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Undoing Borders, Building the Commons:
The Solidarity Politics of the No Evictions Network in Glasgow

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is about the spatial politics of migrant solidarities. Drawing on a scholar-activist approach, it engages with the struggles of the No Evictions Network in Glasgow. The Network emerged through the convergence of heterogeneous trajectories of activism and migrant advocacy in the city to challenge the eviction of over 300 asylum seekers by *Serco*, a multinational company that held a billionaire contract from the Home Office to accommodate asylum seekers in Glasgow and other areas across the UK. Bringing literature on Black Geographies to the analysis of the border regimes, the thesis positions migrant struggles in relation to black counter-cartographies of struggle. Centring questions of race, it reframes current work on migration and solidarity through a nuanced engagement with black and feminist theories, making important interventions. On the one hand, engaging with the role that neoliberal companies like Serco develop within the political economies of the border and the production of migrants' 'premature death' (Gilmore, 2007), the thesis addresses the Network's politics as struggles against racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983). A focus on racial capitalism unpacks the articulations of racism, capitalism, or patriarchy underlying the struggles against borders, throwing light on the importance of building transversal alliances. The coming together of migrant collectives, housing struggles, and neighbours in the Network was an example of such alliances. Nevertheless, the political experiences of the Network illustrate how the crafting of solidarities and the negotiation of heterogeneous political cultures unfolds as a contentious process, crisscrossed by racialized, classed, and gendered borders (Featherstone, 2012). In this regard, special attention is drawn to the negotiation of power asymmetries and the tensions between strategies of 'direct support' and 'political campaigning' throughout the Network's campaigns. The argument explores how migrant agencies performed powerful strategies of mutual support, collective empowerment, and healing, challenging racialized and gendered notions of the political and activist cultures. Building upon these experiences, the concept of 'political reproduction' underscores how social reproductive politics not only enable migrants' survival across the deadly geographies of racial capitalism, but they are the means to build capacity of political struggle, linking to broader black and brown politics. Overall, the thesis explores how 'undoing borders' is an ongoing learning process that demands centring questions of anti-racism and migrant agency when tackling the intertwining oppressions coming to the fore through place-based struggles (hooks, 2013; Mohanty, 2003).

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

BLM: Black Lives Matter

BNP: British National Party

CARD: Campaign Against Racism

CCARD: Committee Against Racial Discrimination.

GARA: Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance

IWA: Indian Workers Association

LGTBiQ+: Lesbians, Gays, Transexual, Bisexual, Queer, +identities

LBF: Lothian Black Forum

LP: Labour Party

NEN: No Evictions Network

SAAC: Scottish Asian Action Committee

SCRC: Strathclyde Community Relations Council

SILC: Scottish Immigrant Labour Council

SLCC: Stop Lock Changes Coalition

SNP: Scottish National Party

STUC: Scottish Trade Unions Council

The Coalition: The Stop Lock Changes Coalition

The Network: The No Evictions Network

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

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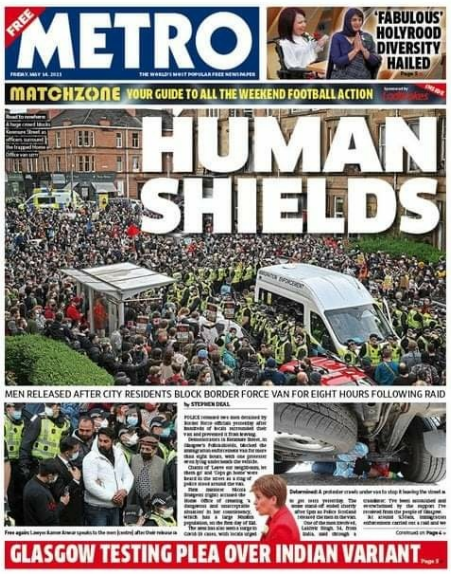
Signature:

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

'Without Community, There is No Liberation'
(Audre Lorde)

When on the morning of the 13th of May 2021 the alarm rang in my small room in Madrid announcing a new day of library work, I found hundreds of messages in the 'No Evictions Updates' WhatsApp group. A local resident from Pollokshields (Glasgow) had seen a UK Border Agency immigration van driving across the neighbourhood, alerting the No Evictions Network of a possible immigration raid to be happening. The Network – where I have been involved during all my PhD research – was formed in 2018 to campaign against the eviction of over 300 asylum seekers in Glasgow. Established since then as a key migrant solidarity hub in the city, it immediately made a public call asking people to come along to Kenmure Street, where two men were indeed being arrested and taken into the van. When the Border Agency's vehicle was about to drive away with the detainees, a local resident from the Network sprawled on the ground in front of its wheels refusing to leave until the men were freed. Following this action, the immigration van became surrounded by hundreds of neighbours in a sit-in protest that lasted until the two men were released, about eight hours later. In the course of the morning, I followed all the developments through the No Evictions WhatsApp group's updates and social media. I phoned some of my friends there, who told me they had never seen anything like this before. Besides, the Home Office had not chosen a random day to enforce those immigration raids. On the 13th of May, Pollokshields was celebrating Eid-al-Fitr, the day that marks the end of Ramadan, a big festivity for Muslim communities. Situated in Glasgow's Southside, Pollokshields has the biggest concentration of Asian populations in the city, and it is the heart of Muslim communities in Scotland. The police deployed tens of vans, vehicles, and horses into the area, and the protest was joined by an increasing number of neighbours, local businesses, and many people who were celebrating Eid in the local Mosque. After the massive protest forced the police to release the men by the end of the day, Kenmure became a symbol of solidarity and collective resistance.



Protest in Kenmure Street, 13/05/21 (Sources: No Evictions Network, Metro)

Many years had passed since the last immigration dawn raid in Glasgow. When in 1999 Glasgow became the biggest dispersal city where asylum seekers in the UK were to be housed, numerous grassroots campaigns emerged across dispersal areas to challenge the UK's Border Agency routine operations against asylum seekers. In the first years of the new century, historical working-class resistances such as the 'Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees' or the 'Glasgow Girls' achieved to put an end to dawn raids in Glasgow and to the deportation of children (Mainwaring, et al., 2020; Haedicke, 2017). Hence, the arrest of the Sikh Indian nationals Sumit Sehdev and Lakhuir Singh in Kenmure on the 13th of May 2021 meant the breach of Home Office's long-lasting pledge to not execute immigration raids in Scotland. On the same day, a third Indian man was also raided and taken to Dungavel Immigration Removal Center after sixteen years living in the country. In a situation of increasing political enclosure and harshening of border enforcement policies, the Kenmure Street protest showed how people in Glasgow were committed to stop dawn raids once again.

The Kenmure Street events happened in a political conjuncture shaped by the first Parliamentary steps to pass the new 'Nationality and Borders bill'[1], aimed at further criminalizing 'illegal migration' and the toughening of the British asylum system. The dangers of 'Channel crossings' and the need to 'take back control' on border policies had been a key rhetoric in discussions around Brexit. Emulating the Australian immigration model, the new bill opens-up the possibility for off-shore detention for refugees and asylum seekers, it establishes a two-tier system distinguishing between those who arrive 'illegally'

[1] https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023

and those who apply through a formal resettlement scheme, and it declares up to 4 years of prison for the former (Global Citizen, 2022)[2]. The bill also creates a precarious citizenship – applicable to a 41% of the non-white British population – whose status can now be taken away by the government without notification. Scotland has positioned itself as contrary to these policies, often using a pro-migration stance as a key argument against Brexit and for independence. Indeed, the Kenmure raid – which happened in a moment of transition of Government in Scottish Parliament – got explicit disapproval from SNP, Green, and Labour leaders, opening up new debates on Scottish' subjection to British immigration policies.

The scenes at Kenmure Street not only reached national political institutions but they crossed borders and reverberated across the world. Around lunchtime of the day of the protest, I got a call from my mom asking me to turn on the TV. Glasgow was in the Spanish news. Before long, I saw how friends from activist spaces and solidarity networks in Madrid and beyond also started to share images and news of Kenmure in social media as an example to follow. By the end of the year, Kenmure was named 'one of the 10 protests across the world that made a difference' (The Glasgow Times, 27/12/21). Sumit's and Lakhuir's release brought about feelings of power, unity, joy, and commitment to struggle. In Glasgow, the protest led to the formation of 'anti-raids' groups in areas like Govanhill, Pollokshields, Maryhill, and the East End, aiming to raise awareness and organize the local communities to stop immigration raids. Writing these lines near the first anniversary of the Kenmure protest, I can contend that the action succeeded in frustrating the Home Office's plans and reactivating a community ready to fight against unfair immigration systems. At this stage, we need to wonder: What can be learnt from Kenmure?

Kenmure was to a large extent an outcome of the struggles addressed throughout this thesis. It sets a clear example of the importance of place-based struggles in constructing networks of resistance to exclusionary bordering practices. On the one hand, Kenmure has taught us the importance of building connections, infrastructures of communication, and everyday political work. Reflecting about the day of the protest, members of the No Evictions Network reckon that the success of the action was due to the Network's efforts over the past three years 'organizing solidarity and building networks', meaning that when the call was made to block the van, 'the message was spread wide, and people trusted the Network to show up'[3]. Tactics such as direct action, legal observing, the disposal of effective

[2] https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/nationality-borders-bill-refugees-explainer/
[3] https://tripodtraining.org/blog-o4p/the-organising-behind-kenmure-street-13th-of-may-2021/

communication channels, and the Network's convening power were the result of years of collective struggle between migrants and neighbours in Glasgow. On the other hand, Kenmure was the materialization of some of the ways communities have agency in shaping 'what a place stands for' (Massey, 2007: 10), showing how they reaffirm their power through collective struggle, setting precedents, and building collective memories (Narotzky, 2014). Likewise, Kenmure's experience exposed the centrality of care and mutual support in the remaking of borders. The power of Kenmure relied in the plurality of people standing together in solidarity for a shared cause, uniting very heterogeneous subjects across axis of race, gender, political culture, religion, status, ethnicity, etc. under a shared notion of community. The coming together of people was fuelled by years of sharing everyday spaces and common struggles in different spaces, years of overcoming the exclusionary political boundaries defined by a deadly immigration system. Most of the people blocking the van, however, did not know the persons that were inside: Solidarity was the only mobile behind their action, and it did not emerge from a vacuum.

In the light of the foregoing, I can conclude that although the Kenmure Street action seemed to be a spontaneous mobilization, it was rather the result of longer trajectories of organizing and solidarity-making behind it (Akhtar, 2021). Kenmure set a new disruptive moment where solidarity achieved to break down the hegemonic logics of the border: this happened before when the Network stopped Serco's evictions, and when it challenged Mears' decision of detaining asylum seekers in hotel. Yet, these visible and contentious moments always capture most of the political attention, missing the relational backdrop that enable them. Rather, my research is precisely interested in the crafting of the solidarities behind the Kenmure Street experience, and in grasping those aspects that remain invisible in formal accounts of the political. Indeed, the hidden aspects of solidarity as a process not only enable moments of rupture such as Kenmure but, overall, they give these moments their disruptive character.

1.1. A Journey Back to the Emergence of the No Evictions Network

The No Evictions Network emerged three years before the events in Kenmure Street, after Serco – a multinational company awarded with a billion-worth contract by the Home Office to accommodate 17000 asylum seekers in the UK, 5000 of which in Glasgow – announced the eviction of 300 asylum seekers that the company considered 'overstayers'. The announcement of the evictions provoked the immediate response of migrant organizations, unions, allied groups, different NGOs, and the community, launching together

the ‘No Evictions Campaign’ in August 2018. By this time, I had just arrived back to Glasgow from participating in an ‘Open the Borders’ caravan that united migrant solidarity groups across Spain to travel to Italy and join protests against Matteo Salvini’s and EU’s migration politics. Concerned by this experience, and also motivated by my previous participation in migrant solidarity movements in Madrid (Spain) and my forecoming PhD project to research migrant solidarities in urban settings, I got actively involved in the ‘No Evictions Campaign’. Indeed, I was part of the conversations that led to the constitution of the No Evictions Network, when the activist side of the campaign – formed mostly by migrant solidarity collectives, a tenant’s union in the city, and local residents – decided to join their efforts in a shared political organizational space. From the beginning, I participated in the Network’s struggles against the evictions on the ground, taking part in different protests, direct support activities, and solidarity vigils across Glasgow’s dispersal neighbourhoods.

After living these struggles in first-hand and realizing the powerful solidarities forged through them, I decided to take the Network as the main case-study of my PhD research. Strongly committed with its politics and inspired by previous work in Human Geography and critical migration studies, I developed a scholar-activist research approach. My scholar-activist role became eased by the fact that I was already a regular member of the Network, and someone trusted by its participants. Beyond the struggles against the evictions, great part of my fieldwork was developed during the Covid19 pandemic, when the Network became involved in a new campaign to ‘Stop Hotel Detention’, challenging the removal of hundreds of asylum seekers from their private accommodations to hotels. Overall, during my fieldwork and my prior involvement, I have been interested in the contentious processes of solidarity making, looking at the negotiation of uneven geographies and the ways questions of power dynamics became addressed. I thought the experience of the Network could bring potential contributions to current theoretical and practical debates on solidarity. Hence, drawing on my scholar-activist experience and the key thoughts that it inspired, my research interrogates:

1) Firstly, what are the relationships between space, borders, and solidarity politics in Glasgow?
2) Secondly, what are the spatial politics of the No Evictions Network?
3) And thirdly, are ‘no borders’ solidarity spaces borderless? If not, what are the racialised, gendered, and classed dimensions of the politics of the Network?

1.2. Developing a Black Geographies of Migrant Solidarity

In its attempt to address these previous questions, this thesis brings literature on Black Geographies and black feminist writings to ongoing debates in work on migrant solidarities and the struggles against borders. Literature on migrant politics and border regimes has paid little attention to questions of race (see e.g. the collective work of Casas-Cortés et al, 2015). Furthermore, when race becomes addressed, it is never discussed drawing on non-white academic work (see De Genova, 2017). Filling this gap, this thesis engages with a rich range of work by black and brown geographical scholars and thinkers throughout its chapters, reflecting on how a nuanced engagement with questions of race raises important discussions to the theory and practice of migrant solidarities. I argue that this intervention expands current relevant work, as well as it directly tackles race-blinded approaches to migrant politics, making four core contributions that have important implications:

Firstly, the thesis unpacks the Black Geographies of the border regime. The last decades have seen a proliferation of literature on border regimes, migration, and the experiences of bordering and struggle from different disciplines (see e.g. Anderson, 2013; Anderson, et al., 2009; Casas-Cortes, et al., 2015; Dadusc & Mudu, 2020; Darling, 2017; Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016; Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013; Paasi, 2012, etc.). Despite the depth of these theoretical engagements, I argue that none of them has been attentive to race as a central element upon which contemporary migration regimes become articulated, nor they have engaged with black theory in their discussions. Challenging this omision, I engage with work on Black Geographies contesting 'the erasure of blackness within the whiteness and coloniality of geographical thought' and centring 'black spatial thought and agency' (Noxolo, 2022: 1). I contend that bringing about a Black Geographies of the border regime entails a fundamental shift in the ways border struggles have been theorized. It involves positioning the uneven geographies of migration in relation to 'a black sense of place' and long-lasting colonial histories of dispossession, mobility, and struggle (McKittrick, 2011). From this perspective, migrant struggles are situated as part of wider black and brown cartographies of struggle. I disscusss how these have been shaped by 'racial capitalism' (Robinson, 1983) and racialised exposure to 'premature death' (Gilmore, 2007). Hence, underscoring the ways racialized exploitation and capital accumulation are bounded together, a focus on racial capitalism unpacks the role that neoliberal companies – like Serco – play within the political economies of the border regime, producing the spaces of migrant struggle against exploitation and premature death. Overall, I unpack how a Black

Geographical understanding of the border regime centers questions of agency and challenges a strong tendency to detach migrant politics from race politics in literature (see the work referenced above).

Secondly, drawing on black feminist writings on solidarity (e.g. hooks, 2013; Mohanty, 2013), the thesis positions the negotiation of borders at the core of the processess of crafting political solidarities and building the commons. The insights of the black radical tradition provide a lens to address the ways race becomes articulated with other elements of the social, political, and economical in particular spatial contexts (Hall, 2018 [1980]; hooks, 2013). While most of the literature on migrant politics focuses on how movements challenge states' borders (Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen, 2016), the ways political, social, economic, and cultural borders become negotiated 'behind closed doors' in everyday solidarity spaces has attracted less attention (Swerts, 2018). I demonstrate that centering these processes challenges both 'no borders' romanticizing approaches (e.g. Anderson, et al., 2009), as well as forms of exclusionary identity politics. Indeed, refusing to understand anti-racism as a single struggle, black feminists have drawn attention to the interlocking systems of power at stake in the struggles against oppression. bell hooks (2013) refers to the 'white supremacist capitalist patriarchy' making a call for a politics of solidarity that moves beyond the essentialization of any political subject and which is attentive to the ways different subjects are oppressed in distinctive ways by hegemonic power structures. In my engagement with these questions, centering borders entails: On the one hand, understanding how migrant struggles are deeply tied to anticapitalism and other struggles against oppression; and on the other, paying attention to questions of power-dynamics in order to subvert the racialised, gendered, and classed borders criscrossing heterogeneous political spaces.

A third core contribution of this thesis comes with the introduction of the concept of 'political reproduction', which traces the intertwinning between black and brown social reproductive politics and the processes of political subjectivation. As noted above, work on Black Geographies has addressed the production of the 'premature death' of racialised populations as the defining element of racial capitalist geographies (Gilmore, 2007; Bhattacharyya, 2018). I argue that this analysis becomes key to understand the central importance that social reproductive politics have in forms of black and brown political agency and organizing, which have often considered reproduction as a necessary step towards political struggle (Heynen, 2009; Tyner, 2006). Indeed, black and brown social reproductive politics have tackled not only material and tangible inequalities experienced by their communities, but also those operating at the subjective level, paying particular attention

to the effects that living in a culture of white supremacy has over black minds, and how this forecloses black agencies (Fanon, 2008 [1952]; hooks, 2013). Linking to the first of my contributions, I argue that positioning migrant struggles in relation to these trajectories demands centring questions of social reproduction in the articulation of migrant solidarities. Building upon black theory and my fieldwork experiences, I demonstrate how social reproductive politics are constitutive of migrant political spaces. The argument underscores how practices of direct support, collective healing, and mutual aid are central for migrants' political subjectivation allowing the overcoming of the material and epistemological boundaries to political struggle. Moreover, I foreground how politicizing reproduction challenges racialised and gendered divisions between 'political campaigning' and 'direct support', and allows forms of 'care without control' that directly subvert hegemonic and disempowering humanitarian frameworks (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020). Overall, beyond the theoretical relevance of this intervention, my analysis here raises questions of central importance to the practice of migrant solidarity movements.

Finally, the thesis develops a methodological approach that brings key contributions to scholar-activist work in Geography and broadly in militant research on migration. Interrogating what a Black Geographies of the border regime entails for the practice of academic research, my methodological approach sought to centre migrant and grassroots knowledges suggesting a focus on 'learning with political movements'. Tackling the 'tendency of academics to overstate their own importance in the struggles for social change' (Choudry, 2020: 31), 'learning with political movements' demands de-centring our role as researchers within spaces of scholar-activism. In this endeavor, I suggest social reproductive and care politics as a research framework and political practice. I contend that through getting involved in social reproductive tasks, scholar-activists can challenge the racialised, classed, and gendered power dynamics implicit in dominant approaches that attribute intelectual roles to scholars (see Derickson & Routledge, 2015). This not only destabilizes divisions between intellectual and material labour in spaces of scholar-activism, but overall recognizes the knowledge produced by social movements' and struggling communities' agencies. Furthermore, social reproductive politics allow a focus on relationships, which is crucial in socially and politically engaged research, valuing work that is not always visible in the academic world (Choudry, 2020). Likewise, they allow creating relationships of trust, equity, and mutual support making spaces where the structural barriers between migrants and scholars can potentially be reworked, favouring distinctive research environments and relations. Finally, through their prefigurative dimension, I assess how a social reproductive

activist-research practice strongly challenges neoliberal notions of impact, making a direct contribution to political struggless on the ground.

1.3. Thesis Structure

The argument is structured in nine chapters. Following this introduction, chapters 2 and 3 develop the theoretical framework of this research, deepening theoretical discussions on the spatial politics of migrant solidarity and the practicing of solidarities against borders. Chapter 2 engages with black Marxist and geographical theory to develop a Black Geographies approach to the struggles against border regimes. It addresses the structural dimension of racism, its embodiment and reproduction in institutions, and the intertwining of these with global capitalism (Gilmore, 2007). In so doing, the chapter positions migrant struggles in relation to long-lasting black and anti-colonial counter-cartographies of struggle. Tackling the increasing importance of everyday spaces in the challenging of borders and institutional racism and emphasizing the ways place-based struggles are constitutive of internationalist politics of migration, the chapter concludes making a strong argument towards re-centring the urban space in the theory and practice of migrant solidarities. While chapter 2 navigates key spatial concepts and questions, chapter 3 focuses on the actual crafting of these political solidarities, the construction of collective identities, and the power dynamics shaping these processes. Drawing on black feminist writings, the chapter pushes forward understandings of solidarity that tackle the distinctive articulations of race, gender and class shaping spaces of struggle against oppression (hooks, 2013). Addressing the heterogeneity constituting these political spaces, the negotiation of questions of political difference is positioned as central in the articulation of political solidarities. Black decolonizing strategies to counter white supremacy and diverse experiences of black social reproductive politics are discussed as effective ways in which difference can be negotiated towards building equal political commons.

Chapter 4 develops the methodology of this research. I outline how my research praxis is informed by a tradition on ‘scholar-activism’ in human geography (see e.g. Routledge & Derickson, 2015; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006; Gilmore, 2007) and ‘militant-research’ in critical migration studies (see e.g. Garelli & Tazzioli, 2013; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021), revisited from a Black Geographical lens. According to this research philosophy, I address how I became both a researcher and an active participant in the politics of the No Evictions Network. Throughout the chapter, I discuss the various ways in which my academic concerns and research questions became shaped by my political stance.

Reflecting on my positionality – as a white European migrant cis female academic –, I navigate how I sought to perform through my own agency some of my foregoing reflections on solidarity and anti-racist politics. In this regard, the methodology developed in this chapter brings important insights to scholar-activist work alongside migrants and other precarious communities. Suggesting a social reproductive research praxis inspired in a caring research ethics, my methodology brings community knowledges to a focus and de-centres my role as academic researcher, in an attempt to rework uneven power relations. Hence, I address how direct participation in the Network became my main method. I got involved in social reproductive activities (such as direct support work, emotional labour, or everyday tasks), which brought me very close to migrant communities and enabled me to share informal conversations and spaces with key participants while making a tangible contribution to the everyday functioning of the Network. Findings were complemented with semi-structured in-depth interviews and documental, archival, and social media research. The chapter concludes addressing some of the key challenges I faced throughout my research, drawing attention to questions of representation, reciprocation, and the emotional implications of care as a research ethics.

Chapter 5 situates the spatial politics of the No Evictions Network in relation to broader questions of race politics and migration in Britain and Scotland. It firstly traces the genealogies of the British Asylum and immigration system and its role in the formal constitution of the British nation after Empire. Engaging with relevant work (Gilroy, 1987; Virdee, 2014), it discusses how historical Black and Asian struggles have contested British racism continuously re-shaping race relations. Thereafter, the chapter explores the distinctive character of the articulation of race and nation in Scotland. In this endeavour, it traces the dialectics of the 'anti-racist' rhetoric mobilised by contemporary Scottish nationalism and the ongoing efforts of black, Asian, and anti-racist struggles to place racism in the political agenda. I explore how the 'welcoming' anti-racist Scottish rhetoric becomes contrasted with cases of police brutality as well as it denotes a sort of 'historical amnesia' (Hall, 1978a[2017]) which obscures the role played by Scotland in British imperialism (Davidson et al, 2018). From this general background, the chapter moves towards a more grounded comprehension of migrant solidarities in Glasgow. It explores how neighbourhood solidarities in the city date back to the very beginning of the dispersal policy. It criticizes that the role of communities and neighbours shaping the first structures of support and solidarity with asylum seekers is completely banished within hegemonic policy-oriented research and academic literature (Wren, 2007; Sim & Bowes, 2007; Barclay, et al., 2003; Bowes, et al., 2009), raising key methodological questions and issues around whose voices

and accounts are valued. The chapter fills this gap, exploring past and present forms of self-organised solidarities, and analysing the ways they speak to each other. Tracing these has not been an easy task, and it involved drawing on oral testimonies and archival material kept by campaigning groups and alternative media. Overall, without obscuring the histories of racism and the contentious character of the political, the chapter addresses how solidarity has been productive of new political imaginaries and community politics that became incorporated to the politics of place.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 form the empirical part of the thesis, developing important contributions. These three analytical chapters flow from a discussion of the more formal aspects of the Network to a grounded assessment of the internal dynamics of its struggles from an antiracist and feminist militant perspective. Chapter 6 starts introducing the No Evictions Network as the main case-study of this research. Emerging in the context of a campaign to challenge the eviction of 300 asylum seekers in Glasgow by the multinational Home Office's contractor Serco, the Network meant the coming together of migrant and housing struggles in the city. Discussing the nature and position of Serco and other Home Office asylum accommodation contractors within the political economies of the border, the chapter addresses the Network's politics as struggles against racial capitalism. Shaped by increasing processes of neoliberalization, the outsourcing of asylum housing has become a key gear of the migration business and therefore an opportunity for capitalist expansion (Bhattacharyya, 2018). A focus on racial capitalism grasps how racial border and capitalism intersect reproducing institutional racism and the 'premature death' of migrant populations (Gilmore, 2007). Overall, the chapter interrogates what the implications of this emphasis on racial capitalism are for the understanding of the struggles against borders and the articulations of solidarity. I demonstrate that some of the limitations of the Network were the result of partial understandings of the struggles against the evictions, which sometimes hindered a broader focus on racial capitalism. Moreover, these partial framings often contributed to uneven power asymmetries that I analyse throughout the thesis. Nonetheless, the chapter shows how the coming together of heterogeneous trajectories of organizing around housing and migration gave the Network a distinctive counter-hegemonic power, enriched by a plurality of political cultures coming together in struggle. Throughout the discussion, the chapter touches upon questions of organization and strategy in the struggles against racial capitalism, addressing key tensions around horizontality, autonomy or institutional compliance, or the role of space and the politics of place in making sense of the Network's political strategies.

While chapter 6 navigates the internal heterogeneity of the Network and how it became materialised in different framings and ways of organizing the struggles, chapter 7 focuses on the negotiation of these internal borders, raising key discussions around privilege, different positionalities within migrant solidarity movements, and the processes of political subjectivation. From a lens on Black Geographies and black feminist writings, the discussion addresses the tensions between prefigurative activist practices to overcome borders and the uneven racialized, gendered, and classed power relations shaping them. It problematizes essentialist divisions between 'migrants' and 'allies' within solidarity movements, arguing towards a more nuanced engagement with the ways struggles against racial capitalism intersect shaping differently articulated subject positions in the processes of coming together. Centering migrant agencies and looking at black feminist strategies towards decolonization, the chapter addresses the processes of undoing borders as ongoing and unfinished. It concludes analyzing how the aforementioned processes and the solidarities crafted within the spaces of the Network led to a repoliticization of migrant solidarities in Glasgow, against depoliticizing humanitarian imaginaries of the community.

Chapter 8 addresses the centrality of social reproductive and care politics in constituting spaces of migrant solidarity. It engages with black radical community strategies of social reproduction to situate them at the basis of the sustainment of precarious communities denied by the state. Suggesting the notion of 'political reproduction' and linking it to questions of self-empowerment and healing of a mental health undermined by white supremacist structures, I address how social reproductive politics stand at the core of the processes of migrant politicization and formation of collective political identities. Indeed, the chapter brings migrant voices in the Network to challenge formalist divisions between direct support and campaigning work, exposing how this dichotomy responds to patriarchal and racialized imaginaries of the political. It concludes analyzing migrant solidarities in Glasgow during the Covid-19 racial crisis, demonstrating how social reproductive politics were strongly racialized, gendered, and classed. Findings point to the need of a more nuanced understanding of the articulations of race, gender, class, or status shaping social reproductive activist work, particularly in strongly racialized political spaces.

Finally, chapter 9 concludes the thesis looking back to the research questions, how they have been addressed, and the main arguments building my answers. It traces the broader relevance of the thesis, foregrounding the important theoretical and political implications of its key findings, and finally signaling possible directions for future research. Overall, the conclusion chapter emphasizes the core contributions of this piece of work, showing how it

makes central interventions positioning migrant solidarity politics as constitutive of wider black and brown cartographies of struggle. Bringing black and feminist theory to the understanding of these geographies allows grasping how racism is articulated with questions of class, gender, ethnicity, or sexuality in the processes of political struggle and political subjectivation.

CHAPTER 2
Theorizing the Black Geographies of Migrant Solidarity

'Racism Was Not Simply a Convention for Ordering the Relations of European to Non-European Peoples but Has its Genesis in the "Internal" Relations of European Peoples' (Cedric J. Robinson)

2.1. Introduction

The next two chapters develop the theoretical framework of this research, bringing key contributions on the Black Geographies shaping the spatial politics of migrant solidarity. Migrant solidarities are addressed as those political, social, and economic articulations fighting for the freedom of movement through different forms and in multiple spaces, united by their commitment to challenge the deadly consequences of outright racist border regimes. As such, they not only include various forms of migrant agency but also the construction of alliances amongst heterogeneous subjects and across multiple spaces (Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen, 2016). In a current global conjuncture of political enclosure – with nationalist discourses hegemonizing political imaginaries worldwide, States attempting to secure their borders and reduce immigration, and a significant advance of the far-right in several parts of the world –migration issues have a fundamental importance in the articulation of left-wing internationalist politics (Badiou, 2020). Indeed, mobility and migration are a constitutive force shaping the spaces of contemporary postcolonial global capitalism, multiplied by neoliberal globalization, global inequalities, regimes of labour, war, and political conflicts of heterogeneous nature (Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013). Engaging with the multi-layered dimension of the spatial politics of migration and the ways they are racialised, gendered, and classed provides an insight of the overlapping regimes of power shaping migrant politics, and the ways these are situated in the intersection of antiracist, class, gender, or sexual liberation struggles. A spatial engagement with the solidarity politics of the No Evictions Network in Glasgow demands raising important theoretical questions: What kind of uneven geographies and power relations are being brought into contestation through the politics of the Network? How do situated struggles against border injustices in Glasgow link to universal struggles against oppression? How to articulate solidarity politics against borders in a context in which borders proliferate? How to make sense of the multiple grounded,

localised, and often invisible struggles of the Network as part of counter-hegemonic politics of migration?

These are some of the interrogations that the next two chapters aim to tackle from a theoretical lens that centres questions of race and migrant agency. In this endeavour, particular attention is drawn to the processes of negotiation of racialised, gendered, and classed uneven geographies through place-based solidarity struggles, as a core focus of the thesis. Foregrounding the role of everyday spaces in the crafting of collective identities and political subjectivation, place-based politics are addressed as spaces of convergence of a heterogeneity of uneven political trajectories constitutive of the multi-layered connections enabling internationalist struggles against borders. Drawing on Black Geographies and black feminist theories, the chapters bring key contributions to debates on the organization of migrant solidarities, the strategies adopted by these, issues of power dynamics, decolonization, or social reproductive politics which will be central to the arguments developed throughout the thesis. Overall, the theoretical discussions developed in both chapters are deeply interrelated. While chapter 2 navigates key spatial concepts and questions, unpacking the black cartographies of struggle shaping the spaces of migrant solidarity, chapter 3 focuses on the actual crafting of these solidarities, the construction of collective political identities, and the power dynamics underlying the processes of building political commons. Hence, the former places emphasis on the material and structural aspects of the border and solidarity politics whereas the second stresses the intersubjective processes of solidarity-making.

Developing the first part of the discussion, the present chapter proceeds as follows: The first section underscores the Black Geographies of the border regime, stressing the structural and situated dimensions of racism and the ways borders are shaped by long-term histories of struggle and dispossession. Filling an important gap in literature, the section explores how race theory and literature on Black Geographies bring a powerful insight to the ways the spatial politics of migrant solidarities can be envisioned, reframing questions of agency and solidarity and challenging the racial denial in European hegemonic approaches to migration. The last section centres the urban – particularly the everyday space of the neighbourhood – as the main space where I engage with migrants' Black Geographies of struggle and the articulation of solidarities in the thesis. It draws attention to the centrality of cities in the organization and contestation of border regimes, positioning the multiple localised struggles against borders as constitutive of networked trajectories of counter-hegemonic internationalist politics against racist exclusionary border regimes.

2.2. Towards a Black Geographies of the Spatial Politics Against Borders

This section develops an analysis of the border regime as a postcolonial configuration of historical geographies of power, arguing that race theory and literature on Black Geographies can potentially bring powerful insights to the ways the spatial politics of migrant solidarity are envisioned. Migration and border studies have increasingly attracted the attention of different academic disciplines over the past decades, including human geography. Nevertheless, despite this leading to an extensive literature on the topic, border regimes have barely been examined through the lenses of Black Geographical work. This thesis aims to address this gap arguing that race theory and geographical work on race can open up productive ways to look at the operation of borders, reframing questions of agency and political solidarities.

The theoretical lens developed here attempt to tackle the persistence of the 'racial denial and widespread refusal to frankly confront questions of race across Europe' (De Genova, 2018: 1769). Especially in continental Europe, racism tends to be pictured as a 'relic from the past' or as some sort of 'individual deviant behaviour'. Racial conflicts 'are barely theorized in terms of racism and the racial element is generally invisibilized in a political space that claims to be the land of birth of the human rights and modern democracy' (ibid). In consequence, border issues are hardly addressed in the terminology of racism. I argue that a pressing task for geographical scholarship in this context is to dismantle this imaginary that displaces geographies of racism beyond Europe to situate it as a core constitutive force in the centre of contemporary European space and its politics, economy, society, and culture.

Overall, the section demonstrates how a Black Geographies of the border regime unpacks migration issues as racial issues, grasping the continuities between the postcolonial geographies of contemporary global neoliberalism and black histories of struggle (McKittrick, 2006). The section starts discussing the key contributions that race theory and literature on Black Geographies can bring to current work on border regimes from a focus on race. Then, drawing from a spatial conceptualization of racism, it develops an analysis of the European border regime making key interventions that bring to the fore questions of black and brown agency in the articulation of migrant political solidarities.

2.2.1. Revisiting Border Work from a Focus on Race.

Against globalizing celebrations of a 'borderless world', an increasing body of work has foregrounded the proliferation of borders shaping the spaces of global capitalism (Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013). Balibar's (2002) claim 'borders are everywhere' gave rise to theoretical engagements discussing the polysemy, ubiquity, and complexity of borders. Concerned with issues of securitization, war, or global migration (Hyndman, 2012; Walters, 2002), critical border studies have moved beyond the notion of borders as 'walls' to foreground the heterogeneity of practices and discourses involved in the production of borders, in and across multiple spatial scales (Casas-Cortes, et al., 2015). Situated at the centre of the political, borders are productive of contemporary political, economic, and social spaces (Anderson, 2013). Nevertheless, borders are both 'porous' and 'not-so-opening' (Paasi, 2012). On the one hand, they are constantly challenged by border crossings (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013), becoming sites of 'constant encounter, tension, conflict, and negotiation' (Casas-Cortes, et al., 2015: 69). On the other, access to mobility is deeply shaped by uneven 'power geometries', meaning the ways in which spatiality and mobility are both shaped by and reproduce power differentials in society (Massey, 2005). In order to capture the complexity and heterogeneity of the processes and logics of bordering, critical scholarship on migration has suggested the concept of 'border regime' as opposed to simply the border (Casas-Cortes, et al., 2015: 69). While this work has opened up important debates on the racialized, classed, and gendered dimensions of border politics (Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013), work on border regimes and migrant solidarity politics have barely centered race and postcolonial theory in its analysis, partly because of the aforementioned grounded tradition of 'racial denial' in Europe (De Genova, 2018). I argue that this has contributed to a strong tendency to detach migrant politics from wider black and brown trajectories of struggles, having important implications for migrant solidarity theory.

An exception to this general disengagement is the work of Balibar, which sets a good starting point to revisit work on borders from its colonial genealogies. Concerned with the position of the *sanspapiers* in France, Balibar identified citizenship as an internal border for Europe's 'own populations'. From here, he unpacked how political constructions such as borders, nations, or the idea of citizenship are European concepts, product of the hegemonic position of Europe in the world during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These histories, he claimed, 'underly the demographic and cultural structure typical of European populations today, which are all postcolonial communities or projections of global diversity within the European sphere, as a result of migration and other causes' (Balibar, 2002: 75-

76). He argued postcolonial populations live in an 'European Apartheid', which 'concerns the populations of the "South" as well as the "East"'. Yet, while this work clearly traces the continuities between today's border regimes and colonial relations, it does not directly address questions of race, nor explores what race theory and black writings can bring to the study of borders. Indeed, the scarce examples of border scholarship that directly tackle issues of race do so from a perspective where black theoretical contributions and voices are completely missing (De Genova, 2018), reproducing forms of epistemic violence (Pulido, 1997). Rather, an analysis of border regimes through the lens of Black Geographical literature and race theory brings potential contributions to critical work on migration. Beyond acknowledging the histories of colonization shaping uneven racialized geographies, it allows situating migrant struggles in relation to longlasting black and brown countercartographies of struggle and a 'black sense of place' (McKittrick, 2011). This move centres racialised experiences in the framing of migrant agencies, rather than colour-blinded affirmations of agency and solidarity (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013). Furthermore, unpacking the ways capitalism and racism are bounded together (Robinson, 1983), black critical theory provides a frame to underscore the racialised, classed, and gendered dimension of struggles against oppresion and their intersecting nature (hooks, 2013). The rest of the chapter develops these points further, setting the theoretical ground for a Black Geographies of the struggles against borders.

2.2.2. Conceptualizing Racism Spatially

This research draws on a Black Geographical understanding of racism as a socio-spatial relation articulating relations of dominance within and between places (Pulido, 2015; Inwood, 2015). This conceptualisation grasps the structural, relational, and spatial dimensions of racism moving away from conceptions that address it as individual behaviours. It unpacks the ways black matters are spatial matters, and how structures of racial dominance are produced and reproduced through multi-scalar social relations and imaginations (McKittrick, 2006; Shabazz, 2015). Against a material-discursive dichotomy, racism exists in various realms: racial meanings are embedded in our language, psyche, and social structures. They are both constitutive of racial hierarchies and informed by them, and therefore reflected and reproduced by our social practices and structures (Pulido, 2015). Rejecting essentialist and universal constructions of race and racism, and hence deepening this spatial understanding, Stuart Hall argues that racism is always subject to historical specificity. He claims

> ‘racism does not always assume the same shape. There have been many significantly different *racisms* – each historically specific and articulated in a different way with the societies in which they appear. Racism is always historically specific in this way, whatever common features it may appear to share with other similar social phenomena. Though it may draw on the cultural and ideological traces which are deposited in a society by previous historical phases, it always assumes specific forms which arise out of *present* – not past – conditions of organization of society’ (Hall, 2017 [1978]: 146).

Contextualism means that a comprehensive analysis of racism must start from the study of the ways in which race is articulated with other social relations in a given context. This links to Doreen Massey’s (1999a) notion of space as a product of interrelations, from the local to the global, making each place unique. Hall’s contextualism is complemented with his theory of articulation, which understands each context as a particular articulation of different modes of production. He refuses a bounded analysis that counterposes and separates different modes of production and their correspondent ‘natural’ social relations – capitalism, feudalism, slavism, etc. Rather, each political context is a specific articulation of present and past relations of production ‘structured in dominance’, meaning that capitalist relations do not dissolve precapitalist modes but transform and combine them within a different articulation. This has important implications for the analysis of the underlying coloniality shaping particular practices of bordering, and the resulting relations shaping migrant access to rights and labour under contemporary capitalism. On the other hand, articulation refers to the different elements constituting the social. Firstly, as a result of the articulation of different modes of production, there is not only one contradiction (capital-labor) structuring social antagonisms. Rather, any social formation is composed of a number of instances – each with a degree of autonomy from one another – articulated in a contradictory unity (Hall, 1978: 325). Secondly, the antagonisms operating in society could not be reduced to the struggle at the economic level. The social is not only a particular articulation of modes of production structured in dominance but also of different levels of the social – economic, political, ideological, cultural, etc. At this point, articulation theory offers a powerful tool to develop a situated and nuanced engagement with the ways racial, class, gender, sexual, or ethnic struggles intersect differently in diverse contexts[4]. For Hall, the ways these different levels become articulated and politicised are key to the shape racism adopts in each society.

[4] See also chapter 3

From a slightly different perspective – and also central to the analysis developed throughout the thesis –, literature on racial capitalism has drawn upon Cedric Robinson's work *Black Marxism* (1983) to unpack the ways racism is intrinsic to capitalist development and accumulation processes. Robinson argued that the capitalist system can only be understood in relation to the specific historical, cultural, and social context in which it emerged, namely Western Civilization. For him, the racial ideology was not a product of capitalism, but it was rather intrinsic to Western history and rationality, meaning that capitalism is itself racial. Indeed, current work on racial capitalism is unpacking the ways the political economies of migration are central to the reproduction of global capital (Bhattacharyya, 2018). Robinson also criticized that the influence of racialized thinking in the consciousness of Western left-wing political radicalism has contributed to the invisibilization of the 'black radical tradition' – as forms of political resistance, critical visions and cultural genealogies that have contested power from imperial Europe until nowadays. From a focus on racial capitalism, this invisibilization – which, as I argued, continues to shape critical scholarship on migration – needs to be deeply challenged positioning migrant solidarities as part of ongoing black geographies of struggle (McKittrick, 2006). This is precisely what this thesis' theoretical and empirical engagements are doing.

All together, these theoretical contributions allow moving towards a spatial conceptualization of racism that foregrounds the ways racism is the product of relations which are both situated and historically specific. On the one hand, such relational perspective allows foregrounding the agency of black spatial practices in reshaping place. While the agency of migrant mobilities as a constitutive force in the remaking of border regimes has been signaled by extensive literature on the 'autonomy of migration' (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013; Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013; Dadusc, et al., 2019), this work ignores questions of race and overlooks the racialized geographies underlying migrant agencies. On the other hand, the previous contributions unpack the ways racism is bounded together with neoliberalism and other systems of oppression, meaning that anticapitalist struggles are deeply tied to the struggles against racism and other forms of subjugation. This contributes to a widening of the understanding of migrant solidarity politics. Drawing on the previous notes, the following section develops a contextual conceptualization of the European Border Regime that centers questions of race and articulation in the understanding of its material and epistemological borders and the struggles staged at its core.

2.2.3. A Racial Reading of the European Border Regime

In line with Balibar's claims above, the 'denaturalization of borders' (Walters, 2002) entails unpacking the ways borders are neither 'accidental' nor 'universal' but rather contingent and embedded in the history of European Modernity, as essential historical devices in the policing of people and the structuring of relationships of dominance. In Europe, bordering has been used to draw a hard line between those who enjoy 'freedom of movement' and those without rights – in consonance with ideas on the 'European Apartheid'. While Modern Europe was constructed on the basis of colonization and the exploitation of colonial peoples and their territories, the current border regime appears as a postcolonial re-spatialization of these geographies, where those with colonial histories of dispossession are the ones denied rights (El-Enany, 2020). This system is sustained by a whole business around the political economies of migration, where border enforcement and monitoring have increasingly become sites of expansion of capitalist interests, especially since the beginning of the century. Furthermore, extensive work has signaled how the articulation and rearticulation of the EU Border Regine has been deeply tied to its capitalist interests, structuring a system of 'inclusion through exclusion' where the border operates as a selective device to include migrant *deportable* – and racialized – workers without rights according to the European and national markets' needs (Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013; De Genova & Peutz, 2010)

A contextual racial reading of the European border regime needs to tackle European supremacy as the material and discursive formation that serves as background ideology of European racism as a particular form of whiteness. As a system of knowledge inherited from enlightened colonialism and Eurocentric modernity, European supremacy repetitively constitutes blackness[5] as a 'hostile racial category that already troubles an already settled whiteness' (Morrison, 1992, cited in McKittrick, 2011: 949). White supremacy refers to the 'hegemonic structures, practices, and ideologies that reproduce white's privileged status' (Pulido, 2000: 337), and it is the 'foundational logic of the modern capitalist system' (Bonds & Inwood, 2016: 720). This links to some of the ideas developed by Robinson in *Black Marxism*, where European supremacy is bounded together with the historical processes of accumulation. This form of whiteness is a productive political force of the European political space and finds one of its contemporary expressions in the current configuration of the European racial border. Chapter 5 explores how race, nation, and borders are articulated in Britain within this framework – particularly in a conjuncture where Brexit politicized

[5] Understood as non-white identities.

particular ideas of Europe and migration – and how this adopts a particular shape in Glasgow and Scotland, building on Hall's contextualism.

Yet, the previous notion of European supremacy draws on a conceptualization of borders as both material and epistemological devices articulating particular relationships of dominance (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). According to this, the European border regime is not only reproduced by state bordering practices, but also through the different structures and institutions embodying European supremacist ideologies and which govern our everyday life and spaces of socialization. These involve a large range of everyday spaces, agents, and institutions that play a key role in the naturalization and performance of racialised, classed, and gendered hegemonic relations of dominance. They link to what Althusser addressed as the 'ideological state apparatuses', with the difference that they go way beyond state and governmental logics. Hence, what William Walters (2006) called the 'ubiquity of borders' refers not only to the spreading of border checks to mundane everyday spaces within and beyond the edges of European national territories (see e.g. Darling, 2017; Fauser, 2019; Lebuhn, 2013; Casas-Cortes, et al., 2015), but also to the ways borders produce particular subjectivities, ideologies, and differential entitlements to rights according to various European projects of belonging which reproduce historical and situated hierarchies of race, ethnicity, gender, and class (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Anderson, 2013). Hence, such approach grasps the intertwining between the European spatial – and racial – borders and the political subjectivities they produce, structuring social relationships of power and hierarchy and reproducing differentials in society.

Once addressed the articulation of colonial legacies, European supremacist ideologies and the genealogies of capitalism shaping the political geographies of the European border regime, a fundamental question interrogates its implications for the understanding of migrant struggles and the articulations of political solidarities. On the one hand, this analysis allows situating migrant agencies as part of historical trajectories of struggle challenging the uneven Black Geographies produced by articulated postcolonial capitalist forms of exploitation. On the other hand, a Black Geographical focus foregrounds how migrant mobilities and forms of resistance contest the false impenetrability and the ideological foundations of the so-called 'fortress Europe'. Black politics of presence, settlement, and cultural genealogies disrupt the essentialism characterizing racialized constructions of European identities and embody historical genealogies of struggle against European racism and imperialism.

The previous analysis is also crucial to the understanding of migrant political solidarities. Firstly, the articulation of capitalist and postcolonial relations on the basis of supremacist ideologies demands positioning anti-racism and decolonization as a core principle in the articulation of counter-hegemonic political solidarities, as the following chapter will argue. Secondly, engaging with these systemic articulations also sheds light to the anti-capitalist common ground and the 'mutually constitutive position' of the different subjects coming together in the struggles against borders, a matter also subjected to discussion in chapter 3 (García Agustín & Jorgensen, 2016; Featherstone, 2012). Finally, this perspective deeply troubles humanitarian hegemonic approaches to migrant solidarities as central expressions of European supremacy in this terrain. Humanitarianism reproduces the 'white saviour complex' through paternalistic, patriarchal, and racialized ideologies and codes of conduct resulting from long-lasting colonial hierarchies (see Dadusc & Mudu, 2020; Barnett, 2011; Fassin, 2011; Mudu & Chattopadhyay, 2016). Inflecting great part of the public, political, and academic debates around asylum and migration in the UK and Europe, the humanitarian script has particular incidence over the political left, denoting the lack of engagement with racial issues in European lefts and the 'invisibilization' of black struggles addressed by Robinson in his work. Throughout the thesis, I problematize some of the intertwining between the humanitarian framework and contentious politics in Glasgow, discussing how humanitarianism promotes an ethics of charity and a politics of compassion that forecloses the transformative potentials of political solidarities and erases the agency of migrants and people on the move. Assistance and charity are detached from politics and narrow the focus to the suffering and the vulnerability of the 'poor' and victimized other, diverting the attention away from the structural border violence and erasing the histories and responsibilities of neocolonial forms of domination (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020). Through the notion of 'humanitarian borders', Walters (2011) analyzes how humanitarianism has become a key bordering practice in the workings of racial capitalism. It not only reproduces racialized hierarchies but overall operates as a 'subtle form of control and discipline' alongside the industry of border enforcement (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020: 5). Overall, critical humanitarian work has been crucial in advancing some of the previous debates. However, it barely tackles directly questions of race and white supremacy – focusing instead on the reproductive role that humanitarian actors play in perpetuating the border regime. Engaging with migrant voices, this thesis centers race in the analysis of the relationships between the humanitarian sector and solidarity activism, evidencing how black and brown agencies contested the whiteness shaping humanitarian politics.

2.2.4. The Border Business, the Production of Premature Death, and the Migrant Geographies of Struggle

In her book *Golden Gulag,* which develops an analysis of California's massive prison construction and confinement of black and brown populations as part of the neoliberal restructuring that followed the 1970s capitalist crisis, Ruth W. Gilmore claims that

> 'racism is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-based vulnerability to premature death' (Gilmore, 2007: 28).

Coming from anti-prison grassroots activism organized by mothers, her book looks at the convergence between race, capital, and carceral power. This section argues that bringing this literature to the analysis of the operation of border regimes can potentially open up new ways to looking at border struggles and unpack how race and capital are bounded together in the experiences of bordering.

Gilmore's definition brings some of the key points of convergence between work on race, capitalism, and Geography highlighted before. A first salient element is the idea of institutional racism – both formal and informal – which she directly links to the production of premature death. This stance situates the State and the institutions as the structures shaping the living conditions of group-differentiated populations, valuing some lives while killing others. De Genova (2018) notes that the EU border regime operates as a selective technology in which just a few and the strongest ones survive the risk of migration routes to Europe to become cheap labor. Premature death as the outcome of EU and national migration politics and institutional racism is produced across multiple spatial sites and scales: from the 'necropolitics' in the Mediterranean to everyday lives of migrants in European cities, where they are not only exploited as labor force, but also experience exclusion from basic rights such as health, housing, or education (Fauser, 2019). The strongly biased exposure to premature death not only affects migrants, but generally all racialized populations settled in European cities, exposing clear racial borders (Dikeç, 2019). The following section precisely explores border struggles in urban spatial contexts.

Moreover, Gilmore's work provides an account focused on contestation, collective resistance, and solidarity. Agency constitutes the point of departure and arrival of her analyses. Coming from everyday spaces of resistance – a group of Black mothers with imprisoned sons in California –, she addresses the 'Prison Industrial Complex' as a

neoliberal restructuring where racial exploitation and political economy converge as a response to the crisis of deindustrialization. Her argument evidences that prisons and the logics of incarceration are intimately bound up in economic development and capital accumulation strategies (Derickson, 2017), setting the grounds for a militant abolitionist politics. In so doing, Gilmore's work not only links the overlapping spatial scales through which racism operates – the everyday (embodied in the gendered and racialized mothers in struggle and their confined sons) and the local, national, and global scales –, but also inserts racism in broader political and economic relations, demonstrating how race operates as a constitutive force of Neoliberalism and how these struggles are to be staged together.

