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Living in Hostile Environments

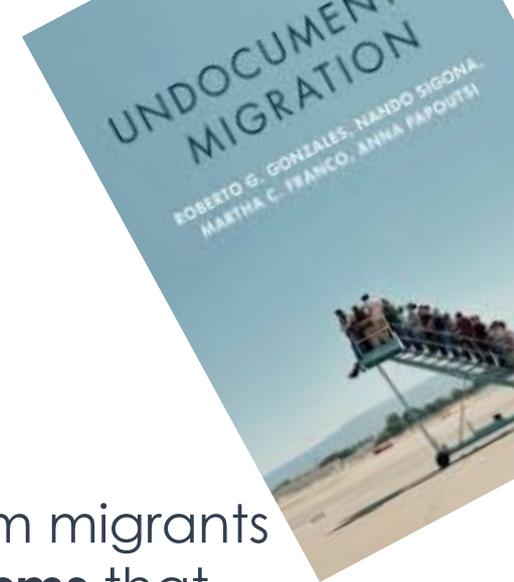
The production of
'illegality' in the age of
'crises'

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NODE NEW AND OLD
DIVERSITIES
EXCHANGE
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Producing “illegality”

- De Genova (2002) by highlighting the legal production of “illegality” shifts the focus from migrants as bearers of illegality to the **state mechanisms** that produce and sustain “illegal subjects”
- ‘Illegality’ shapes the position of the individual vis-à-vis the state and within the state (Coutin 2000, Menjivar 2006, Gonzales and Chavez 2012, Sigona 2012).
- Goldring et al. (2009) offer insight into the **political economy** of “precarious legal status” (also Castles)
- Undocumentedness as a “legal status” and a **mode of membership** resulting from intersection of different regimes of rights operating at **different scales** (including practices of enforcement) (Gonzales and Sigona 2017; Gonzales, Sigona et al 2019)



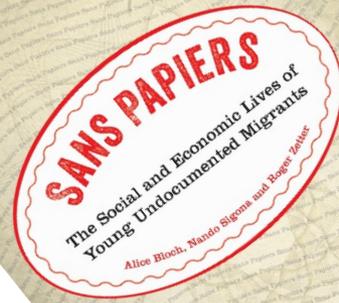
Experiencing “illegality”

- Everyday experiences of undocumented migrants as a way of examining the **specific configurations of “illegality”**
- **Deportability** (De Genova 2002) as the fear of being deported produces a ‘practical, materially consequential, and deeply interiorised mode of being’ in the world (Peutz and De Genova 2010: 14).

But do all undocumented migrants experience the same fear of deportation? If not, how do we explain variation?

- Attention to intersections to avoid a flattening analytical effect – ie the mono-dimensional immigrant (Bloch et al. 2014)

“Master status” shaping everyday interactions



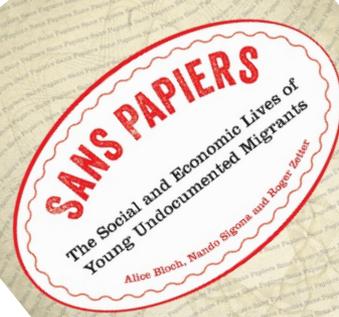
In the place of residence

- **I have too much baggage**, my problems are too much. ... I want to associate with people who understand my plight ... people who will be sensitive towards me when they see me behaving in a certain way. The British friends that I make do not understand so [...] **friendship becomes meaningless**. (Trish, 25, F, Zimbabwean)

And transnationally

- You can't really share something private now. You just talk like 'How are you? What are you doing?' **I can't tell them how my life is here. Because they would get unhappy, they will be worried**. You can't really share much. (Jiyan, 23, F, Kurd from Turkey)

