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Non-Formal Spaces of Socio-Cultural Accompaniment. Responding to Young Unaccompanied Refugees. Reflections from the *Partispace* Project.

Introduction

Building on existing theorisations of formal, non-formal and informal pedagogies, the *Partispace* (www.partispace.eu) research project turns to issues of spaces and places as critical to the development of participatory public pedagogies (Reutlinger and Kessl, 2007; Kraftl, 2013) and hence is drawn to particular accounts of critical pedagogy as border-crossing (Giroux, 2005; Coburn, 2010). The move from a gated intellectual practice and an anti-public pedagogy to a borderless and democratised pedagogy involves the creation of microspheres of public education that enable modes of critical learning and civic agency (Giroux, 2013). This article argues that non-formal spaces of welcome to refugees, might, in consequence of the relative permeability of their borders and boundaries, contribute to the development of such microspheres.

Already framed against the background of economic and political crises, the study experienced the eruption of the 'refugee crisis', the recent migratory movements and the war against ISIL (as declared by the French President after the Paris shootings). These challenges are changing the social and political tissue of Europe, with direct implications for how we perceive democratic education and youth participation. Following the questions raised in particular in the work of Etienne Balibar (2004) concerning the possibility of transnational forms of belonging and citizenship, the *Partispace* project is interested in addressing how non-formal educational spaces can induce people into an existing culture of European belonging and, at one fell swoop, enable people to create (perhaps collectively) a new emerging set of understandings of these life experiences. The challenges that the growing "part of no-part" (Ranciere,2010) of the European social body—groups of people for whom there is no place within the organised totality of the European Union, although they formally belong to or are in Europe—pose to Europe's identity are understood in this article at the micro level of analysis of spaces of inclusion and welcome/exclusion and hostility within three Northern European cities –

Frankfurt, Gothenburg and Manchester – from the summer of 2015 to the spring of 2016. We are particularly concerned here with the life of (unaccompanied) young refugees, of minors, within the European territory. Borders and boundaries – between nations, nation-states, citizens and non-citizens – in our reading are social constructions and are maintained – or challenged, shifted or otherwise altered – by interactions and discourses with boundary-shifting understood as the central process in successful integration of newcomers (Wimmer, 2008).

We analyse the re-emergence of practices of creating and supporting safe enough spaces for association in communities, the ways these constitute a response to the levels of anxiety, fear and hostility, and how these may be mobilised in the continuing crises. Just as the issue of the border is of utmost significance at a national and European level, and the nature of its crossing marks the lives of those who move across it as legal or illegal, national or foreign, belonging or not-belonging, to be retained or to be expelled, so the nature of the borders of non-formal spaces of learning and informal practices of community support, and their relative permeability, is of key significance in the account and analysis which follow. However the disputed border and border-markings which affect all migrants do not miraculously disappear in non-formal spaces of the kind discussed and analysed here. State policies and politics as well as cultural struggles and forms of abjection (including those involving racism and patriarchal politics for example) persist in these spaces too and so we attempt here an initial mapping of the micropolitics of such spaces. We do not seek to romanticise them but we do wish to argue for their value.

These are the 'third spaces', the spaces of civil society (Bhaba, 1994), which must be supported and nurtured if the democratic conversation on the subject of war and refugees is to be embarked on let alone sustained, between people of different languages and very different immediate experience, with different kinds of anxiety and different kinds of hope and fear. The provisional nature of all group belongings is made vivid in these spaces of encounter.

Non-formal spaces and informal practices of learning have been recognised as immensely significant in other processes of transformation (most notably in accounts of transversal politics and peace processes of rooting and shifting (Cockburn, 1998). Non-formal spaces emerge initially when

relatively less powerful populations seek to negotiate with powerful narratives which define and shape an experience of abjection, and abjected populations are able to claim greater freedom for negotiation and indeed for the possibility of life in such spaces (Tyler, 2013). The emergent transnationalism (Rivzi, 2011) of such spaces is one grounded in the experience of precarity. The openness that characterises them is a significant feature of the experience of cross-cultural dialogue here which we argue is needed currently if the 'refugee crisis' is to be democratically addressed.

Non-Formal Spaces of Learning and Welcome in the Face of Hostility.

An essential feature of the spaces for association explored is their voluntary nature and this implies the negotiation as distinct from imposition of boundaries and relationships within them (Batsleer,2008). Such non-formal spaces are therefore able to enact welcome and may also be vectors of hostility. In understanding this more fully, and especially the experience of welcoming young refugees within these spaces, educational institutions will be able to contribute to the essential work of inter-cultural conversation and dialogue which the times demand of us. Building on significant research literature in the field of social work (Hek, 2005), this paper article seeks to engage further with a number of key findings which are of continued relevance. Firstly we are concerned with the impact of public policy. Save the Children (2004) recognised that young people's attempts to build a future and to keep life going are in defiance of immigration frameworks designed to be punitive in order to discourage migration and placate sections of public opinion. This context of both institutional and political hostility is one dimension of our analysis.

Secondly we are concerned with specific and deliberate practices of welcome. Because institutionalised hostility forms the context for the welcome present in non-formal spaces, specific strategies of affirmation are developed to counter this (Shukra,2010). The need for self-advocacy, the need for an opportunity to enjoy life and be distracted from trauma, the need for 'small places close to home' in which to connect and be together are among the further earlier findings built on here. Earlier research on the issues facing young refugees has emphasised the importance of friendship, social bonds and bridges (Behrens, Hughes, Hek and Spice, 2007). In the vignettes which follow, the continuing issues concerning specific strategies of affirmation are presented, now being amplified by

the scale of the current crisis. The intention is to argue that there is no merely administrative solution to these crises and to identify the potential contribution of non-formal spaces to a democratic conversation (Ahmed et al, 2003).