Critical literature has foregrounded the analogies between the 'Prison Complex' and the 'Immigration Industrial Complex', as the 'confluence of public and private sector interests in the criminalization of undocumented migration, immigration law enforcement, and the promotion of an anti-illegal rhetoric' (Golash-Boza, 2009: 295) in a context where the securitized border represents 'one of the most highly profitable opportunities for private corporations in this century' (Bhattacharyya, 2018:136). Following Gilmore's account on contestation, this work has also explored migrants' spatial practices and the agency of political solidarity articulated from below in contesting the 'immigration industrial complex' (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020; King, 2016 ; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013; Walia, 2014). Indeed, the struggles against Serco and Mears addressed in this thesis stage an example of these experiences of political contestation.

Moreover, Gilmore's work links to other Black Geographical literature charting the intersection between political economy, racialization, and landscape through the analytic of the 'carceral state' or carceral geographies (Derickson, 2017). Work on carceral geographies situates the everyday experiences and practices of spatial confinement in different locations – the city, the camp, the border, etc. – to the racialization of place, as a process of constructing geographic landscapes that help to redefine and reinforce racialized social hierarchies, thus facilitating domination and exploitation (Inwood & Yarbrough, 2010). It provides a very useful insight to address the Black Geographies of the border regime in a context of increasing criminalization of migration and the application of carceral power to the securitization of borders. Indeed, border politics are being implemented through an increasing institutional and extralegal infrastructure for migrant surveillance, which operates prisonizing non-white lives in multiple spatial settings and scales: from origin to all sites of transit and settlement, migrant lives are constantly monitored, and the border becomes ubiquitous (Walters, 2010). In the next section I explore how these processes deeply shape

migrants' everyday lives in contemporary urban spaces. Under the European legal framework, the migrant becomes a criminal, someone with 'no right to stay' who can potentially be confined and deported (De Genova & Peutz, 2010). Hence, carceral geographies shape non-white lives in Europe in connection to the politics of illegality. Again, the making of these racialized carceral geographies is embedded in the particular interests of powerful security markets. Gargi Bhattacharyya (2018: 128) explores how the rise of the security business 'reveals the erection, policing and monitoring of barriers among the most lucrative of transnational businesses' and the 'most racialized practices of contemporary states'. This analysis, which encourages reflections around racial capitalism and the role of racism in enabling capitalist development and accumulation, will be central to the discussion of the struggles against evictions and hotel detention that constitute the focus of this thesis.

Carceral geographies encompass not only the material spaces and practices of racist European carceral powers – deportation centres, border controls, mobile borders such as dawn raids or the expansion of border checkings to places such as hospitals or schools – but also to the overall racialization of space and the development of a 'black sense of place' according to these *prisonizing* geographies (Shabazz, 2015). A 'black sense of place' draws attention to the longstanding links between blackness and geography, bringing into focus the ways in which racial violences shape black worlds. It is 'the process of materially and imaginatively situating historical and contemporary struggles against practices of domination and the difficult entanglements of racial encounter' (McKittrick, 2011: 949). Black struggles are not reduced to border struggles, but, overall, they shape lives of struggle and the resignification of space, linking to histories of dispossession and racialized geographies. This perspective emphasizes the role of migrant cartographies of struggle as part of wider black and brown political agencies and the centrality of embracing an antiracist and anticolonial perspective in the spaces of migrant solidarity. In the following section, I bring the previous contributions to the urban space as a key site in the experiences of bordering, and as the main space where the struggles addressed in this thesis unfold.

2.3. The Urban Geographies of Border Struggles: Migrant Solidarities and the Articulation of Place-Based Counter-Hegemonic Politics

This section aims to center urban and everyday spaces in the analysis of Black Geographies of struggle and the articulation of migrant solidarities. In so doing, it firstly explores the centrality of these spaces in the organization of contemporary border regimes

and the shaping of black 'prisonizing' landscapes. After situating neighborhood solidarities as central in the articulation of counter-cartographies of migrant solidarity, I conclude going back to the discussion of the spatial politics of place-based solidarities in the construction of internationalist politics of migration raised in the outset of the chapter. Here, the network is addressed as a form of organization and action that connects the heterogeneity of situated struggles against borders.

2.3.1. Theorizing the Urban Border: From the 'Urban Political' to the 'Migrant Political'

Aiming to build a theoretical lens to address the different forms in which borders are constitutive of urban lives, literature has engaged with the notion of the 'urban border'. Cities constitute the everyday sites of the experiences of social bordering and the quotidian space where a plurality of classed, racialized, and gendered trajectories converges (Waquant, 2004; Dikeç, 2019; Pulido, 2015). Processes of urban bordering and the racialization of urban landscapes have been accentuated with the ongoing transformation of cities into border spaces within the organization of contemporary border regimes (Lebuhn, 2013; Balibar, 2004; Walters, 2010). A rich body of literature has foregrounded the ways cities have become a privileged scale in the de-localization and externalization of borders from the borderline to a multiplicity of spatial settings, particularly affecting everyday public spaces (Yuval-Davis, et al., 2019; Casas-Cortes, et al., 2015). Through devolution from above, as well as through urban autonomy, cities are increasingly engaged in matters such as migrants' legal status, removal, and deportation, with not only state actors being involved in these processes, but also private agents and even local communities (Fauser, 2019; El-Enany, 2020). This re-localization of borders in cities has led to the proliferation of bordering situations into migrants' everyday spaces, accentuating racialized carceral urban landscapes. Most migrants are detained in urban spaces through dawn raids, reporting centers, or stop and search practices (Corporate Watch, 2015). Linking to the analyses developed in the previous section, the expansion and re-localization of the border in cities has also created new opportunities for capitalist accumulation through the outsourcing of the business of immigration detention or the provision of asylum services, evidencing some of the ways the urban border and the political economies of securitization intersect reproducing the logics of racial capitalism (Bhattacharyya, 2018). The intertwining between the encroachment of the military and the neoliberal state, carceral geographies, and the racialization of the urban space through everyday practices shapes the everyday Black Geographies of the border (Shabazz, 2015, Gilmore, 2007). Engaging with the role of Serco and Mears as Home

Office's asylum accommodation contractors, chapter 6 analyzes how these capitalist companies obtain billions from performing bordering roles in UK metropolitan areas.

The global tendency towards the urbanization of borders demand re-centering the urban space in the theorizing and practicing of Black Geographies of migrant struggle. As social and material spaces where migrants and asylum seekers develop their everyday lives – often in defiance of a hegemonic bordering order –, local communities are a central node in facilitating the politics of mobility. Indeed, the exclusionary geographies of the urban border are constantly contested and reshaped from below from a multiplicity of migrant everyday struggles and politics of solidarity (see different examples in Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013; Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016; Swerts & Nicholls, 2021; Darling, 2017; King, 2016 ; Anderson, et al., 2009; Walia, 2014). While migrant mobilities and strategies of survival in the city are the essential – though the most invisibilised – form of agency, the last years have also seen a proliferation of a heterogeneity of immigrant political movements and campaigns in solidarity with migrants and refugees in different cities in Europe and across the world (Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen, 2018; Della Porta & Steinhilper, 2021; Swerts, 2021).

Geographical literature has shown an increasing interest in the recent spreading of mobilizations for immigrant rights in cities, often staged by undocumented activists who are denied citizenship and political rights (Swyngedouw, 2021; Swerts, 2021). In response to forms of exclusionary state violence and the precarious legal status that comes with it, undocumented activists have organized collectively to gain a voice in hostile political environments (Swerts & Nicholls, 2021). Most immigrant protests have taken place in racialized urban spaces where migrants were facing different forms of racializing policing. Work on the 'urban political' has foregrounded the urban as a political arena that exposes deeply embedded injustices and contributes to the creation of new political subjectivities and movements (see e.g. Karaliotas & Swyngedouw, 2019; Dikeç & Swyngedouw, 2017; Karaliotas, 2017; Dikeç, 2012, 2019; Darling, 2017; Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016). This work provides a useful theoretical lens to look at recent migrant urban protests for various reasons. Firstly, some of this work draws attention to the importance of race in the experiences of political contestation in cities, triggered by lived racialized exclusions that take different forms – segregation, poverty, displacement, targeted policing, border controls, etc. – and feed on particular histories of slavery, colonialism and exploitation. Secondly, it allows addressing politics beyond institutions and organized social movements, refiguring what counts as politics and who can be a political subject. Finally, it opens up different ways to

look at the convergence and solidarities between migrant struggles and other urban political movements in the contestation of exclusionary urban landscapes.

Beyond protests and mobilizations, urban political work has also emphasized some of the non-visible ways in which migrants destabilize sovereign authority and negotiate the city through formal and informal practices on a daily basis. Through 'urban informality' or the 'politics of presence', migrants reshape urban spaces and landscapes, becoming present to one another, the community, and the authorities (Darling, 2017; Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016). Furthermore, literature on migrant solidarity as foregrounded the centrality of migrant community networks of support in the development of social and material infrastructures enabling movement and settlement, building geographies of care and support alternative to the exclusionary urban geographies of the border in cities (Kapsali, 2020; Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013; Dadusc, et al., 2019; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021). Bringing attention to these practices allows reframing questions of political agency beyond the edges of citizenship rights and institutionalized conceptions of the political (Darling, 2017).

2.3.2. Centering the Neighborhood in the Theory and Practice of Migrant Solidarities

Against abstract and empty definitions of the city as a political space, it is important to foreground the ways urban spaces are increasingly heterogeneous and shaped by uneven geographies and trajectories. In word of Doreen Massey (2005: 155), cities are 'peculiarly large, intense and heterogeneous constellations of trajectories, demanding complex negotiation'. Mezzadra & Neilson (2013: 153) highlight the processes of 'bordering from below' taking place in cities, noting that the urban is characterized by multiple lines of division and partition between communities and territories. These lines refer both to the complex patterns of spatial segregation that crisscross cities and the everyday interactions between differently situated urban subjects (Dikeç, 2019). An engagement with migrant agencies and political solidarities in urban spaces demands paying attention to these dividing lines, to how they relate to broader processes, and the ways spatial inequalities and the racialization of place are politically mobilized shaping different political imaginaries.

Indeed, articulations of solidarity and 'misplaced solidarities' generally respond to uneven urban geographies in different ways. Migrant solidarities and their counterparts are generally articulated in neighborhoods or urban areas that share specific histories and demographics according to issues of race, ethnicity, or class. Focusing attention on the neighborhood as the everyday space where solidarities are crafted or discouraged allows

unpacking the ways the question of 'our living together' becomes negotiated in multiple ways (Massey, 2007), and how racial imaginaries are mobilized differently in diverse urban contexts (Santamarina, 2021). Centering the neighborhood is important not only because it constitutes the everyday space of cohabitation, community relations, and material survival, but also to counter the specific ways in which racist spatial imaginaries have often been mobilized targeting migrant neighborhoods in Europe in political attempts to generate hatred politics (Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen, 2016; Santamarina, 2021).

First and foremost, the neighborhood constitutes the immediate level for social reproduction and the development of a migrant politics of care (Kapsali, 2020). Proximity to community infrastructures of support is crucial since migration processes rely on the development of material and immaterial social infrastructures enabling movement and settlement (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013). These are often developed by migrant communities settled in a place but also by social and political local solidarity networks. The urbanization of borders and other forms of racial policing and segregation have deeply impacted migrants' access to these infrastructures locally, with community solidarities often playing a crucial role in facilitating survival. Indeed, neighborhood social reproductive politics have been a central stake in black radical forms of organizing (Heynen, 2009). They have often served as a means of survival and collective organization against exclusionary racist spaces. Usually, urban areas that host largest migrant populations or which are in the spotlight of political and economic interests – such as racist populist agendas, gentrification processes, or other forms of urban entrepreneurialism – are disproportionately targeted by border enforcement practices and racial policing. At this point, neighborhood solidarities and everyday practices of mutual support have played a central role in opening up social and material local infrastructures facilitating people in the move to inhabit an 'ubiquitous border' (see e.g. Dadusc, et al., 2019; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Mudu & Chattopadhyay, 2016; Grazioli & Caciagli, 2018). Chapter 8 develops this claim foregrounding the centrality of social reproductive politics in the articulation of solidarity networks.

Secondly, migrant neighborhoods constitute potential spaces for the negotiation of multiculture and the articulation of alternative community politics of belonging (Arampatzi, 2017; Santamarina, 2021). Literature has foregrounded the role of 'emotional encounters' and the sharing of everyday spaces in generating community relations that disrupt the established codes of citizenship and belonging (see e.g. Askins, 2016; Piacentini, 2016; Kapsali, 2020). From this perspective, the neighborhood as a familiar space crisscrossed by multiple living trajectories holds the potential to break the abstraction of migration as a

global process and turn it into a closer lived experience. Although physical nearness or proximity does not necessarily entail social proximity (Gill, 2016; Kearns & Parkinson, 2001), spaces of mutual encounter can help to unpack the commonalities faced by migrants and local communities in shared urban areas. Furthermore, the collective identities associated to certain neighborhoods – particularly in working class areas – can also transgress the state's racialized codes of belonging, including migrants and people from heterogeneous backgrounds horizontal forms of identification based on a strong common sense of place, residency, and quotidian practice (Limon Lopez, 2015). Moreover, understanding the neighborhood as a shared space of community struggle also helps unpacking the dichotomy between everyday social reproductive politics and political campaigning, evidencing its mutually constitutive dimensions. It disrupts the idea of solidarity as a 'moment' and contributes to an understanding of it as a 'process' grounded in a particular space (Arampatzi, 2017). At this point, the neighborhood bridges the temporal and spatial dimensions of urban political movements. Through spatializing mundane and invisible solidarities, grassroots everyday politics are generative of the fabric which becomes activated in moments of 'visible' political disruption.

Finally, centering the neighborhood in the theory and practice of migrant solidarities becomes particularly important in order to challenge racist spatial imaginaries. Not casually, the formal and informal toughening of the urban border links to a global conjuncture of proliferation of far-right and outright racist nationalist politics (Valluvan, 2021; Mudde, 2019). Migration has been a central node in populist discourses, often articulated alongside notions of security, cultural loss, or unemployment, and seeking to appeal to people's everyday lives and spaces. Migrant areas in European cities have been especially targeted by these discourses, generating 'misplaced alliances' that have frequently turned into forms of racist violence (Dalakoglou, 2013). García Agustín & Jorgensen (2016) use this term to refer to the ways racism has been mobilized by the far-right to put on migrants the blame of the consequences of the 2008 financial crisis. Anthony Ince (2011, 2019) has also signaled the local basis of far-right mobilizations, positioning the local as a key scale for the articulation of antifascist cultures and solidarities, and alternative politics of belonging (Santamarina, 2021). Overall, the previous contributions strongly complement approaches on the 'urban political' and the 'urban border' which generally miss an engagement with neighborhood politics. Due to the increasing expansion and heterogeneity of urban areas, paying attention to the uneven geographies of the city through the lens of the neighborhood is central to understand migrants' urban geographies of struggle and solidarity, their challenges, and potentialities.

2.3.3. Unpacking the Spatial Politics of Place-Based Border Struggles: Networks of Migrant Solidarities

The previous sections have centered the urban and the neighborhood in the processes of border struggle and the articulation of migrant solidarities. However, what are the wider spatial politics of these struggles? In addressing this question, I draw on Doreen Massey's multi-scalar and relational conceptualization of space as 'never closed', but the 'product of interrelations' and always in the process of 'being made' (Massey, 2005: 9). For Massey, the ways we understand space are crucial to our political imaginations and to how progressive politics are made on the ground. Although locally based, migrant agencies and solidarities are deeply embedded in global processes shaped by the politics of mobility and migration, geopolitical conflicts, the struggle for social justice, human rights politics, and the negotiation of uneven geographies of power. Yet, due to their transnational character, they rely on the potential of constructing connections amongst subjects and places, shaping internationalist politics from below. This section addresses the network as the main organizational structure and form of action allowing the connections shaping the politics of migrant solidarity.

Understanding solidarity as a 'transformative relation forged through political struggle which seeks to challenge forms of oppression', Featherstone (2012: 2) foregrounds its generative character as a counter-hegemonic 'world-making' activity constructing relationships between places, activists, and social groups. From this perspective, solidarity networks can potentially cross borders – both material and epistemological – and transform the hegemonic ordering produced by them. Rather than bounded in the local, the spatial politics of migrant solidarity networks should hence be 'outward looking' and create 'positive affinities between places and social groups' (Featherstone, et al., 2012) challenging the uneven geographies of racial capitalism.

I understand networks as forms of formal and informal organization that link together different organizations and individuals in political struggles, generally across uneven geographical contexts. Due to their potential to connect place-based struggles at multiple scales, the network has gained increasing relevance in contemporary geographical literature on social and political movements (Featherstone, 2003; Routledge, 2003; Nicholls, 2009; Della Porta & Diani, 2011; Cumbers, et al., 2008). A networking approach challenges accounts of internationalism as separated from everyday contexts, allowing a 'plural and

generous account of the forms of agency involved in shaping internationalist politics' (Featherstone, 2012: 46). It avows grasping the connections amongst the heterogeneity of practices generating cracks in the working of racial capitalism as constitutive of long-term black geographies of struggle.

In recent decades, great part of the organization and practice of the struggles against borders have indeed adopted a networked shape (Walia, 2014). Migrant-solidarity movements emerge as a web of initiatives and trajectories struggling against borders and for the freedom of movement across multiple geographies. They include more or less formalized attempts to join different local struggles and associations in communities of justice or forms of protest – e.g. 'no borders' camps or the 'Refugees Welcome' movement – as well as existing informal links and exchanges between and within place-based struggles. These are both the result of the connections than migrants and 'people in the move' have with struggles in places of origin and transit (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013), and of 'mobile activists' that share ties with different struggles and political spaces (Nicholls, 2009).

Networks of migrant solidarity can bring together migrants, leftist organizations, political associations, churches, neighbourhood and community associations, individuals from different backgrounds, and a long etc. (Anderson, et al., 2009). All these collective actors and individuals have different political cultures and framings of what political solidarity is, materialised in different ways of organizing and strategizing, and which relate differently to the Black Geographies of the border and the struggles against racial capitalism. Networks become spaces of formal and informal negotiation of these political differences, where 'acting in network' (Routledge, 2008) is a contentious process shaped by uneven power dynamics, particularly those produced by the Black Geographies of the border. A Black Geographical reading of the spatial politics of migrant solidarity dismantles the ways processes of networking and solidarity involve an ongoing negotiation of racialised geographies of struggle. Foregrounding questions of agency, the following chapter precisely focuses on these processes, interrogating what a Black Geographical reading of the border entails to the crafting of political commons through networked solidarities in ways that challenge the workings of racial capitalism.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter has built a theoretical lens to analyze the spatial politics of migrant solidarities. Bringing key contributions to literature on borders and migrant politics, the

previous theoretical developments have underscored the Black Geographies of the border, unpacking the ways capitalist and postcolonial relations are bound together in the production of the exclusionary spaces of the European border regime. From this perspective, the chapter situated migrant politics in relation to long-term cartographies of struggle, pushing forward debates on migrant agency, decolonization, and black power in the crafting of counter-hegemonic politics. Drawing on a relational understanding of space, borders, and solidarity politics, I have discussed the place-based character of most of the experiences of migrant struggle as constitutive of ongoing trajectories of internationalist politics. Since it constitutes the everyday space of the experiences of social bordering and border enforcement, the chapter has developed an argument to center the urban space and the neighborhood in the theory and practice of migrant solidarities.

Building upon these theorizations, the next chapter concludes the theoretical framing of this research focusing on the intersubjective dimension of the struggles against borders. It engages with the challenges of practicing an antiracist politics of solidarity from a perspective that is attentive to the ways racialized, gendered, and classed borders become negotiated in heterogeneous spaces of struggle. Bringing black feminist writings on solidarity to the struggles against racial capitalism, questions of decolonization, care, and mutual support are positioned as central. These are addressed as commoning practices that subvert the exclusionary racialized, classed, and gendered geographies of the border regime.

CHAPTER 3
Practicing Solidarities Against Borders

'If you Have Come to Help me you Are Wasting your Time. But if you Recognize that your Liberation and mine Are Bound up Together, we can Walk Together' (Lila Watson)

3.1. Introduction

Unpacking the Black Geographies of the border regime, the previous chapter framed migrant solidarities as ongoing forms of agency disrupting the postcolonial and capitalist logics of racialized, classed, and gendered uneven geographies. This chapter inquires how, embodied and situated in everyday contexts, these struggles go beyond the fights against physical borders, comprising those waged in the terrain of political subjectivities. It interrogates what a Black Geographical reading of the border regime means for the articulation of migrant solidarities on the ground, focusing on the intersubjective processes through which the negotiation of racialized, gendered, and classed borders shapes the crafting of collective political identities and solidarity networks. In so doing, it builds upon black feminist writings to draw particular attention to the ways these contentious processes are at the core of everyday spaces solidarity, raising important questions regarding power dynamics, empowerment, political agency, and social reproductive politics in the discussion of solidarity-making and the processes of undoing borders.

Developing these arguments, the chapter starts addressing the question of the heterogeneity of the political in relation to the uneven geographies shaping migrant solidarity struggles. It pushes forward black feminist work on solidarity to grasp decolonization as a means to rework power dynamics and political identities towards building political commons beyond borders. Also inspired by this work, the second section addresses the centrality of social reproductive labour in navigating the deadly exclusionary spaces of the border regime. It explores how care and social reproductive politics are rooted in everyday spaces and portray forms of commoning that foster processes of political subjectivation, challenging formal definitions of the political. I suggest here the concept of 'political reproduction' as a core argument and contribution of this thesis, and which is rooted at the intertwining between social reproduction and the processes of political subjectivation.

3.2. Negotiating Geographies of Power: Heterogeneity, Space, and Political Subjectivation in the Articulation of Solidarities Against Borders

A networking approach foregrounds how migrant struggles generally involve the solidarity and support of different forms of trans-local communities of justice (Walia, 2014; Anderson, et al., 2009). Hence, spaces of migrant solidarity bring together a heterogeneity of subjects with different positionalities across axes of race, gender, class, status, ethnicity, experiences of the world, and divergent political cultures (King, 2016). Although committed to fight against borders, these spaces are not free from power dynamics (Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013; Montesinos Coleman & Bassi, 2011). This section addresses the ways situated processes of negotiating questions of difference and power stand at the core of the constitution of the commons and the formation of collective political identities, shaped by different trajectories and uneven geographies coming together in political struggle.

Mezzadra & Neilson (2013: 265) approach subjectivity as a 'battlefield', drawing attention to the ways 'border struggles are not only fought at the border'. Borders are constitutive of conflictive social relations in different settings and plains, and 'the struggles against the effects of contemporary bordering should focus on the impact of bordering both on individual peoples' lives (and deaths) and on collective social and political conviviality and solidarities' (Yuval-Davis, et al., 2019: 173). These claims move border struggles into the level of people's subjectivities. Such a shift allows addressing the ways borders crisscross people's subjectivities and are performed through relations and interactions also within spaces of solidarity, from the tiniest ones to multi-scalar global networks (Montesinos Coleman & Bassi, 2011). From a Black Geographical reading, this demands interrogating how peoples' subjectivities and agencies within these spaces speak to the Black Geographies of the border regime and to black genealogies of struggle.

The 'heterogeneity of the political' is a central aspect stemming from a relational approach to space, borders, and solidarity politics (Massey, 1999a; Featherstone, 2012, 2008). Doreen Massey (1999a: 306) argues that space 'is the sphere of the possibility of existence of multiplicity', the sphere where 'multiple trajectories coexist' and the sphere of 'existence of more than one voice'. Against essentialist definitions that associate solidarity to likeness, difference is hence intrinsic to the formation of political solidarities (Mohanty, 2003). Solidarities are forged 'through uneven power relations and geographies' (Featherstone, 2012: 6). For bell hooks (2013: 148), what actually makes possible the practice of 'bonding across race, class, gender and diverse politics' is a 'radical openness'

to approach the world of difference and otherness. This raises important questions: How to build solidarities across this diversity? How to challenge borders in their broadest senses? How to articulate a migrant politics from below that disrupt, rather than reinforce, the Black Geographies of the border regime? Throughout the section, I engage with these questions addressing the notion of alliances as central to the articulation of political solidarities against borders. Inspired by black feminist writings on solidarity, I portray a notion of alliances which grasps the ideological basis of the coming together in political struggle. Thereafter, decolonization is addressed as a transversal strategy to challenge borders and build equal relationships across these heterogeneous alliances. The section concludes inquiring the ways both the crafting and decolonization of solidarities are deeply spatial processes, generative of new collective political identities and processes of politicization. Against notions of citizenship as a normative category, I address decolonization as a form of commoning beyond bordering logics. Overall, the section makes central contributions bringing black feminist work to current literature on migrant solidarities. This move sheds light on the ways struggles against borders need to place race at the centre of the processes of building political commons.

3.2.1. Alliance-Making and the Articulation of 'Solidarities Beyond Borders'

Heterogeneity and difference as inherent characteristics of solidarity entail alliances between differently positioned subjects (Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen, 2016). The process of alliance-making is contentious (García Agustín & Jorgensen, 2018; Featherstone, 2012), and for Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), it is a daily practice of bringing together different perspectives into contact and conflict. Indeed, Harsha Walia (2014: 177) notes that 'no alliance is free from complicated dynamics, differences in ideology and nuanced questions'. Alliance-making involves both engaging with the 'struggles around positionality' (Hall, 1988) and the reflexive process of situating struggles in the intersection of specific 'geographies of power' (Featherstone, 2008). As addressed in chapter 2, Stuart Hall (1988), influenced by the work of Althusser, notes that central issues of race appear historically in articulation, in a formation, with other divisions that are constantly crossed and re-crossed by categories of class, gender and ethnicity. Feminist theory has also drawn attention to struggles around positionality through the notion of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2018 [1989]; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020; Young, 2011 [1990]). From a spatial and situated perspective, Yuval-Davis, Wemyss & Cassidy (2019: 26) note that

> intersectionality analysis relates to the distribution of power and other resources in society and does not reduce the complexity of power constructions to a single social division (…) Situated intersectionality views different social divisions as discourses and practices that are ontologically different and irreducible to one another but that, in any concrete situation, are mutually constituted and shaped. They form the particular, nuanced, and contested meanings of particular social, economic and political contexts, in which some social divisions have more saliency and effect than others.

Both articulation theory and situated intersectionality provide a critical lens to analyse the ways racialized borders within migrant solidarity spaces are entangled with classed, gendered, or sexualized oppressions in heterogeneous ways. The main difference between both approaches is that whereas intersectionality looks at the intersection of 'ontologically different' regimes of power – e.g. patriarchy, capitalism, or racism –, articulation draws attention to the connections of different elements of the social in particular contexts forming an articulated unity. In an intersectional approach, inequalities have a cumulative effect (e.g. woman, black, young, working class), whereas articulation draws attention to the contingent character of the ways inequalities are lived in different contexts and relations (e.g. the position of this woman is not the same in a job interview in the UK than in a community church in the same country). While intersectionality's axes of power are 'fixed' or determined – despite the ways they intersect is variable and situated –, articulations are neither inevitable, necessary, nor determined. Although Hall situates articulations historically, his account is open to the ways in which these can potentially be transformed. Against simple and generalizing views on questions of privilege, both situated intersectionality and Hall's articulation theory are attentive to the contexts and places shaping certain intersections and articulations. Yet, Hall's articulation theory is in greater concordance with the definition of racism developed in chapter 2. Notwithstanding, within this discussion it is important to note that the concept of articulation has been central in debates emerging from the critique staged to the economic reductionism of classic Marxism by feminist and other movements in the 1970s and 1980s. Hence, although I am focusing on Hall's contribution, other key authors theorized articulation from other perspectives, for instance drawing attention to the interactions between humans and non-humans (Haraway, 1995; Latour, 1993), or to the bridging effect of political discourse (Laclau & Mouffe, 1987).

Unpacking the different ways in which regimes of power appear articulated and structured in dominance in situated – social, political, cultural and economic – configurations (Hall, 2018 [1980]) entails an engagement with the intertwining oppressions that come to the fore through place-based struggles. On the one hand, this involves a rejection of an

identity politics that ranks privileges and oppressions, pushing forward forms of political imagination that move beyond political enclosures and that highlight the heterogeneity and mutually constitutive position of allied subjects and struggles (Featherstone, 2012, 2008). On the other, it urges engaging with the question of difference from a perspective that challenges the overlapping systems of domination in their specific articulation (Young, 1990).

In a series of essays on race, black feminist bell hooks (2013) refers to the 'imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy' to offer a way to think about the interlocking systems that work together to uphold and maintain cultures of domination. Resonating with what Harney & Moten (2013:17) address as an 'ongoing attack on the commons', this form addressing the basis of solidarity moves beyond dual thinking (e.g., enemies/victims, oppressors/oppressed) and unpacks all the coexisting systems sustaining the dominant culture (racism, patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, etc.) providing a very useful stand to think about the centrality of transversal alliances within migrant solidarity politics. For Harney & Moten, (2013: 10), this means recognizing that 'when you seek to make things better, you are not just doing it for the other, you must also do it for yourself (…) no one will really be able to embrace the mission of tearing "this shit down" until they realize that the structures they oppose are not only bad for some of us, they are bad for all of us'.

Yet, from this perspective building 'solidarities without borders' (García Agustín & Jorgensen, 2016) does not mean the rejection of borders but the acknowledgement that 'borders both divide and connect' in the sense that 'they also establish relations' and they can 'create politically charged and highly contingent forms of sociability and vulnerability'. Nonetheless, 'the commons will continue to cross borders and borders will continue to cross the commons' (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013: 279), and solidarities will always involve the negotiation of power relations (Featherstone, 2012). Here, black and third world feminism inspires a culture of 'solidarity beyond borders' which suggests positioning borders in the centre of the crafting of political solidarities (hooks, 2013). Theorizing 'feminism without borders', Chandra Mohanty explains:

> I choose feminism without borders to stress that our most expansive and inclusive visions of feminism need to be attentive to borders while learning to transcend them. Feminism without borders is not the same as 'border-less' feminism. It acknowledges the fault-lines, conflicts, differences, fears, and containments that borders represent. It acknowledges that there is no one sense of a border, that the lines between and through nations, races, classes, sexualities, religions, and disabilities are real and that a feminism without borders must envision change and social justice work across

> these lines of demarcation and division (…) I outline a notion of feminist solidarity, as opposed to vague assumptions of sisterhood or images of complete identification with the other (Mohanty, 2003: 2).

Black feminist writings on solidarity provide a clue of the heterogeneity shaping feminist movements in relation to issues of race, class, sexuality, and other social divisions and the need to challenge exclusionary essentialist framings of the struggles. Countering an identity politics that tended to counterpose racialised forms of feminism, I think these analyses are of central importance to the negotiation of heterogeneity within spaces of solidarity challenging border regimes. Due to the centrality of borders shaping social relations and political spaces (Balibar, 2002), we need to be attentive to their operation in the subjective plain within these spaces. The contextual ideological basis of the Black Geographies of the border addressed in chapter 2 reveals how these borders are deeply racialized, and they are articulated in multiple ways with classed and gendered borders. For Featherstone (2012: 21) 'engaging with the power relations through which solidarities are crafted and constructed is a necessary condition for foregrounding the contested processes through which solidarities are generative'. The next section looks at decolonization as a means of situating borders in the centre of the processes of building the commons, constructing counter-hegemonic political relations through the re-working of the power dynamics shaping political alliances.

3.2.2. Undoing Borders: Strategies Towards Decolonization

Drawing on black feminist theory, this section positions decolonization as a practice reworking racialized, gendered, and classed borders within political solidarity movements. As a subjective and material process, decolonization involves undoing borders and unpacking the ways migrant struggles are embedded in long-lasting black cartographies of struggle (McKittrick, 2006). Exploring the multiple ways in which undoing borders traverses the political and personal realms of our lives, decolonization is portrayed as a dual form of resistance that involves not only dismantling current systems of racial capitalist geographies and systemic hierarchies, but also prefiguring societies based on equity, mutual-aid, and self-determination (Walia, 2014). In so doing, I argue that it stands as a constitutive force in the processes of commoning.

Decolonization tackles white supremacy as the organizing logic of contemporary racial capitalism and the Black Geographies of the border regime. It involves addressing the ways borders reproduce postcolonial geographies and social hierarchies through regulating

the times and spaces of group-based differential access to mobility. From an ideological standpoint, decolonization means engaging with the long-lasting histories of dispossession shaping current migration politics and national articulations of racism. It demands stressing the ways racism is intrinsic to the processes of capitalist expansion and accumulation, which build on a longer European history of white supremacy, colonization, exploitation and removal of Black peoples and cultures (Robinson, 1983; Bhattacharyya, 2018). From a focus on political action, a politics of decolonization entails challenging white supremacy in its multiple manifestations, from refusing forms of institutional and structural racism to reworking the ways white supremacy informs our intersubjective exchanges, political imaginaries, and social interactions. In this way, Chandra Mohanty (2003: 7) argues decolonization involves 'profound transformations of self, community, and governance structures' and 'it can only be engaged through active withdrawal of consent and resistance to structures of psychic and social domination'. From this perspective structural change and subjective change need to be placed in a dialectical relationship, with one being tied to the other. Following bell hooks,

> 'white supremacist thought and action, no matter how relative, was imprinted in all our consciousness early in life. Then we can share the common awareness that each of us has to critically examine the extent that early socialization continues to influence us and the ways we have chosen to decolonize our minds. Critical self-examination is a necessary component of the antiracist process' (hooks, 2013: 146).

This quote invites us to think critically on the ways white supremacy continues to structure our thought and actions. Hooks places 'self-examination' as a key process in our way towards decolonization. Self-examination relates to reflexivity, as the collective and individual process whereby privilege can be unlearnt and social relations can be transformed. Reflexivity is always a relational process that entails constant exchanges and dialogue with others and involves the development of a sense of care, solidarity, responsibility, and political consciousness. As a practice, it becomes particularly crucial in spaces of migrant solidarity, which are never free from structural forms of oppression (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021). Although committed to antiracist political struggle and solidarity, both migrants and those standing in solidarity with them can eventually act in a way that reproduces power structures. Decolonizing solidarity is about reflecting and transforming those practices, creating relationships based on equality and the positive negotiation of difference. As a relational process, reflexivity is profoundly spatial: it is related to the creation of 'cross-group' contact spaces (Swerts, 2018; Droogendyk, et al., 2016; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021),

as well as self-organized spaces allowing the exchange of experiences and ideas between differently positioned subjects and social groups.

Reflexivity is also the process through which migrants and people with histories of colonization challenge 'internal racism' (Fanon, 2008 [1952]), meaning the subjection of black minds to the 'mystifications of the very racist ideology which imprison and define them' (Hall, 1986: 26). Fanon does not want the end of colonialism but the end of the standpoint from which colonialism makes sense (Harney & Moten, 2013). In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire links reflexivity to emancipation, as a practice of freedom through which the oppressed finds the ways to discover and conquer themselves, as subjects of their own historical agency (Freire, 1975 [1968]). He portrays reflection and consciousness as the trigger of political action, from a perspective where reflexivity is deeply linked to empowerment. Chapter 8 in this thesis will address some of the spaces where the Network practiced collective forms of reflexivity in multiple ways.

Reflexivity and empowerment are both constitutive elements of anti-oppression work. Anti-oppression work is a means to challenge white supremacy within spaces of migrant solidarity. It involves paying attention to the intersubjective processes and the quotidian social relations taking place within solidarity spaces, critically unveiling the ways grassroots movements often reproduce racialised, gendered, and classed dynamics bolstering the order they seek to subvert (Montesinos Coleman & Bassi, 2011). Anti-oppression analysis precisely attempts to examine and address the varied – often unintentional and invisible – effects of systemic marginalization and differential power dynamics between individuals, groups, and communities by providing a critical analysis of the intersecting lived realities of race, class, sexuality, and ability (Walia, 2014). It looks at oppression as relational and contextual: we are all embedded in relations of domination and all wear privilege, although in different ways and degrees according to various contexts.

Anti-oppression work is the production of collective infrastructures that tackle these power imbalances and decolonize forms of leadership, political organization, and decision 'pushing back against privilege' (McKenzie, 2014). Intersectionality theory has had a great influence on these debates, particularly regarding the issue of privilege. The idea of 'dealing with privilege' has probably been one of the biggest debates within radical migrant solidarities in recent years. It means taking responsibility for how we are all implicated in reproducing inequality and acting in a way that avoids reproducing oppression (King, 2016).

Decolonization also involves the imagining and generating of alternative institutions and relations, prefiguring societies based on equity, mutual aid, and self-determination (Walia, 2014). The politics of prefiguration are central in the struggles against borders and refer to the everyday politics that perform the social relations and spaces we wish to achieve through our political struggles. Prefiguration entails an alignment between means and ends in the construction of counter-hegemonic geographies (Graeber, 2009). It is a practice of radical equality, which consists of 'taking action in the present to undermine borders in practical ways' (King, 2016: 38). It is the notion that 'our organizing reflects the society we wish to live in –that the methods we practice, institutions we create, and relationships we facilitate within our movements align with our ideals' (Walia, 2014: 11). Geographical literature on migrant solidarity movements has foregrounded the centrality of practices of prefiguration in the crafting of solidarities, emphasizing how these are intrinsically spatial, constructing 'infrastructures of dissensus' that constitute autonomous geographies where 'the performative enactment of equality can form the basis of solidarities across differences' (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021: 399). Pickerill & Chatterton (2006: 730) define autonomous geographies as 'those spaces where people desire to constitute non-capitalist, egalitarian, and solidaristic forms of political, social, and economic organization through a combination of resistance and creation'. Insofar they radically disturb the established order, they spatialize a 'revolution of the everyday'. Most of this literature has addressed the intersections between squatting practices in Europe and the constitution of migrant solidarity spaces (Dadusc, et al., 2019; Raimondi, 2019; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Montagna & Grazioli, 2019). Nevertheless, infrastructures of dissensus are not only squats but 'free spaces' (Swerts, 2015) or 'solidarity zones' (Walia, 2014) that contest the logics of surveillance, support the freedom of movement in multiple ways, and perform relationships that aim to overcome forms of oppression.

3.2.3. Solidarity, Space, and the Politicization of the Commons

The formation of political alliances to challenge borders and the decolonization of the intersubjective relations and power dynamics shaping their politics are deeply spatial processes, grounded in situated struggles and 'spaces of convergence' (Routledge, 2003). Geographical literature has drawn attention to the role of these spaces in enabling mutual exchanges setting the ground for reworking of borders and the formation of 'solidarities across differences' (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Walia, 2014). This section deepens how spaces of migrant solidarity foster processes of politicization, empowerment, and forms of commoning, generating new collective identities.

The notion of the 'political' adopted in this thesis draws on long-lasting contributions by feminist and black movements. These have radically contested normative and formalist assumptions of the political, foregrounding how politics start in everyday relationships, and the ways the personal and the private are political. Politics take place not only in public realms but also in everyday spaces where relations of solidarity are crafted, and uneven geographies of power are contested. These different spaces of the political are deeply bounded together through processes of commoning and politicization. Addressing politicization as a relational and spatial process of 'crafting collective intentionality', Swerts (2021) engages with the role of practices of mutual support and friendship happening in convergence spaces as constitutive of the experiences of political disruption. He demonstrates how, very often, the everyday exchanges taking place in solidarity spaces are a necessary step for people to become active in different forms of migrant protests. Indeed, processes of subjectivation appear as a main focus for literature on migrant activism, since migrants are presumed to not have a place within the State definition of the political community and who has the right to act and say in public (Dikeç, 2013).

The previous notion of the political foregrounds politics as a form of commoning. Inspired by the principle of equality, the notion of 'commons' sets a productive way to think about the kind of alliances forged through migrant solidarity politics. It refers to the multiple practices of commoning of the everyday life and the processes of building solidarity networks and collective political identities. Foregrounding questions of interdependence, it highlights the mutually constitutive positions of the heterogeneous political subject embodying the struggles against borders. Commoning unfolds through opening-up spaces to share the multiple ways in which diverse political subjects, with plural forms of identification and positionalities across axes of race, gender, social class, sexuality, status, ethnicity, or ability, are commonly confronting the 'imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy' (hooks, 2013). Overall, this process is productive of new worldviews, collective political identities, and forms of agency (Featherstone, 2008).

A focus on commoning allows thinking about political agency beyond citizenship and the constrains of institutional politics, questioning 'who' can be a political subject and 'what' is considered as politics. It contests citizenship as rooted in the European Nation-State and operating as a biopolitical technology of control based on racial hierarchies (Balibar, 2002). Echoing Harney & Moten (2013: 8-9), the 'undercommons' have the right to refuse what has been refused to them: 'refuse to call others to order, refuse interpellation

and the reinstitution of the law'. They note that 'when we refuse, we create dissonance, and more importantly, we allow dissonance to continue'. Here, work on the 'postpolitical' – which grasps the tendency in neoliberal capitalism to transform politics into a matter of management and administration and foreclose the opportunities for political contestation[6] – addresses politicization as the process of disrupting the logics of the established order, taking place beyond the institutional field and opening-up spaces of rupture with the status quo (Dikeç & Swyngedouw, 2017). As an emancipatory act, subjectivation entails the 'collective process of enactment of a part that has no part in the established order' (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021: 403).

Overall, this approach on commoning and political subjectivation rejects traditional understanding of the political limited to demands of citizenship rights and recognition to foreground the broader everyday politics of mobility as a political movement. Capturing this, Papadopoulos & Tsianos (2013: 191-192) suggest the concept of 'mobile commons', comprising 'the invisible knowledge of mobility that circulates between people in the move and transmigrants attempting to settle in a place', the 'infrastructure of connectivity which is crucial to distributing this knowledge and facilitate logistics of support to stay mobile', 'a multiplicity of informal economies', 'diverse forms of transnational communities of justice' and the 'politics of care'. This notion of 'mobile commons', which has dominated most of the literature on the 'autonomy of migration', is particularly useful insofar as it reckons multiple forms of agency in the articulation of migrant solidarities, offering likewise a way to think about the heterogeneous political subject forming migrant solidarity politics.

Nevertheless, I argue that the previous approaches on commoning generally miss a broader engagement with the struggles around positionality shaping the contentious articulation of the commons, on the one hand, and a nuanced interrogation of the limits of autonomy, on the other. The analysis developed in this thesis attempts to fill these gaps engaging with the material and epistemological borders crisscrossing the commons. Furthermore, it also rejects the rigid equation between autonomy and commoning, arguing that the commons always interact in different degrees with the institutional and formal contexts in which they operate giving rise to complex dynamics of hybridization (Della Porta & Steinhilper, 2021; Karaliotas, 2017). Here, I subscribe Featherstone's claim that 'it makes

[6] See, for example, the work of Rancière, 1999; Swyngedouw, 2007; Zizek, 1999, Mouffe, 2005; or Karaliotas, 2017. Although these authors engage with post-politics in different ways, they all share a concern on radical equality. They also agree in the need to reframe the political, in contrast to formal and institutionalized definitions. This reframing refers to the 'essence' of politics, which relies in their antagonistic and disruptive character. Their work is influenced by Marxist and post-structuralist theories.

little sense to treat subaltern political cultures as autonomous' and 'it is through tracing their engagements with the socially mixed character of left politics and diverse, potentially conflictual political trajectories that agency and dynamic political strategies often emerge' (Featherstone, 2012: 65). A result of this complexity is the ambivalence shaping tensions between autonomy and institutionalization constitutive of migrant struggles against borders (Della Porta, 2018), a discussion which will be developed in different parts of this thesis. Hence, while a focus on commoning allows moving beyond citizenship and formalized politics foregrounding the generative character of political solidarities, I argue that it is important to acknowledge how disruption coexists with institutional engagements and claims for legal recognition in the politics of migration. For instance, the discussion developed in chapter 8 on the Network's politics of social reproduction – theorised in the following section – precisely illustrates this position, tracing how commoning processes are often embedded in particular institutional backgrounds where institutional and autonomous logics coexist in multiple and complex ways.

3.3. Migrant Solidarities, Care Politics, and Social Reproduction

Throughout the chapter, I have addressed politicization, solidarity, and decolonization as forms of commoning. This section re-examines these processes from a focus on the politics of care and social reproduction, positioning these as constitutive of networks of migrant solidarity. Following Katz (2008: 18), 'social reproduction encompasses the broad material social practices and forces associated with sustaining production and social life in all its variations. It is the stuff of the everyday life as well as the structuring forces that constitute any social formation'. Hence, it refers to the means by which society reproduces itself, materially and socially; to the diverse practices towards creating the conditions of living (Federici, 2019). In the terrain of migrant solidarities, it entails a broad range of activities oriented to sustain migrant lives against the deadly Black Geographies of the border regime. Tackling premature death as defining element of structural racism, Harney & Moten (2013) address social reproductive politics as forms of 'self-defence' and 'self-preservation'. Yet, despite their essentiality in shaping Black Geographies of struggle and forms of political organizing (Heynen, 2009; Tyner, 2006), social reproductive and care politics remain unexplored from a focus on race in literature on migrant solidarities. This section addresses this gap, engaging with the centrality of social reproductive politics in the constitution of counter-geographies of care, connectivity, and support that allow migrants navigating exclusionary racialised geographies. Linking care to social reproduction, I demonstrate how militant care work is strongly shaped by racialised,

gendered, and classed geographies. Furthermore, I address how a focus on social reproduction reveals care politics as essential in the sustainment of survival economies and processes of collective healing (Varela, 2020; hooks, 2013), triggering relationships of trust and further politicization processes (Swerts, 2015). Such a perspective allows deconstructing dichotomic understandings of direct support and campaigning within political struggles, positioning social reproduction as the basis for the articulation of disruptive politics and the construction of the commons. Grasping the intertwining between practices of social reproduction and processes of political subjectivation, chapter 8 suggests the concept of 'political reproduction' through an engagement with relevant empirical material.

3.3.1. Theorizing Care and Social Reproduction in the Production of the Commons

Care is a central concept in feminist theory, and it has been theorized from multiple perspectives (Esteban, 2017). A feminist ethics of care foreground interdependence and mutuality as constitutive elements of social life, breaking the individual neoliberal logics based on the autonomous, self-contained, rational individual (England, 2010; Tronto, 1998; Staeheli & Brown, 2003). Feminists have emphasized 'the centrality of care work and care relations to our lives and societies' and the ways politics of care draw on a 'social ontology of connection' (Lawson, 2007: 3).

Care is one of the activities contributing to social reproduction (Kofman, 2012). Indeed, a focus on social reproduction allows emphasizing the collective dimensions of care work and its centrality in sustaining marginalised communities. Moving beyond approaches that focus on the individual aspects of care work, the concept of social reproduction allows unpacking the multiple ways in which care has been central in the articulation of black cartographies of struggle (hooks, 2013). Migrants' 'precarious lives' (Butler, 2004) often rely on subsistence economies and networks of mutual support and interdependence in their material survival across exclusionary racist geographies. Here, social reproduction becomes the ground for the articulation of collective relationships that contest and subvert structural exclusions. The concept of 'reproductive justice' (Ross, 2006) grasps how issues of social justice like border violence, mass incarceration, premature death or environmental justice are also reproductive issues. From this perspective, structural racism and the uneven geographies of the border regime expose how 'reproductive politics involve racial politics' (Roberts, 1997) and the ways reproductive issues are at the centre of the processes of creating antiracist cartographies of struggle. Hall (2020: 245) notes that 'the everyday activities of care work are not simply a local matter'. Rather, 'they are effects of the stretching of social,

political, and economic relations over space, constructed and negotiated at interlocking scales of bodies, homes, cities, regions, nations, and the global'.

Understanding social reproduction as a form of commoning, Caffentzis & Federici (2015) counterpose the logics of the commons to the logics of the capitalist system, showing how commoning practices transcend the logics of the market and the State. This notion of social reproduction goes beyond Marxist theorizations that have focused more on the role that social reproduction has played within capitalist relations (Bhattacharyya, 2017). The production of the 'mobile commons' (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013) generates cracks in the workings of racial capitalism, and it is deeply linked to the creation of connections across situated 'political infrastructures of care' that create alternative logics to those of borders (Kapsali, 2020). This positioning of social reproduction as the basis of the constitution of the commons allows a reconceptualization of care as a reciprocal form of 'mutual support' (Kropotkin, 2021 [1902]), exposing social cooperation and interdependency as key for collective survival and struggle. This emphasis on 'mutual support' expands the notion of care to multiple dimensions of economic protection, moral and ideological support, everyday companionship, etc. (Esteban, 2017).

3.3.2. Articulations of Race, Gender, and Class in the Experiences of Social Reproduction

As a political concept, care demands problematizing the question 'who cares for whom?', acknowledging the ways care marks relations of power in society across the intersections of race, gender, and class (Tronto, 2003). Feminist theory has largely exposed how care and social reproduction work are heavily gendered (Staeheli & Brown, 2003). Feminist Marxists have found the ideological and historical roots of the gendering of care work in the social and spatial separation of waged work from social reproductive work. Work became constituted as 'economically productive', constructing a socio-spatial boundary between work-production-public spaces and care-reproduction-private spaces, devaluating, and obscuring the activities defined as women's work (England, 2010). The 'privatization of social reproduction' (Roberts, 2008) and the expansion of neoliberal logics and market relations to every aspect of people's lives have made these debates even more complex, producing new geographies of inequality (Lawson, 2007). Engaging with the ways today a disproportionate amount of care work is carried out by ethnic minorities, migrants, and women (Tronto, 1995), increasing voices are pushing forward intersectional approaches to the ethics of social reproductive work (Ward, 2015; Hamington, 2015; Havinsky, 2014).

Despite these approaches address the gendered, racialised and classed dynamics of care work, they generally limit their focus to the ways gender intersect with other identity categories rather than engaging with the contextual and nuanced articulations shaping its performance across different settings. At this stake, Raghuram (2021) criticizes the way that gender has been the privileged optic through which care has been theorised. Rather, a Black Geographies of care unpacks how race has been central to the division of caring labour in the postcolonial world, where slavery and colonialism strongly shape the divisions between who cares and who receives care. Hence, the dimensions of race and care are shaped by past and ongoing histories of mobility (van Riemsdijk, 2013) and are deeply imbued with racial politics present and past. Raghuram demonstrates some of the ways re-centring race and postcolonial theory in discussions on social reproduction unpacks how care is performed differently in strongly racialised settings.

A focus on social reproduction precisely grasps the articulations between race, gender, and class in the experiences of care. Precarity, vulnerability, and premature death shape group-based differential access to basic needs, and therefore exposes marginalised communities to a greater interdependence from networks and dynamics of mutual support and practices of 'commoning' that allow life in the edges of racial capitalism. Hence, while a focus on the subject of care exposes how it is gendered, racialised and classed; a focus on social reproduction allows engaging with the articulated structures behind the experiences of social reproduction. Geographical literature has recently explored how intersections between race, gender, and class have indeed shaped different lived experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic (Eaves & Al-Hindi, 2020; Ho & Maddrell, 2021).

All the previous issues become crucial when engaging with the development of social reproductive labour within migrant solidarity networks, where the question 'who cares for whom?' is central. Montesinos-Coleman & Bassi (2011) expose how grassroots counterhegemonic spaces can reproduce problematic power dynamics present in society. Centring questions of race, gender, and class in the analysis of movements' care work – both in relation to the importance given to social reproduction issues within a particular political space, and to the subjects and ways in which care is performed – is crucial if we want to truly constitute antiracist forms of commoning. Chapter 8 develops this stand from a critical engagement with the case study examined in this thesis, making essential contributions to current literature.