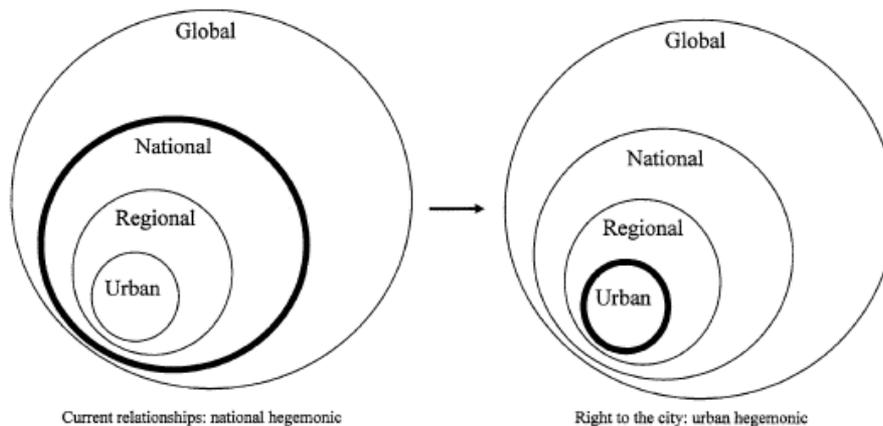
Unpacking experiences of deportation



- *Why should I **fear** to go back **home**?* (Uliana, 28, F, Ukraine) IOM and the suspension of grants for assisted return for Brazilians vs Kurds' **fear** of being sent back to Turkey
- Black Brazilians vs. Ukrainians' invisibility : **racialised** experiences and **racilalised** expectations
- *I am not scared of my flatmates but of **people on the street**. I am scared that they will know I am illegal* (Firat, 30, M, Kurd from Turkey) **Responding to changing immigration rhetoric and enforcement practices** (eg hostile environment)

Emplacing “illegality”: the city scale

- Cities are the primary destination of migrants and where the process of superdiversification is occurring at a faster pace (Pemberton and Phillimore 2016)
- Migrant pathways are both shaped by, and contribute to the **repositioning of cities in global economic and political networks** (Glick Schiller and Caglar 2009).
- They are **strategic sites** for the formation of new types of identities and communities (Sassen 2000) and new political subjects and possibilities of social transformation (Gonzales and Sigona 2017).