The non-formal educational spaces referred to here are projects outside of school, college and University, which seek to engage nevertheless with children and young people as well as adults, beyond the requirements of school based curricula and assessments (Batsleer, 2008). Sometimes sponsored by public bodies and large charities or religious foundations, and sometimes emerging from the self-help, mutual aid and collective organising of specific groups, such projects enables the socio-cultural development of young people to occur (Walther, 2006; Jeffs and Smith, 1996).

The term 'non-formal' (as it has emerged especially in youth work) refers to contexts in which learning is arranged intentionally, yet without strict curricula and assessment. In providing space and opportunity for specific experiences and activities, there is an emphasis on negotiation, voluntary relationship and facilitation of young people's own interests and passions. In such contexts, in contrast to schools, emerging situations, such as the arrival of new refugee populations, can be accommodated more rapidly and there is the possibility of strategies and learning processes changing accordingly fast (Norton and Cohen,2000; Thomas,2011). It is therefore very understandable that it is these non-formal spaces in which new populations are engaged and supported.

Research Questions

The major research questions of the *Partispace* project as a whole concern the spaces, styles and contexts of participation by young people, and the meanings attributed to formal, non-formal and informal scenes of participation. The project is not primarily framed by questions concerning the experience of refugees. It was the presence of refugees in the cities during the first mapping phase of the research which prompted further curiosity. Researchers' interest developed concerning the significance of and tensions in 'small places close to home' as places and spaces of learning and engagement when refugees were present. We wanted to know what was happening now and whether the welcomes and hostilities being extended to young refugees in the cities we were studying was

expressed in particular ways in youth participation projects and civil associations, how the spaces and places of this welcome/hostility were being facilitated and by whom. The question of the nature of the boundaries of such spaces and the potential for learning within them became a key question and this will be returned to in the city vignettes which follow.

Just as, in the overarching research we have an interest in the analysis of the relation between Europe wide experiences and orientations and local expressions and orientations, so the discussion here of civil society based responses to young refugees required a contextualizing perspective on political and historical developments in refugee and migrant reception. In each of the cities familiar narratives and visual images have been mobilised to provoke fear of refugees (The Over-crowded Boat; the claims on Benefits and Housing; the 'alien patriarchal' culture). One of the chief commonalities across the three cities is the strong presence of a discourse of abjection against refugees. Thus the non-formal spaces of welcome must involve more than merely intercultural learning, as intercultural learning is only one part of educational processes at stake; also involved is a countering of abjection. There is not the space to document these discourses of abjection here but they form one of the most significant aspects of the context and supports the analysis by Holmes and Castañeda (2016) (using Gramscian terms) which presents the ongoing struggles about representations of the current situation as a "war of position" between different possible European and global futures. The "war of position" in this sense is the struggle over symbols, discourses, policies, and, ultimately, social and material resources.

One main feature of this discursive struggle is the return of the concept of "deserving refugees" as against bogus or illegitimate migrants or asylum seekers: "the discourse of deservingness displaces responsibility from historical political and economic policies supported by powerful actors in Europe and the United States and instead locates it in displaced people themselves" (Holmes and Castañeda 2016: 13). Graf (2016) also analytically divides the engagement of civil society into "pure" charity and the more overtly political solidarity. Our own reflections, starting from observations made during the field work for our study on youth participation, are analysed specifically in relation to how

counter-hegemonic narratives may be arising, how borders may be crossed as well as re-established and what bridges may be temporarily made.

Methodology and Method

The methodology of *Partispace* is a comparative analysis and delineation of spaces, using grounded theory in its more generic meaning of bottom-up inductive analysis and combining a number of data collection methods (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) . The core of the project consists in case studies aimed at elaborating local constellations of youth participation in major European cities. Across the seven cities of the study, the project teams had undertaken a preliminary mapping of key policy documents, undertaken about 100 interviews and were completing field work when the data in this article was drawn together. Data is transcribed and coded leading to grounded theory memos. It is necessary to state here that whilst this is the ambition of *Partispace*, the material presented here is drawn only from the early mapping phase of the project. Since the field work is still in progress the findings presented here are provisional. The accounts of developments in each city are based on project fieldnotes and developed into a narrative for this article. In gathering together fieldnotes from each context, and analysing them, discussion and analysis occurred both in local teams and in the *Partispace* consortium.

  Qualitative multilevel analysis (QMA) has been developed by Walther et al. (2006) for the analysis of individual education and learning processes which involves not only reconstructing individual biographies but also the interrelation of the individual level in interaction with others. The situatedness of these interactions in institutions and/or milieus, the local environment and finally the societal macro level consisting of socio-economic and institutional structures as well as dominant discourses are analysed. QMA starts from identifying the 'bridges and connection points' between the levels and analyses these interrelations. The 'bridges and connection points' discussed here in relation to the practices of welcome we have identified in each city are: the practices of welcome/hostility; practices of regrouping and shifting; practices of friendship and hospitality. We therefore use these bridging and connecting terms both in the discussion of the individual cities and to contribute to the comparative analysis with which this article concludes.