3.3.3. Social Reproduction, Politicization, and Collective Struggle

A focus on social reproduction expands the notion of the political and demonstrates how care work is constitutive of the experiences of political disruption. Disruption in this way can sometimes be explicit – through protest and the articulation of collective demands –, but most of the times may be implicit, through the construction of alternative relationships that subvert sovereign powers and the exclusionary logics of racial capitalism. Furthermore, this emphasis on social reproduction reinforces the previous section's argument that processes of commoning are deeply spatial and foster processes of politicization and the formation of collective identities (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Swerts & Nicholls, 2021). Black feminist bell hooks situates social reproduction and relationships of care at the core of the political struggles against racism, arguing that

> 'if we are to truly address issues of race and racism then our society must make the creation of the conditions for optimal wellbeing a central aspect of antiracist struggle' (hooks, 2013: 25).

In her writing, she particularly engages with the ways white supremacy and structural racism deteriorates black people's self-esteem and mental health. For her, a first dimension of the politics of care involves creating 'the necessary conditions wherein healthy self-esteem can be nurtured and can flourish'. From this perspective, the analysis developed in this thesis foregrounds how social reproductive work is deeply linked to 'political reproduction', in terms of empowerment, political subjectivation, and the overcoming of structural barriers. As such, it is a necessary step towards politicization. Harsha Walia (2014: 267) suggests 'healing justice' as a liberatory care framework that centres community care as a 'political and philosophical convergence of healing inside of liberation'. It aims to 'transform the individualistic, privatized, and capitalist conditions of healing that deny low-income communities access to food, medicines, and support systems', creating and sustaining communities of care. Healing justice encompasses a heterogeneity of direct support activities developed by migrant solidarity networks as a daily aspect of community organizing, such as food support, drafting legal submissions, providing childcare, emotional support, coordinating group visits to immigration offices, and opening up spaces for collective exchange and mutual support. Askins (2015) foregrounds the political dimension of these everyday quiet practices. Through the notion of 'quieter politics of austerity', Hall (2020: 247) refers to 'significant ways of building relationality, a politics of togetherness at a time of social and personal hardship'.

Social reproductive politics centre direct support and reparative justice within migrant political struggles, showing the ways these are the basis for collective empowerment and the overcoming of structural barriers. The previous section has addressed how sharing experiences through commoning practices foster relationships of trust and processes of politicization and collective struggle. The analysis developed in this thesis underscores how this perspective unpacks the dichotomic understandings of direct support and political campaigning that shape most of the discussions around migrant activism. Divisions between 'direct support' and 'campaigning work' reproduce assumptions of valuable productive 'political' work and unvalued unproductive 'care work'. Rather, social reproduction is positioned here as constitutive of the collective political subject of migrant struggles, exposing the ways care is deeply political, not only enabling collective survival but also fostering the crafting of collective identities and politicization processes that make 'solidarities across differences' possible (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021). I argue that this perspective pushes forward key ideas that exceed the scope of migrant solidarity movements to other forms of political organization and struggle.

3.4. Conclusion

Chapters 2 and 3 have developed the theoretical framework of this research, building an analytical lens to address the spatial politics of migrant struggles and the practicing of political solidarities against borders. Overall, the theoretical discussion above is built upon the core arguments developed throughout the thesis, making key contributions to current literature in different fronts:

Firstly, it deepens understandings on migrant solidarities through the lenses of race and feminist theory, critically exploring how the struggles against borders are characterised by the ongoing, often contentious, and productive negotiation of heterogeneity of multiple positionalities across axes of race, ethnicity, gender, class, status, or sexuality. Hence, border and migrant struggles have been positioned not only as struggles challenging physical geographical borders, but the political subjectivities they produce. In this regard, I have addressed how the negotiation of borders – both material and epistemological – is a deeply spatial process, bringing attention to the political geographies shaping solidarity struggles and foregrounding the role of space in the crafting of new political positions and subjectivities. According to this and engaging with the complexities and contradictions of solidarity-making, the thesis brings relevant insights of how racialised, gendered, and

classed power dynamics shaped the political spaces of the Network, and how the contestation of such logics re-shaped collective political identities. My argument here develops and encourages a critical practice of re-examination of the internal borders playing out within solidarity spaces as a necessary step in the processes of political transformation.

Secondly, I have developed a Black Geographies of the border regime, unpacking the ways migrant struggles relate to long-term black cartographies of struggle. This is a central intervention in literature on migrant solidarities, overcoming a strong tendency to detach migrant politics from other black and brown political trajectories. My argument pushes forward debates on migrant agency, decolonization, and empowerment in the crafting of counter-hegemonic politics and in the shaping of political solidarities. It draws on the observation and analysis of the politics of the Network, where migrants' politics often built upon black and brown forms of organizing, linked, lived experiences of dispossession, and 'black sense of place'.

Thirdly, transversal solidarities against borders have been positioned as common struggles challenging racial capitalism, broadening the framings of migrant solidarities, and emphasizing the ways they intersect with – and are constitutive of – other struggles in the articulation of counter-hegemonic internationalist politics. Networks have been addressed as the political spaces of connection where this heterogeneity converges and is negotiated in multiple ways. This tackles a main concern in solidarity politics, which refers to the question of organization and to the ways different struggles are related across spatial and subjective divides. On the other hand, it contributes to contemporary discussions that unpack the diverse place-based trajectories and connections shaping internationalist politics contributing to a nuanced understanding of the spatial politics of migrant solidarity.

Finally, the theoretical discussion developed throughout the chapters has made a strong argument towards a politicization of care within migrant solidarity movements, centring issues of social reproduction. It has explored the ways care is performed differently in strongly racialized settings through looking at the ways care, race, gender, class, or status intersect in the experiences of social interdependency, precarity, mutual support, and daily survival. A main way in which the thesis develops this argument is through looking at migrant political experiences of social reproduction during the Covid19 pandemic in Glasgow. Centring social reproduction in solidarity spaces expands the notion of the political, situating care as a driving force within the processes of political subjectivation and formation of political collective subjects. At this point, my argument strongly deconstructs

hegemonic dichotomic approaches to the relationships between direct support and political campaigning. It foregrounds how care is constitutive of the experiences of 'political reproduction', making a fundamental intervention to the theory and practice of solidarity movement.

CHAPTER 4

Research Methodology: Researching Migrant Solidarities, Fighting Borders

'Do Work that Matters. Vale la Pena'

(Gloria Anzaldúa)

4.1. Introduction

The methodology developed in this chapter is the result of the ongoing attempt throughout my research to perform an academic praxis coherent to my theoretical inspirations and political principles. Understanding the methodology as the overarching strategy and research philosophy of my research project, a key underlying question was how to build an approach on 'militant research on migration' (Garelli & Tazzioli, 2013) which centres the fundamental insights of my engagement with Black Geographies and black feminist work on solidarity. When I firstly envisioned my project, I was inspired by previous activist-scholarship producing knowledge from a position of active engagement in spaces of migrant solidarity (e.g. King, 2016; Dadusc, et al., 2019; Swerts, 2015; Kasparek & Speer, 2013; Grappi, 2013). Yet, a methodology is something you construct as you become immersed in your research. Throughout this chapter, I navigate how my actual involvement in spaces of migrant solidarity in Glasgow shaped my main methodological reflections, practices, and distinctive contributions to scholar-activist approaches on Human Geography. A contextual understanding of methodological approaches foregrounds the ways these are always situated in specific contexts, where distinctive articulations of uneven power differentials and structural conditions shape our positionality, ethics, roles, and research possibilities.

Hence, the selection of my case-study, research questions, and specific methods responded to ongoing negotiations and decisions adopted through my active engagement in the No Evictions Network in Glasgow. I concluded my fieldwork in December 2020, after 15 months of activist-research in the field and two more years of previous active involvement and political commitment with the Network. Upon this time, my methodology became informed by my activist experience and some key internal debates and dynamics that I considered crucial to enlighten the theory and practice of migrant political solidarities. Drawing on the politics of the Network, my research interrogates:

1. Firstly, what are the relationships between space, borders, and solidarity politics in Glasgow?

2. Secondly, what are the spatial politics of the No Evictions Network?
3. And thirdly, are 'no borders' migrant solidarity spaces borderless? If not, what are the racialised, gendered, and classed dimensions of the politics of the Network?

My research experience and my engagement with these questions strongly pushes forward debates on antiracist activist scholarship, caring academic practices, and activist knowledge production. Developing a methodological approach for scholar-activism on migration inspired by Black Geographies and black feminist writings, I bring central contributions to current approaches. I suggest social reproductive and care politics as an integral research ethics and methodological framework, transversal to all my research praxis. On the one hand, due to its prefigurative dimension and my scholar-activist role, this approach entails a politicization of care in research, moving beyond current caring approaches in Human Geography (Hall, 2017; Hall, 2020; Middleton & Samanani, 2021). On the other hand, practicing social reproductive politics through activist research not only challenges divisions between the researcher and the researched through fostering relationships of mutuality, trust, and friendship, but also contests divisions between intellectual and material labour which continue to shape reference work on scholar-activism in Human Geography. Here, I engage with Derickson & Routledge's (2015) 'politics of resourcefulness' criticizing how their approach over-emphasizes the intellectual role of the academic and overlooks the knowledge produced by social and political movements. Rather, I suggest a focus on 'learning with political movements' that centres migrant and activist knowledges from a perspective that problematizes questions of power dynamics. Here, social reproductive and care politics become ways to decentre our intellectual role as researchers in spaces of migrant activism.

Overall, developing the methodology of this research, the chapter proceeds as follows: The first section explores the research philosophy underlying my methodological approach to the research questions. It introduces my approach to 'scholar activism' and 'militant research', foregrounding how my academic concerns have always been linked to my politics and commitment with social justice struggles. This discussion attempts to revisit understandings of scholar-activism within migrant solidarity spaces through an emphasis on migrant agency and Black Geographies of struggle. Thereafter, I think about my positionality and ethics, drawing attention to the ways in which my role and methodological approach became shaped by the political geographies of the Network and my own political identity within its spaces. Building on this, I disclose some of the social reproductive strategies that I developed to negotiate power dynamics and perform a praxis that was

coherent to my research philosophy and political principles. The third section concludes with a detailed account of the different methods that I employed and how I made sense of the data, addressing some of the main challenges and limitations that I encountered throughout my fieldwork.

4.2. Research Philosophy: A Black Geographical Reading of Militant Research Approaches to Migrant Struggles

Back in the 1990s, Ruth W. Gilmore started a research project on behalf of a group of Afro-American mothers who wanted to understand two Californian criminal laws. The mothers were organized under the rubric 'Mothers Reclaiming our children' (Mothers ROC) as a response to the intensity in which the State was locking their children, of all ages, into the criminal justice system (Gilmore, 2007). They contacted Ruth, a non-lawyer activist with research skills and access to university libraries and big vocabulary to help them to unpack these laws. Although the mothers were aiming to find ways in which their sons could defend themselves against an unfair system, what the group found out is that the Californian criminal law was intended to imprison black working-class populations in order to fuel neoliberal investments on prison infrastructures while generating an exploitable locked workforce. The collective discussion of these laws within the group inspired the book *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California*, where Gilmore traces the intertwining between global capital, black people's imprisonment, neoliberal expansion, and grassroots activism. Gilmore's work sets an example of ways in which scholar agencies can contribute to antiracist grassroots struggles, questions, and agendas. Her intervention moves beyond the production of alternative infrastructures of knowledge to centre political action as a constitutive aspect of her research practice. This is precisely the philosophy that inspires my research project, where my research questions and answers arise from my active militancy and commitment with the politics of the No Evictions Network in Glasgow.

Indeed, this project falls within the framework of a critical research praxis in Human Geography and migration studies construed as 'scholar-activism' or 'militant research', which I attempt to discuss here through a Black Geographical lens. While the Anglo-Saxon and the Human Geographical tradition has generally preferred the term 'scholar-activism' (see Routledge, 2003, 2008; Hale, 2008; Pulido, 2008; Gilmore, 1993, 2007; Derickson & Routledge, 2015; Chatterton et Al., 2010; Gillian & Pickerill, 2012, or King, 2016), work on 'militant research on migration' (Casas-Cortes, et al., 2015; Garelli & Tazzioli, 2013;

Grappi, 2013; Dadusc, et al., 2019; De Genova, 2013) uses the word 'militant' to denote continuity with other forms of radical experiences of knowledge production rooted in struggle (e.g. the Italian autonomous workerist tradition, the Colectivo Situaciones, indigenous movements in Latin America, etc.). Broadly, both terms have been used to refer to those forms of critical investigation that seek social transformation and the construction of relationships of solidarity as a vehicle for emancipation (Chatterton, et al., 2010). They draw on the inseparability of knowledge and action (Routledge, 2003) and encompass a broad range of practices of research and advocacy where the researcher stands alongside social justice struggles, participating in its politics and spaces of contestation. From this perspective, unity of thought and action entails 'challenging binaries' and valuing how research and organizing are mutually constitutive (Choudry, 2014). Drawing on the previous contributions, my research project is aimed at critically contributing to current debates on migrant solidarities, on the one hand, and committed with advancing the struggle of the No Evictions Network in Glasgow (where I was involved as an activist and researcher), on the other. This double outcome is what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (1993) calls a 'talk-plus-walk', where the knowledge produced through academic research has a performative effect to further social change. Mezzadra refers to it as the 'double opening' of militant research approaches, which gestures towards struggles on the one hand, and the production of concepts and theoretical innovations on the other (Garelli & Tazzioli, 2013).

Making the political aims of our research work explicit and upfront (Hale, 2008) disavows positivist epistemology and the claims for neutrality and objectivity that continue to underly great part of academic production and ideology (Tazzioli, 2013), and which still has strong structuring effects even in avowedly critical work. Feminist scholarship has addressed how all knowledge is partisan and situated (Haraway, 1988), and the ways research participants become active agents in the research process (Kapsali, 2020). Garelli & Tazzioli (2013: 246) argue that, in this way, militant research on migration involves an alternative 'political epistemology' where 'critical analysis is developed through migrant experiences and struggle-sites'. My methodological approach precisely starts from this political positioning and from my own participation and commitment with the politics of the Network.

Militant research also seeks to contest the structural position of neoliberalized Academia as an elite classed, racialized, and gendered institution reproducing the social order (Chatterton, et al., 2010; Reyes, et al., 2021). Challenging monolithic notions of Academia, Choundry (2020: 30) notes that 'universities are key institutions of elite

reproduction, but have historically also been important sites of struggle and social change, especially at times when these are connected with broader social and political struggles'. Indeed, UCU struggles since 2017 in the UK set a very recent example of the neoliberal university as a contested space. Particularly in our field – and linking to core criticism staged by scholarship on Black Geographies (Pulido, 2008; McKittrick, 2006) –, the politicization of academic research also involves challenging Geography as a white discipline and contesting the 'methodological Europeanism' driving the institutionalization of migration studies (Garelli & Tazzioli, 2013). I argue that positioning migration as a political question demands centring issues of race and agency not only in our analysis but also in our research practice. The methodology developed in this chapter does so through addressing what a Black Geographical lens potentially brings to scholar-activism on migration. Akom (2011: 114) has argued that 'researchers and scholars need to rethink how we conduct research with black populations and be mindful to deal with questions of contemporary black mobility from the perspective of structural racialisation as well as from the perspective of black people as centred, located, oriented, and grounded'. On the one hand, this involves problematizing how white supremacy can inform our research praxis and intervention in migrant solidarity spaces. Fletcher (2010) argues that despite we position ourselves as antiracist scholars, research encounters are often shaped by 'white methods' and 'white questions'. Reflexivity practices and whiteness studies can result inspiring to tackle this question, as fields that interrogate how white folk can better contribute to the struggles against racism, both in terms of academic research and affiliation to antiracist movements (Roediger, 2019; Inwood & Bonds, 2013). 'Racing research and researching race' (Twine & Warren, 2003) involves incorporating black research ethical principles such as self-determination, equity, community-generated information, healing, and local knowledge as part of the inquiry process (Akom, 2011). On the other hand, it means deconstructing how white supremacy inflects academic institutions in several ways, from academic curricula to research agendas, practice, notions of impact, and access to academic knowledge. Indeed, methodological practices and knowledge production that emphasize cultural concepts regarding African, African American, Caribbean, Latin American and indigenous cultures are still not considered mainstream but rather 'postcolonial' or 'decolonising researching methodologies' (Smith, 1999). This constructs a Eurocentric sense of otherness that gives a clue of the very partial ways in which racialised dynamics are being contested by ideas of decolonizing the Academy. In this direction, Kelley (2016) has argued that 'the fully racialized social and epistemological architecture upon which the modern university is built cannot be radically transformed by "simply" adding darker faces, safer spaces, better training, and a curriculum that acknowledges historical and contemporary oppressions'.

Engaging with recent black students' struggles in US campuses, he highlights how their fight is not for a 'more supportive' educational institution but for a liberated one that not only promotes but models social and economic justice.

Indeed, the multi-layered contradictions shaping the social, political, and economic location of Academia have made the figure of the scholar-activist a polemic one. Its elitist and postcolonial position within contemporary neoliberal societies has been criticised by many counter-hegemonic spaces and movements, sometimes denouncing the ways our careers benefit from the knowledges produced by the excluded. These criticisms need to be taken seriously reframing our agency if we want to practice an antiracist militant scholarship, particularly from a position of whiteness. The question of the production of knowledge is central in this regard (Choudry, 2020, 2015). In a reference to work on scholar-activist approaches on Human Geography, Derickson & Routledge (2015) emphasize the processes of 'co-production of knowledge' taking place in the 'spaces of convergence' where academics join struggles against oppression. They suggest practicing a 'politics of resourcefulness' as a 'guiding framework in the process of doing scholar activism' (Derickson & Routledge, 2015: 1-2). According to them, 'politics of resourcefulness' involve triangulating our research questions with community-based collaborators, channelling resources and privileges afforded to academics to advance the work of non-academic collaborators, designing our research to answer questions of these collaborators, and exploring the barriers to active participation and activism. Although useful to advance political struggles, I argue that all these practices draw on an assumed division of activist labour where academics are always assigned an intellectual role. In this regard, Choudry (2020) has strongly criticized how activist scholarship rarely engages with the rich range of knowledge produced from inside of social movements. In line with these criticisms, my methodological engagement revisits Derickson & Routledge's key work suggesting instead focus on 'learning with' political movements moving beyond resourcefulness. From this perspective, activist spaces are considered sites of collective reflection and negotiation of political possibilities, ideas, and experiences. As such, they produce critical interpretations of the world that inform both our theoretical work and political identities.

Moving beyond resourcefulness also entails problematizing the ways uneven power dynamics and geographies shape practices of scholar-activism. While intellectuals have historically developed a key role in political and social movements – in words of Lenin, 'without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement' (Lenin, 1935 [1902]) – a Black Geographical focus demands reframing the terms in which this relationship is

envisioned. Throughout my PhD and in previous militant fieldwork experiences, I considered central to acknowledge the ways my intellectual work becomes inspired and pushed by the knowledge emerging from social justice struggles. Black Geographical work precisely foregrounds this question: Pulido (1997) addresses the processes of 'listening', 'watching', and 'assisting' within spaces of struggles against environmental racism in Los Angeles; McKittrick (2006) asserts the histories and narratives of black women informing black counter-cartographies of struggle, and Gilmore (2007) starts her powerful analysis from an engagement with the group of black mothers campaigning against the imprisonment of their sons. This recognition is consistent with historical forms of black grassroots production of knowledge, based in community generated information and community capacity building. Since the 1960s, Freire, Fanon and other intellectuals promoted these as alternative methods of inquiry as a direct counter to the ways in which knowledge about the people of colour was being produced in the West (Akom, 2011). Bringing these approaches to scholar-activism in migrant solidarity struggles is a major move to promote anti-racist scholar practices. It tackles the fact that despite black knowledges are central in shaping migrant solidarity spaces, work on 'militant research on migration' and scholar activism in the field has barely engaged with questions of race in their academic praxis. This constitutes, indeed, one of the biggest contributions of this research.

Furthermore, the ontologies of political movements and their structural dimension entail their autonomous existence and knowledges, regardless our involvement as academics (Chesters, 2012). This extrinsic and non-necessary character of the researcher marks the difference between activist-research and forms of Participatory Action Research (PAR). For this reason, I find Derickson & Routledge's language of 'co-production of knowledge' problematic insofar it overemphasizes the role of the academic shaping these movements and the knowledge produced by them, at the time that it falsely suggests equivalences of power relations. Choudry (2020:31) has noted 'a tendency of academics to overstate their own importance to struggles for social change'. Tackling this, my focus on 'learning with' political struggles de-centres the role of the academic and underscores the knowledge produced by differently situated struggling communities. This is consistent with a focus on Black Geographies which seeks to avoid reproducing research approaches that erase subaltern agencies and knowledges, linking directly to the question of how we can represent these struggles without imposing a form of epistemic violence (Jackson, 1993, cited in Pulido, 1997).

A key question emerging from here is how we can decentre ourselves as researchers and 'learn with' political movements. Certainly, as academics great part of our doings are writing, reflecting, and developing different kinds of intellectual labour. While this type of labour is necessary for social and political movements, I argue that divisions between intellectual and material labour and the classed, racialised, and gendered roles shaping them need to be contested. In this endeavour, my approach on 'learning with' political movements is inspired by a politics of care and social reproduction. Reckoning the ways the position of the activist-researcher is classed, racialised, and gendered in distinctive ways, caring demands particular reflexivity on how these identities become performed through our own praxis (Lumsden, 2009, cited in Hall, 2017). Most literature focus on the alternative knowledges and theories produced through militant research methodologies, marginalizing both everyday forms of political contribution (see Derickson & Routledge, 2015; Routledge & Derickson, 2015; Garelli & Tazzioli, 2013; or De Genova, 2013) and the informal and incidental knowledge that emerges in mundane everyday activist spaces (Choudry, 2020). Furthermore, although some recent work has re-centred the politics of care within these spaces (Kapsali, 2020), methodological questions remain largely unexplored. Social reproduction increasingly appears as a theme within work on migrant solidarities but not as a research practice. This chapter makes a central contribution in this regard, interrogating what a focus on social reproduction and care politics entails for practices of scholar-activism. This focus draws on the recognition that relations are 'fundamental to doing socially and politically engaged research', and they involve doing 'work which is not always visible or valued within the academic world' (Choudry, 2020: 35). Addressing care as a 'research ethics', current Human Geography scholarship has noted that 'care might facilitate a rethinking of practices of research and analysis' and a 'distinct mode of ethics capable of informing academic practice' (Middleton & Samanani, 2021: 29). This involves applying a critical care ethics to our epistemological, ontological, methodological, and daily life practices (Lawson, 2007). A scholar-activist approach demands politicizing these 'ethics of care' from a perspective that is attentive to the ways through which care – and broadly social reproductive – politics can challenge hegemonic power structures. Indeed, when developed in migrant solidarity spaces, I demonstrate how care allows re-working the structural barriers between migrant subjects and academic epistemic environments, while contesting neoliberal notions of impact. Caring takes into account questions of agency, representation, emotional involvement, political commitment, and responsibility. While there can be multiple ways to de-centre ourselves as researchers, caring involves not only valuing other kinds of labour beyond our intellectual and relational skills, but also awareness of how the ways we position ourselves and envision our role in research scenarios affect questions of political agency and

power relations. The next section builds upon these developments to address my positionality and ethical stance within the spaces of my research.

4.3. Positionality and Ethics

The research philosophy outlined above arises from years of theoretical and practical engagement with key political questions around the ethics of my research and my position as a researcher committed with migrant solidarity struggles. Ethics are deeply related to our politics, and they inform the ways we act in the world, how we wish to perform our agency, the kind of relationships we establish with others, and the ways we envision political solidarities (Hall, 2017). Throughout this section, I sketch my positionality within the Network navigating the lived experiences that brought me to undertake research in this space. Overall, I chart how reflexivity and agency prompted me to understand my positionality not as a sum of abstract identities – white, cis woman, academic, Southern European migrant, etc. – but as a place of action and enunciation, shaped by the contextual articulation of the struggles I was researching. The following lines develop how my location in the Network and my previous experiences affected the kind of relationships I established with participants and my research approach, practice, and analysis.

My biography as a researcher is shaped by deep political convictions. Feminist geographers have foregrounded that place and the personal biography of the researcher are integral elements of social research and that it is impossible to leave our personal lives apart (Lawson, 2007; Hall, 2020; England, 2010). My academic interests and concerns have always been motivated by my political background, and my way towards becoming an academic was ever linked to my own trajectories of struggle. Between 2011 and 2015, I became involved in the neighbourhood movement in Villalba (Madrid)[7], where I started to share spaces and struggles with migrants, expanding my political views, analysis, and concerns. Over the years, this engagement took me to reflect about the centrality of migration and race politics in the current political conjuncture, asking myself questions around how to build antiracist political solidarities and alliances, and focusing my academic interests in questions of race, gender, and class. As for many activists of my age, my deeper commitment with migrant struggles came in 2015, a central date in the development of solidarity movements across Europe challenging the EU exclusionary politics surrounding the so-

[7] Villalba is the biggest municipality of the *Sierra* (mountain chain) of Madrid. It has an important political trajectory of working-class struggles (it is the municipality with highest unemployment in Madrid) and autonomous movements.

called ‘refugee crisis’ (García Agustín & Jorgensen, 2018). Before long, during the last year of my degrees in Political Science and Law, I won a scholarship as a collaborator of the department of Political Geography in the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM) to map migrant resistances and solidarities in Madrid city. In the first interview I did as part of this research, which was also my first interview ever, someone with Latin American background from a migrant LGTBiQ+ group told me this was the ‘last interview they would do with a white scholar’. We engaged in a conversation about it which made me question the ways I was undertaking research and wonder how I could better engage with migrants’ anticolonial stance in my academic praxis. When a year later I developed my Masters’ research with migrant anticolonial movements in Madrid, I completely shifted my fieldwork approach: I refused to conduct interviews with migrants, and rather participated in a migrant squat on a daily basis assuming essential social reproduction tasks such as cleaning, doing banners, sleeping in the squat, selling food and drinks in fundraising parties, etc. This role allowed me to become part of the struggle an ‘ally’, avoiding the reproduction of colonial relations that were being strongly contested.

The previous experiences showed some of the ways our methodology becomes shaped by political questions emerging through ongoing situated engagements with uneven geographies of power. These personal trajectories and questions deeply shaped the motivations of my PhD and the ways I began to envision this research’s methodology. The outbreak of the ‘No Evictions Campaign’ took place in August 2018, only a few days after I returned to Glasgow from an ‘Open the Borders’ caravan that travelled from Spain to Southern Italy to protest against Salvini’s migration policies. During that year, I won a scholarship from the Urban Studies Foundation to develop a PhD research project from October 2018 onwards on migrant solidarities in the urban space. Concerned by my experiences in Madrid and Italy, and motivated by my research project, I became actively involved in the struggles against the evictions. I took part in the first meetings that gave birth to the No Evictions Network, and I participated in the massive grassroots resistance to asylum seekers’ evictions during the summer of 2019. Yet, it was not until October 2019 that I formally started my fieldwork and decided to have the Network as the main case-study for my PhD. The negotiation of my positionality and the ethical dilemmas arising from it were deeply shaped by my strong involvement and commitment prior to starting fieldwork and during my whole research. Addressing her own positionality within a migrant squat in Thessaloniki where she was involved before starting research, Kapsali (2020) speaks of the dilemmas of being in a position of ‘insider-outsider’ and inhabiting a ‘space of betweenness’. In fact, my experience was not uncommon since scholar-activist work within migrant

solidarity spaces generally entails long-term periods of active involvement, necessary to build relationships of trust with participants (Swerts, 2018; King, 2016). Swerts (2018) foregrounds how 'becoming an ally' is a necessary part of the research process, often demanding months or years of deep immersion and commitment within spaces of migrant activism. Power imbalances in these spaces are not only shaped by our academic position, but also by our status and racial background.

My first action with Living Rent in the 'No Evictions Campaign', when we delivered letters to Glasgow Housing Associations, Glasgow City Centre 03/08/18 (Source: Living Rent)

No Evictions Members after participating in a meeting with Mears to negotiate a no evictions policy before they take over the asylum contract, Glasgow East End, 01/01/19 (Source: No Evictions Network)

Since the beginning and prior to starting fieldwork, my positionality in the Network was importantly shaped by the fact I was a migrant in Glasgow. Although very soon I became a regular participant in its spaces and actions, initially I found it very difficult to have an active voice. My Spanish background entailed significant gaps in terms of political culture, taking a while for me to get a sense of the politics of place. Language barriers also complicated the process. On the one hand, the strategizing work was usually led by British activists, who often made use of legal and specific language and institutional challenges that were inaccessible for someone without English as first language (Fieldwork Diary). On the other hand, the knowledge of migrant groups and asylum-seeking communities provided crucial inputs to our networking activities. My position 'in between' – as neither a local activist nor a member of the asylum-seeking or refugee communities – took me to adopt a supportive role and to assume more practical and reproductive work (e.g. childcare, organizing fundraising parties, managing the bank account, assuming direct support tasks, etc.). Nevertheless, engaging with social reproductive work was as much a deliberate decision as an outcome of my location within the Network. It was not solely the consequence of the barriers I was experiencing as a non-British European migrant and my gendered

identity but, overall, it was a political decision. Indeed, my previous experiences with migrant solidarity movements in Spain had made me question the role of white folks within migrant spaces from an antiracist anticolonial stance. Bringing these experiences from Spain to my intervention in the Network's politics and conversations illustrates how my migrant background was also generative. Hall (2020: 149) argues how through engaging with care work, fieldwork encounters 'are political in what they reveal of researchers' academic labour'. My political decision sought to challenge the traditional roles of the academic-activist and the implicit divisions between intellectual and material labour that continue to shape work on activist methodologies. This form of agency differs from Derickson & Routledge's (2015: 2) 'politics of resourcefulness', where 'the role of the scholar-activist is to pursue and engage with theoretical and conceptual questions in ways that are insistently and dialectically rooted in the struggles of the everyday life', reproducing a clear division of labour.

As a result of these negotiations and political stance, social reproductive work became great part of my doings within the Network and the cornerstone of my approach towards reciprocation. It helped me to navigate the ethical dilemmas of doing research with migrant political movements, becoming a way to 'give back' from a position that avoids reproducing racialised colonial power dynamics. My active involvement in daily tasks had a clear prefigurative dimension that contributed to the sustainment of the social and material spaces of the Network, at the same time that it also facilitated the creation of more horizontal relationships with people and the practice of a politics of 'mutual give' (Pulido, 2008). These social and political outcomes coming from my agency within the Network radically contest neoliberal notions of impact based on university standards (Gillian & Pickerill, 2012), and it is consistent with an integral ethics of care (Middleton & Samanani, 2021; Lawson, 2007).

This role and my own migrant background brought me closer to the migrant communities and families in the Network, with some of whom later I developed strong relationships of friendship and trust. Sometimes we also faced similar issues: we used to speak about how it feels to be away from our family and culture, how we struggled with language in the assemblies, or simply how our lives were before arriving to Glasgow. Despite coming to the UK for very different reasons and with a different status, our migrant experience was a strong point of connection. Language, which operated as a hierarchizing mechanism within the Network, often served to equate our positions. This radically differs from my previous experience in Madrid, where my speaking denotes a native and educated language that inevitably performs my distance to migrants' realities. This closeness and the

relationships I developed invested my research with strong emotions. Doing caring research within and about spaces of austerity, Hall (2020: 248) argues that developing a rapport over months or years of research employing tools of deep immersion and trust, 'fieldwork can become an interpersonal and relational space where differences, distances, similarities, and proximities are tied and tested'. In these forms of embodied fieldwork, 'bodies are vessels of memories and emotions, providing the capacity to make connections to others within these spaces, to create relational spaces of care'.

Arabic BBQ in Bellahouston Park, in one of my visits to Glasgow, 25/08/21 (Source: Own camera)

Indeed, these personal relationships and trust with migrants and other activists became the ground to negotiate my scholar-activist position. I wrote at the start of my fieldwork:

> 'Something that is worrying me is the question of transparency: how to negotiate my positionality, and what is ethically correct. Personally, I refuse to be that person who introduces herself in a movement as a "researcher", creating explicit boundaries and breaking safe spaces without working on trust. I rather tell people in confidence that I am doing research, once they know me, once they trust me, and once they know I care about our political struggle just as one more… This is what I have learnt' (Fieldwork Diary, October 2019).

While my approach to care and social reproductive politics contributed to my success in negotiating my positionality, I still had to face important ethical challenges. Linked to earlier points, a crucial aspect was to acknowledge the ways my research was deeply impacted by the critical stance and the knowledge produced by the Network. As I discuss throughout the thesis, many of my analyses, reflections, and conclusions are inspired by collective discussions shared in the spaces of the Network, and by conversations with participants in informal settings or in the course of my interviews. These learnings not only brought key insights to my research but also shaped my own political identity and ideological

commitment. Echoing Aziz Choundry (2020: 28), ‘we need to take the opportunity to learn from how organizers, activists, and people in struggles think, learn, analyse and generate knowledge in the course of organizing for progressive social change’.

Moreover, the ways they become represented in my research also raise further questions. Accentuated by my strong commitment with the Network, this PhD offers a partisan and situated perspective of its politics, thoroughly shaped by my own experiences and views. Although my findings have been contrasted with other participants’ perspectives, it is important to recognize that my voice remains strong in the ways the Network and its participants become represented. Coming from a specific place of enunciation, criticisms aim to have a constructive outcome, and many of them attempt to dialogue with political positions that have been manifested by different participants. On the other hand, engaging with racial issues demands asking Pulido’s (1997: 208) question of ‘how do we represent those who have historically been invisible, especially in light of geography’s legacy of colonization?’. Here, my methodological and fieldwork approach attempted to centre migrant voices and agencies in the ways I engage with the findings of my research, always being aware of my own positionality (Lumsden, 2009).

Finally, the practicalities of my approach towards scholar-activism also raised important dilemmas that bring key contributions to work on scholar-activism in Human Geography. Although scholar-activism is about recognizing the ways our political and academic backgrounds mutually constitute each other (Pulido, 2008; Chatterton, et al., 2010), my experience sometimes brought me to be very sceptical towards acritical and romanticizing views around doing research in activist spaces (Derickson & Routledge, 2015). Militant research is a complex oxymoron entangled in multi-layered contradictions (Grappi, 2013). I often felt ‘out of place’ (Hall, 2017), and my fieldwork diary is full of feelings and concerns on my positionality as an academic, with critical thoughts that sometimes turned into moments of strong emotional strain. I did not feel that I was involved from the same position as others, and this is something that affected my agency in various ways. Partly as a way to engage with these personal and ethical dilemmas, I became very focused on reciprocating on a practical level, trying to make myself useful to the Network and making tangible contributions beyond writing an academic thesis addressed to a very different audience. For Grappi (2013), one of the paradoxes shaping militant research approaches on migration is the separation between the objects of inquiry and the epistemic environment in which the enquirer acts. Sometimes, my level of involvement and emotional implication led me to a lack of boundaries between my politics, my work, and my personal

life. This emotional dimension of academic work within migrant activist spaces and the ways it is gendered is often ignored in literature, denoting normative and masculinist approaches to what it means to do activist-research in such spaces (see Casas-Cortes, et al., 2015). By the contrary, a focus on care and social reproduction trigger feelings of emotional and experiential proximity (Hall, 2017). This was particularly difficult during the pandemic when social reproductive tasks became critical. Feeling people's hardships, fighting against them, and doing research about these experiences of struggle was difficult to handle emotionally.

Moreover, my focus on reciprocating sometimes obscured the ways I was reproducing power dynamics. My social reproductive role was indeed reinforcing gendered roles (Hall, 2017), often heavily racialised. For instance, in chapter 8 I analyse how doing some kinds of care work during the pandemic, I felt like reproducing a colonial service culture that draws on racialised imaginaries of charity and vulnerability. I was not able to challenge this culture in meetings, and I contributed to it only because it was what the movement apparently was demanding. Furthermore, my emotional involvement and links with people also impacted my mental health and my work, and sometimes I felt so involved and unable to do academic analysis on the situation. Eventually, I felt I needed to take a step back, against all the preconceptions, ideals, and wishes I had on my own role within the network. This experience brought me to think about temporalities and the timings of scholar activists' active contribution to the movements we are engaged with as one of the key limitations of scholar-activism. I travelled back to Spain after finishing my fieldwork in December 2020. Covid, Brexit, and other contingencies made my stay in Madrid longer than expected, to the point that I ended up settling there and writing my thesis 3000 km away from Glasgow.

This meant that I drastically turned from being fully involved to living in another country writing about the Network and the campaign. This accentuated many of my ethical concerns and self-criticisms, sometimes making it very difficult to feel motivated about my work, and confident about my approach. On the other side, it allowed me having some space to become more critical and analytical towards my experiences in the Network over the past years. Although feminist epistemologies have criticized the notion of epistemological distance foregrounding the embodied character of our readings of the world, this very emotional context demanded me to relax my role. Caring, for me, often meant prioritizing the urgency of the moment and the imminent struggles, having little time – and mind – for academic reflections. But the truth was that I needed to write a PhD, and my degree of

implication was making this process quite difficult. At stake here is that it is important to recognize how, very often, scholar activists' commitment with activist spaces becomes compromised by the timings of their research projects. I still attend the Network's online meetings, I follow all the actions and developments, and I am in regular touch with many of my friends. Nevertheless, I have to acknowledge that I am in a very different point than a year ago, and that this is not a trivial matter, particularly coming from a position of caring.

4.4. Doing Militant Fieldwork: Research Methods and Data Analysis

Drawing on the previous research philosophy and questions of ethics and positionality, this section develops the various methods building the methodology of this research, bringing attention to the different kinds of data produced and the processes of translating this into research findings. I sketch how my militant fieldwork consisted in active participation in the politics of the Network, informal conversations, in-depth semi-structured interviews and document, archival and media research. All of them are indeed common methods within scholar-activist approaches to migrant solidarity (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Swerts, 2018). Altogether, they offered different interrelated sources, providing diverse inputs and perspectives to my research questions. Data triangulation helped to identify points of convergence and divergence amongst different subject positions and structural locations across the Network, and it was key to process the research findings.

4.4.1. Active Participation

In line with my militant-research philosophy, active participation and contribution to the politics of the Network constituted the main method of my research. Against a generalised tendency to mix up what I call 'active participation' with participant observation and other traditional ethnographical methods in literature (see Swerts, 2018; Kapsali, 2020), the specificity of active participation relies in the overt political commitment and agency of the researcher within the spaces of migrant struggle. During my fieldwork period (October 2019- December 2020), I have been actively involved in the meetings, actions, and political spaces of the No Evictions Network. Questions of access, trust, and the negotiation of my role were facilitated by the fact that I was already a regular member of the campaign since August 2018.

Participating in the spaces of the Network provided me the main analytical ground to engage with its politics and dynamics, and it became the basis to establish relationships

of comradeship and trust with other participants. On the one hand, meetings were the formal spaces where the political decisions were made, and where the different strategies were decided. I used to attend them fortnightly, adopting multiple roles: listening and observing, facilitating, drafting the agenda, adopting an active voice shaping the decisions, or doing childcare. Overall, participating in meetings allowed me to follow the different debates and discussions of the Network, observe the positions of different groups, analyse issues of voice and power dynamics, and articulate my own political stance through bringing my own background to the struggles. On the other hand, meetings were overall the informal spaces where people came together, and relationships of friendship and solidarity were crafted. They constituted a space of socialization where we practiced what Howard (2014) calls 'affective activisms', referring to political acts of community building grounded in day-to-day practices: we had food together, we shared childcare, and we practiced a politics of commoning and mutual care. In these informal spaces, I established relationships of friendship and trust, becoming close to many of the families. At times, these relationships developed beyond the Network: I shared leisure spaces such as Spanish-Arabic dinners, bike trips, and hikes with different participants. Very often, these informal settings became spaces where people used to share opinions that they did not feel encouraged to voice in the formal space of the meetings due to language barriers and other reasons. Indeed, Karaliotas & Kapsali (2021: 401) foreground how within migrant spaces of activism, 'informal everyday conversations and observations' provide a 'rich source of data, at times more eloquent and illuminating than formal interviews'. Hence, conversations happening in non-research scenarios often shaped my research gaze, raising important questions around the boundaries between friendship, comradeship, and formal participation in research.

I also got involved in different working groups within the Network, which allowed me both to make an active and tangible contribution to the struggles and observe how the Network's organization worked beyond the general meetings and who was taking the lead. Committed with social reproductive activities, I was part of the 'Finance Team', – helping to manage the money, organizing bus fares and food money, launching fundraisers, etc. – and of the 'Response Team' – which organized direct support to people at risk of evictions in 2019 and in hotel detention during 2020. I spoke to people on the 'no evictions emergency phone' at the times I was its holder, I met people with evictions letters to chat about their situation, I participated in vigils to defend people's doors, and I accompanied people to legal and medical appointments. During the pandemic, I was in touch with cases of vulnerability within hotels, I helped addressing relocation requests to Mears and the Home Office, I listened to people on the phone and participated in the organization of direct support. In all

these roles, research encounters developed as a form of care work. Hall (2017: 305) notes how 'by listening and empathizing with participants, or by providing companionship or intimacy, one can perform a caring role', which in research is often a gendered responsibility. Being part of the Response Team gave me a thorough practical knowledge on the workings of the British asylum system, at the time that it brought me closer to the experiences of those navigating it. Most of the direct support work invested my militant research and political commitment with strong emotions of empathy, psychological hardship, and anger. In this regard, supporting participants in times of personal and political upheaval, and seeing the impact on them and their communities, makes research a deeply personal and affective practice (Hall, 2017).

As a member of the Finance Team, I participated in the organization of a solidarity GIG that gave over a thousand of pounds to the Network in August 2019. Source: No Evictions Network

Moreover, I also participated in protests, which were the public manifestations where the Network staged its demands across the city. I took part in several demos, in their organization, and in banners-making workshops. Demos provided me important information to analyse the orientation of the campaign, who was being targeted – the Home Office, Serco, Mears, the City Council… – and who was having the initiative and the voice during the public performances. All these issues were significantly representative of the power dynamics of the Network and have been shifting in time. Finally, I also took part in different workshops and training activities organized by the Network to practice politics of skill-sharing, expanding my observations around questions of power dynamics.

Participating in a 'Lock Out the Council' protest organized by Living Rent, 20/08/19
(Source: Living Rent Glasgow)

My direct participation, observations, thoughts, and informal conversations resulting from these engagements and my experiences within the Network were recorded in a Fieldwork Diary. I used to write my diary at a later moment on a regular basis on my laptop, since I refused to do this during the meetings and while participating in the different spaces of the Network to avoid breaking safe spaces. Hence, all my notes are mediated by my experience, and I never recorded literal quotes. Likewise, I never used private conversations and sensitive information for research purposes without the explicit consent of the people I was speaking with.

4.4.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

Alongside my direct participation, I have conducted a total of 23 in-depth semi-structured interviews with 24 participants in the Network and migrant solidarity spaces in Glasgow (see table below). Interviews enable participants 'to speak in their own voices and express their own feelings' (Berg, 2007: 96). The main aims of these interviews were complementing the data gathered through my active involvement; contrasting my experiences and observations with those of other participants; getting a deeper and nuanced understanding of the divergent positions that different subjects have around specific questions; and gather relevant information that I was missing – for example, oral histories of migrant solidarities and previous campaigns in Glasgow.

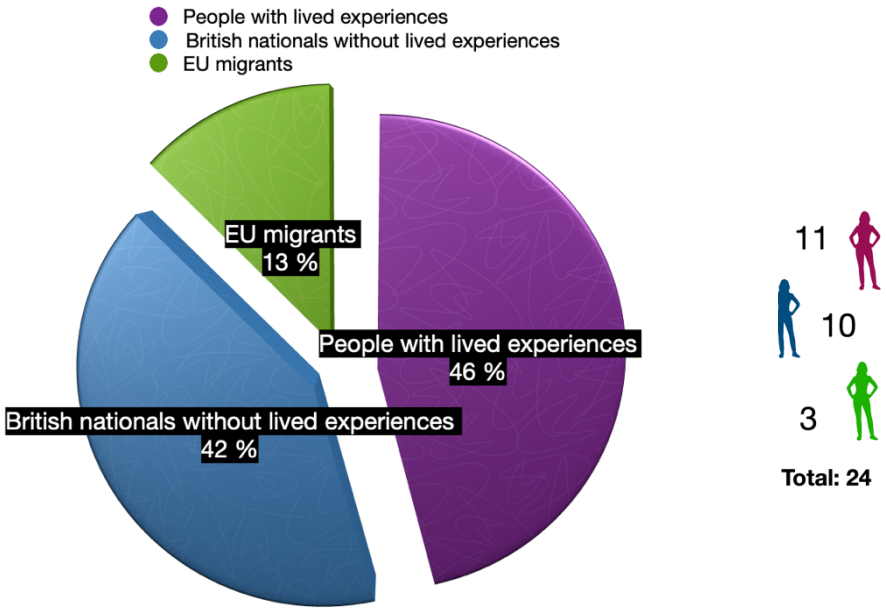
The recruitment of interviewees responded to different criteria. On the one hand, I sought to include an important representation of people with lived experiences of the asylum system, intending to centre these voices in the experiences of struggle and knowledge production. Additionally, I attempted to cover the heterogeneity of subject positions characterizing the Network, considering questions of gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, political background, culture, etc., in their multiple intersections. Thirdly, I questioned what gaps I had in my data, trying to reach people able to facilitate me information to fill them. And finally, I identified key participants in relation to my research questions. Although overall I achieved to recruit a representative sample coherent to these criteria, sometimes the recruiting process was difficult, and I failed in some of my objectives. The interpretation of the different narratives follows an intersectional approach to subject positionalities that attends to the contextual articulation of racialised, gendered, and classed differences (Hall, 2018 [1980]).

Table 1: List of Interviewees

NAME	DESCRIPTION	GENDER	AGE	DATE	DURATION	LOCATION
Ayesha	Member of the No Evictions Network, asylum seeker. Pakistan.	F	≈40	13/10/19	1 h 5 min	Ayesha's and Hamza's house
Hamza	Member of the No Evictions Network, asylum seeker. Pakistan.	M	≈40	13/10/19	1 h 5 min	Hamza's and Ayesha's house
Mike	Member of the Unity Centre, Living Rent, and the No Evictions Network. England.	M	≈30	23/10/19	56 min	Ibrox Public Library
Liam	Living Rent Organizer, Labour Party member. England.	M	≈30	23/10/19	50 min	My house
Keza	Member of the Unity Centre, Unity Sisters, MORE, the No Evictions Network, and Living Rent. Refugee, Rwanda.	F	≈40	12/11/19	3 h (no audio recorded)	Glasgow Autonomous Space
Abdul	Asylum seeker who started the hunger strike in front of the Home Office in August 2018. Member of the Afghan Scottish Society and he has participated in some No Evictions meetings	M	≈30	09/12/19	45 min	Abdul's house
Miguel	Member of the Network and volunteer of the Unity Centre and MORE. Spain.	M	19	11/12/19	45 min	Mitchell Library (translated from Spanish)
Graham Campbell	SNP councillor for Springburn, active member of the No Evictions Network, and long trajectory of involvement in migrant solidarity struggles.	M	≈50	26/02/20	1 h	Café in Gibson Street
Delia	Journalist covering the 'stop hotel detention' struggles for Al Jazeera and Bella Caledonia. Participant in anarchist spaces in Glasgow. Greece.	F	29	10/06/20	1 h 30 min	My house*
Samir	Key leader of the 'stop hotel detention' campaign, member of the Network. Syria	M	32	29/07/20	40 min	Kelvingrove Park*
John	Member of the Network and the Labour Party. Northern Ireland.	M	≈30	30/07/20	1 h	Zoom
María	Member of the Network. Spain.	F	24	06/08/20	30 min	Zoom (translated from Spanish)
Lauren	Member of the Network, community worker with asylum seekers since the 2000s. Scotland.	F	60-70	07/08/20	1 h	Zoom
Callum	Member of the Network. 25 years of active political involvement in anarchist and solidarity spaces in Glasgow. England.	M	60-70	24/08/20	1 h 10 min	Zoom
Aisha	Member of the Network, Unity Sisters, and MORE. Asylum seeker, India	F	≈35	27/08/20	2 h 10 min	Whatsappcall
Scott	Member of the Network, Living Rent Organizer. Previous involvement in the Jungle (Calais) and the antifascist movement in England.	M	≈40	28/08/20	45 min	Zoom
Willy	Involved in community struggles alongside asylum seekers in the 2000s. Neighbour from Springburn.	M	60-70	03/09/20	30 min	Telephone call
Delyse	Member of the Network, MORE, the Unity Centre, and Unity Sisters. Refugee, Jamaica.	F	≈50	04/09/20	45 min	The Unity Centre*
Katy	Member of the Network and Living Rent. England.	F	30	30/09/20	45 min	Zoom
Lucy	Member of the Network. Scotland.	Non-Binary	≈25	07/10/20	45 min	Zoom
Umar	Member of MORE. Asylum seeker, Nigeria.	M	≈35	13/10/20	35 min	Telephone Call
Nasima	Member of the Network. Settled status, originally from Bangladesh	F	≈45	21/10/20	1 h	Zoom
Kim	Member of the Network. Scotland.	Non-Binary	≈25	23/11/20	30 min (No recorded)	Zoom
Pape	Member of the Unity Centre. Refugee, Nigeria	M	≈45	09/12/20	1 h	Unity Centre*

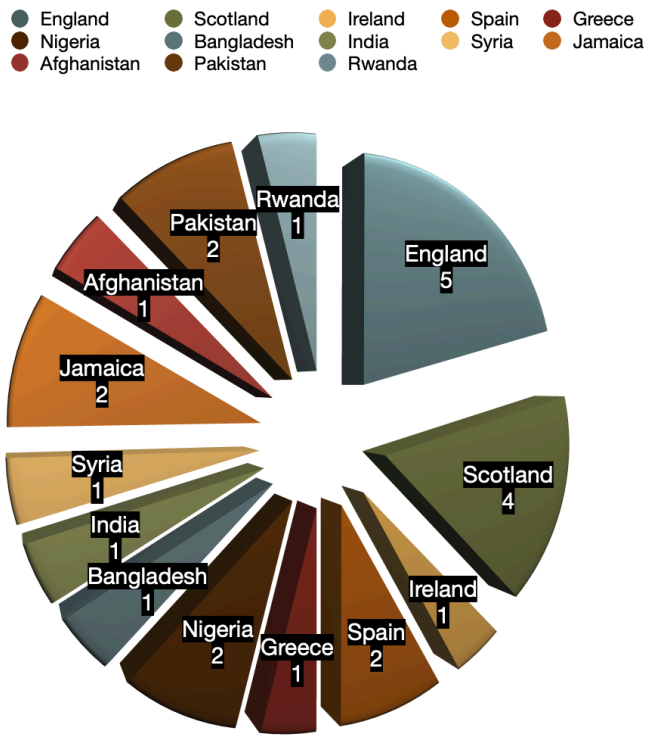
*Interviewees expressly preferred face-to-face interviews. They argued we were sharing activist spaces on a daily basis. Face masks and social distancing rules were followed.