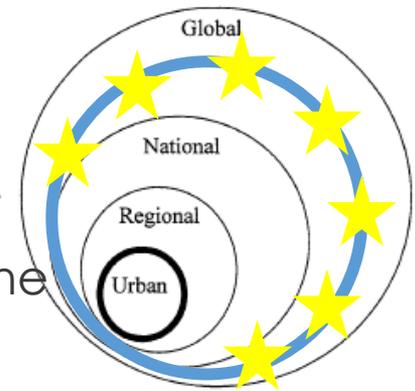


Eg New York,
Barcelona, Baltimore,
Athens, London

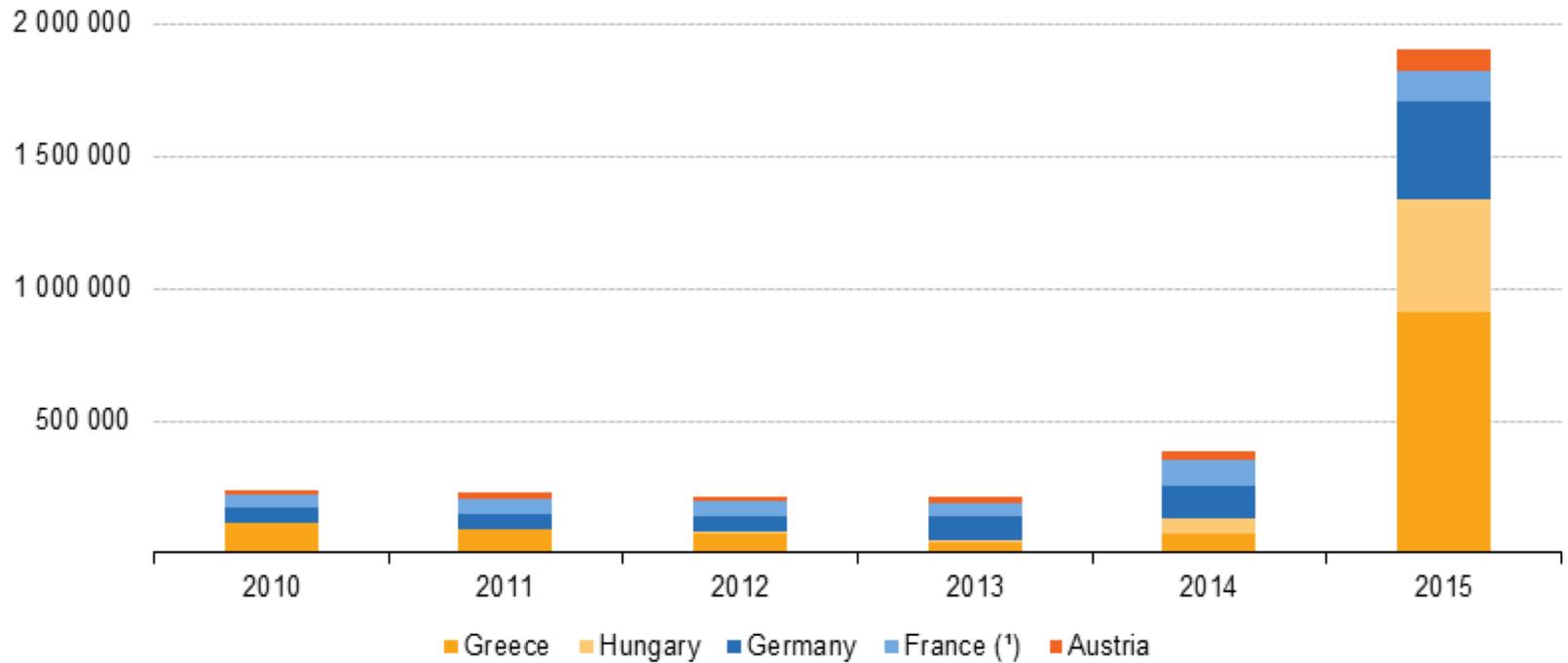
Figure 1. Alternative scalar relationships for defining political membership.

The “crisis” & the production of *new* “illegalised subjects”

- The ‘migration crisis’ triggered a fundamental restructuring of the governance of migration (eg expanded mandate of Frontex, EU-supervised hotspot system, redistribution scheme, Global Compacts)
- **Multiscalar (semantic) dilemma:** national, EU and international actors, agendas and narratives (eg global, EU, Mediterranean *migration crisis*?)
- **Persons of concerns** to whom: IOM vs UHNCR and the return to the migration and development nexus
- Redefining international obligations vis-à-vis people on the move and raised immigration control and management role for ‘transit’ states.
- Big data in externalised border areas make visible mobilities that were previously unaccounted for and create new ‘illegal migrants’.



Number of non-EU citizens found to be illegally present in the five most affected EU Member States, 2010–15 (Eurostat)



“Illegality” as an assemblage

The **illegality assemblage** is a dynamic set of policies, practices, actors, relationships and networks operating on multiple scales (**from hyperlocal to transnational**) that intervene to define the conditions in which *illegalised* immigrants establish themselves in a given context (Gonzales, Sigona et al 2019)

From “illegality regime” to “illegality assemblage”

Key features of the “illegality assemblage”

- **Contingent** and **transient**: It emerges from the encounter and/or collision of different elements – creating convergences of interests among actors with different agendas
- **Structural**: it is produced by the dynamics of neoliberal globalisation
- **Political and legal**: it is shaped by the hegemonic vision of ‘us and them’ and how it is operationalised in a specific place and time;
- **Geopolitical** and **emplaced**: it is shaped by changing power relations and politics of bordering both internationally and hyper-locally
- **Personal**: it shapes and transforms the life chances and opportunities of migrants, their descendants and society more broadly.