobility governed by an exceptional liminal temporality of uncertainty and indeterminacy could lead to the reproduction the very dominant logics of exceptionality those theoretical and methodological approaches seek to critique and subvert.

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<sup>18</sup> Ramsay G., “Time and the other in crisis: How anthropology makes its displaced object”, *Anthropological Theory*, 20:4, 2020, pp. 385–413.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388.



Such descriptions, she argues, implicitly assume that the lived experiences of Western citizens are structured by temporal stability, certainty, and predictability, thereby reinforcing a mirroring binary that positions refugee experience as abnormal or deviant, while invisibilizing the socio-structural challenges in which precaritized Western subjects are exposed to under regimes of neoliberal governmentality. The illumination of the distinct temporalities of refuginess and migration reproduces politico-legal framings of displacement as exclusionary and exceptional and additionally forecloses the possibility of recognizing the broader social, political, and economic conditions through which uncertainty and precarity are produced across populations by obscuring the complex socio-economic processes through which global infrastructures of capitalist dispossession, austerity, and deregulation have increasingly rendered life precarious for migrants and non-migrants alike. Rather than conceptualizing refugeehood as the temporal expression of exceptionality, she calls for the development and re-articulation of novel theoretical and epistemological frameworks that highlight the shared rhythms of dispossession and precarity by contextualizing displacement within encompassing critical insights on global capitalism. By de-exceptionalizing displacement and decentering the spectacle of refugeehood, anthropologists and migration scholars can reframe time not simply as a matter of “refugee temporalities” set against “citizen temporalities,” but as a contested field of temporal trajectories, dispossessed futures, and anticipatory horizons that shape both migrant and non-migrant lives.

In particular, Ramsay advocates for the disentanglement of refugee subjects from the interminable regime of spatio-temporal and politico-juridical exception within which they are normatively inscribed. Against such paradigms of ontological captivity, she advances an alternative analytic that repositions both refugee and non-refugee subjects within a shared temporal rhythm of displacement. Within this framework, she underscores the ways in which neoliberal governmentalities and the infrastructures of global capitalism impose homologous modalities of precaritization upon diverse populations, situating them within overlapping conditions of existential dispossession and political-economic alienation. Crucially, these conditions cannot be reduced to the singular fact of migratory or refugee status, since they are inextrica-

bly interwoven with the systemic erosion of citizenship as a guarantor, or, in fact a matrix of rights-based security and socio-political welfare. For Ramsay, the temporal impasse of protracted uncertainty, the foreclosure of futurity, and the interminable suspension within a state of crisis are not phenomena that uniquely configure refugee or migrant life. Rather, they index the wider dispersal of precarious temporalities across late-capitalist social formations. By unsettling prevailing representations of refugeehood as defined by timeless deferral and dehumanizing vulnerability, she reframes precarity and austerity as the generalized condition of existence under neoliberal capitalism—one that binds refugees and migrants to the so-called “stable” citizens of the Global North within a shared temporal regime of dispossession. In her words, “although migrants experience distinct states of liminality, it would be false to assume that citizenship is automatically conducive to full inclusion and existential security. The lives of citizens themselves, who ostensibly have access to all of the resources, rights and services that some refugees might imagine make life stable and certain, are increasingly rendered into contemporary states of precarity, in which the future is unpredictable (Allison, 2012, 2013; Butler, 2004; Khosravi, 2017; Tsing, 2015). Subsequently, in a period in which global infrastructures of capitalist dispossession have come to precaritize life everywhere (Tsing, 2015), for both migrants and non-migrants, it is necessary to develop theoretical frameworks that reflect these shared rhythms of displacement through dispossession (Glick Schiller, 2018), rather than approach the temporalities of immigrant exclusion as exceptional.”<sup>20</sup>

Problematizing the constitutive allochrony that has long structured sociological and ethnographic renderings of refugee experience, Ramsay, therefore, expands the category of displacement beyond forced migration to encompass a broader ontological condition: that of liminality, suspended presentism, and the violent expropriation of futurity. Such a reconceptualization de-exceptionalizes displacement, divesting it of its conventional tethering to refugeehood and re-articulating it as a relational category through which shared logics of vulnerability and exclusion can be apprehended. In doing so, the suggested approach destabilizes

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 396.

the essentialist dichotomy between refugee and non-refugee subjects, while simultaneously illuminating the multiple and heterogeneous modalities of juridico-political exclusion and economic dispossession that persist even after the acquisition of legal status or ostensible integration of migrant subjects. In this sense, Ramsay's analytic demonstrates how displacement functions less as a singular crisis of mobility than as a structuring principle of contemporary political existence, stratifying temporal horizons and governing access to futurity itself.