Diagram 1: Interviewees According to Migration Status



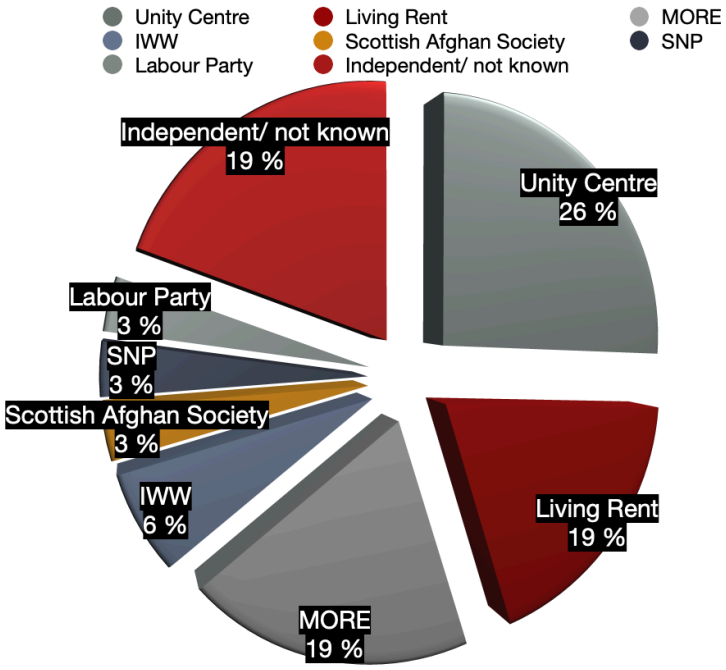
This diagram captures the distribution of interviewees according to their migration status in absolute figures and percentages. 'People with lived experiences of the asylum system' include all participants that have gone through the British asylum system despite their status – asylum seekers, refugees, or British citizens through naturalisation. 'British nationals without lived experiences' are those who enjoy British citizenship without having gone through the asylum system. 'EU migrants' are migrants with EU citizenship. Despite classifying people according to status reinforces the exclusions inherent to the state's categorizations, I considered important to bear in mind these differences when recruiting participants and analysing the data, since this was a distinction that operated within the language and dynamics of the Network, as will be analysed in Chapter 7. In order to voice the migrant community perspective on the social situation, distinctions between asylum seekers or refugees and people with status have been also acknowledged in other research on solidarities involving political subjects with different relations to State practices (see e.g. King, 2016; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Swerts, 2018). The diagram shows that I achieved to have a majority of voices with lived experiences amongst my interviewees, which were very heterogeneous in terms of nationalities:

Diagram 2: Interviewees According to Nationality



Nonetheless, these nationalities are only partially representative of the heterogeneity of the Network. There is a notable underrepresentation of African countries since many of the people with lived experiences were African mothers who were less comfortable with the idea of being interviewed. This was maybe motivated by the fact that they usually formed a 'safe space' within the Network, and it was more difficult for me to establish relationships of trust. On the other hand, Keza told me she tends to be very cautious when speaking out about her politics. She argued she was coming from a very repressive regime, and this was something affecting many other people in the Network. Here, an ethics of care in research demands taking consideration of the instances of exclusion and silencing, the reasons behind the absence or underrepresentation of certain voices, and the implications for actual accounts (Middleton & Samanani, 2020) On the other hand, the higher presence of participants coming from England than from Scotland is not casual. A good part of the activist scene in Glasgow – particularly in the terrain of 'no borders' struggles – is built up by people with previous experiences in England who migrated to Scotland, and so it is the Network. EU migrants were a small minority, with most of them coming from Spain. Regardless their status and nationality, interviewees were participating in different political groups and organizations in Glasgow:

Diagram 3: Interviewees According to Political Affiliation



Indeed, participants were representative of the main groups and organizations constituting the Network, which allows mapping different positions, dynamics, and ways of framing the struggles according to diverse collective visions. Moreover, analysis becomes enriched by the fact that some interviewees belonged to more than one group, allowing an engagement with their different intersections. A total of 6 participants did not manifest any particular affiliation.

Diagram 4: Interviewees According to Gender Identity

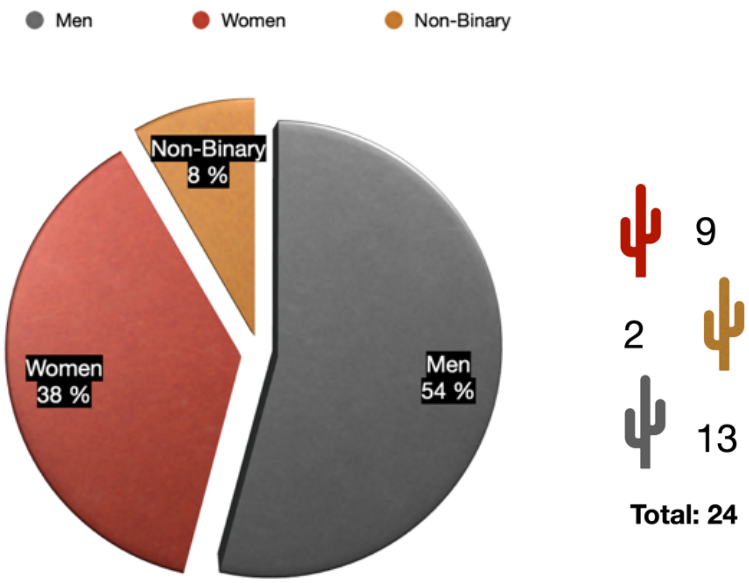
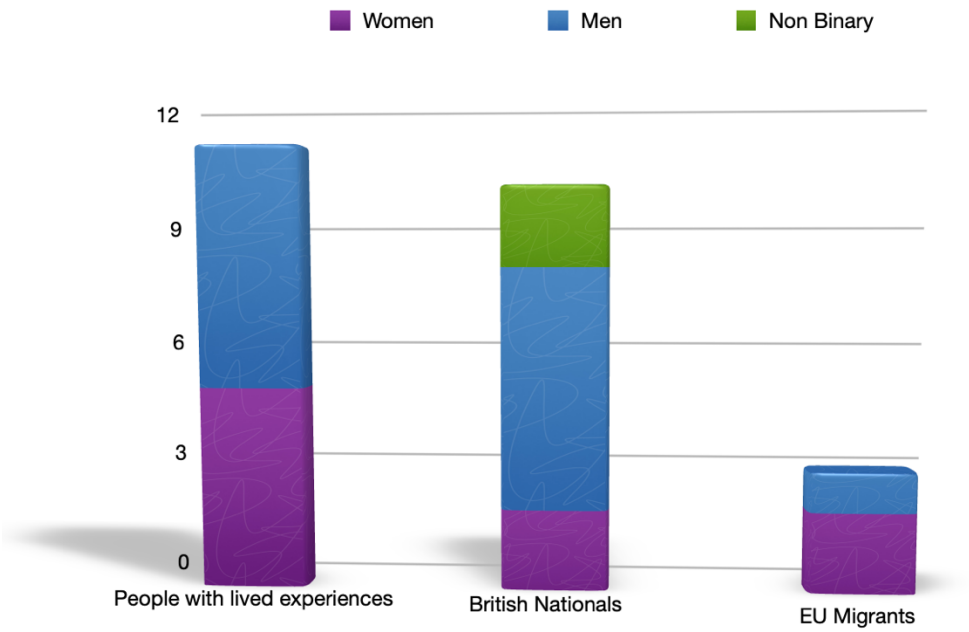


Diagram 5: Interviewees According to Gender and Migration Status



These diagrams show a failure in my attempt to recruit more women and non-binary people to mitigate the overrepresentation of male voices. I found that despite there was a greater number of women in the Network, men were generally more willing to give an interview than women and non-binary members. On several occasions, women and non-binary people told me they wouldn't feel comfortable doing an interview (two interviews with a migrant woman and a non-binary activist were indeed not recorded), while I never got a negative from any European men. Diagram 5 shows that this male overrepresentation becomes particularly salient in the British group. These relate to particular gendered dynamics addressed in chapter 7, where mostly British men assumed the Network's public communication activities in relation to press or politicians. Non-binary and queer people, who have been key supporters of the Network, are especially underrepresented. I attempted to complement these gaps with my other methods, particularly through observations, informal conversations, and active participation. The following diagrams evidence that participants were representative of different age groups:

Diagram 6: Interviews According to Age

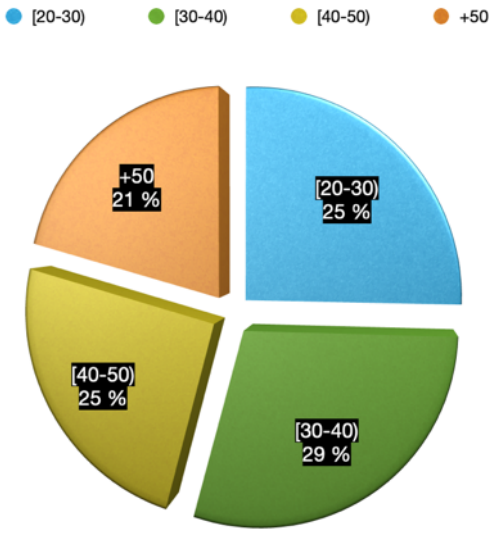
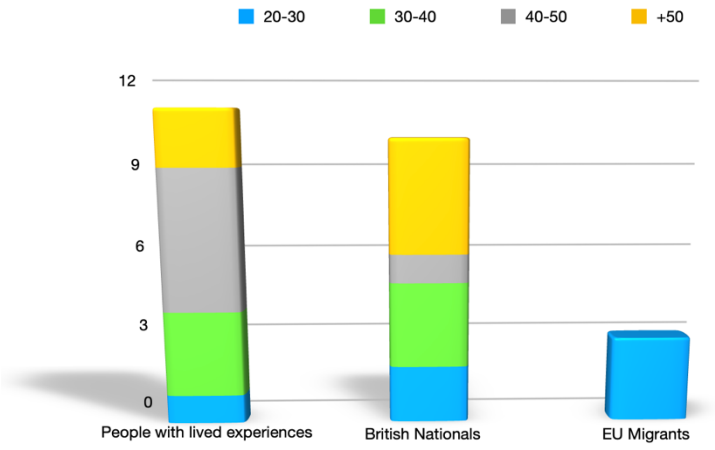


Diagram 7: Interviewees According to Age and Migration Status



Access to interviewees was eased by my long-term active involvement in the spaces of the Network. I already had a relationship of trust with many of them, which also facilitated our communication over the course of the interviews. The few participants who were not part of the Network were contacted using the technique of 'snowballing', through the links they shared with other interviewees. Other than that, I usually recruited my interviewees using the informal spaces of the meetings. I introduced my research to them, explained my focus, and invited them to contribute. To avoid their consent to be affected by our good personal relationship, I made sure I was explicitly foregrounding that participation was voluntary. I always started my interviews explaining that data would be anonymized – unless the participant explicitly asks me the contrary – and that all the information shared

would be confidential. Participants were given the University's information sheet, and they were asked to sign their informed consent. Sometimes, these formal requirements were problematic. I could realize how for some people – especially for asylum seekers and refugees, who were especially concerned about their names not figuring anywhere – all this paperwork and written consents resulted quite intimidating. These burdens of formal consents shape tensions between bureaucratic demands and real research ethics (Gillian & Pickerill, 2012). After asking participants on their preferences on recording, I used to start an open conversation with them, generally lasting for about an hour. When preparing my interviews, I always wrote down beforehand a list of topics I would like to cover with each participant, using this only as a guide and letting the conversation flow. This allowed participants to introduce new topics and information that they considered relevant, what gave me important insights in terms of analysis. Interviews were transcribed[8] and checked back with the participants before starting to analyze the data. Critical work on qualitative research methods has highlighted how interviews constitute a socially and linguistically complex situation affected by power relations (Winchester, 1996). This means that the knowledge constructed through the interview process is informed by the intricacy of the research context and the positions of the interviewer and the interviewed. Moreover, the interpretation and privileging of data depend on the meanings ascribed by the interpreter (Alvesson, 2010). Recognizing these questions is central to the ways my interview findings become represented.

I encountered some difficulties particularly in interviews with asylum seekers. Karaliotas & Kapsali (2021: 401) note how interviewing within these spaces can be a challenging task, given the sensitive psychological condition and transit status of many of the participants and the fact that many people don't feel safe to speak. On one occasion, a refugee told me that she was not comfortable with researchers participating in migrants' safe spaces. Nonetheless, she said she trusted me, and she agreed to do an interview with me. However, this turned into a very difficult situation. She did not want to disclose anything about herself when we started the interview, and I noticed she was becoming anxious every time I was taking notes. At this moment, I decided to close my notebook and leave it aside, and only then, we started a 3-hour conversation. She was a good friend of mine, and I was very worried this could have affected her consent. On the other hand, not only this interview but also many others I had with asylum seekers touched upon very sensitive topics. Very

[8] Some transcriptions needed external support due to language barriers. Interviews in Spanish needed translation, which was done by the researcher.

often, gender was a significant issue structuring the interview process. I noticed that women were more likely to share with me personal stories, often related to forms of gendered violent experiences. Caring was essential in navigating the ethics of these research encounters and it was not limited to the interview moment. Rather, whenever people opened themselves sharing with me difficult aspects of their life, I tried to do my best to be there. This is why Kapsali (2020) foregrounds the importance of the practice of caring 'in and through' our research. Nevertheless, this impacted me mentally and emotionally. On the one hand, I was not comfortable with making people remember traumatic experiences, particularly when I did not have the tools and the background to support them. On the other hand, my closeness to the Network – both in personal and political ways – made me feel these testimonies very intimately (Hall, 2017).

Further challenges were related with the pandemic. The university banned face-to-face fieldwork activities and encouraged online research alternatives. Nevertheless, I initially refused to conduct interviews online due to the importance of human contact in my interviews. Furthermore, the pandemic was a very busy time for the Network, and it was not an appropriate moment to take activists' time with interviews. After pausing my interviews for four months and with the lockdown continuing over time, I decided to conduct some interviews with people without lived experiences on Zoom. Nevertheless, migrants and asylum seekers generally insisted to meet in person, especially when we were already seeing each other in activist spaces. This complicated the process, particularly because most of the asylum seekers couldn't afford internet data and neither the participants nor me were comfortable with sharing intimate information on Zoom. This impacted the number of interviews I was able to conduct, particularly regarding people that had become actively involved during the pandemic.

4.4.3. Archival, Document, and Media Research

Archival, document, and media research included a wide range of activities to gather relevant information from different material and digital sources. These sources are both internal and external to the Network and speak about the past and present of its struggles. Swerts (2018) has foregrounded the relevance of content analysis of speeches, organizational publications, and blog posts when doing activist research on migrant solidarity struggles.

On the one hand, these methods allowed me to engage with material related with the histories of migrant solidarity struggles in Glasgow. Looking at news, documents, and

pictures from the past was key to make sense of the context of the Network's struggles, their political framings, strategies, and the historical memories that were being mobilized. I visited the Unity Centre's archive, which keeps press clippings, newspapers and journals reporting struggles against dawn raids and deportations during the 2000s. In Unity's archive, I was able to look at different pictures of demos and protests in the first years of the dispersal city, as well as old activist pamphlets and articles. Furthermore, I consulted the few digital news available online from that time, and some videos produced by Indymedia in connection with 'no borders' networks[9].

James Maxwell examines the difficulties faced by Glasgow's refugees and asylum seekers – and those who try to help them.

The Unity Centre sits on the corner of Ibrox Street in Cessnock, two or three hundred yards from the gates of the Home Office immigration compound that its volunteers picket weekly. The peeling pale-blue paint of its facade suggests a decades old residence, but in fact it was established just three years ago, as a means to providing asylum seekers and refugees with support, legal advice and 'solidarity'.

Of the approximately 20,000 people who were granted temporary political and humanitarian sanctuary in the UK last year, around two or three thousand have settled in Glasgow, and of those only thirty to forty percent will be allowed to remain permanently. Although that number may seem negligible, according to Phill Jones – a senior staff member at the Unity Centre – it represents the highest concentration of new, non-economic, migrants in any British city outside London.

Mr. Jones speaks warmly of Glasgow's attitude to immigration: "It is one of the most welcoming places in Britain for asylum seekers, partly because the families who come here have a profound impact on local communities, and the local people see that. There is a life-boat mentality with these families. The kids are keen to work and do well at school because they want to help out their parents. The parents are often involved with churches and community projects because they want to integrate and prove they can be successful."

But recent projections have anticipated that Scotland, and specifically Glasgow, will suffer heavily as a result of the current economic crisis. It is expected that upwards of 180,000 Scots will be on the unemployment register by the start of 2010. This will leave little space in an over-saturated jobs market and will stretch the limits of an already strained benefits system. As we lurch further into the depths of recession, what will be the fate of those who are already exposed and susceptible? Is there a risk that native Scots will scapegoat asylum seekers in the way that some in the north of England have?

Jones insists, "It is worth remembering England and Scotland have contrasting attitudes on this issue. The atmosphere south of the border is much more hostile. Whereas here, the SNP government have put a lot of time into promoting the idea of a tolerant and multicultural Scotland – which is at odds with almost every other nationalist party in Europe. Also, there is a tradition of internationalism in Glasgow's politics and history which still means something today."

The debate concerning asylum and immigration in the UK has long been warped by a litany of half-truths and false impressions – some of which have been promoted by the far-right, some by the state. Perhaps the most pernicious misconception is that Britain is a 'soft-touch'; a magnet for foreign free-riders, welfare-cheats and scroungers. On average, however, a single asylum seeker is expected to live on little more than £30 a week; barely enough for basic amenities.

In the midst of the most severe economic slump of recent times, the conditions of the poorest are only going to worsen. It is conceivable that an individual, with three ten pound notes in his pocket, might previously have been able to scratch together the very minimum necessary to sustain a tolerable standard of existence. But today, with rising food and fuel prices and government plans to cut £15bn from public finances, surviving on such a meagre amount no longer seems possible.

"A single asylum seeker is expected to live on little more than £30 a week; barely enough for basic amenities."

In addition, the UK Border Agency – the body that processes asylum claims – is a monolithic, impersonal bureaucracy that forces applicants through a series of degrading procedures. Officials at the immigration compound in Cessnock, for instance, subject new arrivals to five separate searches before they will consider specific requests.

A Kenyan asylum seeker sitting with her infant daughter amongst the clutter of the Unity Centre's tiny, single-room office explains, "You come and they don't seem to know or care what you have been through. The authorities make it as difficult as possible. They don't treat you as an individual with particular difficulties, but as just another foreigner. They make you feel like a criminal."

Jones argues that British immigration policy is not only unfair and inefficient, but chaotic too. He offers this example as illustration of systemic disarray, "Through the Gateway Project (a UN funded programme), the United Kingdom takes in around 500 refugees a year – that's from a global total of twenty-three million, by the way. Two years ago the UK offered accommodation in Motherwell to two hundred men, women and children from the Democratic Republic of Congo, whilst at the same time conducting dawn raids on dozens of Congolese families in Glasgow. Sometimes it seems such confusion is deliberate."

The Kenyan asylum seeker – who wished to remain unnamed – confirms Jones' view. She describes how the Home Office has

[illegible] purgatory; unable to get a job, or an education, [illegible] account because her status has yet to be resolved [illegible] months after she first arrived in Scotland. "I'm [illegible] possess any identification. I can't enrol at a [illegible] education. I wanted to study childcare. I can't [illegible] don't really have an official place here."

[illegible] this disorder benefits no one. Refusing asylum [illegible] gees the right to work and to learn serves only [illegible] and isolate groups who need extra support during [illegible] of extreme economic uncertainty. It also discourages [illegible] following the available legal avenues to citizenship, as Jones [illegible] nts out, "The reality is that asylum seekers can be [illegible] they work. But because they can't get work many [illegible] made homeless. Once National Asylum Support Service (NASS) payments are stopped, they can't afford to keep [illegible] nts and their things are repossessed; sometimes [illegible] rning. This can give them the impression they are [illegible] orted and drives them underground, out of the [illegible] authorities."

[illegible] the volunteers at the Unity Centre do what they can to ensure that some support exists. They operate in a dark, cramped [illegible] the full weight of the British state pressed against [illegible]. On the dirty walls, pictures drawn by the clients' children hang next to a board with a list of the names of recently deported failed applicants. Nonetheless, it seems like gratifying work. Phill Jones grins, leans forward with his hands clasped on his desk, and says, "It's a good thing to be a race traitor."

Sean Anderson

Example of archival material (Source: picture taken in Unity Centre's archive, December 2019)

Analysis of key documents and media research also involved analyzing the different materials and communications produced by the Network in the conjuncture of the present struggles. In this regard, I consulted several internal documents stored in the Network's google drive and available to all members (such as meetings' minutes, links to relevant information, pamphlets and banners, information sheets, logos, pictures, etc.). This was helpful in order to reconstruct the timeline of the Network, identify key moments, and map the different strategies. Confidential information produced by the Network was never used for research purposes. In addition to this, I analyzed the Network's public communications in its social media, drawing attention to the images, discourses, and news that were being

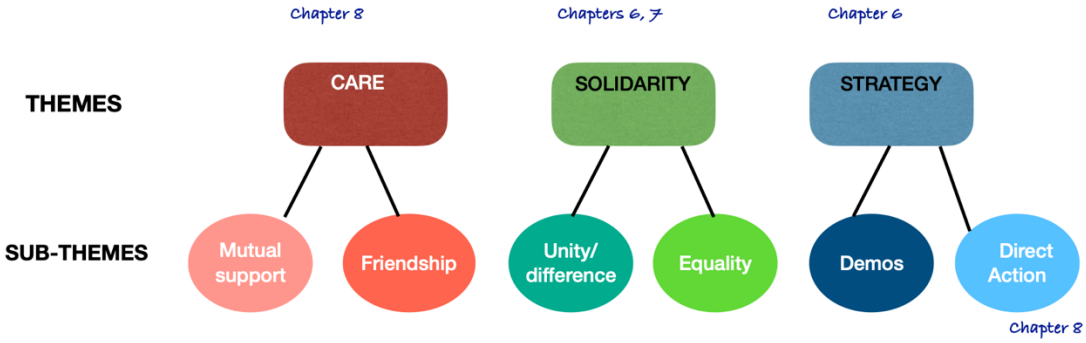
[9] http://noborders.org.uk/aggregator/sources/6 (last access 16/12/21)

shared and the reach these publications had throughout the different moments of the campaign. This allowed me engaging with the hegemonic political imaginaries and discourses of the Network, its relations with other groups, and the impact that the campaign was having in the broader community. Finally, as a direct participant and member of the Network, I was also able to follow key online discussions happening in Whatsapp groups, which operated as the official communication channels of the Network between meetings. Always respecting anonymity and confidentiality, this allowed me to map the positions of different participants and complement some of my findings on power dynamics and decision-making. Lastly, analysis of documental and media research also involved analyzing how the Network and the overall struggles against the evictions and hotel detention were portrayed in the press. In so doing, I consulted the digital news that different newspapers and journals had published on this topic from diverse political positions. This permitted me addressing the ways discourses around asylum were mobilized in Glasgow, situating the Network and the campaign in relation to the public opinion and its hegemonic political imaginaries of the city.

4.4.4. Data Organization and Analysis

The aforementioned methods resulted in 22h 51min of interview audio reproduced in 345 pages of interview transcripts, 250 pages of Fieldwork Diary, and different news, documents and pictures. This constituted the bulk of empirical material to go through and develop my research findings. The analysis required the combination of different techniques of qualitative data analysis. On the one hand, interview transcripts were organized according to codes corresponding to key broad themes related to my research questions – e.g. ‘care’, ‘solidarity’, ‘strategy’, etc. For each of these broad themes, I identified different sub-themes or topics, which were created inductively attending to the ways these ‘big topics’ appeared in the transcripts – e.g. ‘friendship’ or ‘mutual support’. I assigned different colours to these themes and sub-themes and marked those parts of the text relevant to the analysis. When analysing these data and developing my argument, I drew attention to the multiple ways these themes and subthemes were interrelated.

Diagram 8: Example of Coding for Data Analysis



Analysing of each theme and sub-theme, and translating this data into research findings, required the combination of multiple techniques. On the one hand, I looked at the various interpretations that different participants had around these themes. Discourse analysis was useful in order to analyse how these interpretations relate to different political cultures and backgrounds, allowing me to engage with questions of power dynamics. Stressing the centrality of discourse in structuring the social, discourse analysis draws attention to how language constructs rather than mirrors social phenomena (Alvesson, 2010). It interrogates how things are being represented, what data is being privileged and how this speaks to the broader social, political, economic, and cultural contexts and spaces. The narratives behind the ways different subjects approached the different themes, as well as their frequency – or omission – within differently situated stories were indeed very significant. To put an example, I could observe how care themes were more frequent in the visions of migrant activists, while they were very absent or were approached differently in the accounts of some British men. The content of these divergent interpretations was also very insightful when developing my argument, which I often supported in my writing with direct quotes and extracts from my interviews.

On the other hand, the observations and thoughts collected in my Fieldwork Diary were analysed in different ways. Descriptive observations were coded following the same procedure as with the interview transcripts, and they were put in conversation with these data. On the other hand, thoughts and reflections were analysed separately and organized in ideas related to the research questions of my thesis. Once I did this, they were used to develop critical insights throughout my arguments.

Data gathered through archival, documental, and media research was analysed in different ways. On the one hand, I used discourse analysis to scrutinize how different actors – including the Network itself through its official channels – were representing the struggles,

drawing attention to the language that was being used and to the structural conditions shaping both activist and official discourses on asylum. This was very useful in order to situate the Network within its particular political, social context; interrogate what were the hegemonic and counterhegemonic political imaginaries on migration; and address the power dynamics underlying the different representations. On the other hand, examining pictures from different demos and actions from the Network was insightful to situate the different moments, address questions of visibility and power dynamics.

4.5. Concluding Points.

This chapter has developed the research philosophy and methodology of this PhD research, making a distinctive and important contribution to scholar activism in spaces of migrant solidarity and more broadly in Human Geography. Inspired by Black Geographical literature and feminist scholarship, my methodological approach positions care and social reproductive politics as an integral research ethics and political framework. This brings key interventions to current work:

Firstly, I have demonstrated how caring helps to unpack dichotomic divisions between intellectual and material labour that continue to shape scholar-activist approaches in Human Geography. I have engaged with key work by Derickson & Routledge (2015) to foreground some of the ways current approaches tend to highlight the intellectual role of scholar-activists. Likewise, work on 'militant research on migration' has emphasised the contributions that militant scholars bring to border struggles from their privileged academic position (Grappi, 2013; Casas-Cortes, et al., 2015). Rather, a political focus on care and social reproduction envisions scholar-activist agencies from a perspective that seeks to challenge power differentials within spaces of solidarity. Hence, it not only refuses the divisions between intellectual and care labour in these spaces, but also the racialised, gendered, and classed ways in which it becomes performed.

Secondly, an integral politics of care problematizes questions around the production of knowledge, caring about the ways our analyses and political identities become deeply informed by the critical stance produced by the struggling communities with whom we are doing research. I have criticised how under the language of 'co-production of knowledge' (Derickson & Routledge, 2015), approaches on scholar-activism often tend to overemphasize the role of the researcher in the struggles for social change and 'overlook the rich range of knowledge production from inside of social movements' (Choudry: 2020). This

becomes a central question within spaces of migrant solidarity, shaped by black and brown geographies of struggle, subaltern agencies, and knowledges. In order to centre these and capture the ways our conceptual resources and theoretical contributions emerge from our 'concrete engagement in social struggles' (Choudry, 2020), I have suggested a focus on 'learning with' social and political movements. Within this approach, social reproductive and care politics become a means to de-centre ourselves and learn from the knowledges produced through political struggle, challenging forms of whiteness shaping academic research.

Thirdly, drawing on race and feminist theory, the notion of care and social reproduction in this framework is deeply political. Here, my approach politicizes academic care work, moving beyond current approaches in Human Geography (Hall, 2017; Middleton & Samanani, 2021). Drawing on my own experience and contribution to the Network, I have demonstrated how scholar-activists' practices of care and social reproduction within spaces of migrant solidarity have a prefigurative dimension. Their agency directly contributes to the sustainment of social and political spaces and infrastructures of solidarity, challenging neoliberal notions of impact (Chatterton, et al., 2010). Furthermore, they foster relations that contest structural hierarchies, and promote forms of mutuality, friendship, and trust which are central in the crafting of political solidarities (Swerts, 2015).

Finally, I have argued that a framework on care and social reproduction unpacks some of the limitations inherent to scholar-activist work, in contrast with romanticizing approaches that tend to ignore questions of power dynamics (Derickson & Routledge, 2015). In this regard, I have explored how political implication becomes often compromised by the timings of our research projects, the particular challenges that emotional implication poses for academic analysis, or the difficult negotiation of our positionality within activist spaces in relation to the contradictions shaping scholar-activist work (Grappi, 2013).

Overall, the previous contributions have been developed through a nuanced engagement with my positionality within the Network and with the ways I negotiated my agency in the field. The empirical chapters of the thesis are the result of the implementation of the methods and approaches that have been outlined throughout the chapter. They evidence how a distinctive methodological approach for activist-scholarship on migration is productive of original empirical material and contributions, strongly enriching current work and contemporary debates on migrant struggles and the practicing of solidarities.

CHAPTER 5
Contextualising the Struggles of the No Evictions Network: Migrant Solidarities in the Dispersal City

'We are Here Because you Where There'
(Ambalavaner Sivanandan)

5.1. Introduction

Contextualising the struggles of the 'No Evictions Campaign' entails engaging with broader questions of race politics and migration in Britain and Scotland. Place-based struggles are not articulated in a vacuum, yet they are entangled in broader power relations subjected to ongoing and multi-scalar change (Massey, 2005). This chapter is aimed at exploring the political geographies shaping migrant political solidarities in Glasgow, relating them to the genealogies of the British border regime and the multiple histories of struggle staged at the core of the dispersal city. The chapter situates these solidarities in relation to the structural, ideological, relational, and embodied complexities of solidarity struggles, as well as their spatial and contentious dimensions. It argues for a framing of contemporary struggles in close connection to processes of historical dispossession, making a claim for a re-politization of the asylum debate.

The chapter outlines a general discussion of the articulation between race and nation in Britain and Scotland and a more grounded comprehension of migrant solidarity in the dispersal city. It draws on an understanding of migrant solidarity politics as locally articulated but crisscrossed by global processes, negotiating political change at multiple scales. The intertwined neoliberalization and re-localization of the technologies of border control positions the local space as a key site of border struggle and solidarity. Contextualising migrant solidarities in Glasgow entails navigating multiple tensions and contradictions shaping the contentious negotiation of the political community and the practices of political organizing. This endeavour draws attention to the specificities of place shaping counter-hegemonic cartographies of migration politics. The argument develops as follows: The first section looks at the articulation of race and nation in the constructions of Britishness, drawing attention to the genealogies of the British asylum and immigration system and to the struggles staged by racialised subjects at its core. Then, I trace these processes in the Scottish context, discussing how Scottishness has dialogically been constructed in opposition to Englishness, shaping a distinctive framing of the racial and

migrant questions. Finally, the chapter concludes exploring the histories of Glasgow as the biggest 'dispersal city', reckoning the multiple trajectories of community struggle and migrant solidarity shaping the city's politics of place.

5.2. Racism and the Post-Colonial British Rule: Analysis of the British Asylum and Immigration System

The migration question in Britain needs to be situated in relation to the broader histories of nationalism, race, and Empire. The post-colonial construction of the British nation – meaning the political processes producing a British nation after Empire and the formation of the social and legal categories of belonging associated with it – is deeply racialized (Valluvan, 2019; Bhambra, 2017). Britain's racism and nationalism are 'routinely and symptomatically articulated together' (Gilroy, 1987: xxiii). Yet, there is a strong tendency in literature to decouple contemporary debates on asylum and migration from the genealogy of race politics and Empire (Patel, 2021). Challenging this amnesia, this section aims to situate the migration debate in relation to the contentious histories shaping the articulation of racism and nationalism in Britain. It firstly maps the colonial continuities of the workings of the contemporary immigration and asylum systems, drawing attention to the different ideological frameworks mobilized to construct a false elision between Britishness and Whiteness. Thereafter, it emphasizes the role of black, Asian, and anti-racist struggles in reshaping race relations and pushing forward progressive politics. I argue that these processes are crucial to unpack the distinctive articulations of race and nation in Scotland explored in the next section. In this regard, the discussion in the following lines sets the ground to analyse the formation of a Scottish national identity in opposition to Englishness, and how this has shaped antiracist struggles differently in the Scottish context. The table below serves as a guide for the processes that are analysed throughout the next pages:

Table 2: Development of the British Immigration and Asylum Law since 1948[10]

Immigration and Asylum Law	Legislative Changes	Political Context	Ideologies
1948 British Nationality Act	• Right to entry and settle in Britain for Commonwealth citizens	• Colonial uprisings • Canada legislating for an own citizenship	• Welfare Capitalism: (white) working-class inclusion to the Nation
1962 Immigration Act	• Only those with passports issued by British or Irish governments keep the right to enter. • Commonwealth passports holders to be treated as aliens but are able to apply for a work voucher.	• Street racism (1958 Nottingham and Notting Hill Riots). • Racialization of the political debate. • Colonial emancipation	• Birth of a 'indigenous racism' / racism at home
1965 Race Relations Act	• Outlaws racist discrimination in public spaces	• Struggles by first Black and Asian organizations against racism	• Black Power / Black radicalism (US influence)
1968 Race Relations Act	• Reinforces the previous		
1968 Immigration Act	• Only Commonwealth citizens with an existing ancestral link with the country retain the right to enter. • Preferential treatment to white British settlers born or with one parent/ grandparent. Racialised citizens as aliens.	• Political polarization. • Rise of the National Front • Racial policing- 'Law and order society' • Big conflicts between blacks and the police. • Upturn in class struggles and Black liberation movements • Antifascist movement (RAR, ANL…)	• Powellism- Criminality as central in the representations of Blackness. Reimagination of a British nation after Empire • New left ideologies challenging economicism
1971 Immigration Act	• Patriality: Only those born in Britain or with a parent born in Britain have the right to abode, entry and stay in Britain. • Formalization of whiteness as intrinsic to British identity (it served to facilitate the entry of white Australians, Canadians and NZ but no other Commonwealth citizens).		
1976 Race Relations Act	• Recognition of indirect discrimination		
1981 British Nationality Act	• Introduces British Citizenship bounded to a territorial postcolonial Britain. • Applies patriality to citizenship. • Removes citizenship by birth = exclusion of racialised subjects living in Britain and their children • Decouples nationality and immigration laws	• Thatcherism: Neoliberalism, privatization and deindustrialization. • Postcolonial territorially-bounded Britain	• Consolidation of a 'New Racism'. 'Race' in terms of culture and identity • Racialisation of the crisis
1993 Immigration Appeals Act	• First attempt at asylum legislation. • Increases the use of detention	• Welfare systems dismantled • Increasing number asylum applications (disintegration of the Soviet Union, conflicts in ex-colonies and suppression of the commonwealth route)	• 'Bogus asylum seekers' responsible of Welfare decline • Britain as a soft host • 'Burden' on London and South-East of England
1996 Immigration and Asylum Act	• Highly restrictive • New criminal offenses • Limits to access to welfare for people seeking asylum (local vouchers system)		
1999 Immigration and Asylum Act	• Dispersal Policy • Massive increasing of the detention state. • Creation of a two-tier welfare system through the creation of the NASS and the no resource to public funds rule (NRPF)		
2000 Race Relations Act	• Broadens the definition of racial discrimination and entrusts public authorities to actively promote racial equality		
2002 Immigration and Asylum Act	• Withdrawal of the right to work to asylum seekers. • Withdrawal of access to asylum support to those applying 'in country' • Speeds up the removal of 'failed asylum seekers' • System of 'Managed Migration': Promotion of 'skilled' and 'temporal' economic migrants through a 4-Tier system • From 'multiculturalism' to 'integration' and 'social cohesion'	• 11-S • Consolidation of Labour's neoliberal turn • Antidetention/ Antideportation struggles	• Integration • Islamophobia and 'War on Terror' • Skilled migration as positive for the nation
2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts	• Shift from territorial border to 'in-country enforcement' (co-optation of thousands of citizens to control status- doctors, lecturers, teachers, civil servants…) • Criminalization (illegal working, illegal renting, solidarity…)	• Theresa May: the objective is to create in Britain a 'hostile environment for illegal migration' (Home Office, 2010) • Brexit referendum	• Focus on 'illegal migration', 'overstayers' and 'failed asylum seekers' • Brexit= Racialization of the political debate

Labour

Conservatives

5.2.1. Racialization and the Development of the Immigration and Asylum Systems

Migration and processes of racialised hierarchization have been intrinsic to the development of the British Empire and its forms of capitalist exploitation. The first experiments of immigration legislation and control of racialised people took place in the colonies (El-Enany, 2020). Anderson (2013: 35) argues that 'the laws governing the movement of subjects within the Empire were an important means of manufacturing the category of race'. Yet, it wasn't until the aftermath of the Second World War that large-scale settler migration arrived in Britain. In an attempt to hold the Empire together against diverse challenges coming from the colonies, the 1948 British Nationality Act extended the colonial status of citizenship of the United Kingdom and the colonies recognizing a right of entry to Britain. This allowed Afro Caribbean and Asian populations to migrate and settle in the country, leading to a conjuncture of increasing racialisation of the political debate (Small & Solomos, 2005) and the emergence of a distinctive 'indigenous racism' and the 'rebirth of street fascism' manifested in racist riots and attacks (Hall, 1978a[2017]).

Over the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s the dismantling of the Empire was characterised by successive attempts to exclude, control, and repel the immigration of racialised colony and Commonwealth citizens. Indeed, the articulation of these two processes together is key (see Table 2 in previous page). Emerging as the institutional architecture to 'keep Britain white', the immigration system represents a continuum of colonial violence. A series of immigration acts and informal practices by both Labour and Conservative governments progressively restricted the rights of racialised colonial populations, while reinforcing whiteness as intrinsic to British identity and the primary basis for belonging (El-Enany, 2020; Gilroy, 1987). Whiteness was therefore not a pre-existing element of British identity but actively produced through these exclusionary discourses and practices. Hence, the construction of citizenship rights and the immigration system constituted a formalization of a process of racialized exclusion from the 'nation', both in its geographical acceptance and in the sense of the 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013). Informed by a sort of 'historical amnesia' (Hall, 1978a), which pretended to erase the colonial connections of racialised populations to Britain, the ultimate legislative step in this direction was the 1981 British Nationality Act, which drew 'a hard border around the motherland, effectively announcing Britain as postcolonial, making it impermeable from its former racialised subjects' (El-

[10] It is important to note that there are important anti-racist struggles prior to 1948 in which people of racialized minorities played a key role (e.g. the Negro Welfare Association in London in the 1930s). The diagram was elaborated before the approval of the 2022 Nationality and Borders Act.

Enany, 2020: 126). This act evidences the centrality of Empire to the construction of the 'political community' in Britain and its related conceptions of citizenship (Bhambra, 2017). Since its gestation, British Citizenship was 'designed to fail' specific groups and populations, operating as a biopolitical technology and as a means for racial exclusion (Tyler, 2010).

While during most of the second half of the twentieth century the immigration debate and the popular 'moral panics' focused on the threat posed by racialised colonial migration (Hall, 1978a[2017]; Gilroy, 1987; Elliot-Cooper, 2021), the nineties saw the emergence of the asylum debate. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the outbreak of political conflicts in different points of Africa and the Maghreb region provoked an increase in the number of applications. Furthermore, the removal of entry rights for racialised colony and Commonwealth citizens produced the asylum route as 'one of the few means for historically dispossessed people to access Britain' (El-Enany, 2020: 134). Very soon, asylum seekers became the target of renovated racist discourses and a popular imaginary that linked the welfare decline – provoked by the politics of neoliberalisation – to the invasion of Britain by 'bogus asylum seekers'. Although the first developments of the UK asylum policy were enacted by Major's Conservative government, in line with European restrictive policies (Hynes, 2009), the outright 'war on asylum' started under Blair's New Labour Government. The most prolific government on immigration and asylum to that point (Schuster & Solomos, 2004), New Labour turned Britain into one of the biggest immigration detention estates in Europe (Goodfellow, 2019). The basis of the current system, such as dispersal and the neoliberalization of immigration management and enforcement, were very much consolidated at this time.

After the 2008 financial and political crisis, Theresa May's[11] 'Hostile Environment' became the official policy on migration, targeting not only 'bogus asylum seekers' but overall, the evil of 'illegal migration'. The approach, formalised by way of the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts, brought surveillance to the centre of everyday life, involving numerous non-state actors in the business of border control in an attempt to make urban spaces uninhabitable for migrants. The 'Hostile Environment' has been formally and informally toughened with the politics around Brexit, where 'taking back control' was overall an expression of imperial nostalgia (Virdee & McGeever, 2018; Gilroy, 2004). In this context, the 2022 Nationality and Borders Act marks a new turning point in immigration

[11] Conservative Party's Home Secretary between 2010-2016 and Prime Minister between 2016-2019.

policy implementing the off-shore detention and deportation of refugees and asylum seekers in Rwanda. The next section draws attention to how all these processes have been differently articulated in Scotland.

Finally, it is important to highlight the links between the development of immigration and asylum systems and the working of the national capitalist economy (Anderson, 2013; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). Since its inception, the immigration and asylum systems sought to conciliate racial anxieties with the maintenance of postcolonial forms of capitalist exploitation. The dismantling of the Empire led to new forms of racialised labour exploitation 'at home'. This process went through ongoing transformations in a context of global mobility and entailed the establishment of formal and informal differential regimes of labour for differently racialised migrant workers. Bridget Anderson (2013: 10) has clearly documented the relationships between immigration politics and labour markets foregrounding these as 'key sites of construction of us and them'. This speaks not only from a top-down policy angle but also from the perspective of the contentious histories shaping the historical articulations of labour (Virdee, 2014; Featherstone, 2012). The intersection of racism and working-class grievances has been politicised in multiple and contradictory ways leading to different political imaginaries. The following subsections pay attention to some of these and how they are constitutive of race politics in Britain.

5.2.2. Ideological Frameworks

The formal construction of the immigration and asylum systems was accompanied by ideological processes that brought race to the centre of the political debate, in attempts to anchor whiteness as the essence of Britishness. Race has played a strong role in contemporary British politics, with crises becoming central moments to examine the intertwining between institutional change, popular culture, and the racialisation of the political debate (Hall, 1978b; Gilroy, 1987). In what follows, I pay attention to some of the dominant ideologies that have been generative of outright racist 'common-senses' in contemporary British politics.

Although I place the focus on ideological frameworks mobilising particular articulations of race and nation since the 1950s, it is important to note that racism in Britain has a far way longer history. In *Racism and Reaction*, Stuart Hall challenges the generalised idea that racism started in the 1950s, with the 'first waves of black and colonial populations', demonstrating that racism is 'endemic to the British social formation' (Hall, 1978a: 144).

Satnam Virdee (2014) provides an account of the ways race has been pivotal to the processes of formation of the working class and the nation in Britain over the last centuries. He evidences the racialization of Irish workers, Jews, and Black and Asian populations as an ongoing project of British elites in their attempt to disarticulate working class alliances and internationalist forms of political solidarity and organization. Nevertheless, it is very important to note here how racialized forms of trade unionism – such as the National Union of Seamen – also shaped these processes of racialization from below against internationalist working-class alliances (Featherstone, 2019).

Yet, what is found in political discourses since the 1950s is the continuous construction of race and nation under the frameworks of a 'rhetoric of order' (Gilroy, 1987). Since the first post-war settlements, attacks over Afro Caribbean and Asian populations were addressed in the language of numbers, 'cultural clashes' and 'bad race relations' and the solution suggested was to restrict immigration. With public debates becoming increasingly racialised (Small & Solomos, 2005), the 1964 election marked 'the first moment when racism is appropriated to the official policy and programme of a major political party' (Hall, 1978b: 149). Amidst street fascism and increasing racialisation of political discourses, Powellism was about to flourish to give shape to the anxieties of a nation in crisis (Hirsch, 2020).

The late 1960s and the 1970s were a period of 'profound political, cultural and social polarization' (Hall, 1978b). This time witnessed the emancipation of the remains of the Empire, the formation of black and Asian antiracist organizations, a major upturn in class struggles and the escalation of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Emerging in this conjuncture, Powellism will deeply shape the ideologies that will legitimate the shift to a 'law and order society' and the formation of a new political hegemony under Thatcherism (Hall, 1978b). Representing the birth of a 'postcolonial racism' (Virdee, 2014), one that carried within a re-imagination of the nation after Empire staging a defensive racism portraying a white nation under threat, Powellism meant the 'formation of an 'official' racist policy at the heart of the British political culture' (Hall, 1978a). When Enoch Powell pronounced his infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech in 1968 – just days after the assassination of Martin Luther King triggering social unrest in different US cities – warning that Britain will see itself in similar levels of racial violence in a close future, he was condemned by the Conservative Party and thrown out of the shadow cabinet. Ten years later, conservative leader Margaret Thatcher brought the same rhetoric to the centre of the political debate (Hall, 1979 [2017]) – and Powell's ideas continue to have political resonance in the right. This 'new racism' became

the ‘common sense’ shaping everyday understandings of a nation in crisis, operating as legitimizing tool for the imposition of a populist authoritarianism and increasing racist policing. Criminality became central in the representations of blackness and how ‘they’ were transforming the British culture. Criminality was represented as being integral to Black culture: law-breaking was alien to legality as the pre-eminent symbol of national culture (Gilroy, 1987).

The language of invasion in the accounts on Black and Asian settlement re-emerges in the construction of a narrative of ‘bogus asylum seekers’ that will come to dominate public anxieties on race by the end of the century. Beside different efforts to mark a fundamental differentiation between the ‘economic migrants’ and the ‘asylum seekers’ (Anderson, 2013), both Conservatives and Labour contributed to generate the common belief that asylum seekers come to Britain due to the favourable conditions they find in the country. This ideology, which finds it roots in Conservative’s justifications of the welfare decline in the 1990s, was reinforced by New Labour – with Home Secretary Jack Straw claiming, ‘there is no doubt that large number of economic migrants are abusing the system by claiming asylum’ and Blair promising to cut asylum applications –, is the same one underlying Theresa May’s Hostile Environment. The securitization turn that followed September 11 and the crisis accompanying British invasion of Iraq contributed to the ongoing articulation of the ‘war on asylum’ with criminality, international terrorism, and Islamophobia (Kundnani, 2007). Media anxiety over asylum seekers escalates in situations of crisis, becoming key ‘scapegoats’ (Goodfellow, 2019) as evidenced by the ubiquitous focus ‘media crossings’ during the months preceding Brexit. This media climate, alongside political statements by members of Johnson’s government, suggest that Brexit suppose a new turning point in British Immigration and Asylum systems.

Indeed, the overall events around Brexit following the 2008 financial and political crisis evidence the ways how debates on race and immigration, infused with Imperial nostalgia, are central to the policing of crisis (Virdee & McGeever, 2018). This is particularly relevant in a conjuncture shaped by the proliferation of far-right ideologies articulated with nationalist racisms (Valluvan, 2019). Important to highlight here is the pioneer role that the far-right and street fascism have played in mobilising the ‘populist effect of race’ (Gilroy, 1987), having a significant impact in driving the official immigration agenda. Indeed, over decades of UK politics, racist anti-migration positions pushed by the extreme right have been widely adopted by the political establishment. For instance, the Notting Hill and Nottingham Riots in 1958 were followed by the imposition of migration

controls by both the Conservative and Labour Parties, the National Front played a key role in the adoption of Powellism as an official policy. Decades later, some continuities can be traced regarding these dynamics when in the early 2000s Labour adopted some of the racist language of the far-right after the British National Party (BNP) capitalised on the 2001 'race riots' in Oldham in the age of the 'end of tolerance' (Kundnani, 2007). There is hence nothing exceptional in Brexit as far-right politics being incorporated by mainstreaming political forces and mobilised in racist terms.

5.2.3. Anti-Racism and the Role of Black, Asian, and Migrant Struggles

Central to the question of race have been the political and ideological struggles of the black, Asian, and migrant racialised poor (Virdee, 2014). The uneven relations shaping the histories of migration in Britain and Western Europe have led to a generalised tendency in literature to overemphasize control and State power in discussions around race and migration. However, the contentious histories of racial policing and immigration control and the ideologies constructed at the core of these processes need to be situated in relation to ongoing anticolonial and antiracist struggles, as forms of agency that have been downplayed and overlooked in various ways. From this perspective, the struggles that challenged imperial power in the colonies, and the collective action of black and Asian movements and antiracist alliances challenging racism 'at home' have been crucial in the historical configuration of race politics in Britain. Furthermore, race and cultural studies have mapped the inclusion of Afro Caribbean, Asian, and migrant elements to the British culture beyond the axis power-resistance as well as new trajectories of struggle evidencing the ways 'ethnic absolutisms' at the basis of national categories of belonging constitute 'fragmented identities', constantly subverted by the presence and action of non-whites (Gilroy, 1987; Virdee, 2014; Hall, 1978b).

Gilroy (1987) notes that 'blacks have been actively organizing in defence of their lives and communities ever since they put a foot in Britain'. Groups like the Committee Against Racial Discrimination (CCARD) and the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD) played a key role in challenging the first restrictive legislation and pushing forward the Race Relations acts in 1965 and 1968 that banned racial discrimination for the first time (Goodfellow, 2019), and they built on earlier black and brown trajectories of struggle in Britain (Featherstone, 2019). In the late 1960s, black struggles in the US were giving rise to new radical ideologies that inspired the formation of black and Asian antiracist organizations

'at home'[12]. This was the time when Indian, Pakistani and West Indian Organizations marched against the 1971 Immigration Act in London (Virdee, 2014).

However, up to the 1970s the organized white working class and its institutions remained mainly indifferent to racism and many unions even supported the colour bar (Virdee, 2014). The 1968 revolts had brought new ideologies to the left (Mezzadra & Neumann, 2019), triggering the emergence of a 'New Left' with new socialist leaderships pushing forward antiracist alliances and actions. The 1970s saw the formation of a 'massive antiracist movement' in Britain, with the development of a plethora of local and national antiracist network which converged in the development of hubs of cultural exchange and antirracist communication such as 'Rock Against Racism' (Gilroy, 1987). The Anti-Nazi League was also formed in 1977, after a massive counter-demo that challenged a National Front's march against mugging in Lewisham – a neighbourhood in South London with strong Caribbean presence – just after 21 young blacks were arrested and charged without evidence. This time also saw several examples of political solidarity with the struggles of racialised workers, such as the Grunwick strike between 1976 and 1978, when Asian women received the support of trade union leaders, and mass picketing workers, feminist, antiracist, and miners (Virdee, 2014). For Kelliher (2017), Grunwick was a central dispute in the construction of cultures of mutual solidarity and networks across the labour movement, creating deeper and equal relationships. These political transformations in the Left and the powerful antiracist movements during the 1970s found an impact in the development of more progressive agendas. While the Labour government introduced new pieces of legislation to curb discrimination – e.g. the 1976 Race Relations Act – the aftermath of the Brixton Riots saw the emergence of a 'new municipal antiracism' (Gilroy, 1987), with Labour local authorities across the country legislating against discrimination and pushing antiracist public campaigns.