The three cities chosen are each Northern European cities with different experiences of migration and with different policy and political contexts. Germany has been called a "reluctant" (Bommes, 2010) or "late" (Diehl and Schnell, 2006) immigration country. One important legacy of this is that the only legal way to immigrate permanently to Germany is via the asylum channel. Unlike in other European countries there was never space for a "Sans-Papier" movement such as those in France or Spain. One could speculate on whether this is because the German migration regime was able to absorb all people entering into some kind of "legal" status – no matter how precarious these were. The important consequence is the public perception that immigration is manageable by a mix of border control and channelling people into the bureaucratic system of care for asylum-seekers – as every migrant has come to be called since the 1990's. In Sweden, the inherent contentiousness of the 'refugee issue' has unfolded in contradictory ways. On the one hand Sweden has established itself as one of the main recipients of asylum seekers inside 'fortress Europe' during the years of war, conflict and instability in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and north-east Africa (UNHCR.org). A growing number of refugees have been coming to Sweden during the last years with a sharp increase from the summer of 2015. In total, more than 160 000 people sought asylum in Sweden during 2015, which was twice as many as in 2014 (website of the Swedish Migration Agency). Also, the public opinion has on a long-term basis, from 1990 to 2014, moved in a more positive direction towards receiving refugees (SOM-report 2015:22, p 49). On the other hand, there has been a growing opposition both against this refugee policy and, in general, against any immigrants coming to Sweden. The right-wing and populist party the Swedish Democrats, with anti-immigration politics as its most significant issue, won 12.9% of the votes in the election 2014 thus becoming the third largest political party in Sweden. The official UK context is one of determined hostility and denial of responsibility for the crisis at the border of the European Union. There is not only a language of hostility to refugees in sections of the press but to all non-British migrants, including Europeans. This was the context in which the referendum on continued membership of the European Union took place. Only 5,000 Syrians had been granted asylum in the UK between 2011 and 2015. When the Government announced it would take 20,000 more refugees and 3,000 children, it in fact accepted 350 (Guardian,8/2/2017). There remains little evidence of any official commitment to welcome refugees.

In the presentation of findings which follows, the analysis of the bridging themes at the micro level of spaces, i.e. *border-crossing practices; re-grouping and shifting practices; and practices of friendship and hospitality* needs therefore to be contextualised in the following dimensions of the crisis of the European migration regime (Tsianos and Kasparek 2015): (1) the practical discussion about the limitation of resources, the need for infrastructure and support for the newcomers; (2) a theoretical discussion of who is a citizen and what citizenship is like, criteria for the recognition of refugees, religion and culture; (3) a discursive struggle about concepts and terms to position the not-so-new-comers: illegal immigrants, migrants, foreigners, unaccompanied minor refugees, which is also marked by scenarios drawn in mostly nature-like terms, like the "flood of asylum-seekers", "asylum-tsunami", but also "full-boat"-scenarios and pictures of a culture attacked by barbarians, heading towards extinction; finally, (4) a discussion about civil society, about what would be a decent and humanitarian society. These dimensions will provide the analytic framework for the comparative discussion with which this paper ends.

In the drawing of a border (at the level of the nation state or the European arena) a hierarchy of access to resources to meet basic needs is established; citizens before non-citizens. The actions reported on here create spaces with permeable borders in which this hierarchy is suspended so that human needs can be met, and it is on this basis- where humanity precedes citizenship rights - that dialogue can begin, and the transitional spaces which create access to a new form of public belonging can emerge. The findings presented here are given first in their national context and then discussed comparatively.

Frankfurt Contradictions

Theme One: Border-Crossing Practices. The Micropolitics of Welcome.

The unexpectedly friendly face the German public displayed during the world championship in men's football during the summer of 2006 was later labelled the "German summer fairy tale". The same tale has been written in Frankfurt when the trains from Hungary on the 5th September 2015 reached the main train station and arrivals were applauded, helped and given donations – mostly organised by a non-formal group "Welcome Frankfurt" organised via social media and some unorganised volunteers

Just six days later the supporters started getting tired by their around-the-clock-work and asked for support - the "ecstasy of Saturday evaporated" and a big newspaper titled "State of emergency on the main train station ".

The first response from civil society can therefore be seen as one which disrupts a border and attempts to respond to basic needs of other humans, but this was soon complexified. At the start of October 2015 sustainable structures began to be implemented and replaced the non-formal organising by more or less formal support. This happened with significant difficulty but illustrates a typical development of "German Coping", somewhere between hysteria, excessive control, powerlessness and inventiveness. The speed of changing newspaper headlines at this time between state of emergency, professionalisation, distress, solution, hostility and support has to be seen critically and shows a country in a true crisis – the crisis of inner administration rather than a crisis of refugees.

There are several organisations who offer help for (un)accompanied minor and of age refugees; most of them compensate a lack of existing infrastructure by activating engagement by volunteers; others address a certain kind of refugees by neglecting other refugees,for example inner European refugees. This hospitality was quickly channelled into the established ways of the corporatist German welfare state – often top-down and seldom orientated to the needs of the individuals. Two examples for Frankfurt show different ways of hospitality and solidarity on a formal, non-formal and informal level. The first, *Project Shelter,* is a non-formal network and political group for and with refugees which has shown high engagement, persistence and different styles of participation from practical support to political solidarity. The other is a network, *Frankfurt Hilft*, connected to voluntary support organized top-down by the municipality to organise help offered by private persons and companies. *Frankfurt Hilft* can be recognised as giving a significant opportunity for friendship and peer to peer engagement through which learning and dialogue occurs.