### **Between Displacement and Precarity: Reconceptualizing Citizenship, Refugeehood, and Non-Identitarian Solidarity**

As we have observed above, Çağlar, Dahinden, and Ramsay argue that the dominant epistemological inscription of refugee subjects within a temporality distinct from that of Western citizens in host states reinforces prevailing logics of othering and exceptionalization. This, in turn, obstructs the possibility of interactive coexistence and socio-cultural osmosis between refugee, migrants and non-refugee/ non-migrant subjects. Within this framework, the reframing of displacement as a unifying topology illuminates the coeval subjection of both refugee and non-refugee populations to shared rhythms of dispossession, precaritization, and alienation. Such reconceptualizations of displacement bear, in our view, considerable affinities with the notion of precarity, which over the past decade has been systematically re-signified and elevated to a central analytical category in critical theory, political philosophy, sociology, and anthropology. Precarity has been theorized as a multidimensional and encompassing prism crystallizing plural and intersecting forms of exploitation, alienation, financial destabilization, social erosion, austerity, deprivation of fundamental rights and social guarantees, and exposure to accelerated modalities of state violence under neoliberal governmentality.

According to Ramsay, the experience of this fragmented, fluid, and uncertain present under late-capitalist neoliberal conditions interweaves precarity and displacement in an inseparable and mutually constitutive relationship. In her analysis, precarity denotes a generalized condition of protracted socio-political instabil-

ity, while displacement signifies the traumatic existential experience of enforced immobilization within an unstable present and the radically alienating incapacity to anticipate, control, or shape a dispossessed future. As she puts it: “Although precarity and displacement are not precisely the same experience, given such conceptual echoes, they are, I consider, linked and co-constitutive: precarity being a general state of protracted instability and displacement being an existential awareness of a fundamental contradiction in the unfolding of contemporary action towards a future that is unpredictable and controlled by external forces. Precarity captures the politico-economic forces that create uncertainty; displacement captures the existential experience of being immobilised by those forces and having a sense of the future arrested and dispossessed.”<sup>21</sup>

In their joint essay “De-exceptionalizing Displacement: An Introduction”<sup>22</sup> Heath Cabot and Georgina Ramsay further differentiate between the conceptions of precarity and displacement. In their view, while precarity is mainly associated with exposure to socio-economic conditions endemic in late capitalist Western societies characterized by post-Fordism, neoliberal retreat of the social State, and the flexibilization of labor, displacement is multi-layered, historically sedimented, and culturally situated. In this regard, they point out that the theoretical conceptualization of precarity as a novel or unprecedented condition within critical problematizations of radical austerity and holistic neoliberalization of all aspects of Western societies risks obscuring the longstanding structural vulnerabilities and social injustices faced by systematically marginalized populations in historical realities preceding neoliberalism.

In order to further support this line of argumentation, Cabot and Ramsay deploy the interesting problematization of the notion of precarity, mainly as framed within Guy Standing’s theory, by Sean Hill II. More specifically, as Sean Hill II illustrates, the supposed novel and radical emergence of “the precariat” masks the complex historical realities of oppression, discrimination, financial insecurity, exploitation and marginalization that Black Americans

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 401.

<sup>22</sup> Cabot, H., & Ramsay, G., ‘Deexceptionalizing Displacement: An Introduction’, *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 12:3, 2021, pp. 286-299.