With the expansion of the detention state by the end of the Century, detention centres have also been active sites of migrant struggle, hunger strikes, revolts, and articulations of solidarity. The Yarls Wood uprising in 2002 permanently destroyed half of the new centre just few months after it opened. In the 1990s, Campsfield detention centre saw a series of hunger strikes by Algerian communities and further examples include a group of African women organised for social justice in 2012 in Yarls Wood (Tyler, 2013). The scale and

[12] Amongst others, the Black People Alliance (BPA), the Black Unity and Freedom Party (BUFP), the Universal Coloured People's Association (UCPA), or the Organization of Women of Afro Descendent (OWAAD).

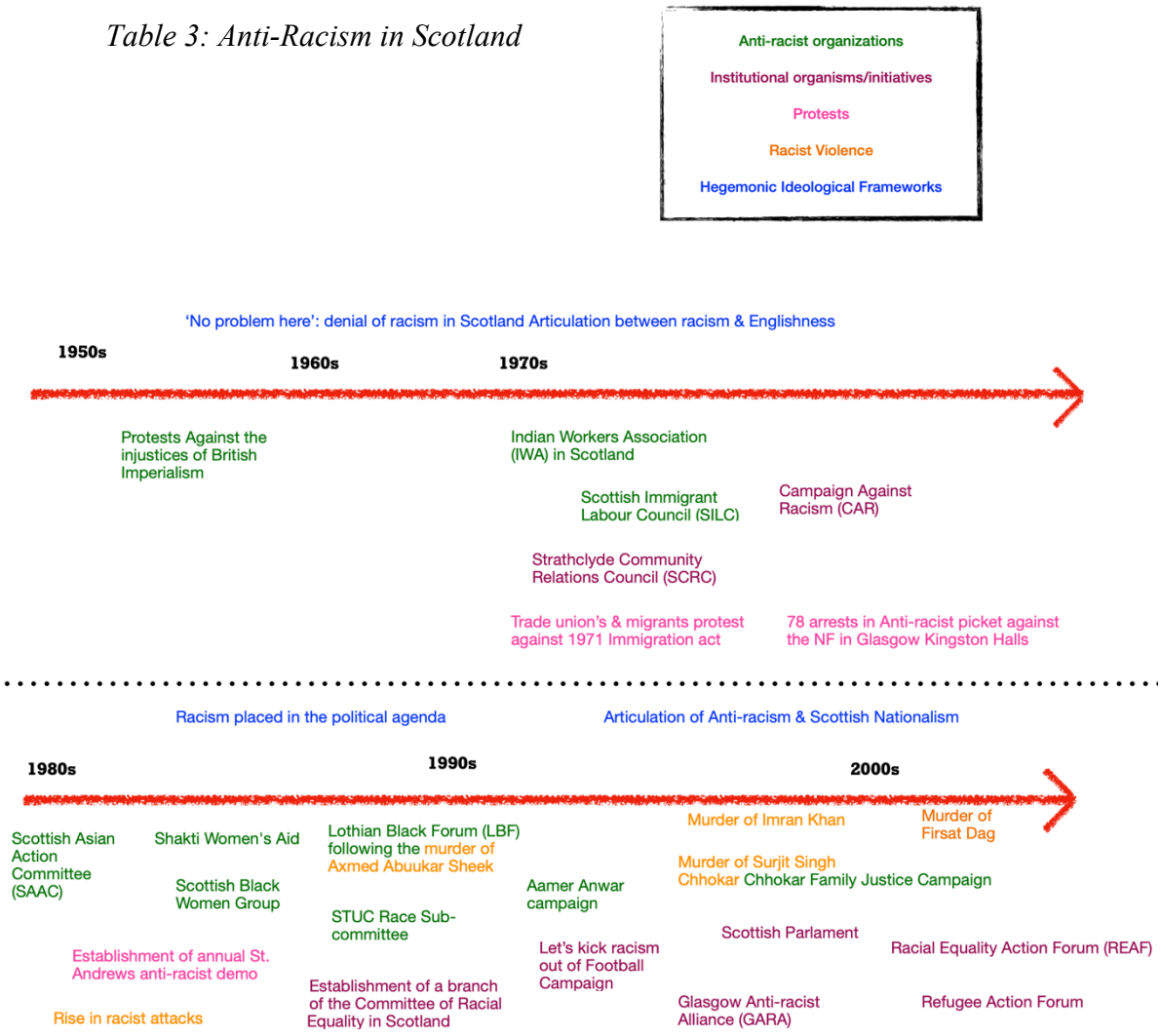
relevance of migrant struggles in detention has turned the detention business as one of the main targets of the political action against borders in the last decades. Solidarity from the outside has played a key role in sustaining people struggling individually and collectively inside detention, organised in groups such as the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC) – now 'Right to Remain' – or the black-led National Assembly Against Racism (NAAR) which later established the Campaign for Asylum and Immigration Rights (CAIR). Since the 2000s, a whole network of local solidarity hubs and no borders groups have emerged across many UK cities campaigning for the freedom of movement and articulating political solidarity against borders and racism (CorporateWatch, 2015).

The next section explores the distinctive articulation of race and nation in Scotland and how this shaped a different context for the struggles against racism. It looks at how Scottishness is dialogically constructed in relation to the previous articulations of Britishness, critically addressing the ways this has shaped different national narratives regarding the racial and migrant questions and how this has impacted the ways black, brown, and migrant solidarity struggles have been waged in Scotland.

5.3. The Distinctive Articulation of Race and Nation in Scotland

While some of the previous histories are shared, there are a series of factors that contribute to a distinctive articulation of race and nation in the Scottish context. These have been shifting in time, with black anti-racist resistances playing a key role in challenging Scottish's historical denial of racism (Dee, 2020). This section draws attention to the hegemonic frameworks through which questions of race have been addressed in Scotland and their relationship with the previous British context. Overall, the discussion foregrounds the ways counter-hegemonic struggles have been central to place anti-racism in the Scottish political agenda.

Table 3: Anti-Racism in Scotland



The problem of racism in Scotland is characterized by its historical neglect (Dunlop, 1993; Kyriakides, 2005), which is linked to the construction of Scottishness as a distinctive identity. From the post-WWII until the late 1980s, a rhetoric of 'no problem here' dominated the institutional framework, with authorities downplaying the existence of racism in Scotland. On the one hand, racism was associated to Englishness, linked to the decline of British Imperialism. Such ideological construction positioned Scotland as one more victim of English colonialism, reproducing a historical amnesia that vanishes the role of Scotland in Atlantic Slavery and colonial conquest (Davidson, et al., 2018). National discourses constitute a sort of unity built of the many differences with which it is confronted (Hall, 2000[2021]). The Scottish national identity has been 'dialogically constructed' in relation to the English 'other'. Indeed, since racism was central to the construction of Britishness, racist denial became a defining element of Scottish distinctive identity. Furthermore, the 'no problem here' framework reinforced hegemonic discourses in England, where an absence of problems of 'race relations' became justified by the smaller size of Commonwealth migrants

in the country (Dunlop, 1993). Nevertheless, what Miles & Dunlop (1986) find during this period in Scotland is not an absence of racism but an 'absence of the racialization of the political process', in which 'race relations' were not defined as problematic and where the right failed to racialize the political agenda in the same way as in England. Yet, the following lines evidence how racism has been an active force shaping the political geographies of Scotland. Whilst the existence of racism was continuously denied by political, media and community representatives, anti-racist mobilizations were key to start placing racism in the Scottish political agenda (Kyriakides, 2005).

Dunlop (1993) traces how until the early 1980s, Asian migrant organizations in Scotland – e.g. the Pakistani Social and Cultural Association or the Bengali Cultural – shared a social and cultural focus with little explicit political interest. An exception to this was the Indian Workers Association (IWA), established in Glasgow in 1971 becoming 'the first migrant organization in Scotland overtly political in character'[13]. An important part of its members had a history of involvement with the independence movement in India and the Communist Party of India. In the next decades, the IWA became an important part of the Labour movement in Scotland, developing a broad structural analysis of racism. The IWA appeared in a conjuncture of increasing racism in Scotland and raising concerns amongst the left about the proliferation of racist ideas in England. That same year, a demonstration organized to protest against the new Conservative's 1971 Immigration Act, brought together in Glasgow different organizations concerned with the issue of racism, including the IWA, members of the Pakistani community, part of the Communist and Labour parties and various educationalists, with the support of Glasgow District Trades Council and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC). The previous section addressed how similar demonstrations took place in England (Virdee, 2014).

As a result of this protest, a liaison committee was set up to bridge migrant communities and the trade union movement to advance the struggles against racism and coordinate opposition to racist legislation, creating the Scottish Immigrant Labour Council (SILC). Kyriakides (2005) has challenged Dunlop's claim that the SILC was mostly white, evidencing the key involvement of IWA and Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi organization, as well as the growing affiliation of migrants in union movements influencing the agenda of the STUC. Also in 1971, the first Scotland's institutional 'race-relations'

[13] The IWA was founded in London in the 1930s with a long political trajectory since then (Gill, 2013). Experiences of organizing against racism in England will shape the organization's struggles in Scotland.

infrastructure appeared with the establishment of the Strathclyde Community Relations Council (SCRC). The interplay between the SILC and the SCRC shaped the first attempts to place racism in the Scottish public agenda, and they often coalesced to prevent the rise of the National Front (NF), which was gaining increasing support in England. While the former had a focus on class struggle against the use of racism as a divisive mechanism, the latter arises from state-sponsorship to regulate 'race relations'. In 1976, a conference on 'The Dangers of Racialism' held in Strathclyde University gave rise to Scotland's first Campaign Against Racism (CAR), led by the SCRC to address the 'deterioration of race relations' in a conjuncture of increasing public presence of the National Front in Glasgow and other areas of Scotland. A year earlier, anti-racist organizations denounced institutional compliance with fascism when a 24-hour peaceful picket to prevent a NF meeting at Glasgow's Kingston Halls resulted in brutal police action and 78 people arrested.

Coinciding with the 1981 British Nationality Act and an escalation of racist incidents and fascists groups across the UK, forms of black self-organization started to emerge in Scotland (Dunlop, 1993). That year, people of Asian origin came together in the Scottish Asian Action Committee (SAAC), when various Asian community leaders demanded the dismissal of Sheriff Middleton during the trial of a man charged with having unlawful sexual intercourse with a 13-years old Asian girl. The Sheriff had acquitted the man arguing that 'girls mature much earlier in the East'. The formation of the SAAC marked a precedent in Scottish based anti-racism as a form of self-organization of the people of Asian origin in Scotland, not only to improve their living and working conditions but also to place racism on the Scottish political agenda, attempting to influence public policies (Dunlop, 1993). The SAAC challenged the idea that racism was solely the consequence of the presence of fascists, foregrounding the racism of Scottish institutions and the British immigration system.

In the following years, further migrant self-organized associations emerged. The Scottish Black Womens' Group appeared in 1986 challenging male dominance in the SAAC, and the Shakti Women's Aid was formed in 1985 as a refugee for women of Asian and Afro-Caribbean origin and their children, victims of gender violence. All these black-led organizations played a key role placing racism in the Scottish political agenda against the widespread denial during the 1970s, making increasing claims to state institutions for action. As a consequence, a Scottish branch of the Committee of Racial Equality (CRE) was established in Edinburgh in 1986, following the logic of 'race relations', now starting to become established as a Scottish problem. During the 1980s, anti-racism became also a priority in the agenda of the labour movement. The Labour Party's Scottish executive created

an anti-racist working party to involve black people in the party and develop links with black activists. On the other hand, the annual St. Andrews Day anti-racist march has its origins in SILC activity since 1984. While the march was minoritarian in 1984, the following year, a committee formed by SILC, CAR, SCRC and Glasgow District Trades Council organized a St Andrews day rally to protest at the BNP's intention to make a rally on Glasgow on that day. The STUC formed a race-subcommittee which became the official sponsor of the St Andrews Day anti-racist march in 1988, with SILC being dissolved in 1989.

Nonetheless, the 'myth' of Scotland as a non-racist country continued – and continues (Virdee, 2016) – to shape institutional responses to racist violence, with racist assaults and murders not being investigated by the police or brought into justice. Between 1988 and 1990, racist attacks doubled in the Lothian and border region and increased by a 300% in the Strathclyde region (Dee, 2020). This was the conjuncture in which the Lothian Black Forum (LBF) was formed after the police refused to recognize as a racist crime the murder of the Somalian student Axmed Abuukar Sheekh by white Scottish fascists in Edinburgh. Led by activists of black and Asian descent, the LBF organised an anti-racist demonstration in June 1989 after the trial's verdict. These struggles meant that racism in Scotland became more covered in media and political discourses between 1993 and 2004. Evidence of this is the launch of the 'Let's kick Racism out of Football campaign' in Scotland by the CRE and the Scottish Professional Football Association, due to the association between football and extremism. By the end of 1997, the issue of racism as a Scottish problem became firmly anchored in the public debate. Glasgow 15-years-old schoolboy Imran Kahn was murdered one year later, triggering a new episode of racial unrest. An anti-racist protest rally planned in March 1999 was accused of 'being hijacked' by extremists, politicizing a community vs. left-wing extremism antagonism. In light of the escalation of 'racial tensions', Glasgow City Council was successful in securing central government funding to create the Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance under the New Labours' Social Inclusion Partnership scheme (GARA). Its action was dominated by a language of racial disorder, social fragmentation, safety, and education.

Kyriatides (2005) places in this conjuncture the first explicit attempts to articulate anti-racism with Scottish nationalism, particularly by the Scottish National Party (SNP). Labour responded accusing the SNP of precipitating extremism through a defence of Scottishness that castigated Britishness as the source of racism. He analyses how the nation being made required a 'cosmopolitan nationalism' that stands against British authoritarian nationalism and incorporates identity claims into the Scottish imaginary on the basis that

‘any identity that can claim victimization must be recognized’. Kyriatides addresses how this framework came accompanied by a progressive emotionalization and psychologization of the racist victim and the subject perpetrator. Anti-racism and the construction of Scots as a tolerant nation became a vehicle to mobilize legitimacy. Scottish national identity becomes inspired by a ‘civic imagination of the nation’ (Liinpää, 2018), evoking a sense of belonging based on ‘non ethnic characteristics’. Scottishness became presented in political discourse as a nonexclusive identity (Pakistani-Scottish, Irish-Scottish, etc.). Nevertheless, Hall (2000 [2021]) has criticized how these notions of universal citizenship and civic nationalism are part of a liberal tradition that erases the particular relationships in which the construction of national configurations is embedded. For him, ‘race’ is one of these particularisms because it ‘constructs differences that operate at a deeper level than the formal play of citizenship, equality, and individual autonomy’ (ibid: 420). For this reason, civic nationalism ‘has never been able to bring justice to social groups at risk or recognize the strength of collective inequalities’.

The official opening of the Scottish Parliament on 1st July 1999 coincided in time with two new racist incidents: The publication of the Macpherson Report on the murder of Stephen Lawrence – evidencing professional incompetence of the Metropolitan Police and the Crown Prosecution Service, labelled as ‘institutionally racist’ – and the trial of Ronnie Coulter, accused of the murder of Surjit Singh Chhokar on the 4th November 1998 in Airdrie (Lanarkshire). The ‘Chhokar Family Justice Campaign’ emerged drawing parallels with the case of Stephen Lawrence, following the Scottish Crown’s refusal to accuse two other subjects and the verdict of non-guilty. This campaign put in the spotlight that institutional racism was not solely an English phenomenon, triggering a response from Scottish institutions to back their anti-racist credential. The new Scottish Executive recognized that the existence of institutional racism was a consequence of past neglect and that the ‘devolved Scottish policy would be a force for challenging relics of the past’ (Kyriatides, 2005). Hence, the new Scottish Parliament would embody the therapeutic impulse in the making of the Scottish anti-racist social imaginary. As part of this framework, the Racial Equality Advisory Forum (REAF) was established to tackle institutionalized racism in all areas of Scottish life and ensure Scottish Executive consultation to people with ethnic minority background. A year later, the murder of the Kurdish asylum seeker Firsat Dag in Sighthill in 2001 motivated a £700000 package to aid ‘community integration’, establishing a Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (SRIF), which launched the ‘One Scotland, Many Cultures’ anti-racist advertising campaign in 2002.

Scottish 'welcoming stance' and inter-cultural imaginary has continued to shape the construction of the Scottish nation against Britain, with migration being a positive slogan in debates around Scottish independence and Brexit. The rise of the SNP and the independence referendum has contributed to the dominant story that racism is absent in Scotland (Virdee, 2016). Yet, Hunter and Meer (2018: 383) argue that there is still a huge 'difference between the salience of race in society and the racialization of mainstream political culture in Scotland'. They observe that 'whilst the political rhetoric is broadly inclusive, there is a disconnect between elite visions of Scotland and popular opinion on this'. Hill & Meer (2020) also evidence a gap between elite 'aspirational pluralism' and the reality of ethnic minority underrepresentation in Scottish politics. Under this political, academic, and public framework, 'the complexities of racialization and its relationship to belonging in Scotland remain under-acknowledged' (Hunter and Meer, 2018: 383). As this thesis will argue, racist attacks, institutional racism and everyday racism continue to shape the lives of racialised populations in Scotland. Young (2018) has evidenced that between 2000 and 2013, the per capita rate of murders with a known or suspected racist element in Scotland was higher than in the rest of the UK. The political scenario continues to be shaped by cases of police brutality such as Sheku Bayoh, a 31-year-old-man who died after being arrested and restrained by nine police officers in Kirkcaldy in 2015, which challenges 'the myth of the Scottish exceptionalism' (Akhtar, 2020). This myth has indeed made racism harder to challenge in Scotland, as will be argued throughout the thesis. The next section addresses the question of racism in Scotland from an assessment of the dispersal policy in Glasgow, engaging with migrant struggles and resistances in the last decades.

5.4. Tracing the History of the Dispersal City in Glasgow

The previous section broadly situated the development of the immigration and asylum systems in relation to the contentious histories shaping the articulation of race and nation in Britain and Scotland. The rest of the chapter will focus on developing the specific context of the present piece of research, situating Glasgow as one of the main cities within the British asylum dispersal policy and a site of antagonistic politics of migrant solidarity.

Glasgow is the biggest dispersal city in the UK, home to over 5000 asylum seekers, and the only dispersal point in Scotland (COSLA, 2019). Since 1999, asylum applicants have been sent to the city and housed in some of its most deprived and impoverished areas. Lived testimonies and research have documented that people arriving new to Glasgow were lacking networks of support and experiencing different forms of everyday racism (Kelly, 2000;

Bowes, et al., 2009). Notwithstanding, the last two decades have seen the development of a huge network of migrant solidarity, support, and advocacy in the city (Bates & Kirkwood, 2013; Haedicke, 2017; Piacentini, 2016; Mainwaring, et al., 2020).

Glasgow has long and intertwining histories of migration and struggle. Although the 2000s marked the beginning of the dispersal scheme, with hundreds of asylum seekers arriving in the city for the first time, migration in Glasgow and the West of Scotland traces back to the time when it was the second city of the Empire. Heart of the ship building industry, Glasgow became a hub of colonial enterprises, with black and Asian seamen arriving to its ports, and Irish workers forming settlements in the South of the Clyde (Damer, 1990). Furthermore, Glasgow has a place in the collective memory of working-class struggles, with the 'Red Clydeside' becoming the epicentre of one of the biggest waves of working-class radical collective action in the country in the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, Griffin (2015) demonstrates how the strikes and riots during the 'Red Clydeside' were characterised by coexisting and contrasting articulations of internationalism and white labourism, often shaped by racialised geographies and exclusionary politics emerging from the trade union movement. Politics of race and class intersected within place-based disputes in Glasgow, with moments of racist violence such as the Broomielaw Riots in 1919. Indeed, the formation of the Scottish working class in the twenty-first and twentieth Centuries was shaped by the racialization and subordination of Irish Catholic and other minority workers (Virdee, 2014). Hence, despite these histories of migration contributed to the formation of a heterogeneous and multi-ethnic working-class, racism has been a driving force deeply shaping the patterns of its articulation (Miles & Dunlop, 1986; Virdee, 2014). Indeed, the long trajectories of anti-Irish Catholic racism continue to shape divisions within the working class and the Glaswegian political culture, often shaping the terms in which other issues around race and ethnicity have been articulated.

Nevertheless, this history, alongside the related particularities of the Scottish context, make Glasgow a singular dispersal city. Distinctive articulations of race, class, and national identity have shaped the processes of solidarity as well as the hardships and racism experienced by newcomers. Following an introduction of the dispersal policy at the core of the British Asylum system, this section will bring an account of the histories of dispersal in Glasgow and the struggles of migrant political solidarity staged at its core.

5.4.1. The Dispersal Policy and the Spatialization of Institutional Racism

Dispersal is the policy whereby asylum applicants in the UK are forcedly housed on a no-choice basis in different locations across the country. It adds to the long history of racialised policy intervention and geographical concentration of social exclusion and minority groups in the UK, constituted through decidedly uneven mobilities (Hynes, 2009). Introduced under the 1999 Immigration and Asylum act, it became one of the pillars of the New Labour's deep re-structuring of the asylum system, lasting until the date and subjected to a progressive neoliberalization (Darling, 2016). Previously to the dispersal scheme, people were free to choose where they wanted to live, generally close to already established community networks and kindships. The alleged reasons behind this policy were the urgent need to 'relieve the burden on London and the Southeast of England' and 'making Britain a less attractive destination to 'bogus asylum seekers', in line with the racist anxieties dominating hegemonic political discourses (El-Enany, 2020). Robinson & Andersson (2003) argue that what dispersal pretended was in fact 'cleaning' a polluted social space, as the concentration of asylum seekers was being constructed as a major problem for race relations.

Hence, dispersal is by definition a spatial measure. It meant the assignation of asylum seekers into the poorest areas of the country with surplus inexpensive housing and non-existent networks of support (Schuster & Solomos, 2004). While the spatial element is implicit in literature, there is little engagement with the key role of space in reproducing institutional racism. 'Dispersal studies' have brought attention to the relationships between dispersal, social exclusion, racism, and xenophobia and have largely addressed the challenges faced by the new dispersal areas (Bloch & Schuster, 2005; Hynes, 2009; Kelly, 2000; Spicer, 2008; Griffiths, 2005; Stewart, 2011). This work foregrounds the ways dispersal contributed to the hyper-visibility of asylum seekers, inserted in white dominated spaces without any previous community work, or the barriers of access to welfare, support, or healthcare they were encountering (McDonald, 2001; Creighton, et al., 2004), as well as their isolation from their own communities (Robinson & Andersson, 2003). However, most of the extensive literature on dispersal is policy-oriented and lacks a broader critical engagement, reproducing a tendency on contemporary research in which refugee debate sees itself depoliticised, sitting in the 'narrow ethical basis of sanctuary' that portrait Britain as a 'host' rather than a colonial state (El-Enany, 2020). Darling (2016: 230) contends that 'in the regulation of housing and support services we witness the depoliticization of asylum' where 'local authorities, private providers, and third sector organizations are all positioned as constituting the neoliberal governmentality of asylum accommodation' (ibid: 235).

The system created for the implementation of dispersal partly mirrored pioneer privatization experiments in the outsourcing of the detention business. Housing started to be run by companies that were already profiting from running detention centres, including G4S and Serco. The initial system was coordinated by a newly created nation-wide agency (NASS), characterised by a mixture of housing arrangements run by local authorities and private companies. This system was substituted in 2012 by 6 regional contracts called COMPASS (Commercial and Operational Managers Procuring Asylum Support Services), concluding the privatization of the system, and awarding the 6 housing contracts to 3 companies (G4s, Serco and Clearsprings Group). In 2019, a new generation of 7 contracts of 4 billion over a period of 10 years were renovated by the AASC (Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contract), with Mears entering the list of awarded and getting the contract in Scotland (Refugee Action Asylum Accommodation Report, 2020). Chapter 6 will explore the profile of the outsourcing giants Serco and Mears, analysing the ways racial capitalism intersects with the asylum accommodation business and the political economies of the border. Under the language of 'partnerships' the dispersal system has also sought the co-optation of different NGOs and the voluntary sector for the provision of support services (Griffiths, 2005). Overall, the overlapping between neoliberalism, the migration business and racial capitalism shape a system that directly profits multinational companies and co-opts charitable work to reproduce racial exclusion.

5.4.2. Glasgow: The Biggest Dispersal City

Glasgow, devastated by deindustrialization, became the only city to volunteer for the dispersal program. The City Council negotiated the most favourable contract they could achieve, offering lettings in their large stock of empty properties in post-industrial areas, most of them in the North-East district of Springburn, once famous for the manufacturing of steam locomotives that were exported around the world (McDonald, 2001). At the time of the start of the dispersal policy, Springburn was one of the poorest areas in Glasgow, Scotland, and Europe, suffering extreme poverty, lack of community infrastructures and devastation after the loss of industrial employment. Most of the vacant housing dedicated to the dispersal scheme were high-rise flats neglected by the local community for years and that were planned to be demolished. Similar patterns of poverty, deprivation, and surplus of council-owned property shaped the remaining areas of the city with stock dedicated to dispersal (Govan, Maryhill, Kingsway, Drumchapel, Castlemilk…). Research spotlights the lack of preparedness of these areas by the start of the policy, as well as the scale and the speed of its implementation (Barclay, et al., 2003; Linsday, et al., 2010; Bowes, et al., 2009).

Furthermore, all of them were all-white deprived areas where no previous community work was done and with extremely poor infrastructures and lacking migrant community networks. Despite antiracist responses being organised, racist attacks and harassments were very usual and over the years, some dispersal areas have remained sites of racialised tensions (Piacentini, 2012). The murder of the Kurdish asylum seeker Firsat Dag in Sighthill in 2001 elevated racial tensions in the city to an unprecedented level, triggering a strong response of the asylum-seeking community[14].

Figure 1: Map of Dispersal Neighbourhoods in Glasgow

The previous map situates the main dispersal areas of the city, drawing on the ten integration networks developed in the first years of the policy. Recalling the conditions that dispersal areas were facing, Graham Campbell (Resident of Sighthill and SNP Councillor for Springburn/Robroyston) accounts that

> 'In the case of Sighthill, folks arrived in the middle of the night, turned up to an empty flat in an area which had suffered long-term neglect, 20 years'-worth not of being invested in a social housing had been sold off in the Thatcher period and the early part of the Blair period, so the piling was starting to decay. The city council was massively in debt and wasn't able to repair the housing stock (…). These

[14] https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/dec/15/immigration.race

> communities were suffering multiple deprivation from lack of employment, many of them were on benefits (…) Many of the housing was empty or disused, there was a big drug problem during the 80s, which was not so bad when the refugees were arriving, but still the legacy of that was there' (Graham Campbell, 26th February 2020).

Graham gives here a strong sense of the geographies of poverty shaping the spaces of asylum dispersal in Glasgow. These areas lacked resources, and by that time they 'had no community centre, nothing like that'. Overall, they had 'very few resources to actually host, accommodate, and deal with the influx of people that were coming' and 'no preparation of the community was made to announce that refugees were coming and there was nothing given to the refugees to orientate them'.

Although the first large group of refugees arrived under the 1999 Kosovar Programme, the dispersal contract was set to start in April 2000, with thousands of asylum seekers arriving new to the city each year from different locations (Kosovo, Albania, Somalia, Uganda, Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey…)[15]. The BAME population in the city increased by 60% in only the first 3 years of dispersal (Wren, 2007). The City Council towerblocks used to house asylum seekers were privatised in 2003 with the creation of the Glasgow Housing Association (GHA), which became the biggest social landlord in the UK (Gray, 2018). Most of them were situated in the eight 'transformational regenerational areas', becoming target of demolition and urban regeneration from 2006 onwards. Also in 2006, the contract for housing asylum seekers was partially privatised. About 20 per cent of housing would be provided by private companies and charities. The Angel Group and the Christian charity YMCA won a £1.5 million contract to house about a fifth part of Glasgow's asylum seekers, 100 of them in their tower block hostel in the Red Road, leading to a series of evictions and struggles detailed below. The Glasgow City Council contract was cancelled in 2011, with Angel and YMCA taking over for an interim period before a six-year billionaire contract was awarded to Serco, a multinational company which had already been running detention centres for the Home Office (Corporate Watch, 28th June 2018)[16]. The struggles addressed in this thesis against *Serco's* asylum seekers evictions contributed to Serco's loss of the contract in Scotland, awarded to a new company *Mears* in 2019. For Darling (2016), outsourcing was a key move to depoliticize asylum and expel power away from local political institutions.

[15] The dispersal programme meant the arrival of large numbers of refugee populations in Glasgow for the first time. See Kelly (2000) for a long-term history of refugees in Scotland prior to dispersal.
[16] See Chapter 6 for more information about *Serco*

Table 4: Glasgow Asylum Housing Contractors

	Home Office Housing Contractor (Scotland)	Contractual Basis	Value
2001- 2011	**Glasgow City Council** • 2003 - Stock transferred to GHA • 2006 - Beginning of the demolition programe	Housing arrangements between NASS (National Asylum Support Service), local authorities and private companies	12 Million Contract 10 years
2006	Privatization of 20% of the contract (YMCA and Angel Group)		
2011	**Ypeople and Angel Group**		
2012- 2018	**Serco**	COMPASS (Commercial and Operational Managers Procuring Asylum Support Services)	Undetermined value 6 regional contracts 5+2 years
2019-2029	**Mears**	AASC (Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contract)	4 billion 7 regional contracts 10 years

5.4.3. Tracing the History of Migrant Solidarities in the Dispersal City

The history of the dispersal city is overall one of solidarity, community, and political struggle. The last two decades witnessed umpteen examples of asylum seekers self-organised struggles, dawn raids being stopped by neighbours, powerful anti-detention campaigning and massive demonstrations against the Home Office that have become party to the politics of place. The taken for granted 'better conditions of asylum seekers in Scotland' are not manifestations of an 'open and multi-ethnic nationalism', but rather the result of a history of community struggle and won battles. Over the years, migrant activism in the city stopped children from being detained, put an end to dawn raids, prevented the opening of a new deportation unit at Glasgow Airport, and very recently challenged the evictions of hundreds of asylum seekers by the housing contractor Serco.

Filling an important gap in literature, this section traces the histories of autonomous neighbourhood and migrant-led forms of solidarity. Over the years, the development of a massive structure of third sector organizations and NGOs dealing with asylum seekers in Glasgow has attracted the interest of academic literature on this field (Jones & Williamson, 2014; Wren, 2007; Mainwaring, et al., 2020; Sim & Bowes, 2007; Bowes, et al., 2009). Nevertheless, this policy-oriented literature and its humanitarian focus misses the histories

of struggle behind Glasgow's political geographies of dispersal and which were crucial for funding becoming available.

Neighbourhood solidarities date back to the very beginning of the dispersal policy. The absence of support structures and the problematics faced by asylum seekers in the new dispersal areas brought neighbours to start self-organizing around housing, racism, and exclusion. The sink estates where asylum seekers were placed were actually areas with a legacy of working-class solidarity and community organizing (Gibbs, 2016). Many of them had been at the front of the poll tax struggles just a decade ago and had suffered the hardship of deindustrialization. Hence, most of these forms of solidarity drew in working-class and community forms of identification. Very early on, neighbours, sometimes with the support of trade unions, tenants' unions, and churches, started to build infrastructures of direct support. In Sighthill, a volunteer-run community self-supported flat opened by neighbours became a hub of community organising in the area, progressively linking the issues faced by the asylum seekers and those living in the area.

> 'Neighbours started welcoming people and setting up services, giving advice sessions about where to go for stuff, getting people registered for doctors, speaking over the phone, doing translation, dealing with agencies on their behalf… all this was done by neighbours' (Graham Campbell, 26th February 2020).

Meanwhile, the first attempts to organize the asylum-seeking community across the city were very successful. Community workers supported by unions, churches and community members from different dispersal areas helped to organize a number of meetings across the city, so asylum seekers and refugees have their own voice. Six to eight local meetings were regularly attended by hundreds of asylum seekers each: 'The agenda of that meetings was to get a space where asylum seekers and refugees could meet each other, discuss and talk about their personal experiences' (Willy, 3rd September 2020). This was the origin of the Integration Networks, which emerged later on across ten areas when funding was made available in an institutional effort to bridge refugee and local communities[17]. That time also saw the birth of the first self-organised migrant-led groups, such as the Refugee Action Group, set up by Afghan, Iraqi, Kurdish, Kosovar and later Congolese migrants, or the Caribou African Women's Group in the Red Road flats (Graham Campbell, 26th February 2020), as well as the well-known city-wide Glasgow Asylum Rights Campaign and Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees (Bates & Kirkwood, 2013).

[17] See Wren (2004) for more information on the Integration Networks in Glasgow

Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees, 2001
Source: BBC News, 9th August 2001

The assassination of Firsat Dag, a Kurdish asylum seeker dispersed to Sighthill, by a member of the far-right in August 2001, supposed a turning point in the council's approach after his murder became a national issue (Athwal & Bourne, 2007). A rally of over 3000 asylum seekers, supported by unions and campaigning groups, marched towards George Square to demand justice and denounce the horrific conditions of asylum seekers in the city. Demonstrations pushed the council to invest for the first time in support services. While Immigration is decided in Westminster, primary legislative powers to services supporting the 'integration' of asylum seekers were devolved to the Scottish Government, who was responsible on issues such as housing, education, social services, children, health, social justice, or the promotion of equal opportunities (Piacentini, 2012). Until this point, Glasgow City Council had opportunistically benefited from a millionaire contract to host asylum seekers leaving communities behind without essential institutional support.

Demonstration after the stabbing of Firsat Dag in Glasgow
(Source: BBC News, 14th December 2001)

Alongside the struggles around hosing and direct support, powerful campaigning against dawn-raids and anti-detention emerged, in struggles that will have a strong legacy on contemporary forms of migrant solidarity and an impact on the collective historical memory (Mainwaring, et al., 2020). In 2005, residents of the Kingsway estate organised look-out patrols against dawn raids of asylum seekers in the tower-blocks. The UK Border

Agency (UKBA) used to burst into asylum seekers' flats in the middle of the night detaining whole families to be deported. Neighbours organised shifts to watch the towerblocks, often blocking the entrance of the building or hiding families in their own flats[18]. The strategies utilised by antideportation groups often drew on the collective knowledge built through previous struggles. For instance, phone trees became a very effective way to stop the removal of neighbours. They were a key form of organizing within the anti-poll-tax campaign (Gibbs, 2016), consisting of a system of contacting a large group of people quickly were the message recipients become deliverers. Forms of anti-raids organising were articulated across different dispersal areas in Glasgow. Graham Campbell, resident in Sighthill, notes how 'in Sighthill, Red Road and Royston Flats, we actively protested against deportation. We stopped vans from coming to people's flats, we stopped people from being evicted physically. We mobilised numbers for that. We had phone trees, and we stopped several evictions' (Graham Campbell, 26th February 2020).

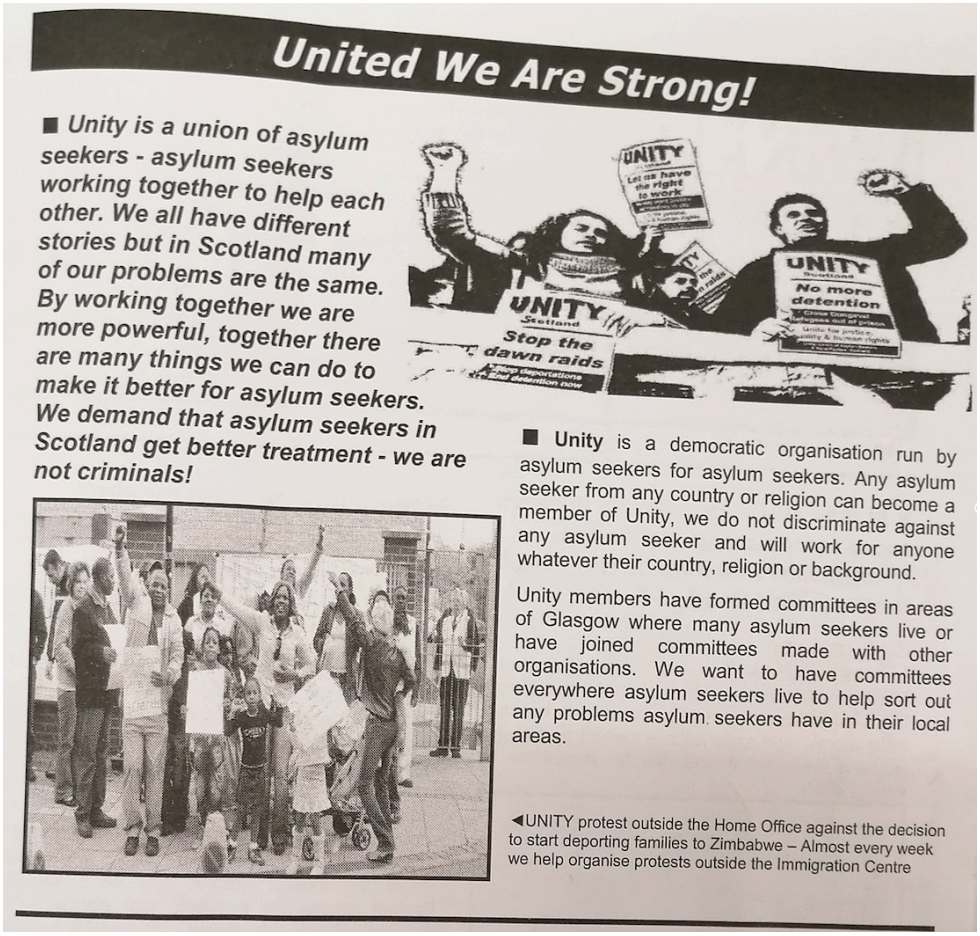
During this time, seven schoolgirls led the major children campaign challenging the Home Office in the UK in Drumchapel (Haedicke, 2017). Against the detention and threat of removal of one of her classmates and her family, they organised a massive campaign which gained the support of the local community and forced the British Government to commit to stop children detention in Scotland. Although the UKBA continued to raid and incarcerate children the following years, nowadays children are no longer detained in Scotland.

5.4.3.1. The Unity Centre: The Union of Asylum Seekers and Sans Papiers that Became a HUB Space for Migrant Organizing in Glasgow

A trade union of asylum seekers and sans papiers, *Unity*, was launched in 2006 to organize asylum seekers against detention, dawn raids and deportations and campaign for the right to work of asylum seekers. In the following quote, an interviewee recalls the first Unity Centre's meetings, emphasizing some of the ways they became a space of encounter and exchange of different political cultures and trajectories of organizing that drew on previous experiences in home countries – an aspect often overlooked by work in migrant politics:

[18] https://www.scotsman.com/education/grandmothers-who-tend-their-flock-asylum-seekers-against-dawn-raids-2466496

'I was at some of the Unity Centre's very first meetings in Red Road flats and I remember meeting them and their original aim was to be an asylum seekers' trade union and obviously many of the asylum seekers had been politically organised from the countries they'd come from, so they brought that political culture with them. Many of them were organising country national associations or they formed charities on the ground in Sighthill and Red Road flats. So, the Asylum Seeker Refugee Action Group was formed to represent those people. They worked jointly with the tenants' (Graham Campbell, 26th February 2020).


United We Are Strong!

■ Unity is a union of asylum seekers - asylum seekers working together to help each other. We all have different stories but in Scotland many of our problems are the same. By working together we are more powerful, together there are many things we can do to make it better for asylum seekers. We demand that asylum seekers in Scotland get better treatment - we are not criminals!

UNITY Let us have the right to work

UNITY Scotland Stop the dawn raids

UNITY Scotland No more detention

■ Unity is a democratic organisation run by asylum seekers for asylum seekers. Any asylum seeker from any country or religion can become a member of Unity, we do not discriminate against any asylum seeker and will work for anyone whatever their country, religion or background.

Unity members have formed committees in areas of Glasgow where many asylum seekers live or have joined committees made with other organisations. We want to have committees everywhere asylum seekers live to help sort out any problems asylum seekers have in their local areas.

◄UNITY protest outside the Home Office against the decision to start deporting families to Zimbabwe – Almost every week we help organise protests outside the Immigration Centre

Spreading Unity, 2006 (Source: Unity Centre's Archive)

The same day that the union was created, 'supporters of the union of asylum seekers opened the Unity Centre, less than 100 metres from the main entrance of the Immigration centre in Brand Street to operate as a support for people reporting at the Home Office' (Spreading Unity, October 2006). This was a central space since every asylum seeker was forced to report periodically in Brand Street, often facing detention and removal to Dungavel. People used to sign in Unity before reporting, finding emotional support in this space. If they did not come back from the Home Office within a reasonable time, the Union would take action. The Unity Centre brought people organised around the first No Borders group in Scotland – that had been holding weekly gatherings outside the reporting centre in Brand Street – as well as people politicised around the anti-G8 mobilisation, which supposed

an outburst of activism in Scotland and had the Dungavel Detention Centre and the No Borders Campaign as one of its focuses (Indymedia UK). Since the centre opened, it was visited by hundreds of families that got registered there, so if they were detained or dawn raided, Unity would take action. Activists from Unity used to organise frequents pickets padlocking the Home Office gates in Brand Street, as well as different workshops and skill-sharings empowering people to fight the system (No Borders Scotland, 2006). It has also fought destitution organising a housing solidarity network at the times where there were no alternatives for migrant homeless people (Pape, 9th December 2020). Over time, Unity has become a hub for migrant solidarity, support, and campaigning adapting to the different times. Activists from Unity mounted the first shelters for migrants in the city after Serco took over the housing contract (the Night Shelter in 2011 and Ubuntu Women Shelter in 2017). Although the initial trade union of asylum seekers is no longer active, different migrant-led groups have also flourished from there (Unity Sisters, LGBT Unity, Migrants Organising for Rights and Empowerment…). Unity and it networks would be a key social and political space shaping the struggles addressed in this thesis.

Barricades in the Home Office, 16/12/05 (Source: Indymedia UK)

The Unity Centre, 22/07/06 (Source: Indymedia UK)

One of the first victories of the union of asylum seekers was the struggle around a series of evictions related to demolition. As urban regeneration projects were being put into place by the Council and the GHA, asylum seekers in the Shawbridge and Ibrox areas started to receive letters informing they were going to be moved to the YMCA tower block hostel in Red Road. Red Road flats in the North-East of Glasgow were famous for being an urban jail, with a system of signing in and out and YMCA staff entering people's houses without previous notice (Spreading Unity, 2006). Fifteen families from the Union refused to move despite having money stopped and being threatened with eviction. Finally, the moves to YMCA were suspended for months, the Angel Group committed to accommodate families

within 3 miles of Ibrox with private landlords and YMCA was forced to change the way the hotel was run (Spreading Unity, 2006). Broadly, several struggles around demolition and 'secondary compulsory dispersal' (Piacentini, 2012) were staged in the following years, with new emergent tenants' unions that at times articulated the 'anti-privatization' question with the tenants' rights and the refugee rights questions. Many saw in the demolition plans an attempt to destroy the solidarities and community infrastructures developed from below in the previous years. Although lowering the previous hyper-visibility, demolition and privatization also has hindered organization, as it is not known where people are accommodated (Kim, 23rd November 2020). However, there are important legacies from those community struggles:

> 'Although it did destroy a lot of the brilliant bonds we created on the schemes, the legacy of it hasn't gone away, because the people remember the lessons, that we fought together and we won at that time, which is you stand up for yourselves, that you organize yourselves, you stand by your neighbours. So when we are going through this work now, when we're canvasing to do the No Evictions work, we're going in a context where there's a legacy in those communities. People have a folk memory of those resistances and what we did achieve. We did achieve a degree of grassroots-led social integration between Scottish people and the asylum/refugee communities. It did get partially destroyed by demolition, that's why I fought very strongly against it. So, in a way they weren't just demolishing buildings, they were demolishing the solidarity that we had built from below' (Graham Campbell, 26th February 2020).

Image of the Red Road Flats (Sighthill), demolished between 2012 and 2015. Source: The Herald

5.4.3.2. ‘We Will Rise’ and the Struggles Against the Dungavel Detention Centre

The last decade saw a new wave of struggles against deportations, with the focus placed in Dungavel detention centre. ‘We Will Rise’ emerged in 2015 as a migrant-led campaign to shut Dungavel, organising countless mobilisations to surround the centre and solidarity buses to show support on court dates and other detention centres across the UK and Ireland. Mobilisations made the Home Office announce the closure of the centre, consecutively announcing the opening of a detention facility in Glasgow Airport. A new campaign to ‘Stop Detention Scotland’ thwarted this plan, but the Home Office decided not to close Dungavel. Despite a bitter defeat, anti-deportation campaigning brought together people in mass meetings, built trust amongst ‘struggling communities’ (Arampatzi, 2017) and unleashed important debates on power dynamics. Although the campaigning group ended its activity for not being led by migrants anymore, the relationships building over this time will be crucial for bringing people together in the latter ‘No Evictions Campaign’ (Mike, 23rd October 2019).

‘Shut Down Dungavel’ demonstration, 7th May 2016
Source: We Will Rise

Albeit this section has focused on autonomous, neighbour and migrant-led forms of solidarity, over the years Glasgow has seen a massive development of a structure of third sector service organizations and NGOs dealing with asylum seekers, attracting the attention of academic literature on this field (Jones & Williamson, 2014; Wren, 2007; Mainwaring, et al., 2020; Sim & Bowes, 2007; Barclay, et al., 2003; Bowes, et al., 2009). Although due to the scope of this research there is no capacity to engage with these forms of humanitarian solidarities, a few things that existing accounts are missing should be highlighted. On the one hand, political struggle has been crucial for public funding becoming available. Hence, these forms of autonomous, civic, and institutional solidarity (Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen,

2018) were always interrelated. On the other, the development of a huge 'humanitarian industrial complex' in Glasgow (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020) has encouraged uneven relationships, relaxing radical politics and political solidarity having an impact in contemporary forms of migrant politics, a matter which will be subjected to discussion throughout the following chapters.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has contextualized the struggles staged within the 'No Evictions Campaign' in relation to the broader histories of hardship, solidarity, and organizing in the dispersal city. It firstly argued for the need of situating migration and asylum debates in relation to the contentious historical articulation of race politics in Britain and Scotland. While there is an extensive literature on race politics in England, the histories of antiracism in Scotland have been more difficult to trace, due to the longstanding construction of Scottishness as a 'non-racist' identity in opposition to Englishness. Secondly, the chapter unpacked the intrinsic spatial dimensions of the dispersal policy as a means of social exclusion and segregation, becoming a main pillar of the British asylum system since its integral reform by New Labour in 1999. The first and largest dispersal city, Glasgow is also shaped by histories of community and working-class organizing, which encouraged distinctive forms of solidarity politics and a particular articulation of migrant and housing struggles since the first arrivals of asylum-seeking communities. Nevertheless, I argued that these histories of community struggle remain largely hidden, with literature on asylum and dispersal in Glasgow strongly dominated by humanitarian and policy-focused frameworks. Through oral testimonies and archival material kept by campaigning groups and alternative media, the chapter has traced important trajectories of migrant and neighbours self-organized struggles, making a crucial contribution which fills an important gap in current work. The chapter discusses how Glasgow's collective memories of solidarity became reactivated by the 'No Evictions Campaign', uniting different trajectories of migrant organizing, asylum advocacy and support built upon the years. Without obscuring the histories of racism and the contentious character of the political, I addressed the ways solidarity has been productive of new political imaginaries and community politics incorporated to the identity of place. The following chapters will come back to many of the discussions raised here developing the empirical part of the thesis, analysing the multiple ways the struggles of the 'No Evictions Network' have been deeply shaped by – and are actively reshaping – Glasgow's political geographies of migration and community struggle.

CHAPTER 6
Resisting Evictions and Hotel Detention: The Solidarity Politics of the No Evictions Network

'One of the Most Vital Ways we Sustain Ourselves is by Building Communities of Resistance, Places Where we Know we are Not Alone' (bell hooks)

6.1. Introduction

This chapter commences the analytical body of the thesis, which attempts to contribute to ongoing debates on migrant solidarity politics and the geographies of the struggles against borders. I engage with the spatial politics of the No Evictions Network in Glasgow, which emerged in the context of a grassroots campaign to challenge the eviction of hundreds of asylum seekers by the multinational asylum accommodation contractor *Serco*. Following an introduction of the Network's campaigns in relation to the main grievances framing its struggles, the chapter positions housing as a key site of border struggle. In the age of everyday bordering (Yuval-Davis, et al., 2019), the policing of the quotidian spaces of migrant inhabitation constitutes a core gear in the working of contemporary border regimes and the political economies of present-day racial capitalism (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Darling, 2017). Nevertheless, racial and neoliberal borders are continually challenged from below through numerous examples of networked place-based solidarity articulations across the world (see examples in Walia, 2014; King, 2016 ; Anderson, et al., 2009; Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013; Nyers & Rygiel, 2012). Adding to ongoing debates on political movements theory and 'no borders' politics, this thesis engages with the politics of the No Evictions Network as such an example of resistance. This first analytical chapter navigates some of its organizational challenges and the political strategies staged at its core. Discussing the achievements and limitations of the coming together in solidarity of heterogeneous political cultures, the chapter delineates some crucial points that will be central to the discussion developed in the remaining chapters. Overall, the analysis of the Network's 'No Evictions' and 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaigns sheds light on central debates around the articulations of solidarity which are crucial for the left in the current political conjuncture.

Tracing the history of the 'No Evictions Campaign' brings us back to August 2018, when Serco – a multinational company awarded with a billion-worth contract to accommodate 17000 asylum seekers in the UK, 5000 of which were in Glasgow, Scotland

– announced the eviction of 300 asylum seekers that the company labelled as 'overstayers'. *Serco* – as a transnational company developing the role of a border guard — embodies the privatization and the ubiquity of the border, exposing how the outsourcing of the coercive powers of the state shapes new forms of racial policing while configuring a new niche for capitalist profit and neoliberal expansion (Gilmore, 2007). Serco's announcement of lock-change evictions provoked the immediate response of migrant organizations, unions, allied groups, different NGOs, and the community. On its earliest stage, the campaign took the shape of a series of spontaneous demonstrations against the evictions and the hunger strike of two Afghan men affected by them, alongside a legal challenge lodged by immigration lawyers questioning the lawfulness of the lock-changes (Ali vs Serco)[19]. The continuation of the conflict over time led to the formalization and aggrupation of these initial solidarities in what will be constitutive of the two main pillars of the 'No Evictions Campaign': On the one hand, the third sector organizations and the lawyers behind the legal case formed the Stop Lock Changes Evictions (SLCE) coalition – from now on, the Coalition –; on the other, and due to the lack of representation of people with lived experiences in this coalition, the No Evictions Network (NEN) – the Network – united migrant-led collectives, activist groups and the tenant's union *Living Rent* to organize a community political campaign on the ground. This political campaign achieved to stall most of the evictions and contributed to *Serco's* loss of the contract in January 2019[20].