Theme Two Regrouping and Shifting The Micropolitics of Citizenship

The grassroots-based group *"Project Shelter"* is an example of a project which broadens its social and political work as it is guided by the necessities of its members and thus shows the development from

support to solidarity. Again, the response to basic need takes priority. *"Project Shelter"* has existed since December 2014 and started as social support to homeless refugees by providing them with basic infrastructure (i.e. organising shelter) and political support, by criticising the impact of European and German law towards the situation of the so called "Lampedusa Refugees" who have fled their countries by crossing European borders and were hence neglected in their appeals for integration and social welfare in Germany. The project consisted then and today of a heterogeneous group: socially and politically active students, refugees fled from African countries of all ages and gender, also with their families (or, in their own words, as they name it: the group consists of "passport-Germans and non-passport-Germans"). In this context people from a range of national contexts have come together and claimed the name 'German' …. in part as a means of claiming a new form of belonging and an example of the 'war of position' over the representation of refugees. This discursive affirmation is significant. It shifts and makes permeable a boundary rendered powerful in citizenship status.

In January 2016, the group decided that creating immediate support by providing infrastructure was insufficient. They decided to create a social centre where they could work socially and politically, connect, inform and support as well as make offers of temporary housing, cultural and educational offers and plan communication about the situation. This place should not just be for the active people of the inner core but for all refugees and migrants: a communication and consultation café. The idea of a café as used here reflects the open-door approach in direct contrast to the closed borders of the migration system.

After nearly one year of intensive networking, demonstrating, campaigning, attending political meetings and round tables and meeting politicians the main goal, a centre, still seemed far away. *"Project Shelter"* had become well known in the city and had the same trouble as all the refugees had: a lack of support and acknowledgement by the political representatives and institutions of the city. In addition, and making everything worse, was the homelessness during a harsh winter and the fact that the refugees themselves often have no legal status and thereby no chance to demand support by the state. In December 2015 and February 2016, the group occupied long-time vacant buildings but, after confrontation with the police and following injury and arrest of some demonstrators, left it

or were evacuated. Prosecution of the activists by the authorities followed in the months afterwards. The city, supporting voluntary work for refugees by talking and praising its citizen's engagement, still failed to support the work of "Project Shelter". In July 2016, the next occupation followed by occupying the next vacant building in the inner city, this time with a partial success: the private owner of the building negotiated with the squatter personally and offered a partial use of the ground floor and a withdrawal of criminal charges. The intensive renovation work needed less than one month, then the new Café opened in August 2016 and, despite a short-time-closing after Neo-Nazi attacks and threats on the place in December 2016, has opened for the interested public and the more than 70 people in need. *Project Shelter* shows the development and intensive, but also highly precarious, work of activists, their strong solidarity, but also the marginalisation of refugees, lack of support and passivity of the political system, and the entanglement of formal, informal and non-formal structures and activities. The Café as a form expresses the openness of the endeavour; the failure to act in support of Project Shelter suggests the persistence of the 'border control' of space on the part of the City authorities

Theme Three Practices of Friendship and the Micropolitics of Hospitality

Frankfurt Hilft is a regional platform of the social work department of the municipality of Frankfurt in cooperation with several foundations. *Frankfurt Hilft* functions to distribute offers for engagement and donations to interlink them with volunteers and organisations in need. It serves as a platform of institutions, private persons and companies who are willing to help/donate. They can match their engagement with needs collected via the platform while grassroots groups can communicate the needs occurring during their day-to-day work. Furthermore, this platform interlinks institutions with others, offers training and supervision of volunteers. *Frankfurt Hilft* serves as a junction which is organised professionally on a top-down structure, but is flexible in bringing private persons into face to face contact. This person to person contact can be understood as an essential aspect of the regrouping process which migrants face, as well as a basis for friendship to develop.

The engagement and its efficacy can be experienced almost immediately. However it can be argued that the attitude which is the basis of those offers inhibits self-organisation, as refugees are assessed in

a bureaucratic manner and their possibilities of agency and presence as equal subjects thereby rendered difficult. Here the relative permeability of the 'helping' and 'welcoming' space shows how it may be open to a range of meanings, including those hostile meanings which the discourses of abjection involve. There are also powerful drivers dividing the sympathies of the public towards welcome and unwelcome groups of migrants. The 'attractive' and 'unattractive', the 'vulnerable' and the 'dangerous' may come to be defined through a bureaucratic screening process, which then suggests that 'volunteers should not ask about the experience refugees have had' just as the State systems themselves work to name and classify asylum seekers as 'genuine' or 'bogus'.

Nevertheless, and within these tensions, there is space, here too, for creativity: one of the youth centres in the *Partispace* project became a centre for emergency accommodation for refugees in autumn 2015. The youth worker (herself a daughter of Kurdish migrants in an earlier generation) regularly facilitated dialogue on the basis of her own language competence and her requests to the platform enabling the newly arrived young people to name their own needs, which, as well as the most basic needs, also included a request for the provision of Pashto/German and Dari/German dictionaries. This practice of language learning from both directions was enabled by the presence of a 'small place close to home' and the socio-cultural accompaniment provided in the context of the Youth Centre.

Gothenburg Contradictions

Theme One: Border-Crossing Practices. The Micropolitics of Welcome

Gothenburg, the second largest city in Sweden, is a natural thoroughfare for migrants coming through Germany and Denmark. The responsibility for asylum seekers lies with the Swedish Migration Agency and asylum is sought from the police. The municipal authorities are obliged to arrange pre-school and school activities for all children they host as well as for those who have arrived with their parents. There is a special municipal responsibility to provide for the well-being of unaccompanied children under 18 years of age. Especially during the second half of 2015 a large number of refugees arrived in Gothenburg, many of them unaccompanied children. About 1 700 children came during

2015, compared with a little more than 400 children during 2014. The number of refugees exceeded all calculations and existing resources to take care of the situation were far from sufficient. This was met on the part of the municipality, by setting up a special management structure and by temporarily moving staff and means from all parts of the organization where possible.