have always been subjected to. In this sense, presenting precarity as a newly emergent phenomenon that horizontally vulnerabilizes Western societies re-establishes the experiences, struggles and worldviews of the white, middle-class populations of the Global North as the normative archetype of the socio-economic analysis. It is therefore supported that the conceptual framework of precarity alone cannot adequately capture the layered and intersecting dynamics of dislocation and dispossession, which are simultaneously rooted in longstanding histories of racial oppression and settler colonialism, as well as moulded by the complex outcomes of Western extractivism and capitalist accumulation. Contemporary displacements, therefore, emerge not simply as a symptom of labor market flexibilization, but from the entangled projectories of land, resource, and bodily appropriation that mark both past and present trajectories of global capitalism. As Sean Hill II frames it, “Yet when we examine the United States through the lens of precarity, we encounter a glaring contradiction—namely, that Black Americans have had the markers of precarity since the country’s inception through to the present day. Their existence as a precarious class in fact preceded neoliberalism. The last several decades are only unique in that the pool of precarious persons has now expanded to include white Americans and others of European descent, the lives that have “mattered” both historically and contemporaneously. It is this small subset of the precarious class that Standing is seemingly describing in his scholarship: newly exposed to the job insecurities of capitalism and especially susceptible to the appeals of fascist leaders.”<sup>23</sup>

At this juncture, we recognize that adopting a conceptual approach to precarity perceived exclusively as a product of neoliberalism, structural adjustment policies, and austerity measures offers, indeed, a fragmented account of the phenomenon. Such a reductionist framing may in fact efface or marginalize the gendered and racialized dimensions of the multiple and intersecting configurations of contemporary social deprivation, dispossession of rights, exploitation, oppression, and alienation. In our view, however, more inclusive conceptualizations of precarity—such as

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<sup>23</sup> Hill II, S., “Precarity in the Era of #BlackLivesMatter”, *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, 45: 3/4, 2017, p. 95.

that one developed in the political philosophy of Judith Butler—effectively mitigate the aforementioned risk and can be brought into productive dialogue with the critical reconceptualizations of displacement elaborated by the aforementioned scholars.

Briefly put, Butler articulates a dual understanding of vulnerability. On one level, Butlerian vulnerability denotes the inescapable relationality, sociality, and dependency of the subject—conceived as decentered and dissolved—upon uncontrollable and non-chosen Others, as well as upon the infrastructural, societal, institutional, and political conditions that sustain its very existence. On another level, the concept highlights the uneven exposure of particular racialized, feminized, and nationalized subjects to systemic violence, structural inequality, cultural misrecognition, and social exclusion. These groups are rendered less “grievable” within hegemonic frameworks, and thus considered less deserving of protection in comparison to other subjectivities. This dual conceptualization is further clarified through Butler’s critical distinction between *precariousness* and *precarity*. First introduced in *Frames of War* (2009), and developed in her subsequent work, this distinction builds upon her theoretical reflections on vulnerability. *Precairousness* refers to the universal existential condition of embodied openness, relational sociality, and exposure to the unpredictability of Otherness. By contrast, *precarity* designates the historically and culturally contingent, socio-politically mediated, and unequally distributed manifestation of this general condition. Viewed through Butler’s theoretical prism, complex assemblages of bio- and thanatopolitical mechanisms differentially produce precarity by subjecting particular social groups and entire populations to plural, intersecting, and stratified forms of violence, dispossession, deprivation, abandonment, detention, exploitation, persecution, stigmatization, and even death. As Butler eloquently puts it, “Precariousness and precarity are intersecting concepts. Lives are by definition precarious: they can be expunged at will or by accident; their persistence is in no sense guaranteed. In some sense, this is a feature of all life, and there is no thinking of life that is not precarious- except, of course, in fantasy, and in military fantasies in particular. Political orders, including economic and social institutions, are designed to address those very needs without which the risk of mortality is heightened. Precarity designates that politically induced condition

in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence and death. Such populations are at heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and of exposure to violence without protection”<sup>24</sup>.

Butler and Athanasiou, in their collaborative work *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (2013)<sup>25</sup>, provide a meticulous elaboration of the dual conceptual morphology of the term *dispossession*. For them, dispossession embodies an aporetic paradox, at once referring to the constitutive conditions of subject formation and to the socio-political processes of deprivation that structure contemporary life. On the first register, dispossession designates the very condition of the emergence of the subject, which is inevitably mediated by the subject-to-be’s subjection to hegemonic norms of intelligibility. Driven by a quasi-Spinozian primordial striving for existence—the nascent subject becomes recognizable, namely intelligible, within the symbolic order only by submitting to these disciplinary regimes and by relinquishing non-compliant attachments. In this sense, the subject is dispossessed from the outset, dissolved not only by normative frameworks of intelligibility but also by her constitutive encounter with alterity. As Butler and Athanasiou argue, our inevitable exposure and unavoidable commitment to the radical Otherness that we have not chosen is best understood as a *heteronomic condition for autonomy*<sup>26</sup>: a paradox in which the very possibility of selfhood is predicated upon an Other that one has neither chosen nor mastered. On the second register, dispossession depicts the subject’s fundamental exposure to the normatively regulated socio-economic mechanisms that impose violence, displacement, deportation, intensified financial precaritization, biopolitical regulation, accelerated social exclusion and cultural marginalization unsymmetrically among different social subjects and population categories. Within this register, dispossession describes the condi-