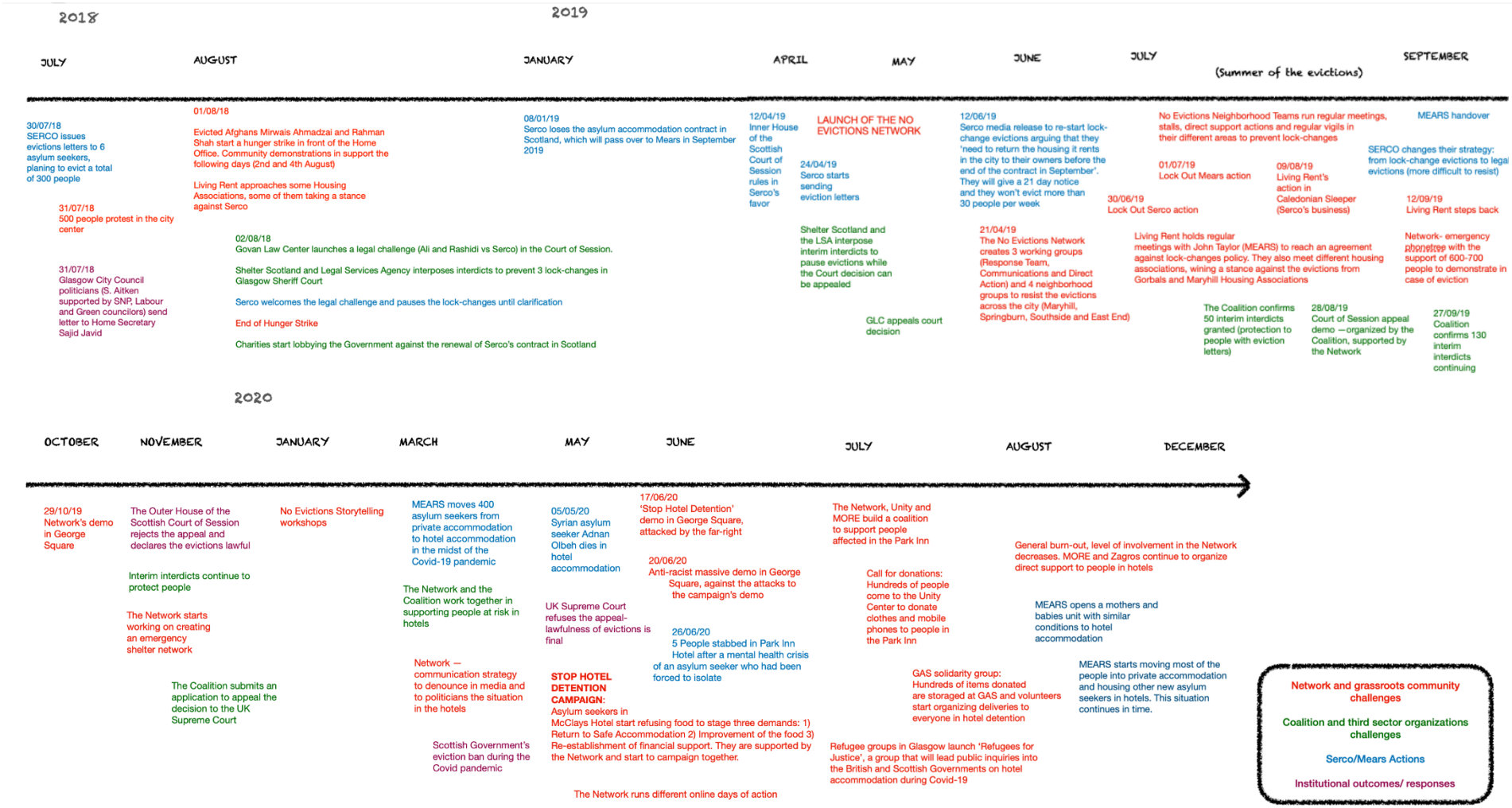
In the long term, these solidarities have materialised in formal and informal alliances and structures advocating for asylum seekers' housing rights in the city beyond the temporal and thematic limits of the struggles against the evictions. Evidence of this is the role developed by these organizations in the struggles around asylum seekers' rights during the Covid-19 pandemic, involved in a new campaign to 'Stop Hotel Detention' against the housing of asylum seekers in hotel-based accommodation. Questions of voice and power, autonomy or institutional engagement, and tensions between everyday direct support and campaigning have shaped the trajectories, cleavages, and ongoing challenges throughout the campaign. The table in the next page captures a whole timeline of the 'No Evictions' and 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaigns, addressing the role of the Network, the coalition, the housing contractors, and the different institutional actors through them.

[19] See Diagram 12 (Ali vs. Serco, the legal case against the evictions) in page 162.
[20] https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-46801589

'No Evictions Block' in Glasgow 2019 May Day, which joined Living Rent and migrant collectives forming the No Evictions Network. Source: Living Rent Glasgow

Engaging with these struggles, this chapter proceeds as follows: The first section unpacks the key role of housing within the political economies of the border regime from a perspective on Black Geographies and racial capitalism, interrogating the implications of this analysis for the articulation of solidarities. Building upon this, I explore the potentials and limitations of the coming together of migrant solidarity and housing struggles in the context of the 'No Evictions Campaign', tracing the ways different framings of the struggles and political cultures were negotiated, and how they shaped further campaigns and solidarities. The last part of the chapter situates the Network's struggles in relation to the politics of place, addressing the relationships between its strategies, the Scottish political frameworks, and the SNP's approach towards migration. Drawing on the campaign's experiences, I criticise some of the pitfalls of institutional strategies enclosing broader challenges to racial capitalism.

Table 5: Timeline of the 'No Evictions' and 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaigns



6.2. Housing as a Site of Border Struggle: Contesting Racial Capitalism from a Politics of Inhabitation

One of the outcomes of the urbanization of border regimes addressed in chapter 2 is the centrality of the spaces of migrant inhabitation within the processes of contemporary state bordering and disciplining (Dadusc, et al., 2019). The continuous struggle for a home criss-crosses the heterogeneous experiences of mobility, migration, and dispossession. Due to its centrality within these experiences, housing has become a central means of control and a border space. Indeed, this section engages with these struggles particularly from the perspective of recent shifts in border monitoring entailing the expansion of surveillance, bordering, and disciplining to the most intimate space of the home (Darling, 2011). Moreover, exploring the outsourcing of the provision of asylum accommodation in Britain to big companies such as Serco or Mears, I address the ways this state-led move of turning homes into border spaces opens new opportunities for neoliberal investment in the reproduction of contemporary forms of racial capitalism as defined in chapter 2 (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Gilmore R. W., 2007, 2022). The discussion explores how the production of the border space of the home relates to transnational flows of capital and a global system of postcolonial oppression. Finally, I develop the implications of this analysis for the articulation of solidarities, arguing that a comprehensive reading of the border allows situating the struggles of the 'No Evictions' and 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaigns in the intersection, contestation, and remaking of multiple regimes of power. Overall, the section draws attention to some of the key contributions that my engagement with the campaigns brings to the theoretical elaborations developed in chapters 2 and 3 and to the practice of migrant solidarity politics.

6.2.1. The Urban Border, Housing, and the Reproduction of Racial Capitalism

Chapter 2 addressed the de-localization of State borders in cities through the notion of the 'urban border'. Some of the literature engaging with the 'urban border' specifically focuses on housing as a key site of border control. Darling (2011: 263) explores how accommodation 'acts to discipline asylum seekers and to reinsert modes of arbitrary sovereign' in the British asylum housing regime. Hence, rather than a 'safe space', the home becomes a source of insecurity and control. It shapes everyday migrant experiences of spatial confinement and surveillance, expanding black carceral geographies beyond the physical and symbolic spaces of the detention centre and analogous explicit 'prisonizing' landscapes to everyday urban landscapes (Shabazz, 2015). Broadly, critical scholarship has denounced

the central role of institutional accommodation within the biopolitics of migration. While this work has been able to move beyond the experiences of control, foregrounding how migrants reshape cities (Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016; Darling, 2021) or suggesting a radical politics of inhabitation (Dadusc, et al., 2019; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021), what has been less explored in literature is the intersection of migrant institutional accommodation, the city, and the reproduction of racial capitalism. Here, there is a pressing need to foreground the increasing economic interests shaping the outsourcing of institutional accommodation to companies and private agencies participating in the contemporary global migration business and security markets. Ranging from humanitarian actors – e.g. Y-People or Migrant Help – to multinational companies overtly involved in the global security and military markets – e.g. Serco or G4S –, these private actors result from the neoliberalization of state functions, the privatization of social reproduction, and the need to seek niches of capitalist expansion.

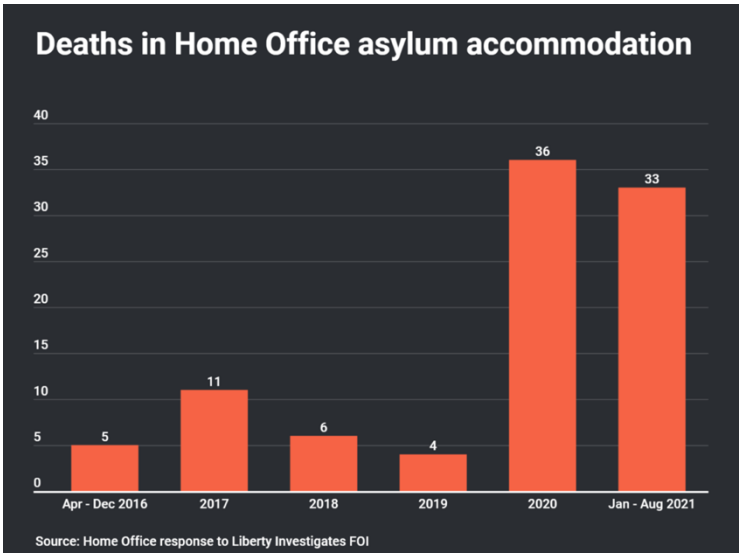
The theoretical framework of this thesis explored how a focus on racial capitalism allows unpacking how the urban border and the political economies of securitization intersect in multiple and various ways. It scrutinized some of the ways the expansion and re-localization of the border into 'domestic spaces' creates new opportunities for capitalist expansion through the outsourcing of border control. Notwithstanding, while the academic focus has mainly been put on the business of migrant detention – with multinational companies like G4S running the biggest detention centres in the UK and the US – the role of housing within the profitability of borders has been less explored. In this extent, the UK has been pioneer in the massive privatization of accommodation services in Europe (Alonso & Andrews, 2020, 2021). As traced in chapter 5, the policy of dispersal of asylum accommodation was subjected to a progressive privatization since its inception, fully completed in 2012. In Scotland, the chapter examined how this process involved different companies, from the initial Christian charity Y-People to the outsourcing giant Serco and more recently the Mears Group.

6.2.2. Who are Serco and Mears? Why Do they Have the Power to Evict Asylum Seekers?

The struggles of the 'No Evictions Campaign' emerged through organizing resistance against Serco, the multinational company that between 2012 and 2019 held the billion-pound contract from the Home Office to accommodate asylum seekers in Scotland. The campaign prevented the lock-change evictions of over 300 people that the company pointed out as 'overstaying' in the UK in an implicit exercise of outsourced coercive powers,

evidencing how the Home Office contractors not only provide 'asylum services' but develop a key role in the policing and monitoring of the border. Mears took over the contract few months prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, a conjuncture that led to a new campaign to 'Stop Hotel Detention' following Mears' silent removal of over 400 people from their private accommodations to hotels in the city centre without right to self-isolate in the midst of a housing crisis. The outsourcing and neoliberalization of migration management and its consequences has been explored in the literature (Grayson, 2016; Arbogast, 2016). In their profitable role, Serco, Mears, and the other Home Office contractors are directly involved in the production of 'premature death' of asylum-seeking populations as an outcome of their entrepreneurial activity. Ninety-five people have died in Home Office asylum accommodation in the past 5 years (Liberty Investigates, 24/10/21)[21]:

Diagram 9: Deaths in Home Office Asylum Accommodation (2016-2021)



Bringing back Gilmore's (2007: 247) definition of racism as the 'state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death', the outsourcing of asylum accommodation to private companies, the violation of migrants' and asylum seekers' right to a home, and the transformation of a human right into a means of racialized exclusion, control, and profit need to be analyzed from a lens that foregrounds the ways the neoliberalized border enables both the perpetuation of geographies of racial domination and capitalist reproduction. Both Serco and Mears are companies that

[21] https://libertyinvestigates.org.uk/articles/95-died-in-asylum-seeker-accommodation-in-five-years-amid-fears-home-office-downplayed-toll/
See also: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jul/25/more-than-50-died-in-home-office-asylum-seeker-accommodation-in-last-five-years

have grown from the privatization of public services and the eruption of neoliberal forms of governance and corporate-state management[22]. The origin of their expansion is found in the privatization waves of the 1980s. Serco works for 20 governments world-wide, including the UK and other countries across Europe, USA, the Middle East, and the Asia Pacific region. While 40% of its businesses are based in the UK, one of its biggest contracts consists in running the 11 Australian immigration centres, largely documented as deadly spaces of violence, brutality, beatings, and suicides (Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013). In the UK, in addition to regional asylum accommodation contracts that the company keeps holding in several parts of England, Serco runs the biggest immigration detention centre in Yarls-Wood and other six prisons across the country. While Serco develops public services in five areas ('defence', 'justice and immigration', 'health', 'transport' and 'citizen services'), 30% of its profits are associated to the military business. Despite being hit by the post-2008 austerity in military spending, the company keeps an annual revenue of £3 billion (Corporate Watch, 28th June 2018). Hence, Serco's profits settle upon the intersection of securitization agendas, the racial violence implicit on them, and the progressive neoliberalization of state functions as a way to secure capitalist expansion. In this way, Serco embodies the intersections between what Gilmore (2007) calls the 'prison industrial complex' and the 'immigration industrial complex' (Golash-Boza, 2009) in the reproduction of capital flows that feed from a system of racial exclusion. In this system, I am demonstrating that housing and accommodation services play an increasingly central role. The fact that institutional accommodation and immigration detention centres are run by the same companies evidence the existing links between the two in delimiting the carceral geographies of the UK border and the ways asylum seekers' lives and situation become subjected to capitalist interests.

Unlike Serco or G4S, which are overtly part of a transnational capitalist oligarchy, Mears flourished on the ground of the local governments' privatization of social housing, becoming one of the biggest maintenances and repairs contractors in the UK, working on the 14% of the country's social housing (Corporate Watch, 10th June 2020). Mears has been an active agent of urban regeneration projects across the UK –and not surprisingly a target of neighbourhood anti-gentrification campaigns in some areas of London[23]. Before embarking in the business of asylum accommodation provision, awarded with a 1.15 billion ten-years contract, the company had already expanded their commercial activity into the

[22] Data here draws on sources produced by Corporate Watch's research, which counts with the collaboration of activists and academics committed to the dismantling of the UK Border Regime.

[23] https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/england-residents-wins-60-rent-reduction-after-council-ends-difficult-relationship-with-mears

social care area through the provision of services to 15000 old and disabled people. Mears Group makes roughly £900 million benefits a year, with all its revenues coming from the public sector. In addition to multiple scandals hitting both companies, they are infamous for the exploitation of their workers, with Mears loosing 42% of their staff in 2017 due to extreme low rates of pay. Again, links between neoliberalization, the crisis of deindustrialization, and the expansion of outsourcing companies is clear. The housing crisis was indeed one of the main outcomes of Thatcherism and privatization policies in Britain. The shape that asylum accommodation contracts take in the UK – and its pioneering role – is not casual. Due to the size of this problematic, Serco, Mears, and other contractors have become targets of different campaigns organized by tenants, prison abolitionist movements, migrant and asylum rights advocators, and other grassroots groups in different places across the UK and elsewhere. The 'No Evictions Campaign' in Glasgow brought together these fights in a conflict which exposed the intersections between different struggles against racial capitalism.

6.2.3. Asylum Accommodation and Housing Crisis in Glasgow

Despite successively pursuing to renew their contract, Serco or G4S have largely complained of the asylum accommodation endeavour as a 'loss-making contract'. Indeed, numbers reveal this business is not as profitable as others like immigration detention – where companies exploit detainees labour force on a daily basis. This is a consequence of the ongoing housing crisis hitting contemporary forms of capitalism and urban entrepreneurialism, where urban spaces have become main terrains to secure capitalist reproduction and 'accumulation by dispossession' processes (Harvey, 2003). While in its inception the dispersal policy allowed the Glasgow City Council making money from spaces deemed 'useless' and 'valueless', the conjuncture has radically changed a few decades later when 'urban regeneration projects' have been put in place to revalue post-industrial areas and destroy the surplus of housing left in there. Albeit responding to a global trend, Gray (2018) notes that the scale of the privatization and commodification of former social housing in Glasgow largely exceeds other cities in the UK, which links to its industrial past. With increasing rents and a lack of public and affordable housing, the Home Office contractors are struggling to find places to maintain the financial benefits of the initial dispersal policy. While this policy was very profitable in its inception, private contractors are increasingly resorting to forms of accommodation different to individual family houses. This has already been put in place in Ireland, where the existing housing crisis powered the implementation of more profitable alternatives such as 'direct provision accommodation centres' (O'Reilly,

2018), which Home Office private contractors are starting to replicate in Glasgow and other places of the UK in the forms of 'hotel accommodation' or other migrant camps.

Indeed, the pandemic has outrightly exposed many of these problems, when Mears – and the other contractors across the UK – dealt with the housing crisis signing contracts with several hotels across the city as a means to secure profits and face the reduction of the lettings available. Other pandemic spaces of migrant contention to avoid the housing of migrants in the city include military camps – e.g. the Napier Barracks in Kent – directly used by the Home Office under the pretext of the 'crisis'. Central to shifts in borders policing, the narrative of 'crisis' allows a restructuring of the organization of power (Hall, et al., 2013 [1978]). Dreams of an Australian way of migration system and remote islands to house asylum seekers – a system that builds upon the longer histories of the 'white Australia policy' between 1901 and 1973 – respond to the convergence of multiple interests in which economic profits and racial exclusion again operate transversally.

6.2.4. What are the Implications of these Analyses for the Articulations of Solidarity and the Understanding of the Struggles of the No Evictions Network?

A focus on racial capitalism brings attention to the ways neoliberalism, racism, and capitalist reproduction intersect in the configuration of border regimes. This entails linking struggles against the imposition of barriers to the freedom of movement to broader anticapitalist and antiracist agendas. As chapters 2 and 3 have addressed, black feminist writings on solidarity set the ground for a political theory and practice that understands struggles against borders and racism as particularly embedded in wider struggles against oppression (hooks, 2013; Mohanty, 2003). On the one hand, this has several implications for the organization of solidarities, unpacking the common ground that unites heterogenous and differently positioned political subjects. Engaging with the political economies of the conflict behind the evictions reveals the mutually constitutive position of tenants' and migrants', both facing the consequences of a neoliberal crisis where property speculation, housing privatization, and lack of access to affordable living shapes everyday struggles for survival of the working classes. Serco and Mears become common enemies with a powerful position in the housing market that arises from the neoliberalization of the state and the privatization of basic rights. Nevertheless, a focus on racial capitalism furthers the understanding of this mutuality from a perspective that acknowledges the uneven geographies that shape the differential impact that capitalism has over racialized, classed, and gendered subjects, and inquires the ways racial oppression operates enabling capitalist

reproduction. In such direction, it not only unpacks how urban entrepreneurial strategies are intrinsically racialized displacing and segregating communities in cities (Pulido, 2017), but also how the housing market particularly intersects with the business of the border and the making of profit through the exploitation of racialized migrants worldwide.

Hence, racial capitalism potentially draws attention to the overlapping spatial scales through which racism operates and the ways it is embedded in wider political and economic relations. When migrants, neighbors, unions, and community groups fight Serco in Glasgow, they are challenging a multinational company whose bulk of revenues comes from the political economies of the war and the military and security markets. In the previous lines I have addressed Serco as a powerful actor within the global neoliberal economy. With a global scope of action and strongly involved in the neoliberal outsourcing of Western State's borders, 'security', and 'defense' functions, Serco is directly involved in the reproduction different forms of postcolonial capitalist oppression. Despite its different scope of action, *Mears* is also making its place in the British social and housing sector benefiting from the neoliberalization of these markets. Hence, a comprehensive understanding of the struggles against Serco and Mears cannot be separated neither from anticapitalist agendas nor from the struggles against borders and their racial dimension. The political geographies of these struggles entail that place-based articulations of solidarity in specific contentious conjunctures are not bounded in particular causes, places, and organizations. Rather, they should be understood as constitutive of different trajectories of anticapitalist and antiracist dissensus (Featherstone, 2012).

Finally, the assertion of migrant politics of inhabitation from a focus on racial capitalism unpacks the contentious and distinctive character of the struggles around housing in contemporary politics of mobility. Housing appears as a key terrain where tensions between humanitarianism, state control, and autonomy are negotiated. I have demonstrated how the production of institutional accommodation as a particular space of border control involves the outsourcing of housing and migrant services to actors that range from the humanitarian sector to capitalist companies overtly involved in global security markets. This combination of the outsourcing of 'softer' and 'tougher' State forms of power turns institutional accommodation as a key technology of discipline and control against forms of autonomous politics of inhabitation (Dadusc, et al., 2019). This raises particular dilemmas in terms of agency, solidarity, and the organization of these struggles. Firstly, being part of the system and 'behaving well' is portrayed as a necessary step to get papers. Secondly, the scope of the implication of humanitarian actors in service provision, their position as asylum-

right advocators, and the dependency that many migrants have from these services make the articulation of autonomous politics more difficult, as discussed by the end of the chapter. These circumstances mean that the consequences of challenging Serco or Mears are different for people without papers and no resource to public funds than to those with status. This difference, as will be explored throughout the thesis, has an important effect on the political strategies and the ways of organizing resistance and negotiating difference.

Building upon the previous contributions, the rest of the chapter explores the relations between the Network and racial capitalism. It examines some of the ways the struggles of the campaign are situated in the intersection of multiple axis of resistance, focusing on the contentious processes of organizing and strategizing. The argument explores how the common grounds between the heterogeneity of subjects composing the Network and the campaign was negotiated, addressing the main challenges, achievements, tensions, and limitations encountered along the way.

6.3. The No Evictions Network and the Coming Together of Migrant and Housing Struggles in Glasgow: Challenges, Potentials, and Limitations

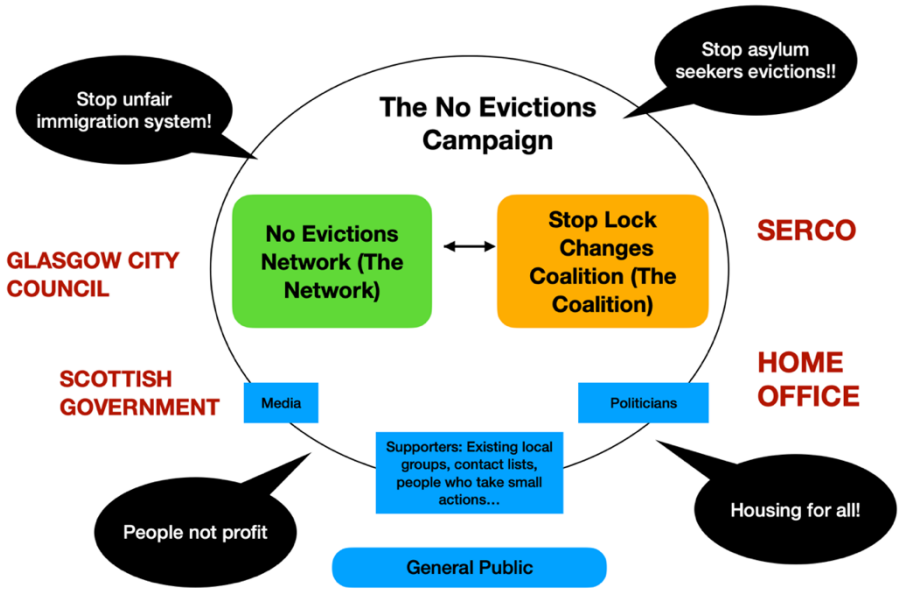
6.3.1. Mapping the Network

Coming back to the beginning of this chapter, the No Evictions Network was formed in the context of the 'No Evictions Campaign'. A campaign is a public initiative organized and sustained with the aim of raising collective demands to particular authorities (Tarrow, 2012). The 'No Evictions Campaign' broke out demanding an end to asylum seekers' evictions by the Home Office housing contractor Serco and entailed the strategic alliance of the No Evictions Network and the Stop Lock Changes Coalition. While the Network joined migrant-led collectives, the tenant's union Living Rent, ordinary neighbors, and other active political groups in the city; the Coalition brought together a group of third sector organizations and immigration lawyers committed to work together to prevent the evictions[24]. The relationships between these two were crucial in shaping the politics of the

[24] The SLCC was formed by a good number of third sector organizations working with asylum seekers in Glasgow (Scottish Refugee Council, Shelter Scotland, Govan Community Project, Asylum Seekers Housing Project, Community Infosource, British Red Cross, Justright Scotland, Network for social change) and immigration lawyers (Govan Law Centre, Legal Services Agency, Latta & Co). For more information, see 'A site of Resistance: An evaluation of the Stop Lock Change Evictions Coalition. January 2020' in the following link: https://assets.ctfassets.net/6sqqfrl11sfj/4eqvfFLZhJMLDOSK05HnT5/a80fae5b1288252e1afc9477279c1447/A_Site_of_Resistance_Report.pdf

campaign, yet this research focuses on the Network. The following diagram traces a map of the campaign, including some of its key demands and the authorities to whom they were addressed[25]:

Diagram 10: Map of the No Evictions Campaign



With more than two years of history at the moment of writing, the Network has gone through different political moments, meaning important shifts in its internal composition, dynamics, strategies, and organizational structure. For this reason, and due to the heterogeneity of individuals and collectives that have been involved over time and their overlapping political spaces, mapping the Network is not an easy task. The 'internal map' comprises not only the groups and individuals involved but also the resulting formal and informal organization constitutive of the Network.

The Network emerged in the early months of 2019 as an attempt to give shape to the convergence of different groups that had been involved in organizing resistance to the evictions on the ground beyond the charity sector in 2018 – mainly the tenant's union Living Rent and several groups in the sphere of the Unity Centre. In the big picture, this represented the coming together of housing struggles and migrant-solidarity struggles in the city. The Network operated as an organizational structure connecting different collectives and struggles in a social and a political space where this heterogeneity converged and was negotiated (Featherstone, 2003). As analyzed in chapter 5, this coming together had

[25] This diagram draws on one elaborated by activists of the Network in a workshop on campaigning organized by the No Evictions Southside Group in August 2019 (Fieldwork Diary, August 2019).

important precedents in the histories of Glasgow, where during the 2000s tenant's unions and migrants struggled together in solidarity in postindustrial dispersal areas like Sighthill or Drumchapel, with this unity being inspired by those historical memories (Narotzky, 2014).

On the one hand, Living Rent is Scotland's tenant's union. They are 'a democratic organization run by and for our members', they 'organize and represent' their members in the 'private and social rented sector' and 'fight for safe, secure and affordable housing for everyone' (Living Rent Scotland, 2020). Organizationally, they operate as a classic union, with territorial branches and elected committees. As tenants, they are not organized through workplaces, but rather through neighborhoods. Their policy is periodically decided by all members in general assembly following a model based on forms of democratic centralism. They have a strong presence in the political space of the city, with active participation of young, middle-class, mostly European students. Although the union has achieved to build strong branches in working-class neighborhoods, the representation of BAME communities amongst its members remains minoritarian. They have no explicit political affiliation, uniting people from different positions across the political left.

Living Rent members. Source: Living Rent Glasgow

On the other hand, migrant-led and migrant-solidarity activist groups were organized around the *Unity Centre* and drew on some of the histories of migrant organizing addressed in chapter 5. Although heterogeneous, they inherit of some of the principles guiding the organization of 'No Borders' movements from the beginning of the Century – horizontalism, consensus-based decisions, prefiguration as a way to challenge borders, etc. Sharing an abolitionist ideology, these groups pushed forward what Harsha Walia (2013) conceptualizes as 'antiauthoritarian leadership', a form of leadership that integrates anti-oppression analysis and prioritizes the opinions of 'people with lived experiences of the

asylum system'. The strongest presence from this background was the Unity Sisters – a group of women and mothers going through the asylum system – and MORE (Migrants Organizing for Rights and Empowerment) – a group campaigning for asylum seekers' right to work and access to education.

Unity Centre, Unity Sisters, and MORE logos

The negotiation of these two main models of organizing – unfree from controversies –, alongside the sharing of information amongst participants and their diverse political cultures, was constitutive of the first configurations of the Network. Living Rent brought massive numbers of students involved, a political knowledge of neighborhood organizing and action, and key contacts with media and politicians. On the other side, Unity brought many people with lived experiences, as well as trust and proximity to people affected by the evictions and years of experience of their activists doing non-charitable casework support. Through its action, the Network started to involve many people beyond the aforementioned groups. The creation of 'Neighborhood Groups' to organize resistance to the evictions in areas where Serco had accommodation stock (Maryhill, Springburn, East End, and Southside) achieved to involve asylum seekers and working-class communities from the dispersal areas. This neighborhood strategy was the clearest example of the powerful combination of Living Rent's and migrant-solidarity collectives' knowledges and experiences. In their areas, the Network's neighborhood groups articulated strong spatial politics of presence, both extraordinary – in the form of protests or solidarity vigils, for example – and ordinary – through regular stalls in the street informing neighbors about the evictions and inviting them to join the Network. They mapped the strategical sites to reach asylum seekers that might be affected by the evictions in across the neighborhood, visiting places such as community centers, local churches, or halal shops. Although the Network sometimes struggled to actively involve people with eviction letters, since the beginning it counted with the participation of people living in Serco accommodation, as Katy reckons in this quote:

‘There wasn’t a huge number of people in the Network who were facing eviction imminently, but there was a lot of people who had been through the asylum system or were still in the asylum system…’ (Katy, 30th September 2020).

Springburn neighbourhood group’s street stall poster. Source: No Evictions Network

Poster pasted by the No Evictions Neighbourhood Groups across the dispersal areas. Source: No Evictions Network.

Anti-eviction solidarity vigil in Maryhill, 25/06/19. Source: No Evictions Network

Coming from different communities in Africa, Middle East, South Asia, and Eastern Europe, people ‘with lived experiences of the asylum system’ – as they were referred to within the spaces of the Network – came from very heterogeneous political cultures. Some of them were politically organized around spaces like Unity or GAS (Glasgow Autonomous Space), while others got involved in the Network because they were Serco’s tenants going through the hardships of the British Asylum system. Their experiences prior to the arrival to Scotland were also heterogeneous. While some of them got involved in community spaces through the experience of navigating the system, others had strong political trajectories in

their countries of origin. These trajectories have been difficult to trace in my research since people were generally cautious when speaking about them in interviews and the formal spaces of the Network. In this sense, many of the stories of political organizing I got to know were confidential and came from strong bonds of friendship and trust. Consistent with my methodology, I have avoided mentioning personal information shared with me beyond the spaces of the interview or the public meetings, except those cases where I was given explicit consent.

Those 'without lived experiences of the asylum system' also presented very diverse political backgrounds and origins. While the neighborhood groups counted with more involvement of Scottish people, a good number of the key activist in the Network came from different points in the North of England, and there was also a small presence of European students and young workers. My interviews reveal that the drivers bringing people to the Network were also heterogeneous. Some of them were shaped by previous experiences of organizing with migrant-solidarity movements in Calais, Greece, or London; there was people coming from queer and LGTBQ+ movements; others were more linked to the Labor Party or the labor movement; while people involved in the neighborhood groups was often inspired by the community struggles narrated in chapter 5 and were situated in different positions across the independentist Scottish left. Age was also a fundamental factor when coming to analyze the political experiences shaping people's political cultures. Whereas people in their 30s mentioned the student occupations of the last decades as key moments in their political trajectory, older people alluded to the anti-war and anti-globalization movement as well as to a bunch of community struggles such as the 'poll tax' struggles, the 'Govanhill Baths' in Glasgow, or the antifascist movement in England. Finally, younger people – often University students – mostly came from environmental and LGTBiQ+ movements, shaken by the events around the 2015 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe. All these diverse trajectories of organizing shaped the politics of the Network in multiple ways, becoming a space of negotiation of very different political cultures, imaginaries, and geographies (Featherstone, 2003; Routledge, 2003). In this way, the Network operated not only a key formal and informal structure connecting struggles but also spaces, since activists and migrants shared links with many struggles elsewhere –in countries of origin, points of transit, and other activist hubs across the UK and Europe.

The launch of the 'Stop Hotel Detention Campaign' during the pandemic changed the internal composition of the Network. New people got involved, the Network renovated its alliances and established close contacts with a group of people organized within the hotels

and other migrant-led groups such as the Kurdish-Scottish association Zagros or the recently created refugee-based group Refugees for Justice. People organized in the hotels were coming mostly from different points in the Middle East, many of them with Kurdish background and others with strong political trajectories in countries like Syria or Iran. Inspired by previous political experiences, they were autonomously organized and often sought the support of the Network for their actions. This differed from the experience during the 'No Evictions Campaign', where the Network struggled be led and include people directly affected by the evictions. Chapter 7 addresses these aspects, exploring how these shifts in power dynamics were also the result of an ongoing collective process of solidarity making.

End Hotel Detention Campaign's banner, 29/06/20

Overall, the negotiation of this heterogeneity – political background, affiliation, origins, cultures, and positionalities in the struggles – was a contentious and a learning process. While chapter 7 focuses on the intersubjective dimensions of the making of these solidarities, this chapter traces the organizational and strategizing outcomes of this process. In so doing, the rest of the section particularly draws attention to how the coming together of migrant and housing struggles involved the negotiation of different models of left-wing organizing and divergent understandings of the struggles against Serco and Mears. I particularly interrogate what a focus on racial capitalism could potentially bring to these discussions.

6.3.2. 'Housing for All' or 'Amnesty for All'? The Limitations of Fragmented Understandings of the Struggles Against Racial Capitalism

A central challenge for the Network was negotiating the divergent understandings of the struggles against the evictions between the different groups involved. The framing of the

struggles entails the construction of collective meanings and symbols (Tarrow, 2012) and the corresponding production of collective identities defining 'who we are', 'who are them' and 'where are the boundaries' (Melucci & Lyyra, 1998). The crafting of solidarities and alliances between different groups and political projects entails a process of 'aligning frames', which is often contentious, contradictory, and traversed by relationships of power and different geographical imaginaries.

Hence, the groups involved in the Network framed the struggles in diverse ways. For the tenants' union Living Rent, the central element of the struggle was housing, and the political subject was collectively embodied by the neighbors of Glasgow. From a trade-unionist tradition, their discourse equated the position of asylum seekers to that of other tenants standing in solidarity. The main enemy was Serco and the complicit Housing Associations operating in the background of the neoliberalization of public housing. Nevertheless, Living Rent barely engaged in their discourses and public communications with the role that Serco was developing as an agent within the immigration system (Fieldwork Diary, September 2019). Through equating the position of migrants to other tenants, their framing inspired a powerful notion of community based on its neighbors' relations of equality and belonging regardless their status. However, this equation sometimes missed the particular oppressions that people affected by the evictions were suffering due to their status as asylum seekers. In this regard, I argue that Living Rent's focus on housing sometimes invisibilized the racial element present in the struggles of the campaign and in Serco's and Mears entrepreneurial activities. This had important consequences in the processes of organizing and strategizing, and shaped key debates within the Network which in the end led the Union to step back from the campaign in September 2019.

Living Rent's framing was contested in several ways by some migrants in the Network. One of the asylum seekers involved in the hunger strikes in front of the Home Office in August 2018 told me in an interview:

> 'I always said to No Evictions that Serco wasn't the big problem, the big problem is the Home Office. The Home Office pays Serco and gives them right to evict us. That's why I was on a hunger strike in front of the Home Office, not Serco's offices' (Bilal, 9th December 2019).

In this quote, Bilal was pointing to a different direction: the conflict around the evictions was a matter of border violence and a deadly immigration system that he had been navigating for 14 years. When we spoke, we were sitting in the floor of a new flat he got

after being evicted four months ago. He told me this was the third time Serco had evicted him and that he had gone through two deportation attempts by the Home Office, the last one ending up in hospital due to a heart attack. Through our conversation, he insisted: 'the no evictions campaign is against Serco, but this doesn't make sense. The main direction should be the Home Office, not Serco… I have gone to many meetings to explain this to them, but they are still behind Serco'.

This last quote not only reflects key points of discrepancy in the process of aligning frames, but it also raises important questions around who was driving the campaign against the evictions forward. Indeed, during the 'summer of the evictions'[26], power dynamics often privileged a frame in which Serco was the main target and housing the main issue. Without dismissing the relevance of housing precarity – which affected them directly – for migrant collectives the central issue and source of oppression was the immigration system, and the key enemy was the Home Office. For them, the main demand was not 'housing for all' but rather 'amnesty for all'. Hence, the root of the problem were not the evictions, but the way evictions were performing a bordering practice. People were not only worried about being left in the street, but mainly about the border enforcement policies involved in this action and the threats of deportation and detention involved in their further development. However, Bilal's focus on the Home Office is also problematic insofar it portrays a nationed vision of the struggles that overlooks the role of Serco as an active agent shaping the political economies of the border.

The geographies through which these different frames were envisioned became reflected in the spatial politics of the Network. Indeed, the spaces chosen by the Network for its protests illustrate the different targets of the campaign. On the one hand, the Home Office was the core site for migrants to express dissent, meaning the symbolic appropriation of the hub of migrant control and surveillance in Glasgow, where all asylum seekers were compelled to report periodically. As a referent point in the Black Geographies of the border in Glasgow, the Home Office is a historical site of migrant struggle, with the Unity Centre situated only situated two streets away. On the other hand, protests led by Living Rent directly targeted Serco and Mears in actions such as the 'Lock Out Serco' and 'Lock Out Mears' demonstrations, where activists sought to evict the companies from their own offices in the summer of 2019.

[26] See Table 5 in page 129 for a whole timeline of the campaign.

Living Rent's 'Lock out Serco' and 'Lock out Mears' actions, in Serco's and Mears' offices (July and August 2019)

Asylum seekers in hunger strike in front of the Home Office, supported by no evictions campaigners, 04/08/18. Source: inews

Overall, both positions constitute partial readings of the conflict that could potentially be fulfilled through a deeper engagement with the complexities of racial capitalism and the contributions I am bringing through this discussion. While Living Rent, in line with the sectorial intervention characterizing the union, struggled to expand their struggles to those against the immigration system, migrant-solidarity collectives sometimes focused too much on the Home Office and State power de-centering their broader critique of capitalism and the role of *Serco*. This is reflected in Bilal's narrative when he claims, 'if we had a problem with Serco, we would have done the hunger strike in front of Serco'. The limitations of this approach also enclosed the scope of the struggles against hotel detention, which did not address 'hotel detention' in the context of Glasgow's housing crisis and its racialized outcomes. Nevertheless, Bilal's one was not the only position and, very often, people coming from war countries were quite aware of the deeds of Serco in the global security markets. For instance, Keza, from Rwanda, showed a strong anticapitalist position in our interview explaining me the role that Serco and other British capitalist companies were developing in her country, tracing links to their colonial history and the ways global capitalism works[27]. She told me how this shaped the political conflicts affecting her own

[27] Since Keza preferred not to record our interview, this information comes from my own notes.

mobilities and trajectories of struggle. This narrative is very important and generative of a common ground that foregrounds how Serco is part of a transnational oligarchy shaping global geopolitics. Living Rent activists' positions were also heterogeneous and many of them moved beyond housing throughout political debates and exchanges in the Network. Hence, rather than a 'color-blind equality' between asylum seekers and other tenants or a bounded analysis where the target is limited to particular State or economic actors, a common analytical ground may need to unpack the role of Serco and Mears within the political economies of global capitalism, their reproduction of overlapping systems of oppression, and the need to organize together against them. I argue that this brings key contributions not only to present-day articulations of migrant solidarity but wider forms of left-wing politics.

6.3.3. The Negotiation of Different Models of Left-Wing Organizing

In addition to the difficult process of 'aligning frames', the Network entailed the assemblage of different models of left-wing organizing. Although this was a contentious process, the Network's biggest successes and challenges are linked to the bringing together of radically different ways of organizing and understanding politics. Living Rent's unionism drew on a vertical structure, based on impersonal relationships amongst their members who shared a commitment with the general policy and mandates of the Union. Contrarily, migrant-led and migrant-solidarity groups advocated for a flat organization, with a more informalized structure of tasks and skills-sharing based on personal relationships of friendship and trust. Negotiating these differences was a contentious process shaping key debates, which underlies most of the discussions and internal processes within the Network. Seen in this way, organization emerges as a progressive process of collective learning, mutual exchange, and ongoing efforts to balance different political perspectives.

A first fundamental political difference referred to the ways these organizations envisioned the position of the people affected within the organization of resistance to the evictions. While Living Rent was committed to take action within their own structures and on behalf of the people affected, migrant-solidarity groups centered the relevance of organizing alongside people with lived experiences and listen to their voices. This is illustrated in this quote from an interview with Liam, member of Living Rent:

> 'Living Rent was amazing that they step into the moment to say we are going to run this campaign and they did it… we are going to organize ordinary tenants across

> Glasgow and its different neighborhoods to come out and stop the evictions… but we are not necessarily gonna try to work directly with people in the immigration system. If they wanna come forward and they want to get involved… great. But we won't necessarily work with them' (Liam, 23rd October 2019).

Criticizing the exclusions implicit in Living Rent's stance, Delyse, a refugee member of the Network, wonders in our interview 'how can you organize to say something that is happening to me is bad when I'm here and I am not involved in that?' (Delyse, 3rd September 2020). This discrepancy had very important implications for the process of strategizing and the political actions undertaken within the campaign, reflecting very different approaches to solidarity. It is precisely here where the difference between 'standing with' and 'standing for' relies, which for Paulo Freire (1968) draws the line between freedom and oppression. This difference exposes exclusionary and privileged ways of solidarity-making (Swerts, 2018). The exclusion of asylum voices in Living Rent's position closely relates to the erasure of questions of border violence in their framings and the equation from a color-blind stance the position of tenants and migrants. They did not address how the position of asylum seekers was crisscrossed by different oppressions in their situation of housing precarity and the ways 'acting on behalf of migrants' contributes to the reproduction of racial oppressions. As Chapters 2 and 3 have addressed, this has been a fundamental question explored in recent literature on migrant solidarity, which has problematized in-depth the relationships between migrants and those standing in solidarity with them from different perspectives (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Swerts, 2015; Swerts & Nicholls, 2021). In chapter 7, I elaborate this question way further, drawing attention to the racialized, classed, and gendered power dynamics underlying these different approaches to solidarity.

On the other hand, there were also implicit discrepancies around the meanings of political organizing. The tenant's union drew on a classic notion of what politics were and had a very clear structure of the different steps involved in organizing a political campaign – targeting the enemy, planning actions, assigning roles, mobilizing support, communicating with media and politicians, etc. 'Political discipline' and 'efficacy' were the key outcomes of their political organization:

> 'Living Rent brought discipline… actions were very disciplined. The organizing of Living Rent is about discipline: be at this point, meeting for this long, we are going to do this at the meeting, we are going to be sit in that part of the room doing phonebanking and in that part writing a statement and demands, we are going to plan a demonstration, we are going to wear a kind of uniform… everybody it's gonna know what their role is on the day and stuff… that's where Living Rent really brought

a lot to the campaign that was being done. We needed to know what our targets are, and we need to do it right with this action' (Liam, 23rd October, 2019).

This exposes a way of organizing which clashed with many of the principles and practices of migrant-solidarity groups. Feminist and black movements have been longer challenging this narrow and formal account of the political present in some forms of traditional left-wing organizing. Hence, as I will explore in chapter 8, for migrant groups political organizing was deeply linked to questions of social reproduction. According to their position, in order to build power, one needs to build community and develop a number of tasks not traditionally considered political. For them, meetings needed to be more flexible and less structured, leaving more space for people to raise their voice, share their views and empower themselves beyond fixed agendas and shifts of word. In such way, the notion of discipline portrayed in this quote silenced many voices at the expense of political efficacy and the pre-established idea of 'what should be done' in order to organize a political campaign. Chapter 8 critically explores how this definition of the political reproduces patriarchal and racialized political imaginaries marginalizing care and social reproductive politics. Despite some of the previous problematics – many of which became collectively reworked –, Living Rent's contribution gave the movement a powerful organizational basis, a political structure, and campaigning knowledges that are often missed in anti-authoritarian forms of community politics and which enriched the political experience of migrant collectives in this regard. Indeed, these important contributions allowed the Network to be strongly responsive to the continuous challenges and critical moments throughout the campaign.

Different aesthetics in Living Rent's and migrant-led protests, reflecting the previous notions of discipline.

Glasgow May Day, 2019.
Source: Living Rent

Protest in Scottish Parliament, August 2021.
Source: Own camera.

Related to the previous discrepancies, a key question causing important internal disputes came around issues with money. The fact that Living Rent had a hired paid member to run the campaign was not welcomed by migrant-led and migrant-solidarity groups, often based either on a culture of voluntary work in contrast to the commodification of the solidarity sector (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020), or in the promotion of people with migrant background in paid positions. The 'professionalization of leadership' (Tarrow, 2012) – which shapes key tensions within contemporary social and political movements – became aggravated here by the racial implications of a white British person with status being paid for running a grassroots campaign advocating for asylum seekers' rights. Addressing this as a key point of rupture, Mike, activist from the Unity Centre, reckoned in our interview that 'the fact that there was a paid organizer from Living Rent wasn't good. It does create difficult questions around strategy. It created confusion… especially amongst people in the system who were like "wait a minute, if that guy is paid to do this, how did he get that job? What is going on here?" This created a lack of ownership over the campaign…" (Mike, 23rd October 2019).

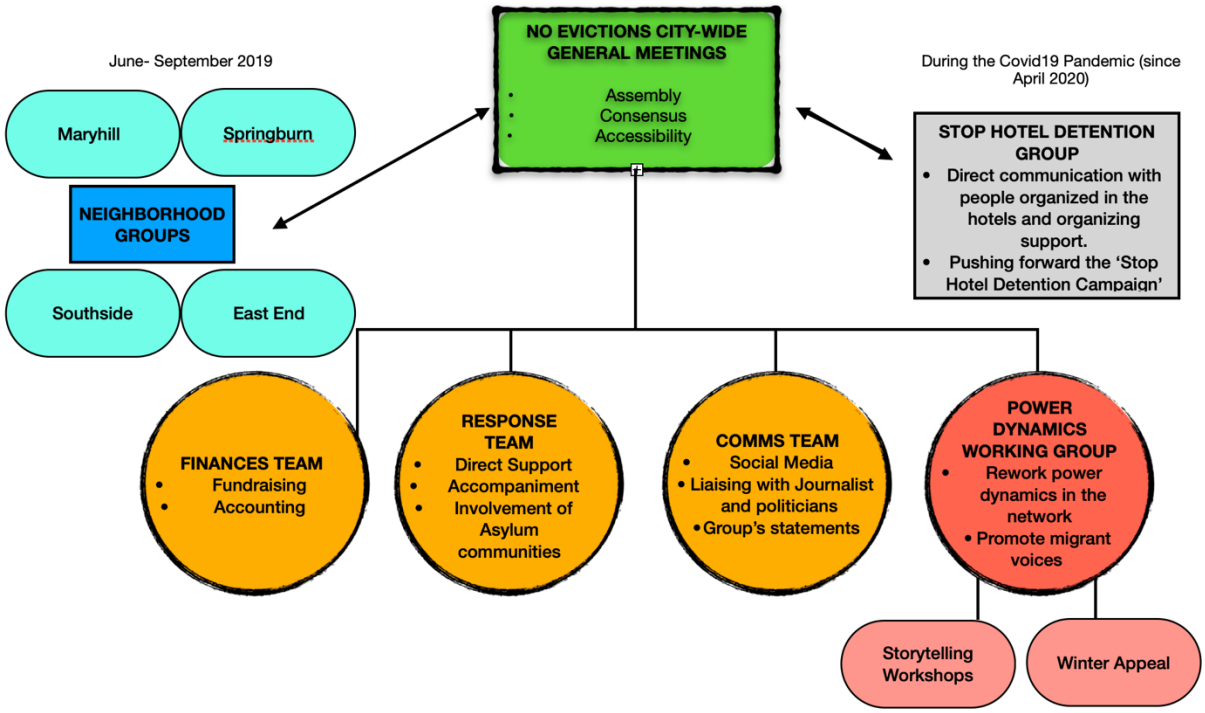
Overall, the negotiation of the previous models led to a form of organization that progressively achieved to combine the strengths of these different approaches and encourage a collective critique of the respective failures. Living Rent's step back in September 2019 was not a rupture but a decision upon longstanding debates around 'people with lived experiences of the asylum system' having to run the campaign forward. Reflecting about this, Liam tells how by the time the union decided to take a step back, '[its] members had already learnt a lot about what it means to stand in solidarity with another group that are not necessarily part of your membership' (Liam, 23rd October 2020). Chapter 7 discusses how the differences in power dynamics shaping the ways the Network approached the 'No Evictions Campaign' in 2019 and the 'Stop Hotel Detention campaign' in 2020 reflect a process of collective exchange and mutual learning. These ongoing processes demonstrate the generative character of political solidarities, how they re-shape political identities through bringing together heterogeneous cultures of organizing (Featherstone, 2012).

6.4. Organizing the Network: Rethinking Horizontal Political Spaces

The previous section has addressed the challenges, potentials, and limitations of the coming together of migrant and housing struggles in the No Evictions Network. The negotiation of different framings and models of left-wing organizing has been explored as an ongoing and learning process. Drawing on this, this section draws attention to how these

exchanges were materialized in the internal organization and dynamics of the Network. In so doing, I criticize that despite the Network formally adopted a horizontal and consensus-based model, this was not always the case due to the uneven positions of the different groups and individuals involved. The following map captures the internal organization of the Network, which shifted in time according to the launch of different campaigns and political needs:

Diagram 11: Internal Organization of the No Evictions Network



The Network adopted a horizontal model of organization where the decisions were made by consensus, according to a general trend of organization towards more democratic and non-hierarchical models of organizing within contemporary social movements. General assemblies were organized and facilitated by volunteers and accessibility was ensured through the provision of bus fares, childcare, and a community meal. They were held at GAS – Glasgow Autonomous Space – an activist and community space opened up in the city two years before the start of the campaign and that had become a point of encounter of different groups politically active in Glasgow. The space of GAS was central, since it was familiar for asylum seekers, who were already involved in some of the activities that were already run there, such as the community gardening, the English-Arabic exchange, or the Tuesday's community meals. With the outbreak of the pandemic, meetings needed to be shifted online, bringing new challenges that will be addressed throughout the thesis. In order to work on the different decisions adopted in the general meetings, the Network organized different

teams or sub-groups assuming different tasks captured in the diagram. Overall, the ways these groups operated drew on the political cultures of the different groups involved in the campaign. For instance, while Living Rent had a good level of expertise in media and political communication, shaping the working of the 'Comms Group', the 'Response Team' was mostly inspired by the knowledge built by the Unity Centre upon years of voluntary casework with asylum seekers in the city. Parallel to the working groups, the virtual spaces of the Network – WhatsApp groups and social media – operated as main sites for information sharing and mobilization. Facebook and Twitter have been key tools for creating public opinion, releasing statements, raising awareness, and reaching out the community. Indeed, the key role of communication technologies and social media platforms in facilitating mutual aid networks and the practice of solidarities has been signaled in research (Forkert, et al., 2020; Routledge, 2003). In this regard, the Network's WhatsApp groups and social media created an 'infrastructure of connectivity' enabling mutual support and solidarity (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013).