At the same time there was a mobilization of civil society. Particularly distinguished was the assistance organized by the network *Refugees Welcome*. It played a major role in mobilizing both material assistance and social support, especially in the autumn of 2015. A special agreement was also signed between the municipality and eight different NGO's. Through the agreement it was possible to cooperate and use resources in an effective way. Aside from this there were several efforts started by for example churches and various sports clubs.

However, the presence of many newcomers in the city, many of them young men carrying painful experiences, also stirred up feelings of worry and insecurity among parts of the Gothenburg population. These feelings have been encouraged by political groups like the Swedish Democrats, but also fuelled by media coverage of some very rare, but also tragic, examples of violent conflicts at refugee accommodations. An image has been created that the refugees represent a kind of general threat against people's everyday security and ordinary life-styles. A group calling themselves 'the Soldiers of Oden' has taken on patrolling the streets of Gothenburg during night time in order to make them 'safe'. Rather, considering that the members of the group to a high degree have criminal records and political sympathies on the extreme right wing, they contribute to the opposite.

However, it would be a mistake to locate this kind of xenophobic hostility only in peculiar groups in the margins of society. This has been displayed during the beginning of 2016 when the city published plans to build new housing for refugees and decided to locate them in well-to-do areas, where the number of immigrants generally is low and the response focussed on presence of social problems and threat to property values. Gothenburg is a very segregated city and the main responsibility to cater for the everyday needs of refugees has this far primarily been taken by districts with already stretched economic resources.

The importance of the Swedish welfare system with its organized top-down steering through authorities and political decisions becomes evident in the Gothenburg situation. The system frames and directs all efforts. The public organization and resources managed to withstand great strains and to solve a number of difficult problems. However, it also had limitations and these were used as main argument to drastically change the national policy in January 2016. The immediate change the new policy resulted in at the local level, again illustrates the massive impact of the top-down steering model.

One would perhaps expect that the top-down steering process resulted in passivity at the local level, but what we see is rather an extensive activity. Partly it has a complementary and supporting function in relation to the public efforts. The organization *Refugees Welcome* was much faster than the city administration to organize a reception for the refugees at the central train station. The response to basic needs, here as in Frankfurt and Manchester, emerged first from civil society networks, social media organising and private individuals, with the public authorities engaging more slowly. This citizen action establishes a 'border-disrupting practice.' Many practices by young volunteers, like organizing a first reception, arranging a place to sleep and managing school activities, are really central in order to help refugees to have a functioning everyday life and a hope for a better future. In relation to these efforts social relations and leisure time activities develop. The action to create a space of welcome immediately makes the apparently impermeable borders of citizenship more permeable.

Theme Two Regrouping and Shifting The Micropolitics of Citizenship.

The *Biskopsgården* project exemplifies how a combination of formal institutions and non-formal associations could manage an effort that compensated the failure of the local administration to provide refugee children with schooling.

This volunteering project is a project at the Department of Social Work, Gothenburg University, where daily activities are organized for unaccompanied refugee youth living in the suburb 'Biskopsgården'. Students are responsible for the project and it is situated in premises that the students have access to since they take part in a field based study programme. The background is that

the local administration of Biskopsgården has not been able to provide all young refugees with proper schooling, so instead the students organize social introduction to the Swedish society and language training in combination with sharing social relations and making meaningful activities. This involves peer to peer support and the practices of friendship here. Taking part in everyday and low key social and leisure activities, for example, are the forms through which hospitality is practiced and regrouping may occur. Here the capacity to act from a non-formal space of civil society is seen as enabling learning as belonging while more boundaries and bureaucratic processes of assessment are still occurring.

Through the project the young refugees have been able to make contacts with other young people, with the students and special 'introduction assistants'. The latter have also functioned as interpreters. This is learning social work as a form of pedagogy while doing it. It is interesting to reflect upon the relation between the different groups involved. Here we have the young refugees, the students and the volunteers who functioned as 'introduction assistants' and interpreters. These were unemployed immigrants living on social benefits. For them the mission was connected to a feeling of having something meaningful to do; they had important knowledge that they could make use of in order to help others. The students were dependent upon the introduction assistants for interpretation and in relation to the newly arrived refugees the introduction assistants could feel useful since they had more experience of the Swedish society. For the students the most important thing was to make a contribution in order to help the refugees, but it was also a situation in which they could try their knowledge of social work and test a professional role. This illustrates clearly how the positions of being 'helped' or 'a helper' shift between participants. The refugees were constructed as receivers of help, but in several ways their presence actually helped both the students and the introduction assistants, whilst in some cases refugees themselves take on the 'helper' role especially in relation to issues of translation and access to language learning. So the complex terrain of mutuality is co-constructed and the boundaries of belonging and not-belonging are rendered permeable in ways which support mutual learning and mutual socio-cultural accompaniment.

Theme Three Practices of Friendship and the Micropolitics of Hospitality

Youth Agents started out from a different angle. Already engaged in issues concerning young people's position in society, helping young refugees fits well into their overall commitment. In a way, they can be seen as a flexible micropolitical unit, ready to become involved in issues that are compatible with their agenda.

Youth Agents' is a group of about ten girls aged 15 to 17 years living in the west part of Gothenburg. They have been working together in the group for three years. . First, they took part in different girl groups at local youth centres. Then they joined a number of courses, for example in leadership, arranged by the Youth consultants in the local area. Right now *Youth Agents* have focussed their interest on newly arrived refugee children. The Agents make contact with the children and try to find happy, enjoyable and meaningful activities to do together with them. This is made more possible by the resurgence of civil society groups offering opportunities for refugees: many leisure facilities are offering specific 'welcome' sessions and this means that local young people can and do accompany refugee young people to dance sessions, skate parks, and language classes. These peer-to-peer activities are an essential aspect of solidarity building and an orientation to support. As the 'Soldiers of Odin' exploit fears of safety, this network counters this by supporting 'safe spaces' for encounter. Furthermore, the groups assisting refugees deal with safety, but in contrast, it is the vulnerability of the refugees and their need for security that is their vantage point. This illustrates the inherent (micro)political character of the safety issue.