<sup>24</sup> Butler, J., *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?*, 2009, New York: Verso, 2009, pp. 25-26. Cf. Kakoliris, G. “Judith Butler on Gender Performativity”, *Dianoesis*, 17, 2025, pp. 57-74, <https://doi.org/10.12681/dia.41735>.

<sup>25</sup> Butler, J. and A. Athanasiou. *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

tions under which individuals and populations are deprived of rights, protections, and material supports, thereby exposing the unequal allocation of precarity across lines of race, gender, class, and citizenship. Seeking to conceptualize the complex relationality between these two dimensions, Butler and Athanasiou argue that our primordial embodied vulnerability—our constitutive exposure to norms and Others—forms the very ground upon which subsequent forms of deprivation can be enacted. In other words, the ontological dispossession that inaugurates subjectivity renders possible the political, social, and economic forms of dispossession experienced throughout one's life: the loss of social bonds, the erosion of legal entitlements, the dismantling of material infrastructures, and the deprivation of political liberties and economic resources<sup>27</sup>.

In our view, both displacement and precarity, restructured through the above-examined theoretical perspectives, can mutually operate as critical anti-essentialist conceptual frameworks for the theorization of the emergence of non-identitarian forms of sociality, relationality, struggle, opposition and solidarity between contemporary refugee and migrant populations and precaritized citizens of Western host societies in the last decade. Both provide fertile epistemological devices for theorizing the connective basis of the multiple and heterogeneous relationalities that have been sociologically observed to be developed in crisis-stricken South European societies among refugee and migrant groups, on the one hand, and precaritized citizens, on the other; and both are in a position to furnish novel epistemological grounds of critical reflection on the foundations of the newly emerging constellations of social solidarity and political struggle that have arisen over the past decade of successive crises among such heterogeneous population categories. Moreover, the inscription of refugees, migrants and Western citizens within the shared analytical categories of displacement and precarity constitutes in both perspectives an alternative modality for theorizing the relationship between refugees, migrants and Western citizens beyond the Eurocentric, hierarchical economy of asymmetrical charity and professionalized humanitarian aid. Through such analytic prisms, what comes to the fore are the symmetry, plurality, heterogeneity, agonism, and

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 4.



horizontality of relations that may be forged in the pursuit of common political objectives and within the fabric of everyday social interactions and confrontation of similar struggles between these social subjects. More specifically, within dominant discourse, contemporary refugee and migrant identity is constructed as a discursive formation entirely mediated by intensified processes of othering and invisibilization either as a threat or as a victim<sup>28</sup>. Under the prevailing nexus of neoliberal bio-/thanato-political production of alterity, representations of the so-called “refugee crisis” incorporate technologies that reconstitute two relationally co-constituted subject positions, locked in a permanent dialectical negotiation: that of the refugee-subject (and/or migrant-subject) and that of the citizen-subject. Through the hegemonic production of refugee and migrant subjectivity as non-Western, non-civilized, non-agentic, non-rational, and above all non-citizen, the national imaginary simultaneously crystallizes—through a process of mirror reflection—the positive definition of the subject that is not identified as a refugee. This process intensifies narcissistic ideological hallucinations of national superiority and self-determined sovereignty of the Western Self, while at the same time producing a positive revalorization of the radically weakened status of citizenship<sup>29</sup>. Furthermore, the bipolar projection of two ostensibly opposed identities undermines any prospect for a symmetric and egalitarian ethical encounter between refugee subjects and citizens of Western host societies. By enacting the hegemonic ontologies of Self and Other, the perpetual symbolic juxtaposition of these two subject positions obscures potentially fertile avenues for solidarity and joint mobilization between refugees and citizens in confronting the shared threats posed by economic precarity and neoliberal governance.