6.4.1. Horizontality? Reflections from a Scholar-Activist Practice

In order to anchor a political ground for the articulation of a space of convergence between the different groups and political cultures resisting the evictions, horizontality became the ideal organizing model of the Network. Horizontality, which has emerged as a key form of organization amongst contemporary political movements, stands as a key principle in 'no-borders' and autonomous migrant-solidarity spaces (Walia, 2014; King, 2016). Yet, academic literature on horizontalism and 'no borders' often tends to be acritical of the informal verticality and the practical problems that arise within openly horizontal movements (see e.g. Anderson, et al., 2009), and it often counterposes 'horizontal' and 'vertical' forms of organizing in simplistic ways. Marina Sitrin's (2006) definition of horizontalism as a 'goal' involves the acknowledgement that there isn't a fully horizontal space, and that deconstructing hierarchies and authority is a tedious and contradictory endeavor. Hence, despite the Network defined itself as horizontal, it was always traversed by different dynamics contradicting such definition. Ignoring such dynamics would lead to a marginalization of important inequalities shaping its politics (Featherstone, 2012). While chapters 7 and 8 will develop in-depth the implications of this regarding power dynamics, I examine here some of the practical organizational obstacles resulting from this 'flawed' horizontality.

In my fieldwork, Miguel – a Spanish activist –, observed the existence of 'two levels of organization in British horizontal spaces: There is always the big group of volunteers and the small one that makes the key decisions' (Miguel, 11th December 2019). Miguel, involved both in the Network and in the Unity Centre, was referring not only to the split between the 'Response Team' and the 'Comms Team' and the general group in the Network but also to the ways this structure, according to him, replicated a similar internal split between 'collective members' and 'volunteers' within the Unity Centre, where you need to gain entry to the collective in order to have a say. Probably motivated by issues of security and trust – but also of knowledge and positionality –, these divisions create a clear power imbalance between those in the 'small group' and those in the 'big group' in terms of access to information and voice in the decisions. While decisions are supposed to be made in the general meetings, in practice these small groups operated with a good degree of autonomy, particularly in those campaigning moments where quick decisions were needed. In the case of the Network, the next chapters develop how this shaped a deeply racialized, classed, and gendered imbalance.

Addressing the practical problems of horizontality, Nasima (21st October 2020) points out that 'hierarchy exists, but who is the hierarchy…? Nobody knows'. She makes this claim looking back to the problems she encountered when trying to put forward an initiative and needed 'a go from the Network'. For her, hierarchy also shaped who could suggest initiatives and how they were going to be welcomed by the group. In the same direction, other interviewees have signaled how people that have been involved longer have more weight in the decisions or how horizontality failed in the ways 'sometimes things fall too much on one person's shoulders' (John, 30th July 2020). Skill-sharing not always worked as it should, and knowledge has operated as a key differential element situating particular people on a decision-making and action-taking positions. This meant that due to the urgency of the situation, some work was directly assumed by those that were more active and with more knowledge on the campaign. For those without a strong position of confidence, horizontality also operated as a barrier to action:

> 'No Evictions is quite a flat organization, so it can be difficult to know when it's appropriate for you to take action on behalf of the group. You don't know whether a clear decision has been made or not or whether people have been consulted. Obviously, you want people to be consulted but that's a constant concern I have, anyway, of not wanting to do things that other people haven't… especially people who are directly affected…. Who haven't had any say in it" (John, 30th July 2020).

Horizontality became also confused by the duplication of structures between the Network and the groups which formed it. For instance, although Living Rent was a founder member of the Network, the union kept their own 'Stop Serco Evictions Campaign' holding parallel meetings to decide a common policy towards the Network and organize their own actions. Although this reflects a common way of strategizing within left-wing parties and unions, it clashed with the direct democracy and anti-representative premises of horizontalism. Furthermore, this duplicity of structures generated confusions between Living Rent and the Network, and very often the Network was publicly portrayed as part of Living Rent silencing the migrant contributions to it, something that often created internal conflicts.

Finally, a key problem of horizontal and informal ways of organizing relates to the temporalities of political activism and the need of sustainability in political movements. This is particularly relevant within migrant solidarity spaces, shaped by high levels of burn-out (King, 2016). After an intensive campaign, many people leave, and the lack of formal structure and designed responsibilities poses specific challenges regarding the sustainability of the movement. Commitment is often transitory and only people directly affected or those with strong links to them remain in the movement. Delyse puts it this way:

> 'Something I have noticed is how people can just like jump into something and then remove themselves from it… These are people's lives we're talking about. We're talking about people who have been exposed to things you couldn't even begin to imagine. How do you come and leave? I understand that things change, but at least if you say, we're going to give a commitment for two years, I'm going to give a commitment for six months… But you just disappear. How do we overcome that? I think it's about capacity building' (Delyse, 4th September 2020).

In sum, within the horizontal structure of the Network, there have always been informal hierarchies driving the campaigns forward, favoring privileged framings of the struggles and reproducing different forms of structural oppression. Very often, the formal and explicit organization that characterizes vertical forms of organizing is substituted by impersonal relationships based on an implicit trust and strong commitment of some key activists. Sometimes, these informal authorities have been key to sustain the movement and keep its energies. In this sense, political initiative appears as one key outcome of this informal power. However, at many other times informal authorities also operated delimiting the debates, lowering the confidence of other participants, or creating confusion (Fieldwork Diary, September 2019). Acknowledging these dynamics becomes key particularly when

engaging with the limitations of solidarity networks as spaces of prefiguration. Again, this matter will be subjected to discussion further in the coming chapters.

6.5. The Spatial Politics of the No Evictions Network: Racial Capitalism and the Challenges of the Scottish Institutional Framework

This section concludes by analyzing how the previous processes of solidarity-making and negotiation of different framings, political cultures, imaginaries, and strategies relate to Glasgow's and Scotland's politics of place. It argues that despite the struggles against the evictions were deeply inscribed in racialized and classed geographies, some elements posed specific challenges that hampered a deeper engagement with racial capitalism. Engaging with the spatial practices of politicization involves situating political claims, processes, and the framing of struggles in relation to the broader histories and geographies of the political (Featherstone, 2021). The political geographies of Glasgow draw striking forms of 'militant particularisms' (Williams, 1989) and identities associated to place that have shaped the forms of its struggles and the understandings of solidarity. Raymond Williams (1989) used this term to refer to 'strong militant place-based centered politics' articulated within 'stable working-class communities' and 'rooted in particular localities' (Featherstone, 1998: 19). Militant particularism refers to the ways solidarity 'begins in very local ways, within particular struggles, and draw upon a long-term experience and history' (Featherstone, 2008: 9).

Glasgow's politics of the last decades have been deeply shaped by the 'geographies of deindustrialization' and strong 'spatial antagonisms' contesting the uneven relationships of power shaping the geographies of the UK (Featherstone, 2021). Chapter 5 addressed how migrant solidarities have been deeply embedded in these processes. These politics of place and the particular histories of resistance in Glasgow inform the strategies and framings of the struggles of the Network in multiple ways (Narotzky, 2014). The emergence of the Network and the coming together of migrant-solidarity collectives and housing struggles was not casual. Indeed, the first articulations of migrant solidarities in Glasgow took place at the heart of communities with a long trajectory of struggle around housing deprivation and neoliberalization in their neighborhoods. As developed in the previous chapter, dispersal sits on uneven geographical dynamics of marginalization as an outright measure to 'clean' privileged areas of the UK moving asylum seekers into the urban landscapes of deprivation left by the neoliberal policies of the 1980s (Schuster & Solomos, 2004; Bloch & Schuster, 2005; Spicer, 2008). Overall, the geographies of dispersal foreground the ways race and

class intersect shaping the spaces of social exclusion and marginalization and the role of this policy in making capitalist profit out of valueless spaces. Although these straightforward links between neoliberalization, racialized dispersal, and deprivation clearly set a potential ground to engage with the geographies of racial capitalism, in the following lines I argue that different aspects operated hindering a deeper and more complex engagement by the Network – and migrant-solidarity politics in Glasgow and Scotland – with the spaces of racial capitalism.

6.5.1. Racial Denial and the Limitations of the Nationalist Framework in Challenging Racial Capitalism

Chapter 5 addressed the historical neglection of racism in Scotland and the involvement of post-devolution institutions in producing a narrative around the Scottish anti-racist social imaginary (Kyriatides, 2005). The rise of the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the independence referendum elevated this dominant story to a sort of 'common sense' (Virdee, 2016), reinforced by the more recent Scottish opposition to Brexit. Relevant work has signaled how while race and ethnicity cut across all these political questions, it has been overlooked in debates on Scottish nationalism and Scottish independence (Meer, 2014; Virdee, 2016; Hunter & Meer, 2018). The myth of the 'no problem here' (Davidson, et al., 2018) has deeply shaped the framings and approaches towards the migrant question in Scotland, often blocking left-wing movements' intellectual engagements with questions of race and consciousness with challenging racism. This, I argue, sets important grounding challenges to the Network's engagement with the geographies of racial capitalism.

Fueled by these political imaginaries, migrant solidarities in Glasgow have been historically inscribed in spatial antagonisms. Scotland has been constructed as different to England. Racism is an English – outsider – problem, with Scots being characterized in opposition by being an inclusive society (Virdee, 2016). These spatial antagonisms have favored a framing of the migrant question where Westminster and the Home Office become the key targets and independence has often been portrayed as the way forward to construct an all-inclusive society. This constructs a nationed approach to migrant struggles which is generative of important forms of political enclosure, particularly considering the transnational dimension of the struggles against racial capitalism. While this narrative has sometimes strengthened grassroots migrant solidarities, it has also set important limits to the struggles in terms of their analytical and practical engagement with the question of race within Scotland.

Accentuated in the post-referendum and post-Brexit conjunctures, the SNP and other hegemonic actors have been involved in producing a widespread political position that relegates questions of migration to a greater horizon of independence. This quote reflects the stance of some SNP members of the Network:

> 'Until the Home Office situation changes, until the immigration policy changes, until the asylum policy changes… My view is that this will only happen with independence, unfortunately. We will have to wait until that happens. Now we are going to suffer short term' (SNP councilor and participant in the Network, 26th February 2020).

Against this position, Satnam Virdee (2016: 62) argues that 'we need to find innovative ways of challenging the corrosive effects of racism in the here and now – not post-independence'. Although the Network moved further beyond this focus on independence as the necessary way forward, the nationalist approach was not challenged from a perspective that foregrounded the ways racism also shapes Scottish postcolonial geographies and political institutions. The limitations of the post-independence solution, and the ways it banishes Scottish' histories of racism and colonial enterprise, were not confronted directly in the Network's relations with Scottish politics. In this regard, challenging Scottish racism and its erasure in opportunistic nationalist ideological framings remains a central task for migrant-solidarity movements in Scotland.

On the other hand, Scottish nationalism and its non-racist welcoming façade shaped in different ways the political background, imaginaries, and strategies in which the struggles against the evictions and hotel detention unfolded. Firstly, the backdrop of Scottish' racial denial difficulted a more complex and in-depth engagement with the geographies of racial capitalism underlying the asylum housing conflict in Glasgow. This meant that the racial question was skewed to the Home Office, and race was not central in the ways the internal power dynamics of the Network were addressed at certain times, as chapter 7 will discuss. Secondly, Scottish institutions were generally perceived as inclusive in contrast to hegemonic British racist policing, determining a strong institutional orientation of the campaign. The friendly stance of Scottish institutions also shaped the political imaginaries of migrants in the Network, reinforcing a 'longstanding trend of self-identification and claims-making on Scottish identities by ethnic minorities' (Meer, 2014). In such way, claims for recognition such as 'all people make Glasgow' attempted to counterpose Scotland as a welcoming country against the exclusionary geographies of the British Home Office.

Notwithstanding, this institutional focus and the assumption of Scottish 'non-racist' hegemonic discourses encountered important limitations when coming to challenge racial capitalism. The following lines address this question in the context of the 'No Evictions Campaign'.

6.5.2. The Scottish Framework and the Strong Institutionalization of the Politics of the Network: The Legal Case Against the Evictions

The tensions between autonomy and institutional engagement constituted a key issue within the political strategies during the Network's campaigns. Chapter 3 has analyzed such tensions as constitutive of migrant solidarity politics, often situated between claims for legal recognition and 'illegal' survival at the margins of the State (Nyers, 2010; Walia, 2014). In this regard, I argue that Scottish institutions' racial denial, coupled with elite political discourses on migration and projects of 'civic nationalism', contributed to a strong institutionalization of the politics of the Network and affected the Network's agency in challenging racial capitalism.

Despite the existence of a strong radical tradition that goes back in time to different political moments in the history of Glasgow (see Griffin, 2018, 2015; Featherstone, 2021; Gibbs, 2016) – from 'Red Clydeside' to the 'poll tax struggles' or the anti-road challenges to the construction of the M77 –, Scottish post-devolution politics have been characterized by a strong tendency towards institutionalization, favored by constructions of Scottish institutions as receptive and progressive. In the context of the post-referendum, this trend has been reinforced by what Featherstone (2021) has addressed as the 'pasokification of the SNP' after the 2017 general election and the SNP's hegemonization of the nationalist project enclosing the spaces of radical politics. In the present moment, autonomy – understood as the building of alternatives beyond State logics, though always partial and differently related to geographies of power – is very limited in the political practices of Scottish social movements, even in those self-organized spaces that envision themselves as autonomous such as the Unity Centre or Glasgow Autonomous Space. Institutional engagement is constitutive of a sort of 'common sense' action framework in activist spaces, partly due to the absence of an antagonistic relation between left-wing politics and Scottish institutions.

In the specific terrain of migrant politics, the 'New Scots' policy frameworks and the elite political constructions of pluralism described in chapter 5 have attempted to redirect to the political institutions the different attempts of migrant organization. Furthermore, the

position of the UK as a country of destination – and not of transit – also favored forms of institutional engagement and legality, often seen by migrants and solidarity networks as the way to get papers. This partly explains the strong institutionalization of the Network's politics, as well as the scope, extent, and power of the third sector and charity organizations working with asylum seekers in Glasgow and their role throughout the campaigns.

The legal case around the evictions became the clearest evidence of this and deserves further examination. Indeed, the 'No Evictions Campaign' was deeply marked by the rhythms of the whole legal case and its profound legal complexities. Its 'cycles of protests' and mobilizations (Tarrow, 2012) were dependent of, and structured around, the timings of the legal process detailed in Table 6 below. While the activity of the Network relaxed in-between legal challenges (August 2018 – April 2019 and November 2019- April 2020), its strategies during its peaks of activity mainly consisted in building a support structure for the Coalition's legal strategy.

Table 6: Timings of the Legal Process

August 2018	April 2019	May 2019	June 2019	November 2019	April 2020
• Serco announces the 'Move on Protocol' and starts issuing evictions letters to asylum seekers. • GLC and LSA challenge the decision in Court (Ali vs Serco)	• Inner House of the Scottish Court of Session rules in Serco's favor.	• GLW appeals the decission	• Serco issues a statement to re-start the evictions	• Outer House of the Scottish Court of Session rules in Serco's favor. • GLC submits an application to appeal to the UK Supreme Court	• The UK Supreme Court refuses the appeal = The decision is final. • Scottish Government has banned evictions during the Pandemic. • 44 people still protected by interim interdicts at potential risk of eviction
			Interim Interdicts (Glasgow Sheriff Court) granted on individual cases to protect people while there is not a final decision on the legal case		

Diagram 12: Ali vs. Serco, the Legal Case Against the Evictions

Applicable Law: Rent Act 1984 (Scotland), Human Rights Act 1998 (UK), and European Convention of human rights (EU)

Subject of litigation: Whether is unlawful for Serco to evict an asylum seeker whose asylum claim has been refused from his or her accommodation without obtaining a court order autorising to do so

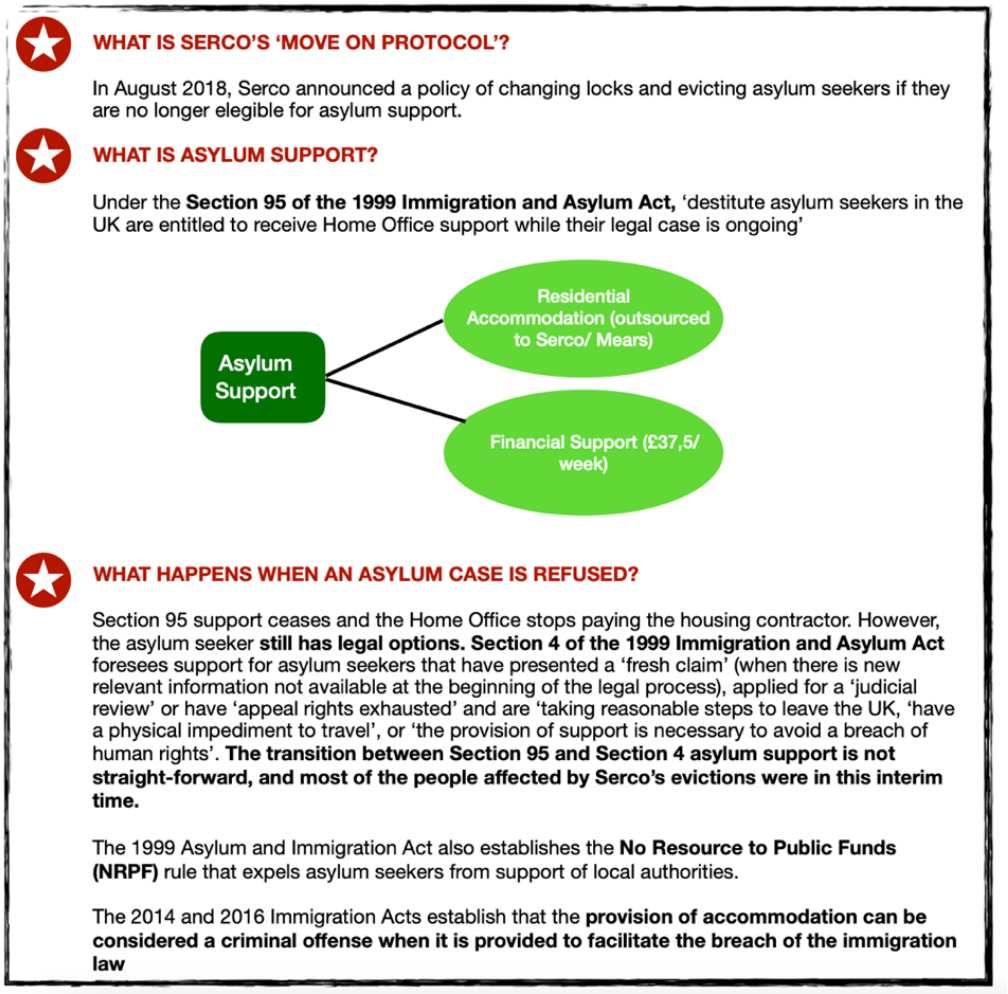
Points of dispute:
1. Whether Serco is or not a 'public authority'.
2. Legal nature of Serco's accommodation.
3. Violation of the principle of proportionality.

The legal case around the evictions presented a profound legal complexity. It brought together UK, Scottish and European law and was situated between the intersection between

immigration, housing, and social care regulations. The key subject of litigation was 'whether is unlawful for Serco to evict an asylum seeker whose claim for asylum has been refused from his or her accommodation without obtaining a court order authorizing it to do so' (Ali v Serco, [2019] CSOH 34). Three were the main points of dispute: Firstly, whether Glasgow was or not a public authority. Drawing on the Human Rights Act 1998 and extensive jurisprudence, Govan Law Centre argued that Serco was a public authority due to the 'public nature' of its functions. Under the Rent Act 1984 (Scotland), the evictions executed by a public authority without a court order violates the articles 3 and 8 of the ECHR (European Convention of Human Rights). Although ruling in favor to Serco, the first judgement by the Inner House (Lord Tyre) agreed Serco was a public authority exercising not only the UK's government 'international obligations' but also 'coercive power'. Nevertheless, the second – and final – judgement by the Outer House (Lady Dorian) ruled that Serco was doing a 'commercial activity', paid under a commercial contract and hence it was not a public authority. Such a decision has been condemned by human rights organizations as it means that 'governments are able to divest themselves of their human rights obligations by outsourcing the provision of public services' (Scottish Human Rights Commission, November 2019). A second point of dispute was the legal nature of Serco's accommodation. Govan Law Centre argued Serco's accommodation was a 'tenancy' and therefore subject to Scottish housing law and Common Law, which prohibits evictions without court order. This argument was dismissed by the two judgements due to the absence of 'rent' as an essential element of a tenancy contract. Serco's defence drew 'a distinction on immigration cases and housing cases'. For them, Serco accommodation was a 'precarious' and 'temporal' accommodation conditioned to a principal immigration obligation: according to this argument, occupation rights cease when an asylum case is determined. The two judgements also agreed with Serco at this point. Finally, a third core argument of the pursuers was that the absence of individual judicial assessment -court order- was violating the proportionality of the decisions. This was also dismissed by the two judgements pleading that lock-change notices could be appealed at a First Tier Tribunal if there were legal grounds to prevent the evictions.

The resolution of the legal case lasted almost two years, when different struggles unfolded. During the interim time while the Ali vs. Serco's final judgement was awaited, the core strategy of the humanitarian coalition was rushing 'S4 institutional support applications' for people affected by Serco's 'Move On Protocol'. The Network's agency on the ground was central for the success of this strategy, which needs to be understood in relation to the institutional background of Serco's evictions:

Diagram 13: Institutional Background of Serco's Evictions



According to this diagram, most of the asylum seekers affected by Serco were in the transitioning time between S95 and S4 asylum support. In line with the Coalition's strategy, the Network's 'Response Team' operated reaching out to people with evictions letters in the dispersal neighborhoods and putting them in touch with the immigration lawyers of the Coalition. Although this was a strategical move – which allowed to prevent a good number of individual evictions –, the Network ended up very constrained by the rhythms and the outcomes of legal process, enclosing other political possibilities beyond legality:

> 'Legality became this huge, huge thing, just kind of haunting the whole of the No Evictions Campaign, I'd say. We need to wait to see what's a legal way of doing it. We need to wait for lawyers. It became we were reacting very much to legal movements in the campaign… there's a pragmatic side to that… like we had to do it… but there's also part of me that wanted to be like… how can we get out of this, because we're just stuck in this, and we are still just waiting for the legal judgements' (Mike, activist in the Network, 23rd October 2019).

Mike reflects here on how the institutional and legal orientation of the campaign made it particularly reactive, meaning that the creation of alternatives beyond the institutional channels was very limited. For instance, autonomous housing initiatives were radically discarded in meetings (Fieldwork Diary, December 2019). Legal language was not understood by most migrants in the Network, and neither by many of the activists (Fieldwork Diary, December 2019). Particular expressions in this quote such as 'pragmatism' or 'we had to do it' naturalize institutional engagement as the way forward.

Nevertheless, Bourdieu (2000) has analyzed how the legal authority constitutes the form by excellence of the legitimate symbolic violence, whose monopoly belongs to the State. For El-Enany (2020: 30), this violence is deeply racialized, evidencing the limitations that legal strategies have in attempts to challenge racial capitalism. Instead, she suggests a 'counterpedagogy of the law', one that positions these struggles as forms of anti-colonial resistance, rejecting 'the violence of legal categorization' and embracing a 'more empowering, redistributive, and radical politics of racial justice as a new way to work towards new strategies for organizing collectively in the service of antiracism and migrant solidarity'. From this perspective, an engagement with questions of race demands moving beyond the established institutional challenges and humanitarian frameworks in political action, particularly if we consider the role of humanitarianism in reinforcing the uneven geographies of racial capitalism and blocking radical change (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020). Indeed, the coalition legal strategy was challenging Serco from a humanitarian ground which itself reproduces forms of racial oppression. While the Network articulated strong criticisms to this position organizing grassroots agencies, I have evidenced how its action was very tied to the Coalition's strategy. The weight given to the law sometimes reinforced an oppressive legal system that sustains the working of racial and capitalist regimes of power, which are far from being absent in Scotland.

Moreover, institutional strategies raised further problematics considering the discrepancies between political discourse and action in the interpretative frameworks and agendas of Scottish political institutions. Despite Glasgow City Council publicly manifested opposition to asylum seekers' evictions, they continuously alleged 'lack of competency' when they were targeted by the Network. The ban that the 1999 Asylum and Immigration Act's NRPF rule establishes on asylum seekers' access to local Welfare systems[28] was strategically used by the Council to divert the campaign's pressures to Westminster. This

[28] See Diagram 13 in page 163.

evidences how, very often, migration turned a simple and powerful political slogan for independence that was not directly contested by the politics of the Network. Susan Aitken – SNP leader of the Glasgow City Council – stated 'the UK should be the target of this outrage as the no resource to public funds rule limits council support for asylum seekers'. She claimed the provision of emergency accommodation by the Council 'would breach the law' (August, 2019). Rather than a strategy of non-compliance – that would have been more coherent with the SNP's discourse around migration –, the Council put into operation the 'Asylum Task Force', aimed at reviewing the evictions process through engaging with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to identify those people 'without right to remain' and no legal grounds to oppose the evictions[29]. The Council's and humanitarian sector's commitment to collaborate to find the 'least harmful' way to enforce the immigration law demonstrates how relying on the legal strategy meant undirectly reinforcing exclusionary institutional logics. Although it served as a patch to prevent individual evictions, it never altered the structural basis of the conflict and therefore its capacity to challenge racial capitalism was very limited. Overall, what these experiences show is that although legal engagements often allowed the Network meeting short-term goals, they hindered its potential to challenge the basis of outrightly racist systems.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the No Evictions Network as a social and political space advocating for asylum seekers' rights in Glasgow. Emerging in the context of the 'No Evictions Campaign' – which challenged the evictions of over 300 asylum seekers by the Home Office's multinational subcontractor Serco –, the Network supposed the coming together of different migrant collectives, housing struggles, and members of the community. Its struggles continued over time, playing a key role during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the Network supported a campaign to 'Stop Hotel Detention' started by asylum seekers housed in hotels. The first section of the chapter situated these struggles in opposition to the political geographies of racial capitalism, paying particular attention to the growing businesses around contemporary border regimes and the ways they are grounded in the increasing commodification of the quotidian spaces of migrant inhabitation. Secondly, and linking to broader debates on migrant-solidarity politics, the chapter has explored the organizational and strategical aspects of the Network, addressing organization as a collective learning process, product of multiple relations and ongoing negotiations. Throughout the

[29] https://glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44501&p=0

discussion, the chapter has foregrounded the potential contributions that a focus on racial capitalism can bring to the processes of negotiation of the multiple political trajectories coming together in migrant-solidarity spaces. After reflecting on the complexities shaping forms of political horizontality in these spaces, the chapter concluded with a reflection on the limitations that Scottish nationalism and institutional frameworks set to engagements with racial capitalism. Building upon these discussions, the next chapter unpacks the intersubjective processes shaping the processes of organization and strategizing addressed here, drawing attention to the centrality of questions of race, class, gender, or status.

CHAPTER 7

Challenging Borders, Building the Commons: Negotiating Racialized, Gendered, and Classed Borders in the Political Spaces of the Network

'I Am a Feminist, so I Believe in Inhabiting Contradictions' (Angela Davis)

7.1. Introduction

The last decades have seen a great development of migrant solidarity movements, accompanied by a growing academic interest in theorizing the struggles against borders (Anderson, et al., 2009; Dadusc, et al., 2019; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen, 2018; Walia, 2014). Although they adopt different forms, migrant solidarities generally involve the alliance of migrants directly experiencing border violence with political activists and people standing alongside them throughout different temporal and geographical scales (Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen, 2018). As noted in chapter 3, they comprise heterogeneous translocal communities of care and connectivity that attempt to challenge from below the necropolitics of the border (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013). Nevertheless, within these communities, the relationships between borders and solidarities are contentious and often contradictory: issues of power and privilege, autonomy and institutional compliance traverse the organization of the struggles around migration (Swerts & Nicholls, 2021; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; King, 2016). While the previous chapter already mapped the internal heterogeneity of the No Evictions Network and how it became translated into different framings and organization of the struggles, this chapter focuses on the negotiation of its internal borders, deepening discussions around privilege, the different positionalities within migrant solidarity movements, and the contentious processes of political subjectivation. The chapter attempts to develop a nuanced engagement with these questions from a lens on black geographies and black feminist writings, making important contributions to current literature and centring migrant agency in the processes of making the commons.

The chapter proceeds as follows: The first section analyses the challenges of practicing solidarity against borders, addressing the Network as a prefigurative space that sought to build anti-oppressive relations as part of its political means and goals. The discussion interrogates the kind of spaces the prefigurative actions of the Network attempted to shape, and how these ideal models related to the politics of place and clashed with racialized, gendered, and classed power dynamics and other internal borders. Furthermore,

exploring the Network's 'politics of allyship' (Swerts, 2015), I discuss the different positionalities existing within the No Evictions Network, critically addressing some of the problematics around a stark divide between 'people with lived experiences of the asylum system' and 'allies'. The section centres questions of migrant agency examining the different dynamics shaping the 'No Evictions' and the 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaigns, addressing how the decolonization of power differentials was an ongoing and learning process. The last section interrogates the relationships between solidarity, space, and politicization within the No Evictions Network. It demonstrates how the Network operated as a social and political space that triggered politicization and the forging of collective political identities, concluding with an examination of some limits to this set by the counter-position of depoliticized and political notions of solidarity to these processes of politicization.

7.2. Practicing Solidarity Against Borders

Practicing solidarity against borders entails not only dismantling violent and unjust border regimes but also confronting the everyday borders that shape our social interactions, addressing subjectivity as a battlefield. Chapters 2 and 3 developed a conceptualization of borders comprehensive of its material, spatial, and epistemological dimensions, drawing attention to how they structure our everyday social relations according to racialized, gendered, and classed relationships of power both historically specific and situated (Yuval-Davis, et al., 2019; Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013). Hence, borders are productive of distinctive subject positions and shape the political subjectivities of those coming together within migrant solidarity movements. A key concern in these struggles is how to articulate a heterogeneous political subject without reproducing structural forms of violence and racialized, gendered, classed, or sexualized power asymmetries. This section situates this endeavor as one of the main challenges of the actual practicing of solidarity against borders.

In chapter 6, I explored how the No Evictions Network brought together people from very different positionalities across race, gender, class, citizenship status, relation to the struggles of the Network, political affiliation, culture, and backgrounds; a heterogeneity which entailed a tedious cross-border solidarity work. Although alliance-making appears as a central aspect in literature on migrant solidarities (Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen, 2016), echoing bell hooks 'theory has been all about border crossing, while there has been little talk about actual practice, of what makes bonding possible across race, class, gender, and diverse politics' (Hooks, 2013: 143). Central for this 'actual practice' are processes of negotiation of the structural power differentials between allied subjects. Exploring these, this section

aims to unpack the everyday practices of solidarity through which the No Evictions Network negotiated the internal borders operating at its core. It critically assesses the 'micropolitics of allyship' within the Network, understanding these as the 'intersubjective exchanges between activists in unequal positions of privilege that affect how social movement organization operates' (Swerts, 2018: 167), drawing attention to the ways they shaped distinctive subject positions in relation to its struggles. In first place, the section addresses prefiguration as a core spatial strategy of the Network to challenge forms of structural oppression and rework social relations from its everyday spaces of activism. Secondly, I draw attention to how the language and actions of the Network produced a structural distinction between those 'with lived experiences of the asylum system' and 'allies', problematizing some of the implications of essentialist understandings of this division. Critically engaging with some of the Network's politics, the end of the section demonstrates that decolonization and anti-oppression work is an ongoing and unfinished process within spaces of migrant solidarity, often shaped by shifting racialized, gendered, and classed dynamics.

7.2.1. The Network as a Space of Prefiguration

As with other 'no borders' solidarity spaces, the Network had a strong prefigurative orientation, seeking to create a social and political space free from borders in line with its political principles. Prefigurative politics, cornerstone of autonomous forms of organizing, entail an alignment between means and ends in the construction of counter-future geographies (Jeffrey & Dyson, 2021); they constitute a 'way of actively engaging with the world to bring about change, in which the form (and) organization of action is itself a model for change' (Graeber, 2009: 210). Prefiguration strategies in the Network entailed a constant and ongoing negotiation of issues of voice and privilege, with anti-oppression work becoming increasingly central in its spaces and politics. Staging this commitment, every assembly started with the readout of a 'No Evictions Opening Statement':

> STEP FORWARD STEP BACK
>
> Not everyone has the same privileges due to many circumstances including language, age, experiences, cultural beliefs, race, gender, class, education and sexuality. Check your privilege and be aware of how much you are speaking. If you have just said something, it is probably someone else's turn.
>
> PRONOUNS
>
> To clarify why we ask people to say their pronouns. While your pronouns might seem obvious to you, for many - particularly non binary people - having someone assume your gender based on physical appearance can be harmful. By everyone saying their pronouns, it makes it much easier for non binary & trans people to assert their gender and exist within a space. If it makes you feel uncomfortable to assert your gender, consider that that is the discomfort that many people have to live with in every

interaction they have and their gender is likely just as obvious to them as yours is to you. So please state your pronouns and respect the pronouns that people say for themselves.

COMMUNICATION

We are a mixed group with different experiences of language. Please try to follow this advice when talking in the meetings: Speak slowly, speak loud & clear, use plain English, take your time, allow time for translators.

(No Evictions Opening Statement, Source: No Evictions Network)

This statement established some basic rules for the assemblies' dynamics. Despite these core rules not always succeeded shaping the dynamics of the Network, they were aimed at constructing a social and political space based on equity through the positive recognition and negotiation of difference (Young, 2011 [1990]). They sought to raise awareness and reflexivity around questions of privilege, voice, and participation regarding the internal power dynamics, and they portray the Network's commitment to work against the reproduction of the systems of oppression they aim to overcome within its spaces (Montesinos Coleman & Bassi, 2011). Firstly, 'Step forward step back' acknowledges the power differentials amongst those involved in the Network, pushing forward privileged allies' 'journey to the margins' (King, 2016). It promotes what hooks (2013) calls 'self-examination', as the work that each of us must do in order to be aware and unlearn our privilege, decolonizing our minds and practices. Although it is addressed in the statement in individual terms, 'stepping back' and the bolstering of less-privileged voices was collectively reworked through involving people in the organization and facilitation of meetings, or by way of the creation of small-group discussions where everyone could have a say in the decisions. Skills-sharing was a central practice allowing these processes. The Network organized 'facilitation', 'direct support', 'strategizing' and other thematic workshops which allowed sharing knowledges and tasks, bolstering collective empowerment. Questions of voice became progressively central in all the public performances of the Network, pushing forward speakers directly affected by the evictions, hotel detention, or 'with lived experiences of the asylum system'. Swerts (2015) has analyzed how, for immigrant rights movements, 'gaining a voice in the public debate' is a key way to 'come out of the shadows'. Notwithstanding, as chapter 6 has analyzed in relation to the framing of the struggles and the informal leading role of Living Rent, the Network not always succeeded in its attempt to rework questions of privilege from a decolonial position. Indeed, confessions of privilege in anti-racist movements can substitute political action to dismantle structures of domination when they do not become translated into spatial and material practices (Smith, 2013, in Morrison, 2016). Challenging inequality sometimes becomes 'reduced to own goodness and the public recognition of how privilege works in

their own life or in the lives of those around them' (Morrison, 2016: 101). At this stake, towards the end of the section I will analyze how the criticisms articulated by some migrant political activists have been key in order to rework uneven power dynamics and ensure forms of leadership that center the experiences of migrants recognizing the differential impact of systemic marginalization.

Secondly, 'Pronouns' were intended to create a safe space for non-binary people and promote a counterculture of acknowledgement of diversity in the spaces of the Network. Although sometimes this shaped important cultural gaps, pronouns became an example of the generative character of solidarity in creating relationships of respect and mutuality across difference. In practice, the generalization of the use of pronouns in the space of the Network helped to construct bridges between different struggles against borders and their different intersections. Nevertheless, the absence of an analogous explicit engagement with colonialism and racism in the text also raises important questions of power dynamics. The centrality of pronouns in the opening statement and the ways it is approached denotes the leadership of activists that were deconstructed from a very particular place and location – Scotland, Britain – and a Western culture, often not corresponding with many migrants' cultural backgrounds. At this point, discourses around identity sometimes forget to confront uneven dynamics that reproduce other axis of oppression –be they racial, classed, gendered, cultural, etc. Morrison (2021) has critically explored these dynamics in radical left feminism within the 2014 Scottish independence movement, noting how intersectionality was taken up in ways that reproduced – rather than tackled – multidimensional lines of inclusion and exclusion of race, class, gender, and age. Furthermore, the cultural gap on this matter raises important questions about the epistemological distance between radical theories influencing spaces of activism and the popular culture, particularly of those people directly affected by the struggles. This reflects how sometimes movements' agendas might not respond to the realities and necessities of those directly affected and participating in the movement, evidencing that prefigurative spaces are less horizontal than they claim to be. Hence, although the use of pronouns was generative of new ways of thinking politically and bridging struggles, I argue that the ways this question was approached missed a deeper anticolonial engagement where British activist cultures were not put into dialogue with others in the crafting of political solidarities and equal bonds. Overall, the Network lacked a more detailed engagement with the meanings of using pronouns and how this had a central importance to the processes of solidarity-building.

Finally, communication tackled the crucial question of language, raising awareness of the difficulties that some people may have to access the discussions. In spite of the importance of this question, I analyze later that translation not always worked, with language playing out a particular bordering role. Whereas translation was very difficult in the big space of the assembly, it worked especially good in small groups as spaces that favored dynamics of mutual support where people with a higher level of English helped others from their communities.

Overall, the 'No Evictions Opening Statement' attempts to create a social space that challenges structural power dynamics as part of its political means and ends. This was a deeply spatial process, rooted in everyday exchanges, friendships, and uneven negotiation of power differentials. Yet, I have already mentioned some of the ways it portrays an ideal model which often clashed with the actual practices. Very often, 'no borders' discourses and the recognition of privilege remained in a linguistic plain, without becoming materialized in political action. Engaging with Scottish radical left feminism, Morrison (2021) notes how even when inclusion is claimed rhetorically, material practices do not fully integrate racialized minorities. At this stake, the emphasis on language that solidarity movements sometimes have can undermine collective action to dismantle power structures, reinforcing the oppressive systems they aim to overcome (Montesinos Coleman & Bassi, 2011). Empirical studies on 'no borders' solidarity movements show how building 'solidarities across differences' always entail contradictory and problematic dynamics reproducing power relations (e.g. Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Swerts & Nicholls, 2021). The next subheadings draw attention to some of the ways questions of 'privilege' were negotiated, analyzing the gaps, failures, and limitations of the Network in prefiguring a borderless social and political space.

7.2.2. 'With' and 'Without' Lived Experiences of the Asylum System: The Different Positionalities within the No Evictions Network

The 'No Evictions Opening Statement' sets a good basis for a potential intersectional approach to positionalities within the Network, since it addresses questions of 'language, age, experiences, cultural beliefs, race, gender, class, education, and sexuality'. Nevertheless, the main way the Network dealt with the different positionalities coming together in its struggles was through the recognition of a structural – and structuring – difference between those 'with lived experiences of the asylum system' and those who were 'allies' or 'without lived experiences'. These terms were constantly used by activists – both

migrant and European – in the political spaces of the Network (Fieldwork Diary). The former included people with different status – asylum seekers, refugees, people granted leave to remain, etc. – who have gone through the hardships of the asylum system and therefore have a direct knowledge of it. Those 'without lived experiences' were 'allies' with Western citizenship status, heterogeneous backgrounds, and political identities. The actions of the Network were mostly structured around this logic, which feeds from longer trajectories of migrant solidarity organizing in Glasgow and elsewhere and attempts to tackle questions of power dynamics in the crafting of political solidarities. Indeed, the notion of 'privilege' and the distinction between 'migrants' and 'allies' have become increasingly central in the theory and praxis of migrant solidarity movements worldwide (Swerts, 2015), influencing the Network's approach to this question. The term 'ally' has been generalized by feminists, LGTBiQ+, and antiracist movements to refer to the position of those not experiencing sexism, racism, and gender-based oppression directly but stand in solidarity with these movements. While allies often play key supportive roles, their differentiation draws on a recognition of the implications of their own group-based privilege to not undermine the movement (Droogendyk, et al., 2016). Being an ally entails 'a journey to the margins' (McKenzie, 2014) assuming a supportive stance but leaving leadership roles to those directly oppressed. McKittick (2006) has though criticized the notion of 'margins' reflecting on the ways these 'margins' produce space. While this has opened political spaces to rework the uneven power geometries shaping these movements, I argue that a dualistic contraposition of the oppressed-ally relation can favor essentialist conceptions around political identities and roles. In this relation, despite confessions of privilege denote awareness of power structures, they risk displacing collective action by the emphasis on individual behaviors (Morrison, 2016).

Indeed, although the distinction between 'people with lived experiences' and 'allies' allowed addressing important questions of power dynamics – e.g. through the promotion of voices of people 'with lived experiences' in demos and events of the Network, or the creation of non-mixed spaces of reflection – it also raised fundamental problems that should not be overlooked. On the one hand, as a key structuring logic based in an objective fact – having or not experiences of the system –, it risks homogenizing the multiple subject positions existing in the political space of the Network enclosing them in two pre-established groups. The following section deepens on how belonging to one or another often pushed people to assuming certain tasks and being adjudicated a certain position across a dichotomy between privileged-oppressed, obscuring their very heterogeneous political positions, skills, and power differentials. To put an example, there was a worrying and essentialist equation within

the Network's assumptions between 'vulnerability' and 'people with lived experiences of the asylum system'. When asylum seekers decided to go on demonstration against hotel detention in the midst of the pandemic, many white 'allies' adopted a protective stance towards them due to the risks of far-right and police presence. In a later informal conversation, Samir and Seyyed told me they found this attitude 'very funny' since they had been respectively involved in a deadly war against the government in Syria and the Kurdish struggles against Turkey. I remember Seyyed saying 'my friends are dying against the fascist Turkish government and I can't protest here because there are fascist in the square?' (Fieldwork Diary, July 2020). Chatterton, Featherstone, and Routledge (2012) accounts similar dynamics in the context of the global climate justice movement, addressing how during the Coop15 alternative climate summit activists from the North argued for a non-violent position on the basis of protecting activists from the global South. This raises questions on how essentialist understandings of the 'people with lived experiences' and 'allies' division obscures migrants' heterogeneity, agency, and geographies of struggle. It also reproduces wider assumptions that deny complicated political trajectories and experiences to those coming from the global south (Featherstone, 2012). Privilege becomes performed from a position which encloses migrant agency and reproduces colonial logics deeply rooted in the British and European reasons, despite the decolonial discourses and prefigurative stance of the Network. Furthermore, this example spotlights the importance of thinking politics of allyship spatially, considering the broader geographies of struggle that 'people with lived experiences' carry with them (Featherstone, 2008; García Agustín & Jorgensen, 2018).

On the other hand, this contrast between allies and 'people with lived experiences' also risks reproducing essentialisms that can reinforce the inequalities produced by border regimes. At this point, the language of the Network often reproduced the boundaries between citizens, asylum seekers, refugees, and other migrants, evidencing some of the ways solidarity movements can also reinforce the micropolitics of the borders and the social and legal categories established by the State. These categories draw on racial and colonial histories deeply shaping who belongs to which group that remained unquestioned (El-Enany, 2020) and they also reflect the limitations of the institutional orientation of the Network's campaigns analyzed in the previous chapter. The notion of 'lived experiences' focuses on asylum and refugee and obscures questions of race and racism, again evidencing the strength of humanitarianism shaping the Network's language and common senses. One example of the shortages of the Network's narrow focus on asylum and refugee was its incapacity to equate its struggles against hotel detention with the Black Lives Matter

mobilizations in Glasgow during the Covid19 pandemic. This radically differs from other experiences in the US, where the centrality of antiracism in immigrant rights moments allowed strong links between BLM movements and mobilizations against ICEs and other pandemic spaces of migrant contention (McCalla-Johnson, 2021).

Rather than a stark divide, I argue that a more contextual, spatial, and articulated approach to the number of identity categories mentioned in the statement can shed light to the ways migrant solidarity movements deal with privilege. The acknowledgement of multiple forms of oppression shaping different subject positions within a racial capitalist system is a key step in deconstructing dualisms that structure solidarity across the lines of friend-enemy, oppressed-ally (Young, 2011 [1990]). In this direction, chapters 2 and 3 have analyzed how black feminist writings inspire a notion of solidarity beyond borders, based on an acknowledgement of the interlocking systems that work together to uphold and maintain cultures of domination (hooks, 2013; Mohanty, 2003). This chapters also explored how the construction of political identities unfolds through social and spatial relations, against essentialist positions (Hall, 1988). Hence, I argue that enclosing the multiple subject positions into two pre-established groups sets important limitations not only in terms of agency but also regarding the political imaginaries of the struggles and the political trajectories coming together with their articulation. It narrows down their potential to generate common horizons, hindering the possibilities of the more nuanced engagement with the spaces of racial capitalism addressed in chapter 7. Having said this, the next pages expose some of the ways the power imbalances between 'allies' and those 'with lived experiences' were negotiated and performed in practice, critically analyzing some of the problematics that emerged from an excess of essentialisms within this ally-based understanding of solidarity, notions of privilege, and the ideals of prefiguration. Notwithstanding, I considered important to maintain this distinction in my writing since it became an essential language of the Network and its key form of recognition of the structural differences between those involved. Yet, I advocate for a more nuanced assessment of this divide which centers questions of agency, making important contributions to wider political movements articulated across the affected-ally relation.

7.2.3. No Borders? Challenges, Power Dynamics, and Exclusions: The Racialized, Gendered, and Classed Politics of the No Evictions Network

Throughout the thesis I have already explored how despite the attempts to construct an equal and horizontal space, uneven power dynamics often shaped the Network's

processes of decision-making, framing of the struggles, strategizing, and political action. Literature on no-borders movements tends to romanticize the social and political spaces created by these movements as radically prefigurative and 'borderless' (see Anderson, et al., 2009; Walia, 2014). However, a focus on migrant agency and Black Geographies of struggle demands placing critical attention to the internal borders present in 'no borders' movements, situating these in the center of political thought and action (Mezzadra & Nielson, 2013; Mohanty, 2003).While chapter 6 drew attention to the negotiation of borders in relation to questions of political organization and the framing of struggles, this section focuses more on the intersubjective exchanges shaping these processes. In so doing, I critically engage with some of the ways the divisions between 'people with lived experiences' and 'allies' became translated into political action, bringing a comprehensive approach to the articulations between race, gender, class, or sexuality shaping the particular spaces of the Network.

a) The Racialized and Gendered Division of Activist Work

On the one hand, the distribution of roles and tasks within the Network responded to heavily racialized and gendered dynamics. The unproblematized division between 'allies' and 'people with lived experiences' analyzed earlier on partly contributed to such asymmetries. The clearest example of this was the role developed by British white men within the 'Comms Group', which was the public face of the Network, formally dealing with politicians and local media to echo its political demands. In our interview, María, a Spanish woman member of this group, reckoned how she realized that 'the only ones speaking out in the Comms Group where the whites, born in Scotland or in England, and generally men'. She commented that 'this was happening to the point that one day, they told me in my face: "we need to recruit communication professionals to help out the team", and I thought… ok, fuck off… I have been here for months and you never listened to me, and I have worked in politics, I come from a background in political communication in Spain' (María, 6th August 2020). María provides an account of how communication tasks were left mostly to British men in the Network. Her experience exposes some of the ways issues of privilege and power contradicted the homogeneity of the 'allies group', crisscrossed by divisions of gender, belonging, or social class. It also evidences very problematic assumptions about others' lack of previous experience, and how such assumptions shaped the space for others' agency within the Network. Furthermore, later in the interview María analyzed that 'the few women in the Comms group were in charge of the social Networks… Facebook, Twitter… without contact with the outer world, whereas men were in touch with public media, speaking in the radio, giving interviews, and talking to politicians'. Nasima, a migrant women with settled

status, also contended ‘it seems to me that the Comms Group is led entirely by them, and I can’t see many people who have had lived experiences’ (21st October 2020). Apart from evidencing again a clear British hegemony in the ‘Comms Group’, Nasima’s statement demonstrates some of the ways distinctions between ‘people with lived experiences’ and ‘them’ structured internal assessments of power dynamics, enclosing the potentialities of a more intersectional approach. These distinctions will appear in many other quotes throughout my argument.

Articulations of race, gender, and class not only shaped activists’ membership to the ‘Comms Group’, but also the actions and language of the group. In my fieldwork, I often observed patronizing behaviors where members of the ‘Comms Group’ directly adopted a protective role towards asylum seekers, sometimes even justifying the silencing of migrant voices in the public debate. This was the case when John, key member of the group, told me in our interview ‘you don’t want to put somebody who is part of the situation in front of the media, or pressure them to do so… the risks of being so exposed… they are not always aware of what the media will do to them, and you want to tell them properly’ (John, 30th July 2020). Again, this quote not only reflects structural and unproblematized divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Anderson, 2013), but above all it denotes a colonial culture whereby the asylum seeker is portrayed as a child that needs to be educated. This protective language involves particular geographies and echoes the humanitarian common sense that dominates the charity sector and the asylum industrial complex in Glasgow against an ethics of solidarity based on agency and equality (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020). Once again, this marginalizes migrant voices and reflects the limitations of the strong institutional focus of the campaigns and its lack of proper engagement with questions of race and coloniality.

The British-male dominance in the Comms Group radically contrasts with the development of care and direct support tasks by – often migrant – women. As a matter that will be examined in-depth in the following chapter, this gendered division of activist work reproduces the classic public-private dichotomy that feminist movements have largely fought against. Nevertheless, I noticed some reluctance to speak about these gender issues and power asymmetries in the interviews. When I asked key activist women of the Network about this, they responded ‘I don’t want to make a comment that is too gendered because gender is a social construction’ (Katy, 7th October 2020), or ‘I think I don’t know if I’ve really got much to say on that’ (Lucy, 1st October 2020). Not surprisingly, gender-based dynamics were only acknowledged by British CIS men when addressing their own privilege – see Mike’s quote in the heading below. This exemplifies some of the ways the use of

pronouns and the confession of privilege were reduced to language whereas gender asymmetries kept being reproduced through spatial material practices.

Analyzing the role of feminist radical activists in the context of the 'Radical Independence Campaign' in Scotland, Jennifer Morrison (2016) criticizes how a discourse on individualism dominated feminist radicalism where structural concepts were rhetorically invoked but resistance emphasized the altering of individual behaviors, impeding the development of a collective feminist praxis. She accounts how the essential role of feminists shaping the radical grassroots movement for independence contrasted with a lack of feminist approach in the campaign — what the movement itself addressed as 'many feminists but little feminism'. In spite of the obvious differences, I noticed similar dynamics in the context of the No Evictions Network. Although it was built up mostly by women, feminism was not a common form of identification within the Network – again exposing the limitations of fragmented understandings of the struggles addressed in chapter 6, either focused on housing or asylum rights. Moreover, Katy's and Lucy's denial to speak about gender evidence its marginalization within the Network's politics.