Manchester Contradictions

Theme One: Border-Crossing Practices. The Micropolitics of Welcome

In the UK, the camp at Calais known as 'The Jungle' became a significant focus for activists of all ages, perhaps especially but not only for young people. This included both charitable work, the direct delivery of food, clothes and other goods, cultural engagement with music theatre and worship and political advocacy and activism. It was possible in Manchester to regularly hear reports from those who have visited the camp at Calais taking humanitarian aid. The denial of crisis by the UK Government and the official 'refusal to help' seemed to generate an opposing desire among some

groups of young people and reference to the needs of refugees and homeless people can be found throughout the range of *Partispace* fieldnotes from 2015 to 2016. The determination of some young people to act with hospitality is strengthened by Government and wider public hostility. The protests against eviction of the camp at Calais were attributed to 'No Borders' activists, but there is also a movement of compassion here which does not especially seek a political voice.

Against the national context of hostility and denial, Manchester as a city takes pride in its traditions of welcome. As well as an official civic culture of support to refugees there is a strong activist tradition in the city of justice campaigns in support of individuals and families, and specifically of anti-deportation campaigns. Some of these successful anti-deportation campaigns (dating back to the 1970's) became focuses for the development of community organisations and support networks and currently the city's organisations – which unite educational, welfare and political work. Alongside these civil society groups and projects, Manchester City Council has become a 'City of Sanctuary' and part of the City of Sanctuary Network, encouraging local people and communities to take small actions which welcome refugees. This included such actions as offering services, creating conversation circles, promoting membership of sporting clubs, and challenging exclusionary practices.

Theme Two Regrouping and Shifting The Micropolitics of Citizenship.

The local Universities have been a source of energy and activism. In 2001, *RAPAR's* (Refugee Action Participatory Action Research) initiator, a researcher at the University of Salford, was approached for help by community health, cohesion and social work practitioners who were confronted with a new population: refugees, forcibly dispersed to these practitioners' localities in North West England conurbations for the first time, became their 'clients'. With support from the Revans Research Institute at the University of Salford, *RAPAR* began as a working group that drew on their skills and networks as clinicians, epidemiologists and social scientists; their personal identities as refugees and second or third generation migrants to the UK; and their professional relationships with community development practitioners. *RAPAR* began to reach the national media with its research about what was happening to people seeking asylum from both Iraq and Somalia and to their local communities here.

However, during 2004-6, *RAPAR* faced highly concentrated efforts to stop its work in its tracks, when the organisation as a whole came under direct and sustained attack. These attacks were a result of *RAPAR's* continuing exposure of institutional racism and a range of examples of very bad, and in some instances deadly, practices in the maltreatment of forcibly displaced peoples which can place the organisation in direct conflict with police forces, and the statutory, private and third sectors. The turn of the attention to the institutionalised racism which is embodied in the work of the Border Agency leads to difficulties in the development of a more open approach to 'borders' when charitable work and solidarity is essentially politicised.

It can be said that Manchester remains a city of diversity but little integration. There are significant problems about language learning for new arrivals, and student political engagement with the conditions in 'The Jungle' in Calais needs to be set alongside the marginalisation of 'actually existing refugee communities within the city. The presence of 'homelessness camps' around the city currently has led to claims that 1 in 4 of those camped out in the city centre are Europeans, for whom the City Council has offered to pay for flights home. New militant anti-Muslim far right groups such as North West Infidels are beginning to establish a presence, alongside UKIP, in some of the poorest wards of the City. In the face of such hostility, the reporting by the local press that Syrian refugees living in Greater Manchester formed a contingent to support those from host communities affected by floods in winter 2015-16 was very welcome . This was enabled through a small community association, created with the support of Refugee Action. The support to the development of 'small spaces close to home' by refugees as well as by those welcoming them is integral to the practices and possibilities of non-formal learning and mutual socio-cultural accompaniment.

Theme Three Practices of Friendship and the Micropolitics of Hospitality

Many people in the Somali community in Manchester arrived from a bloody civil war in the 1990's and early 2000's. Since that time there has been a systematic change in the life chances of young people from the community – their educational achievement has risen significantly and the access to post school opportunities has also been more fully realised than it was at the beginning of the period. Some of the children who arrived with their parents are now youth workers in the neighbourhood

where they first arrived and they are now responding to the presence of a new group of refugees, this time from Libya. From 2011 Libyan refugees have been arriving into the city and many are being housed on the estate to which the Somali refugees first arrived. This estate was previously home to the City's African Caribbean community and some African Caribbean households remain, but during the 1990's became the site of significant gun crime which led many families to seek to protect their children by leaving the area. There is therefore a history here, both of the experience of welcome, of cross-community working and of facing up to and seeking to tackle racism and xenophobia encountered by members of minority

communities.