In our belief, the conceptual frameworks of displacement and precarity can equally problematize this constitutive binary, by exposing its profound anachronicity. In reality, the vulnerable citi-

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<sup>28</sup> See Polychroniou, A., “Towards a Critical Reconstruction of Modern Refugee Subjectivity: Overcoming the Threat–Victim Bipolarity with Judith Butler and Giorgio Agamben”, *Open Philosophy*, 4:1, 2021, pp. 252–68.

<sup>29</sup> For the relational production of the antinomic subjects citizen-refugee see Kirtsoglou E. and G. Tsimouris, “Il était un petit navire”: The refugee crisis, neoorientalism, and the production of radical alterity, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 2016, p. 7.

zen-subject of the prolonged financial market crisis has long ceased to represent the hierarchically superior pole within the classical ethnocentric dichotomy of the self-sufficient Western citizen versus the vulnerable, Orientalized refugee subject. As the constitutive attributes of Western citizenship gradually recede, giving way to a new form of neoliberal subjectivity structured around precarity, uncertainty, and dispossession, the social relationalities between citizens of Western host societies and newly arrived refugee populations inevitably depart from the outdated modernist frameworks of charity, philanthropy, or unilateral humanitarian aid. Instead, they are being radically reconfigured through unprecedented, multi-identitarian, hybrid, and horizontal forms of socio-political interconnection.

Illustrative of the obsolete character of this constitutive Western-centric binary, as well as of the necessity to re-situate the aforementioned social categories within a shared analytical framework, is the ethnographic study “The European Refugee Crisis and Humanitarian Citizenship in Greece”<sup>30</sup> by the American political anthropologist Heath Cabot. Situated within the contemporary Greek historico-political reality of intersecting financial and mobility crises, the study explores the foundational convergence of the previously rigidly dichotomized categories of “citizen” and “foreigner” under the imposed neoliberal governmentality of precarity. In this regard, Cabot advances a common analytical framework for examining the radical precaritization of rights among both native citizens and refugee/migrant subjects. In doing so, she documents the neoliberal reconfiguration of a novel, fragile, and vulnerabilized form of citizenship, which she terms as *humanitarian citizenship*.

Indeed, in Greece’s decade-long fiscal crisis we witness the emergence of new mechanisms of neoliberal subjectivation and a re-coding of citizenship in terms of radical dependency, socio-political alienation, and juridico-political dispossession. These processes contribute to the profound blurring of boundaries between providers and recipients of humanitarian aid, as well as to

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<sup>30</sup> Cabot H., “The European Refugee Crisis and Humanitarian Citizenship in Greece”, *Ethnos*, 84 (5), 2019, pp. 747-771. Cf. Rupčić Kelam, D., “Militarization of Everyday Life: Girls in Armed Conflicts”, *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy*, 8: 2, 2023, pp. 487-519, <https://doi.org/10.12681/cjp.35119>.

the destabilization in practice of the hallucinatory racialized and nationalized hierarchies that traditionally separated citizens from non-citizens. As numerous ethnological, anthropological, and sociological studies have compellingly demonstrated, the unfolding of plural, decentered, and diffuse formations of solidarity economies and mutual aid in late-crisis Greece illustrates that the constitutive evacuation of Western conceptualizations of citizenship from its democratic premises, its juridico-political legitimacy, and its socio-economic guarantees generates novel forms of social horizontalities and non-identitarian relationalities across differentiated segments of the general population.

Although subjected to distinct modalities of precaritization, the unemployed, the underpaid, the socially uninsured, the indebted, the economically vulnerable, the labor-alienated, and the exploited Western citizens increasingly encounter and interact with heterogeneous migrant and refugee subjects. They occupy fluid, deconstructible, and mutually substitutable positions within social clinics, community tutoring schools, pharmacies and cafés, cooperative kitchens, solidarity networks, housing shelters, exchange economies, and other—more or less institutionalized—forms of mutual assistance, financial support, and social care. The disembedding of citizenship from a dense nexus of fundamental constitutional liberties and inalienable juridico-political entitlements, when read together with the intensified phenomena of social exclusion, internal displacement, debtocratic governance, economic flattening, labor insecurity, and pervasive fiscal deregulation, demonstrates the insertion of Western citizens into a *shared continuum of precarity* with migrant and refugee subjects who inhabit the same socio-historical conjuncture and the same geopolitical and spatial localities of crisis. As Cabot aptly observes, “however, increasingly visible forms of neoliberalisation, and attendant humanitarian projects that come to stand in for both human and social rights, have destabilized this assumed antinomy between citizenship and alienage. Key aspects of global trends toward neoliberalisation include policies and practices actively dismantling the social state, a rise in temporary and precarious work, and a concurrent decline in labour mobilisations. Anthropologists have studied how, under such conditions, citizens themselves increasingly become brokers for rights and services once taken to be the provenance of state/society relations (Allison