This is the context in which *The Hideaway Youth Project* operates. *The Hideaway* is housed in the Amani Centre at the edge of the estate and the Amani Centre also houses The Manchester People's Church. Currently the project has two key focuses for its work. The first continues to be an engagement with the local Somali community who are facing a renewed level of scrutiny after the Paris bombings. Initially, newly arrived parents did not wish their children to come to the project as they feared for their safety. But over time they recognised *Hideaway* as a safe space for both girls and boys. For girls, the Girl Talk project is a space for girls only which is mainly attended by Somali girls. They relax after school and take part in simple activities, whilst becoming involved in mutual support and discussions of many kinds. The staff at the project, some of whom arrived themselves as children in the refugee movement from Somalia, were hearing of an increase in harassment of girls wearing the hijab. Together with a local arts project, Odd Arts, they made a film about the experience of harassment, and to support the voice and self-advocacy and rights of Muslim young women. In this context of experiencing abusive comments and 'scarf-pulling' (in case they are hiding a bomb) , faith and the right to wear the scarf as an outward and visible sign of faith is becoming a strong marker of identity for young Somali women, who are by no means the submissive young women of Orientalist stereotype.

However, despite the very recent arrival and settlement of the Somali community, and the fact that all are Muslim, there are emergent tensions with the Libyan community who arrived most recently and

are therefore predominantly young men, who are, as is well established, often the first to arrive in any movement of people. So,staff are seeking to create bridges between two very different but equally traumatised communities as hostilities and aggression threaten to emerge on the estate. The possibility of negotiating and sharing activities which this relatively open space permits is of central importance. Here football (the Refugee World Cup) becomes a tool to build bridges and establish contact and the local gym becomes a vital point of contact for the outreach workers. The presence of young men from a wide range of migrant communities – not only Libyans and Somalis, but Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis and even one or two Syrians – becomes a possible place where a potential binary divide (Somali's versus Libyans) can be diffused. From here the project contributes to a 'Peace Radio' station on a regular basis. This is what is meant by the potential offered by relatively permeable boundaries in the small groups we are analysing.

Comparative Analysis

The findings presented above have indicated how spaces of non-formal socio-cultural accompaniment have a significance in the ambivalent response to young refugees. Beginning with the idea of border-crossing and border-disrupting practices in the immediate response to human need, we have identified the recurrence of themes of welcome and affirmation, of regrouping and shifting, and of friendship and hospitality within these spaces. Non-formal spaces, with relatively permeable boundaries, have allowed a speed of response to an emergency, an openness to questions of safety, a re-grounding of response in basic human need and recognition, and the possibility of shifting and regrouping of roles of 'helper' and 'helped' from which mutuality and the conditions of dialogue can emerge. In the final section, the argument returns to the four dimensions of the crisis of the European migration regime delineated earlier and considers ways these are present in the non-formal spaces and practices of socio-cultural accompaniment which have been described..

Infrastructure Support, Limitation of Resources and Meeting Basic Needs

Firstly it can be said that in each case the development of a more permeable border for the welcoming of refugees in particular neighbourhoods of the three cities has been led and mobilised by civil society

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even when the co-ordinating presence and practices of Local Authorities are positive in enabling peer to peer friendship networks.

These responses have been to immediate basic needs for food and shelter and the 'border-disrupting' response of human solidarity and recognition of need provides the basis on which further 'inter-cultural dialogue' may happen. Nevertheless, the lack of a sufficient response remains evident in the strong presence of asylum seekers in the street homeless communities of Frankfurt and Manchester.

The role of public co-ordinating platforms appears in the accounts in Gothenburg and Frankfurt with a slightly different emphasis. On the one hand in Gothenburg these can seem to further energise and enable civil society actions whilst the perception in Frankfurt is more mixed with some problems associated with the sense of administrative regulation of a deeper crisis are highlighted. Separating the refugee with the right to remain from the asylum seeker and the failed asylum seeker contributes to the discursive division between the deserving and undeserving refugee; a division which threatens the practices of more permeable and open borders in small groups described here, by shaping the allocation of resource and dividing vulnerable populations.

Citizenship and Entitlement: Issues of Recognition, Religion and Culture

It can be argued that a relative openness of borders exacerbates the experience of lack of safety and it is this message which is present in the border-policing action of groups such as 'Soldiers of Oden' in Gothenburg, of North West Infidels in Manchester, and in the border skirmishes between communities in Manchester. The way that such border conflicts also come to be marked through attitudes to women is clear in all the cities. There is in consequence of this border-policing a sense of fragility in responses to and by refugee young people and a set of questions and experiences concerning safety and security which are present throughout the non-formal spaces presented here. Claims to entitlement are then framed not by appeals to common humanity but as citizen entitlements which must be assessed and legitimated.

It is notable that when there is a claim to citizenship, this also can legitimate a claim to politics and political struggle which can challenge the institutionalised racism of welfare systems. Differential

methods of allocations of resources (through voucher systems for example) and systems of exclusion, for example from participation in paid work, are highlighted. However,in the context of attempting to establish practices of friendship where a humanitarian focus is to the fore, explicit political activism can be destabilising.

When projects focussing on countering harassment, as with the Youth Agents in Gothenburg and Hideaway in Manchester, it is notable that it is in the local 'host' community in the first case and the relatively long established Somali community in the second, who experience an entitlement to highlight such issues, rather than the most recently arrived refugees.

Discursive Struggle

The context of a discursive struggle over concepts and terms through which to position the not-so-new-comers is marked in all three cities. The response to this is most often in the rejection within the projects of terms such as 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' and the conscious embrace of terms which equalise the power dynamics within the practices of the projects: terms like 'Introduction Assistants', language teachers/learners, active citizens campaigning for rights/meeting of needs; members of faith communities in dialogue with people of other faiths; volunteers responding to a public emergency (the floods) and supporting new comers. The point here is that this re-inscribing of relationship, together with a care about engagement with stories of loss and trauma and experiences of arrival in the city, is in absolute contention with prevailing hostile discourses of abjection against refugees. In some cases there is a clear political edge to this as in 'Passport and Non-Passport Germans.' Most often though, it is a positive affirmative step away from the effects in day to day encounters of profoundly unequal subject positions, and this creates the basis on which mutual learning occurs.

Practices of Friendship and Civil Society

There is an attunement to every day practices and sharing of resources, pleasures and leisure time which create the channels for further connection and exchange. This is illustrated in the existence of peer to peer volunteering networks in each city, often led by private individuals but with a significant part played by newly emerging associative practices in response to need (City of Sanctuary in Manchester; Young Agents in Gothenburg) and by the role of previously migrant communities in building these channels for new connection (Turkish heritage youth workers in Frankfurt; earlier immigrants in Gothenburg Biskopsgården; the African Caribbean youth workers linking to Somalis and links from Somalis to newly arriving Libyans in Manchester). It is possible to see how a more permeable border in small groups close to home may allow otherness to turn to ourness through small acts of every day exchange including information about safety, dictionaries, and forms of experience sharing, such as of ways of dealing with aggression and hostility.

Conclusion: Rising, Emerging, Contradictory Spaces. Microspheres of Learning and Civil Agency

In three significantly different political contexts therefore we can re- affirm significance of small places close to home, spaces which are flexible, easy to access, having relatively permeable boundaries. It is apparent that non-formal spaces are emerging and developing from the existing practices in each of the cities and from an engagement between refugees and indigenous communities. Notwithstanding existing and well-established practices of welcome, there is an inherited practice of control and exclusion in some contexts, and of right-wing neo-nationalism and inflammatory press reporting which means that civil society spaces explicitly dedicated to creating affirmation are necessary. (paralleling much established anti-racist thinking, Shukra, 2010).

In order to create space for democratic encounter, it is essential that newly arrived migrants are not rendered merely as objects of policy interventions but are present as equals and co-producers of emergent responses to and imaginations of new ways of being together in Europe. Non-formal spaces and initiatives seem to support these forms of inter-cultural learning. There can be both 'rooting' in a positive sense of identity and 'shifting' through relationship and dialogue with others and re-grouping. (Soni, 2011). It is absolutely necessary to acknowledge the context of violence and extreme trauma to

which these socio-cultural spaces are responding and against which they can provide a fragile but necessary buffer. It is very important that the violence of current global conditions is recognised as present throughout and not merely projected on to and acted out by refugees or the impoverished members of indigenous far-right groups. Given the masculinism through which the violence is currently acted out, and the presence of sexual violence right across the current landscape it is striking that in two of the case studies presented here, it is young women who are leading in attempting to establish peace-building conversations, which do not avoid the realities of violence, but seek to go beyond it.

In terms of enjoying life and providing distraction from trauma there is a recognition of the importance of every day places to gather and get help, enjoy food, take part in sport and cultural activities, share worship perhaps and relax and socialise, as well as more formal educational opportunities for example in language learning. The value of University-community connections in each of these student cities is surely one strong potential source of a renewed democratic conversation, as it is in these small everyday practices that communication channels are being established.

At a microlevel, then, it is possible to see clearly how the channels which establish the possibility of dialogue and exchange might be established and also how State processes may undermine them. Therefore, there is a tension between the development of mutuality and solidarity at a micro level and attempts to generalise such solidarity which are frequently seen as overly politicised and dismissed by the municipal authorities and third sector networks (Project Shelter Frankfurt and RAPAR Manchester).

Holmes & Castañeda (2016) argue that in situations like this, local communities may react with hospitality towards newcomers and this may constitute a way to resist newly created dichotomies between the "settled population" and incomers, the deserving and the undeserving and the restriction imposed on people fleeing from war and terror. They argue that instead of seeing this as an unpolitical act that neglects the responsibility of the state, it may simply be impossible now to know what new forms of solidarity and political action might emerge from this.

It is not possible to escape from the dilemma that most of the time engagement fills the gaps in welfare provision that are not the consequence of an accident or natural catastrophe but of the politics of border regimes and that such actions sustain this this regime (Graf, 2016). And that progress from charity to solidarity is only possible if the engagement is based on a reflection of these circumstances. One final example from fieldnotes shows that grassroots initiatives also have an influence on the macropolitical setup: by the end of 2015 grassroots activists together with some of the big corporatist welfare organisations succeeded in ensuring that young unaccompanied refugees were granted the same rights to protection and care as their "autochthonous" peers when the German parliament decided that they should fall under the "Children and Youth Act" and not under the general "Asylum Seekers Support Act". This lead to a massive amelioration of their situation – and a huge gap between those who arrived alone and the children and young people who immigrated together with their families and have to live with the much lower support standards granted by the latter.

If we are right to see the possibility of non-formal spaces as contributing to an emerging new vision of European civility, they will need to be recognised and acknowledged and nurtured by those directing more institutional spaces such as schools, colleges and Universities. Volunteer 'Welcome' networks deserve nurturing and support as part of new infrastructures and the skills of people who are experienced and qualified to run groups in such 'third spaces' need to be acknowledged and valued. These may include youth workers, social workers, pedagogues, community educators, and socio-cultural animateurs. Part of the role of such staff is to support the emergence of co-facilitators from the newly arrived communities so that the move from 'help' to 'solidarity' can be effected.

Rozakou (2012) reconstructs two notions of hospitality in Greece: one that places refugees somewhere between the bare physical survival and a real social citizen and another form of hospitality that "symbolically reconstitutes" refugees as hosts and political subjects. There is at least a chance that resourcing and supporting non-formal spaces of inter-cultural meeting and solidarity building might enable a move towards the inter-cultural democratic conversations and imaginations, within which refugees are both hosts and political subjects, without which no merely administrative European solution is possible.

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