2013; Molé 2012; Muehlebach 2012). These shifts have led to forms of subjectivity shaped by moralized notions of individual responsibility and experiences of fragmentation and atomization (Greenhouse 2012; Gershon et al. 2011). As such, precarity has emerged as a concept that captures – for many scholars and political mobilizers alike – struggles for basic rights and livelihoods in contexts where politico-legal belonging is not, in and of itself, under question. In diverse national contexts, then, citizens themselves are increasingly facing the radical precaritization of rights, belonging, and life – a struggle that has often been ascribed to the domain of alienage.”<sup>31</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

The theoretical and methodological incorporation of refugee, migrant, and Western subjects within a shared analytical framework is by no means an easy epistemological undertaking. The search for mediating modalities and common narrative threads across distinctly precarized lives encounters entrenched ethnocentric and Eurocentric conceptions of citizenship and foreignness, while simultaneously clashing with obsolete egological imaginaries of an autonomous and invulnerable Western Self, normatively construed in constitutive opposition to the amorphous mass of passive and fundamentally vulnerable refugee and migrant subjects. At the same time, such a philosophical–political project inevitably confronts the systematically ingrained epistemological methods and binary categorizations that continue to shape dominant disciplinary approaches to contemporary human mobility. As demonstrated in the critical analyses of Çağlar, Dahinden, and Ramsay, much of the existing anthropological, sociological, and political science literature tends to essentialize “refugeeness” situating refugee and migrant subjects within temporalities distinct from those of Western citizens, and thereby failing to embed these categories together within the shared socio-political condition of globalized capitalism and neoliberal governmentality.

Within this context, we have argued that the concepts of displacement and precarity—when critically reworked and placed in

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 753.

dialogical relation—offer productive epistemological devices for re-situating both refugee and non-refugee subjects within a common spatio-temporal and socio-political reality. Both conceptual frameworks are adept at encoding both forms of territorial dispossession, geopolitical displacement, juridico-political abandonment, and prolonged confinement that more closely characterize the condition of refugeeness, and also complex phenomena of social exclusion, labor exploitation, debt-induced exhaustion, economic devastation, and the withdrawal of the welfare state, which increasingly define the precarious situation of Western citizens exposed to neoliberal governmentalities.

It is crucial to emphasize, though, that situating refugee and non-refugee subjects within the common analytical trajectories of displacement and precarity does not entail a homogenization of their distinct experiences, traumas, memories, narratives and challenges. On the contrary, the reframing of these categories as a shared mediating topology across heterogeneous, plural, and socio-politically differentiated populations is not intended to obscure the asymmetrical conditions of exposure to intensified—and often lethal—forms of precarization, nor to efface the gendered, racialized, heterosexist, and ethnocentric structures that actively shape these differentiated vulnerabilities. Rather, embedding diverse social collectivities within the shared horizon of postmodern neoliberal reality facilitates the development of a radical potential for forging non-identitarian, horizontal, and multi-participatory forms of political mobilization, cultural interaction, social alliance, and epistemological reconfiguration that transcend the outdated hierarchical opposition between “citizen” and “refugee.” Perceived in this light, the critical conceptualization of precarity and displacement as unifying topologies functions deconstructively with respect to the foundational binary of Western citizen/migrant-refugee subject, while simultaneously demanding a critical, encompassing, unifying and non-essentialist reconceptualization of these terms to avoid reproducing or reinforcing dominant forms of homogenization, erasure, exclusion, otherization and essentialization. Ultimately, these conceptual frameworks allow us to illuminate complex relational structures of solidarity, cultural osmosis, and political communication between Western citizens, migrants, and refugees, while at the same time reopening a critical philosophical inquiry into the very

foundations of social solidarity beyond the hegemonic logic of identity.

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