I argue that this denial relates to the state of the feminist debate and the 'trans question' in Scotland (and beyond), where queer politics – as an hegemonic framework in activist spaces in Glasgow – have often been constructed in antagonism with forms of mainstreaming and non-trans feminisms and vice-versa. While these antagonisms are crucial to advance the theory and praxis of counterhegemonic feminisms, I argue that the ways this became translated in the politics of the Network was problematic. As much as we want to deny gender – because indeed, it is a social construction that has made of the gender-sex binary something hegemonic –, we cannot ignore the effects that this binary has in the organization of society and in people's lives. I argue that recognizing this materiality or lived reality is indeed part of the process of feminist struggle and gender deconstruction. With a strong individual approach and drawing on the vindication of politics of identity, I think the Network's narrow understanding of queer politics operated blocking the feminist debate and overshadowing the *de facto* power asymmetries that are crosscut by intersecting experiences of gender, sexuality, class, race, etc. While I have seen similar power dynamics very contested by feminist and LGTBiQ+ activists in my previous experiences in Spain[30], the ways in which the Network approached queer politics partly brought about a lack of

[30] It is important to note the strong influence that queer politics in Spain have from queer Latin American feminisms, which differ from the Anglo-Saxon strand in its decolonial approach.

reflexivity about how activists were reproducing deeply gendered patterns in their everyday roles. Here, I argue, we find a big tension between the Network as a space of prefiguration – emancipated from normative gender – and the Network as a material space crisscrossed by heavily gendered relations. This shapes a central disjuncture between political claims and action that evidences the ways 'no border spaces' are never borderless. It also shows how claims should be accompanied by movements' analyses on the ways power relations operate within their groups (Morrison, 2021).

b) Voice, Leadership and Temporalities of Activism

Intersections between race, gender, class, or belonging also shaped issues of voice and political leadership. Despite the Network's efforts to 'push against privilege' and center migrant voices, there were always important imbalances, where people of privileged activist knowledges and English-native speaking backgrounds dominated the discussions developing strong informal authorities. Critical with these dynamics and speaking about the internal dynamics of the Network during the 'No Evictions campaign', Mike reckoned that 'we probably failed in being too led by people with experience on the asylum and immigration stuff… people who had particular kind of knowledge, skills, and connections'. He added 'me at some times, Liam at other times… and this is not accidental, that was people who were white and male' (Mike, 23rd October 2019). Swerts and Nicholls (2021: 325) note how 'those activists and allies with more cultural capital and resources often assume a prominent position in constructing migrant voices and representing migrants in the political field', resulting in a situation where 'those who speak for the excluded may not be the most excluded'. In this regard, in addition to activist knowledges linked to specific political trajectories and experience in a certain king of struggles, language played an important bordering role, generating an unequal access of people to the discussions. In almost all the pages recording my experience during the anti-evictions campaign in my fieldwork diary, I have notes criticizing how the discussions were totally inaccessible for a non-native speaker like me since they were full of technical and legal terminologies (Fieldwork Diary, June-September 2019).

On the other hand, the temporalities of the campaigns were central in the analysis of power dynamics. Moments of 'crisis' were in fact those when uneven power dynamics were more accentuated. Developing his statement earlier on, Mike noted that

> ‘Every day there was a sense of crisis, it was a constant crisis… every day it was like… “this could be the day, this could be the crisis” and this created models where people just decided to get on with the things and doing that, you often reproduce power dynamics that I think we should be trying to fight against. As someone that was doing that… I think for me… It’s just very sad. In these situations, you just think “oh, I can just get this done” but then you think on what is being done and who is doing it and it isn’t really a success… it isn’t effective… it’s better if it involves people and let people work and share skills and knowledge rather than doing a very effective thing’ (Mike, 23rd October 2019).

As Mike addresses here, skill-sharing totally failed in those busiest moments of the campaign, hindering the decentralization of knowledge and the division of labor, and hence reinforcing structural hierarchies. Those with privileged backgrounds and knowledges – generally British, white, and cis men – tended to assume all the urgent tasks that required action during the critical moments of the campaign against the evictions, excluding others’ capacity to act. Very importantly, moments of ‘crisis’ also shaped racialized and gendered patterns of membership and leadership in relation to the temporalities of the struggles. In the aftermath of the anti-evictions campaign, Liam notes how

> ‘It has been a campaign very much up and down where the ground has changed and changed and it’s a shame that people’s engagement is kind of drifting off, or people’s energy is drifting away but to be honest, I can understand, it happened to me as well. It happened to a lot of people. People were really committed to it, but they knew they just could plug their energy for like 20 days, or 50 days, and then they would need to exit because it is too intense’ (Liam, 23rd October 2019).

Indeed, after the ‘summer of the evictions’, active participation and support to the Network came down from hundreds to tens of people. Nevertheless, migrants and people within the immigration system never stopped coming to the meetings. This raises important questions around who stays and who leaves solidarity movements after moments with intense media scrutiny. Apart from being racialized, the temporalities of activism were deeply gendered: While during busy and mediatic campaigning moments men occupied key roles and positions in strategizing, communication, and direct-action activities; in the quiet moments of the campaign these ‘action men’ (Montesinos Coleman & Bassi, 2011) mostly left and the Network was mostly sustained by women and migrants. Chapter 8 develops these questions around the intersection between race, gender, and the temporalities of the movement from a focus on care politics and social reproduction, bringing key contributions to feminist work on social movements.

c) Internal Borders and the Use of the Spaces of the Network

There were also internal discrepancies between some white 'allies' and some of the families and people within the immigration system regarding the specific use of the space of the assemblies. For the former, the aim of the assemblies was to plan actions and organize protests. For the latter, assemblies were more a space for sharing experiences, practicing mutual support, and being together. Very often, especially in moments of crisis, the clash between these two conceptions resulted in the imposition of what some white activist wanted from the spaces of the Network. This tendency was very noticeable during the time Living Rent was driving the campaign forward. Often, those facilitating meetings tended to cut the discussions every time migrants were drifting away from the agenda or sharing their own experiences. This closely relates to the union's narrow understanding of the struggles and their notions of political 'efficacy' and 'discipline' discussed in chapter 6. The next chapter explores how some of these racialized and patriarchal dynamics and the use of the space was deeply contested by migrant activists in the Network.

Notwithstanding, internal borders within the Network not always reproduced power asymmetries, but also often developed a key function of creating 'safe spaces' as sites of empowerment, community building, and trust. The occupation of the space and people's distribution in the assemblies often followed patterns of race, gender, nationality, and political background. For instance, African mothers or Pakistani families used to sit together, which encouraged a sense of comfort and active participation in the space (Fieldwork Diary, November 2019). Progressively, they opened their social spaces to further members of the Network with whom they developed a sense of trust and friendship, which are essential elements for undocumented migrants to act politically (Nicholls, 2021). These informal safe spaces of the Network favored dynamics of translation, collective discussions, and empowerment. Hence, in this point, internal borders operated fostering equality rather than power imbalances.

Overall, the analyses developed throughout this section make distinctive contributions to current literature demonstrating how despite its continuing efforts to rework and overcome internal borders prefiguring a borderless space, the politics of the Network were shaped by racialized, gendered, and classed power dynamics. On the one hand, it has foregrounded some of the practical implications of the unproblematized essentialist understanding of the divisions between the 'people with lived experiences' and 'allies' divide, demonstrating the ways positionalities and agency within the Network were shaped by the intersection of different power relations and contextual elements. On the other hand,

it has explored how these intersections shaped particular internal borders such as those related to issues of voice and leadership, the temporalities of activism, or discrepancies in the use of the space of the Network. Engaging with this, the next section emphasizes the shifting character of these internal borders and how the ongoing negotiation of the political led to different power dynamics across the different campaigns of the Network.

7.2.4. Fighting Borders as a Learning Process: From Challenging Evictions to Fighting Hotel Detention

At the start of the 'summer of the evictions' in June 2019, the Network barely counted with people with eviction letters amongst its members. Chapter 6 analyzed how despite the presence of Unity brought many families in the asylum system who were also Serco's tenants, almost none of them were directly affected by the lock-changes. The Network built a huge structure of support for those facing evictions, alongside a campaign which combined demonstrations, direct support actions, media engagement, and negotiations with representatives of Serco, Mears, Glasgow's housing associations and politicians. This chapter also explored how during that time, the tenants' union Living Rent adopted a predominant role shaping the decisions, actions, and organization of the Network. Overall, we can state that the 'No Evictions Campaign' succeeded in stopping the evictions, but it failed in involving people directly affected by the lock-changes. Although the opinion of those supported by solidarity vigils and other forms of direct action was generally consulted in advance, they were never involved in the processes of decision-making and articulation of the political demands, enclosing migrant agencies (Fieldwork Diary).

Action led by Living Rent against Serco's business 'Caledonian Sleeper', August 2019

Almost a year later, in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, the Network got involved in a new campaign. With the occasion of the pandemic, Mears – as other housing contractors in the UK – removed over 400 people from their private accommodations to place them in four hotels across the city without right to self-isolate and with the Home Office financial support stopped. The Home Office's contractor justified this as a 'safeguarding measure' to deal with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. A self-organized group of asylum seekers affected by this decision came together after the tragic death of the Syrian asylum seeker Adnan Olbeh in one of the rooms of the McClays Guest House, launching a campaign to 'Stop Hotel Detention'. They started a 'food refusal' staging three demands: the return to safe accommodation, the improvement of the food, and the reinstatement of the Home Office's financial support. When the asylum seekers reached the Network to seek support in May 2020, the Network assumed key communication tasks, centering efforts on keeping asylum seekers' demands in press and media, getting in touch with politicians, or mobilizing support to the demands in social media through 'online days of action'. At one point, the asylum seekers decided to escalate their actions and organize a physical protest against hotel detention. Samir, political activist in Syria, recalls this moment:

> 'I was staying with other guys, like 10 days refusing food. And we could not continue like this… we started refusing food like 25 people and after a week we were maybe 12 and a few days after maybe 2, 3, or 4. So I was thinking… let's make something big and efficient. Let's make a protest, a demonstration. I wrote in the No Evictions Whatsapp group that we wanted to make a demonstration about the ways we had been treated. And they joined us because we needed some help' (Samir, 29th July 2020).

By that time, there was a full lockdown issued in Glasgow and the local political left was very reluctant to do any physical protest, which has placed important limits to political activity in the city during the last years. Furthermore, Black Lives Matter protests were being contested by far-right mobilizations 'defending the statues', and there was a risk of being attacked by fascist and loyalists. While the Network advised about the risks – increased by police stalking to some of the asylum seekers involved –, the asylum seekers manifested their intention to keep the demonstration on. Although the Network was mainly averse to it, a final decision was taken to support the demo, making a public call, and organizing a group of stewards and security protocols. Lauren, elder member of the Network hesitant of the risks involved in the protest, told me that she 'felt that the people at the hotels were quite clear that they wanted to go ahead, and it was for us to support them and probably to sort of minimize the risks at best we could, and I don't think we did the wrong thing' (Lauren, 7th August 2020).

Images from the 'Stop Hotel Detention' demonstration, 29/06/20
Sources: Glasgow University Solidarity Collective and Evening Standard

These two situations made me wonder: What changed from June 2019 to June 2020? Indeed, if we interrogate the power dynamics shaping the 'No Evictions' and the 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaigns, important shifts can be observed. While during the 'No Evictions' campaign the Network built a structure of support for people at risk of eviction, in the campaign to 'Stop Hotel Detention' people directly affected adopted the main decisions and the Network played a supportive role rather than a leading one. Katy, involved in the Network since the first day, reckons these dynamics:

> 'Especially the stuff in the hotels… I think that was really led by the guys in the hotels, people in the Network were supporting them, the meetings were very much like "we're not going to take any of these decisions, we are going to give you the information that we have but this is your campaign, this is your fight; what can we do to facilitate what you want? Okay, you want a demo; we'll do a demo. Okay you want to do this and that". I think this was particularly a strong point in terms of solidarity work, very much led by and participated by people in the hotels. It was a collective thing, and it wasn't just like people of settled status doing all the work or making all the decisions' (Katy, 1st October 2020).

I strongly agree with Katy that the struggles around 'hotel detention' were led by people in the hotels refiguring political relations and demonstrating a very powerful solidarity work. They built way more equal relationships, and people struggling in hotel detention were positioned in a very different place to that one of those affected by evictions a year before. Certainly, the Network learnt some important lessons from the struggles against the evictions that allowed distinctive power dynamics during the 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaign. Some of the criticisms and internal discrepancies staged by migrant collectives in between campaigns were crucial in allowing these shifts and triggering migrant agency. Living Rent's step back motivated a conjuncture of collective reflexivity and

explicit commitment to work towards forms of action that center the experiences and voices of migrant subjects. This allowed the reworking of political relationships that were addressed as problematic in a process of collective learning. On the one hand, these internal shifts demonstrate the ways 'solidarities across differences' (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021) are generative of new political relationships and forms of struggle (Featherstone, 2012). Moreover, they evidence how the opening of migrant spaces of disruption opens up further forms of political dissensus. The fact that there was already a Network fighting around housing issues in Glasgow amplified the political possibilities and potential of a campaign pushed forward by asylum seekers in hotel detention.

Nevertheless, the 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaign was not free from contentious and problematic power dynamics, which I also discuss throughout the thesis. For instance, the aftermath of the asylum seekers' protest was very polemic and problematic, both in terms of power dynamics and voices being silenced. The demo in George Square was attacked by hundreds of loyalists and fascists from the Scottish Defense League and other groups, after which the Network became very punished by public opinions coming from the Glaswegian third sector and part of the political left who ignored the internal dynamics and discussions that led to the decision of keep the demo on and drawing on an assumption of migrants' lack of agency. A 'reflexivity session' organized to address collective trauma and concerns after the demo completely failed to include asylum seekers' voices. Furthermore, following the fascist attack to asylum seekers, different organizations and unions made a call for an antifascist demo that the Network decided not to support without asking people in hotels about their position (Fieldwork Diary, 22nd June 2020). These dynamics reflect some of the contradictions shaping political solidarities and how anti-oppression work is always an unfinished and learning process that requires constant reflection on how hierarchies are informing our political actions, decisions, and knowledge.

7.3. The Network as a Space of Politicization: Solidarity and the Forging of Political Identities

Expanding the theoretical points made in chapters 2 and 3, this section navigates the relationships between solidarity, space and political subjectivation, addressing the Network as a social and political space boosting new political relations, collective political identities, and political imaginaries (Featherstone, 2012; Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021). In first place, the section foregrounds the politicization and empowerment of migrants and asylum seekers involved in the Network, nurturing a rich body of work exploring the processes of becoming

political underlying migrant protests (e.g. see Swerts & Nicholls, 2021; Swerts, 2021; Swyngedouw, 2021; Dikeç, 2013, 2019). Some of the previous analysis on temporalities of migrant solidarity movements and the processes of building bridges amongst struggles are re-examined here drawing on the direct experience and testimony of some migrants involved in the Network. On the other hand, I explore how politicization within the spaces of Network entailed a transformative intersubjective process of decolonizing political imaginaries and constructing collective political identities, materialized in distinctive practices of solidarity. The section concludes addressing some tensions between political and depoliticized ideas of the community, arguing that re-centering the political in neighborhood-based migrant solidarities becomes crucial in the articulation of counter-cartographies of struggle against borders.

7.3.1. Migrant Politicization Within the 'No Evictions Network'

Geographical literature on migrant solidarity movements has foregrounded the role of space in the crafting of collective political identities and in fostering common struggles (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Swerts & Nicholls, 2021). This section engages with the ways the Network operated as a space of politicization where everyday interactions and exchanges between activists generated relationships of commonality and trust, fostering the politicization of migrants and other activists alike. It firstly brings some examples of migrants becoming political through their experience in the Network, drawing on testimonies gathered in my interviews and captured in my fieldnotes. Secondly, I explore how the ongoing negotiation of power dynamics addressed in the previous pages reshaped the political imaginaries and identities of all those involved. The analyses, which demonstrate how common spaces were the key ground enabling these processes, will be developed further in chapter 8 from a focus on empowerment and the politics of care.

In the first interview I did for my PhD fieldwork, I was sitting with Ayesha and Hamza in the living room of their new flat in Springburn. They told me they just moved in a week ago, after being harassed and threatened by far-right neighbors several times in the Maryhill area where they always used to live. Serco had ignored the situation for months despite of the multiple reports by the family to the police, but after the last attack to Hamza and his 7-years-old daughter, they were finally relocated. Although they have always suffered racism in Scotland – what challenges the official Scottish tolerant rhetoric critiqued in earlier chapters –, they seemed worried about its escalation in the last years. Ayesha and Hamza always come to the Network's meetings with their two children, becoming regular

participants in actions and events, and key members of the Maryhill Neighborhood Group. When I asked them in our interview how they got involved, Ayesha replied she found the Network by chance while she was 'doing some gardening at GAS and wanted to take some rest'. She recalled 'I went inside GAS for drinking water and someone told me they were here for no evictions… and I asked "what is evictions?" My English is not very good… and then they told me that Serco gives letters to people to move out and stuff like that and I said "oh my god, I am part of this situation, this is so bad, can you add me in your group?" (Ayesha, 13th October 2019). Glasgow Autonomous Space (GAS) was indeed a site frequented by asylum seekers, involved in different activities such as gardening, English-Arabic exchanges, community meals or sport classes. It is a sort of autonomous social center that pays a small self-sustained rent and is run by activists organized in assembly. As a familiar site of migrant encounter situated in the Southside of Glasgow, GAS operated as a 'safe space' for asylum seekers to get involved and come along to meetings. Meetings there were completely different to the initial ones happening in the 'Unite the Union' building in Regent Street, the place used by Living Rent where attendants needed to sign with their name to access the building. When asylum seekers manifested discomfort about coming along to such place, the Network decided to meet in GAS instead, something that allowed people like Ayesha to get in touch with the Network and speak out in a safe space.

Ayesha and her husband left Pakistan more than ten years ago, and although their two kids were born in Scotland, they still don't have leave to remain and they 'have to deal with Serco every day'. Since her 'accidental' discovery of the No Evictions Network, Ayesha and her family became regular members:

> 'I told the Network "text me every time you are going to have a meeting". And then I came to every meeting. I told my husband meetings were good and one day he came with me to a no evictions protest in the city center and after that he said: "every time there is a meeting, we go together". From that day, we always go together, to GAS, to meetings, to protests…'. (Ayesha, 13th October 2019).

This is how Ayesha and Hamza became very active in the Network, assuming different tasks and even becoming some of the key organizers of the 'Maryhill Neighborhood Group'. While we were chatting, they told me they had remained politically unactive for ten years so far, but their involvement in the Network made them realize that standing together with those in a similar situation was crucial to keep fighting against an unfair immigration system and take care of their mental health. For this reason, their

experience in the Network led them to get involved in other political spaces in the city. Reckoning this, Hamza continued telling me:

> 'Now you see us in the Unity Centre. Some of the Pakistani friends I made in the Network were there before. Now after this No Evictions Campaign, we think that we have to be in Unity as well. We can contribute there. Because this campaign will end after the court decision, but the Unity Centre will remain there. Because most of the people who come they come from Asian countries (Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, India… and some African countries). And if there is people who can speak their languages and be there it is easy for them, you know? Even after we get our visa because of my 7 years old kid, I will remain in Unity Centre' (Hamza, 13th October 2019).

This quote evidences how their engagement in the Network and the social and political relationships and friendships their family made there were crucial for their later involvement in the Unity Centre. Probably inspired by their own recent experiences, Hamza foregrounds the importance of the dynamics of mutual support and solidarity to advance migrant struggles. Importantly, he expressed particular concerns regarding the temporalities of the campaign: the reason they have got involved in Unity is because the campaign is temporal, whereas Unity will remain there. The experience of Ayesha and Hamza shows the relevance that the spaces of the Network played for them to become active and break the position that the established order dictates for them. It also evidences important gender dynamics since Ayesha was the first one in getting involved in the Network, as many other migrant women in a similar situation. Indeed, many of the key asylum voices in the Network came from previous political trajectories of organizing around spaces such as the Unity Centre, Unity Sisters, GAS, or MORE; and those who didn't, very often got involved in these spaces after passing through the Network. Following the struggles against hotel detention, some migrant activists got involved in Refugees4Justice, a refugee-led organization that emerged to push forward a public inquiry to challenge the situation in the hotels. These dynamics evidence how the temporal dimension of solidarity campaigns becomes materialized in the active organization of dissensus through the experiences of migrant politicization. The construction of communities of struggle often feeds from this ephemeral and contentious moments that boost people to become political and meet each other, but materializes in long term visible and invisible social and political community networks (Arampatzi, 2017). Furthermore, migrant politicization within the Network also brought asylum seekers to get involved in solidarity with other political struggles. In one of the UCU strikes over the past years, I joined the Climate Strike rally organized by students on the 29th November 2019. Almost arriving to George Square, I found three asylum-seeking families of the Network participating in the demo. I approached them and they told me that

they knew about the students' climate strike and they wanted to stand in solidarity with them, not only due to the importance of climate struggles but also to demonstrate mutual support after their involvement against the evictions (Fieldwork Diary, 29th November 2019). This sets an important example of how the actual practicing of solidarities allowed forging bridges amongst different struggles, expanding the connections amongst them, and strengthening collective power.

Overall, processes of politicization fostered the collective empowerment and agency of migrants in the campaign, a matter subjected to further examination in the next chapter. The shifts between the 'No Evictions' and the 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaigns that I was analyzing earlier on was indeed the result of an increasing empowerment of asylum voices in migrant solidarity spaces and of the reworking of collective political identities as key outcomes of the political experience of the Network. Politicization was not exclusive of migrants; rather, getting involved became a learning process for everyone. The experience in the Network challenged many of the political assumptions and imaginaries of many activists who had never shared a political space with migrants and asylum seekers before. Shifts in power dynamics illustrate how it totally reshaped the ways they envisioned their own place and position in these struggles, reworking the whiteness and humanitarian logics that dominate hegemonic left-wing approaches to the migrant question. Liam acknowledges this when he reckons that after Living Rent's step back from the campaign many union members had learnt a lot about standing in solidarity with migrant groups (Liam, 23rd October 2019). Even my own involvement was itself a learning process that deeply shaped my political identity over the past few years. I became more conscient about the realities of those directly confronting border violence, and debates and conversations happening within the Network made me rethink many of my political positions around questions of antiracism, organization, authority, difference, care, forms of political action, and how to get involved in solidarity struggles, many of them reflected on this thesis. Overall, anti-oppression work and the ongoing negotiation of power dynamics helped to build a political consciousness and commitment towards decolonizing the political spaces of the Network, constructing 'solidarities across differences' and collective political identities (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021). The result of these processes was the forging of strong ties, trust, and the materialization of diverse forms of commoning, friendships, and comradeships. In the days in which the first version of this chapter was drafted, images of hundreds of neighbors stopping a dawn raid in Kenmure Street (Pollockshields) have portrayed Glasgow as an example of solidarity on mainstream media across different countries in Europe (see Akhtar, 2021). Paying attention to the processes of political subjectivation and the active forging of

new collective political identities sheds light to the ways these solidarities do not emerge on a vacuum but are the result of everyday practices of community struggle, in a perspective which also challenges unproblematic constructions of spontaneity in theorizing urban solidarity mobilizations. The bonds and collective identities created through the struggles against the evictions and hotel detention strongly contributed to this 'not-that-new' community rejection of immigration raids in Glasgow and a very strong political imaginary of migrant solidarity attached to the politics of place. They bring a clear sense of how 'what comes together, in this place, now, is a conjunction of many histories and many spaces' (Massey, 1995: 191).

7.3.2. The 'Humanitarian Border': Tensions between Politicized and Depoliticized Notions of Community

Overall, the struggles against the evictions, hotel detention, and more recently dawn raids have triggered a re-politicization of migrant struggles and the asylum debate in Glasgow. Darling has addressed how various practices of governance – involving local authorities, private providers, and third sector organizations – have indeed sought to depoliticize asylum matters and those seeking asylum in the UK over the years. Depoliticization is 'a set of ordering tendencies and alliances that produce and maintain perceptual orientations towards the contours and limits of the political debate' (Darling, 2013: 74). Notwithstanding, depoliticization 'is not an endpoint, but an effect of the policies that are opened to be challenged and reshaped' through re-politicization (Darling, 2016: 233). In this regard, the Network has been shaped by an ongoing interplay between modalities of politicization and repoliticization. The tensions entangled in this process become illustrated in movements' division between the 'community' and the 'political':

> 'Community action is about community change and it's not always about political change. Political change is something people need to be prepared. Community action can be in self-interest; people just want something bad to change whereas they might not see that political link. I think we need to recognize that not everybody will want to take forward a political agenda. Some people will, and we would need to support them to be able to do that. But others might just want to take a step back and think "I've just got this resolved", and I think that's what community action is about, people just want something bad to change. It is not necessarily political action, but it can lead to political action' (Lauren, 7th August 2020).

This is the response that Lauren, a member of the Network with a long trajectory of active involvement in migrant spaces in Glasgow, gave to my question on how we can trace links between community organizing, empowerment, and political change. In her narrative,

she draws an important internal border dividing the Network, particularly between those considered 'political activists' and those who do not identify themselves as political but rather as doing some sort of 'community work', understanding this as a managerial issue. In practice, I argue that this division often operated limiting the scope and reach of the processes of political subjectivation addressed in the previous section. It was quite strong, not only marking a central confrontation between charities and the Network throughout the campaigns, but also shaping people's political positions within the Network itself. Such border reflects the challenges emerging from the hegemonic character of humanitarianism and racial capitalism and its logics of depoliticization, but also its contested nature through neighborhood-based community solidarities and migrant agencies.

The previous dichotomy is deeply problematic insofar it rejects the political character of community struggles, reflecting a post-political viewpoint where community change and agency appears detached from politics. One of the main ways the 'post-political' – understood as the neoliberal logic to transform politics into a question of management enclosing political possibilities – is reproduced in contemporary border regimes is through humanitarianism as a depoliticized form of solidarity which reproduces colonial hierarchies and fuels geographies of inequality through institutionalized action (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020). Previous chapters have addressed how humanitarianism and the neoliberalization of asylum are particularly strong in the UK, where big charities have adopted a depoliticized language of 'community' to replace politics reproducing social exclusion and marginalization through the logics of assistentialism. The term 'community' has been very prominent since the 'New Labour' years of implementation of the dispersal policy, used in very depoliticizing ways. In line with this, chapter 5 explored how the emergence of a powerful 'charity industrial complex' (Golash-Boza, 2009) in Glasgow attempted to coopt and redirect the disruptive character of the early historical solidarity struggles. Over the years, it has hegemonized most left-wing and community approaches to migration in the city intersecting with political projects of Scottish 'civic nationalism'. In discourses framed on the basis of inclusiveness, integration, and belonging, particular accounts of the community have erased the radical character that this term used to have in the political histories of Glasgow.

Due to their hegemonic position, these discourses have remained strong across the heterogeneity constituting the No Evictions Network, enclosing the possibilities of the political. Chapter 6 explored how these logics shaped the institutional and legal orientation of the Network, which often operated building a structure of support for the charities' coalition. I likewise addressed how when evaluating options in light of potential evictions,

self-managed community hosting and other 'illegal' choices were radically discarded, and the Network mapped instead the hosting possibilities offered by the charity sector (Fieldwork Diary, November 2019). Pushing this argument further, chapter 8 evidences some of the ways the actions and discourses of the Network reproduced the charities' service model and language, where very often activists were 'volunteers' rather than political advocators. These examples prove that despite the political nature of its struggles against Serco's evictions and Mears' hotel detention, 'politics' remained a big word for many members in the Network. Both in the meetings and in the interviews, there was an implicit preference to make use of the term 'community' as the basis of the Network's struggles, while the question of 'being political' – as the quote above evidences – was assessed as being one step forward (Fieldwork Diary).

Notwithstanding, the individualism underlying the previous quote responds to a liberal notion where the community is portrayed as the self-serving strategical association of individuals in order to achieve a common interest. This view reproduces a neoliberal hegemonic culture that overturns the collective bonds and political potentiality that a progressive collective political account of the community engenders for solidarity. It also reflects uneven geographies of power that picture an atomized and individualized Western society, which does not correspond with the idea of community that Hamza was charting in the previous section when addressing questions of mutual support, and with the understandings of the community inspiring many experiences of radical black political struggles and forms of organizing (Heynen, 2009). It probably does not correspond neither with the classed idea of community present in the political imaginaries of many people who got involved in the struggles across the dispersal neighborhoods. Chapter 8 precisely draws on black feminist theory to demonstrate the multiple ways in which the agency of migrants and other activists within the Network deeply contested these narrow notions of community and the political, remarking the political character of everyday forms of mutual support and collective community building, and stressing the overlapping the intersections between solidarity, community, and political struggle. From this perspective, a focus on contestation complementing approaches on the post-political allows foregrounding the ways migrant agencies contest and reshape depoliticizing logics through multiple practices (Darling, 2013).

Hence, while the Network made very important steps forward re-politicizing migrant community struggles in Glasgow, the 'humanitarian borders' (Walters, 2010) and the logics of racial capitalism crisscrossed people's political subjectivities in various ways shaping

internal and external power dynamics. ‘Humanitarian borders’ refer to the key bordering role that humanitarian actors develop in the organization and disciplining of contemporary border regimes. At this stake, chapter 2 has addressed how in a neoliberal conjuncture where the political economies of the border regime have become a core gear in the workings of racial capitalism, the politicization and decolonization of the migration debate becomes central. The situatedness of most migrant struggles and practices of solidarity demands centering the political and collective dimension of urban and neighborhood-based community solidarities (Dikeç & Swyngedouw, 2017). Dichotomic understandings of the ‘community’ and the ‘political’ misses an analysis comprehensive of the political geographies and spatialities of border struggles and its multiple edges.

7.4. Concluding Points

This chapter has addressed some of the main challenges of migrant solidarity politics, arguing that the struggles against borders are embedded in ongoing processes of negotiating difference in the making of a heterogeneous political subject. Emphasizing the co-constitutive epistemological, material, and spatial dimension of borders (Balibar, 2002; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Yuval-Davis et Al, 2019), the first section examined the problems of negotiating different positionalities within migrant solidarity movements according to situated and interlocking hierarchies of race, gender, class, or sexuality (Swerts, 2018). It critically pushed current debates exploring how although the distinction between ‘people with lived experiences’ and ‘allies’ entails the recognition of power differentials, it often shaped essentialist and reductionist understandings downplaying the multiple positionalities existing within the Network, affecting questions of agency. Inspired by the theoretical points made in chapters 2 and 3, the chapter argued towards a more nuanced awareness of the ways different power differentials are articulated together in the spaces of the Network, problematizing the affected-allies binary. At this point, it has made essential contributions to current literature re-examining the multiple articulations of race, gender, class, or sexuality in shaping issues of voice, leadership, or temporalities within migrant solidarity movements from a perspective that centers migrant agency. The situated engagement with these dynamics unveils the important gaps and failures that underly activist attempts to prefigure borderless and non-oppressive spaces and foregrounds the need to tackle this in order to decolonize our struggles. Yet, the shifts in power dynamics between the ‘No Evictions’ and the ‘Stop Hotel Detention’ campaigns demonstrate that decolonization and the negotiation of difference is always an ongoing and unfinished learning process. Building upon this, the final section of the chapter has evidenced how the

solidarities crafted within the spaces of the No Evictions Network led to the re-politicization of migrant struggles in Glasgow, foregrounding the role of space in enabling processes of migrant political subjectivation, agency, and the formation of collective identities. The chapter concluded analyzing some of the shortages shaping these processes of politicization, arguing that challenging depoliticizing imaginaries of the community becomes central in neighborhood-based mobilizations of solidarity. Building upon the central contributions of this chapter, the next chapter explores articulations of race, gender, and class in relation to care politics and social reproduction work within the Network. In so doing, it demonstrates some of the ways social reproductive politics constitute grounds where the problematics of essentialist oppressed-allies divides reproduce deeply racialized and gendered uneven geographies of power.

CHAPTER 8

Migrant Solidarities, Social Reproduction, and the Politics of Care

'Caring for myself Is Not Self-Indulgence, it Is Self-Preservation. And it Is an Act of Political Warfare' (Audre Lorde)

8.1. Introduction

Questions of social reproduction and the politics of care are gaining a central importance within the theory and practice of social movements and political solidarities, bolstered by incipient feminist movements, black antiracist struggles, and new forms of protest worldwide, as well as by the recent left-wing grassroots responses to the Covid19 pandemic crisis. Nevertheless, although they are intrinsic to – and constitutive of – migrant solidarity spaces, they remain unexplored in literature. This gap is particularly important in a conjuncture in which the pandemic has accentuated a 'racial crisis' (De Genova, 2018), exacerbating the precariousness shaping migrants' everyday lives. Drawing on fieldwork with migrant solidarity spaces in Glasgow, this chapter foregrounds the centrality of social reproductive and care politics in constituting spaces of migrant activism (Kapsali, 2020). Although care has been the central concept mobilized in the theory and practice of social and political movements, I position it as one of the activities contributing to social reproduction (Kofman, 2012). Widely, social reproduction encompasses 'the broad material social practices associated with sustaining production and social life'. As such, 'it is the stuff of the everyday life as well as the structuring forces that constitute any social formation' (Katz, 2008: 18). In the political space of the Network, it included a wide scope of activities ranging from different forms of direct support, emotional labor, and caring practices. Throughout the chapter, I demonstrate how these activities were deeply racialized, gendered, and classed, expanding some of the arguments made in chapters 6 and 7. Moving beyond thinking about only gender as the privileged optic through which the division between who cares and who receives care has been theorized, the chapter argues that a nuanced engagement with social reproductive politics in migrant settings demands drawing attention to the contingent situated articulations of race, gender, and class shaping these relations. The argument builds upon migrant experiences and ideas that have brought very important insights to the core arguments of this thesis.

The chapter proceeds as follows: The first section situates social reproductive politics at the core of black counter-cartographies of struggle. Engaging with migrant voices and

building upon black histories of organizing, it positions 'self-care' and empowerment as the basis for 'political reproduction', breaking longstanding patriarchal and racialized dichotomies between political campaigning and reproductive labor. The second section focuses on storytelling as a key spatial strategy in the Network to empower migrant voices, to practice mutual support, and to produce counter-narratives of migration. Then, I address the Covid19 pandemic as a racial crisis, engaging with impressive articulations of solidarity staged by migrants in Glasgow during this conjuncture. I argue that lived experiences of the crisis of social reproduction shaped particular racialized, gendered, and classed forms of activism during this critical conjuncture. The chapter concludes with an analysis of some of the ways migrant agencies contested hegemonic humanitarian caring frameworks, arguing that processes of solidarity and hybridization during the 'No Evictions' and 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaigns have contributed to a greater presence of migrant voices and spaces of dissent.

8.2. The Racialized, Gendered, and Classed Articulations Shaping Social Reproductive Politics in the Experiences of Migration and Struggle

This first section spotlights the centrality of social reproductive politics in the sustainment of infrastructures of migrant solidarity, bringing particular attention to the articulations of race, gender, and class underlying their performance in the political spaces of the Network. I address the ways social reproductive work was pushed forward mainly by activists with migrant background, arguing towards a contextual analysis that underscores the ways care politics are performed differently in strongly racialized settings (Raghuram, 2021). The first part of the section engages with migrant voices to address care and empowerment as essential dimensions of social reproduction. I discuss how the opening-up of community spaces for healing and mutual support were constitutive of migrant experiences of political disruption throughout the Network's campaigns. Here, I suggest the concept of 'political reproduction' to grasp the interchanges between care, trust, empowerment, political subjectivation, and the overcoming of structural barriers towards political action taking place within spaces of migrant solidarity. Building upon these analyses, the second section discusses migrant views on social reproductive work through the lenses of black feminist theory, deconstructing dichotomic understandings between political campaigning and direct support work in the articulation of black counter-cartographies of struggle. I argue that splits between campaigning and direct support in the Network responded to racialized and patriarchal imaginaries of the political that became deeply contested by forms of migrant agency. Finally, the section concludes with some

important thoughts about the gendered, racialized, and classed temporalities shaping social reproductive work in the Network, expanding some of the points developed earlier on in the thesis.

8.2.1. Empowerment and Self-Care as Basis for 'Political Reproduction'

In one of my interviews, Pape, an activist from the Unity Centre, told me 'We need to remove all the barriers, "no borders" is not only physical but also mental and emotional' (Pape, 9th December 2020). Today, he said, he is fortunate to have settled status. He arrived in Glasgow from an East African country ten years ago, after which he faced detention twice and was threatened with deportation on several occasions. Recalling this experience, he tells how the hardest thing for him was not directly facing the violence of the border, but rather keeping himself 'mentally and emotionally strong'. At that time, he found a home in the Unity Centre's community, a place from where now he supports people in detention all across the British state on a daily basis whilst he studies to become an immigration solicitor. When I asked him what his understanding of empowerment was, he said that 'empowerment is sharing knowledge and information, it is having a space where your voice is heard'. The support he found in Unity when he first arrived in Glasgow not only helped him to navigate the material and mental hardships of the asylum system but also motivated his active political engagement in this space, recalling some of the stories of politicization of people like Ayesha and Hamza shared in chapter 7.

Indeed, notions of empowerment in the processes of commoning have been a key concern throughout my fieldwork, and they vary across the Network upon different positionalities of race, gender, class, or sexuality. What attracted my attention the most was realizing how, for those with migrant and refugee background, empowerment was often linked to ideas such as collective self-care, healing, community, or capacity-building. Indeed, all these aspects point to different dimensions of social reproductive labour and evidence the claim that 'if we cannot reproduce ourselves and each other, we cannot produce the conditions of possibility for emancipation' (Jeffries, 2018: 589). In the next lines, I draw on direct testimonies of migrants and asylum seekers to situate care and social reproduction at the centre of the political experiences of building the commons. I bring attention to how the overcoming of the 'emotional' and 'mental' borders Pape was referring to underlie people's processes of political subjectivation. The argument pushes a conceptualization of social reproductive politics that centres black experiences and genealogies of struggle, where

notions of empowerment and political activism are deeply tied to the transformation of everyday life.

Conversing with Delyse – a Jamaican refugee and inspiring leader in the Network, the Unity Centre, and MORE – she told me that 'empowerment is collective because we believe a chain is as strong as its weakest link'. When I asked what she meant by empowerment, she did not hesitate to answer that 'empowerment is self-care, it is about re-humanizing our communities' (Delyse, 4th September 2020). Critical of the term 'empowerment', she argued we should better speak about 're-empowerment', since people's journeys to Britain and the trajectories of struggle behind their mobilities were the clearest evidence of people's power. For her, re-empowerment and the creation of community spaces and bonds are crucial to counter the effects that exclusionary spaces have on people's self-esteem. This resonates with John La Rose's arguments in 'We Did Not Come Alive to Britain' (La Rose, 1976), where he alludes to the trajectories of struggle waged by Caribbean peoples prior to arriving to Britain against colonialism and racism, and through difficult experiences of mobility. In this line of argument, Delyse pointed that

> 'when we come to a space where we are not treated like human beings… space does everything… the narrative, the structure, the socialization, the consciousness… tapping into that reservoir… For me, the crucial part of empowerment is about reminding people "yes, you are strong, and this is what you have been through". The moment you get that, you don't need to be chasing people to say "come, we are going to campaign" because that's already in people's spirit' (Delyse, 4th September, 2020).

Delyse's position effectively links empowerment to a collective notion of self-care, capacity-building, and everyday activism, capturing the disruptive essence of black cartographies of struggle. It is important noting how, in her narrative, 'self' has a collective meaning that encompasses the migrant community. Central in this narrative, mental health[31] was a main concern in all my interviews with people with migrant background, who often signaled mutual support and community-building as the ways forward against a deadly immigration system. Aisha, activist and asylum seeker, spoke to me about the emotional and mental strains resulting from her struggles both in India and the UK, reflecting on what the experiences of political organizing in the Network meant for her claiming that

[31] See extensive literature on mental health in geography (e.g. Parr, 2008; Philo & Wolch, 2001; Philo, 2005) and on mental health and the experiences of seeking asylum (Satinsky, et al., 2019; Tribe, 2002; Robjant, et al., 2009; Silove, et al., 2000)

> ‘this system is forcing you to kill yourself. I feel that as human beings, we need to support each other, at least not to die. We can, maybe, have some differences. Maybe we are all having difficult times. Maybe we are not able to wear good clothes. Maybe we are not able to eat well. But if we are together, we will not be that mentally dragged that we would die’ (Aisha, 27th August 2020)

Her words inspire a powerful notion of unity which foregrounds the role of ‘being together’ in the struggle for survival. No matter the heterogeneity of migrant journeys converging in the Network, no matter their differences, they are all affected by racial capitalism, precariousness, and exposition to premature death (Gilmore, 2007). In fact, the centrality of social reproductive work in spaces of migrant solidarity becomes accentuated by the fact that reproductive issues are racial issues, shaped by uneven geographies of power (Roberts, 1997). Questions of survival and everyday life have been central in the political experiences of organization of black communities (Heynen, 2009). Thus, throughout my fieldwork I realised how people with migrant backgrounds in the Network were the first ones concerned with the needs of their communities and the importance of taking care of each other as the primary and preceding form of political action. Yet, in Aisha’s account above, survival exceeds the material dimensions of social reproduction, emphasizing the role of emotional labour in the practices of commoning offering an alternative to functionalist accounts of social reproduction. Jeffries (2018: 587) defines emotional labour as the ‘work entailed in the production and negotiation of the affects, feelings, attitudes, and desires that underwrite social relations and intimate life alike’. For Aisha and many people, the experience in the Network meant breaking the isolation imposed by the logics of the asylum system and sharing their distress with others in a similar position (Swerts, 2018). ‘Feeling in common’ recreated solidarities and practices of living together with other people beyond material survival, encouraging mutual recognition, friendships, and politics of belonging grounded in the everyday geographies of the Network (Askins, 2016). Indeed, struggles for survival and reproduction – both ‘physical’ and ‘epistemological’ – have been central to black and brown political agencies resisting forms of colonial and postcolonial oppression.

No Evictions Christmas Party, December 2019.
Source: No Evictions Network

Indeed, Black Power movements have been largely concerned with the psychological health of their communities living in a culture of white supremacy. For black radicalism, the principal struggle was the emancipation of the mind, something that Malcom X referred to as 'changing our minds and hearts'. Within the Network, this was a deeply relational and spatial process, as I explore in the next section addressing the Storytelling workshops. Fanon described how white supremacy is also interiorized by black populations, affecting their self-esteem in addition to the structural oppression and the everyday racist behaviours deteriorating black mental health. Addressing this, Samir speaks about the mental impacts of being 'treated like animals' (Samir, 29th July 2020). In the same direction, Delyse points that some of the barriers that asylum seekers face to keep fighting are 'self-doubt, people get burnout, people no longer believe or no longer have hope'. She asked me to think about the last three months in Glasgow, when every single month someone died from the migrant community: 'That is enough to crush your spirit… it is difficult to say "you have to be strong" because people have lost their lives because of a system that makes it impossible to live'. At this stage, for her the main question is not about 'how do we challenge the system' but 'how do we make sure we have a space where people can heal and get revived':

> 'It is like you are in a battlefield and somebody is unwell, a soldier got injured. They need a place to recuperate and then you come back with ten times force or ten times power' (Delyse, 4th September 2020).

In her narrative, Delyse spotlights that creating spaces for healing is a necessary step towards re-empowerment and the overcoming of the material and emotional barriers that migrant people face in the processes of becoming political. She inspires a notion of social reproduction that centres questions of re-empowerment and politicization expanding current conceptualizations which focused on matters of sustainment (Jeffries, 2018). Indeed, direct support and self-care activities in the Network worked towards building long-term relationships of confidence and trust that enabled the formation of political commons as alternative to the logics of racial capitalism (Caffentzis & Federici, 2015). As such, the intersections between care, trust, collective empowerment, and politicization make social reproductive labour a ground for 'political reproduction'. With this concept, I emphasize the constitutive political dimension of the practices of mutual care and social reproduction work in the processes of political struggle. Through situating social reproduction and care as the basis for political solidarities, Delyse's quote above opens the central discussion developed in the following section, where I draw on the previous ideas to deconstruct a dichotomy that continues to shape migrant solidarity movements between campaigning and social reproductive work. Building upon internal debates in the Network, the section

demonstrates that care is strictly linked to solidarity and campaigning, insofar it sets the basis for a collective political struggle.

8.2.2 Deconstructing the Dichotomy between Campaigning and Direct Support: Reflections from Migrant Solidarity Spaces in Glasgow

Samir was one of the asylum seekers leading the struggles against 'hotel detention'. He was a political activist in Syria, and he has continued campaigning for refugees' rights and against Bashar Al-Ashad's regime throughout his journey in Denmark and in the UK. As a journalist, he covered the war in Damascus and published articles about his way to Europe, where he has participated in different forums and demonstrations against the war in Syria. During the 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaign, he was not only leading the different demos and actions of the campaign but also part of his everyday routine in the hotel was knocking other people's doors aware that mental health and isolation were major issues to confront collectively. Other times, he used to leave the hotel to go to register other families' kids at school or deal with their teachers because their parents did not speak English and most kids who arrived in Glasgow during the pandemic weren't enrolled at any school (Fieldwork Diary, 30th July 2020). Not isolated, Samir's example is relevant because he performs practices of care that exceed the theorizations of social reproduction articulated on Western constructions of gender and activist roles, relying instead in a shared lived experience of migration and political struggle. While gender was still a very important marker shaping the ways care was practiced, these experiences evidence some of the ways the Network's social spaces became sites where white hegemonic masculinities were challenged. Indeed, whereas chapter 7 demonstrated a clear gendered boundary between 'people without lived experiences' in the Network when coming to develop direct support work and other activist roles, this boundary was articulated differently in the case of migrant communities, for whom direct support always had a paramount role. In understanding this phenomenon, feminist analyses on mutuality and interdependence become central (Federici, 2019; Lawson, 2007; Tronto, 1998; England, 2010). Drawing on these experiences, this section challenges racialized and gendered constructions of activist work, demonstrating how the constitutive character of social reproduction within migrant cartographies of struggle breaks Western patriarchal divisions between political campaigning and direct support.

Indeed, these divisions marked a central debate within the course of a meeting to evaluate the 'Stop Hotel Detention Campaign', where Mike and Delyse – both prominent

informal leaders of the Network – started a long discussion counterposing political campaigning to direct support and care work. Mike intervened first arguing that the campaign had focused too much on direct support activities, while it should have been more focused on 'building strategies to counter the system' (Fieldwork Diary, 2nd August 2020). Direct support activities during the 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaign included giving emotional support to people in the hotels, ensuring access to food and other material needs, accompanying people to hospital and other doctor appointments, or dealing with Mears and the Home Office to compel them to relocate vulnerable people. Mike contended that despite the Network did a great job, now it was crucial to create a 'No Evictions Strategy Group' to make sure the actions of the campaign have a political direction and follow specific political goals. This position, which reproduces normative racialized and gendered understandings of activist work, was strongly challenged by Delyse, who argued that political solidarity means 'caring about' and ensuring the wellbeing of our communities: 'If people are unwell, they won't be ready to campaign, and we don't want to do a campaign without those experiencing border violence, or do we?' (Fieldwork Diary, 2nd August 2020). For her, there was not such a valid distinction between campaigning and care work since empowerment and self-care were seen as the first steps for capacity building and therefore campaigning. Recalling her discussion with Mike, she contended:

> 'I realized that it was a deliberate choice not to engage in self-care. I realized that from the get-go it's planned, it's deliberate that this is what we are going to do. It's going to be political. We are not venturing into self-care. When I got off from the Zoom meeting, I realized this was not accidental. People are not going to invest their time and their energy into self-care. For them, their time and energy is to go into political struggle. I don't know how people make a decision like that… We spoke about empowerment in the beginning of the interview… one of the things we need to do is to build capacity. In order to do capacity building, if self-care is not crucial, if I am not at a good place, how are you going to build my capacity?" (Delyse, 4th September 2020).

The strong ties between social reproduction and political organization present in Delyse's discourse constitute a central aspect of Black Power movements, which have linked questions of everyday reproduction of the black community to the articulation of revolutionary politics at other scales (Tyner, 2006). Heynen (2009) evidences how the struggles over social reproduction served as a catalyst and a first step for the Black Panthers Party organizing strategies in the US. The party launched survival programs in many inner-city communities to meet impoverished black communities' day-to-day needs by providing food, healthcare, education, and other welfare services. This mutual aid and direct-action programs were posited as necessary given the contradictions of racialised welfare capitalism.

They were initiated to sustain the social reproduction of their black community, starting at the scale of the individual body but seeking to build a political base to resist US imperialism (Heynen, 2009). This understanding of social reproductive work as constitutive of the political dismantles the division between direct support and campaigning activities as a main strand in black radical organizing. This dichotomy has been largely criticized by feminist movements, which have expanded the notion of the political centering questions of social reproduction and politicizing forms of direct support drawing on the principles of self-organization (Kouki & Chatzidakis, 2021). Indeed, assumptions of direct support as 'non-political' and campaigning work as 'political' relate to patriarchal splits between the public-productive and the private-reproductive, and the different spaces in which these take place. Consequently, the marginalization of social reproductive work within migrant solidarity movements reproduces uneven racialized geographies and deeply gendered constructions of the political.

Furthermore, the politicization of direct support not only disrupts patriarchal binaries but also challenges the paternalistic humanitarian logics of assistance that attempt to depoliticize and commodify the social reproductive dimension of migrant politics. Here, migrant solidarity spaces become grounds to rethink how care practices can be developed in ways that can be empowering and disempowering. The notion of 'self-care' and 'self-organization' emphasizes forms of caring that emerge from the community and for the community and are grounded on equal notions of mutuality and solidarity. In chapter 5 and throughout the thesis, I have criticized the strong humanitarian tradition influencing spaces of migrant solidarity in Glasgow and the limitations of the institutional focus of the campaign. I argue that these factors sometimes favored an association between direct support and humanitarian assistance that left care work during campaigns under the charities' domain, enclosing the transformative potential of social reproductive work in the construction of alternative relations (Caffentzis & Federici, 2015). Engaging with matters of social reproduction, Cindi Katz (2008) criticizes the role of the NGO sector in the professionalization of direct support under disempowering logics, and the effects this has breaking down forms of transformative activism. Towards the last section of the chapter, I expose some of the ways migrant criticisms and agencies in the Network were crucial in contesting these logics.

Overall, migrant experiences and analyses in the Network expose the need to center questions of social reproductive work and deconstruct dichotomic understandings that reproduce patriarchal and paternalist divisions between 'the political' and the 'reproductive'.

In the intersection and the mutually constitutive character of these two is precisely where the concept of 'political reproduction' stands. 'Political reproduction' refers to the constitutive and indispensable character of self-organized social reproductive politics in building oppressed communities' capacity to challenge racialized, gendered, and classed geographies. The deconstruction of dualisms between the political and the reproductive needs to be both discursive – through elaborating narratives and political frameworks that position direct support as political work and a constitutive aspect of political solidarities –, and material – through developing practices based on equality and mutuality that counter the logics of humanitarian assistance. Despite Delyse and other migrant activists powerfully raised important criticisms, later in the chapter I engage with migrant solidarities during Covid to argue that this was achieved only in a partial way. The shortages and contradictions shaping this process evidence chapter's 7 claims that decolonization is always an ongoing learning process through collective struggle and how racialized, gender, and classed dynamics continue to shape counter-hegemonic movements in various ways (Montesinos Coleman & Bassi, 2011).

8.2.3. Social Reproduction and the Uneven Temporalities of Migrant Solidarity Activism

In the fourth section of this chapter I explore some of the important direct support networks built by migrant activist groups in Glasgow to face social reproductive needs in the midst of the pandemic. Supporting over 2000 people across the city, MORE and the Unity Direct Support Group represented two of the main activist efforts to deal with the crisis throughout the lockdown. While MORE was led and run by people 'with lived experiences of the immigration system', Unity's Direct Support Group was coordinated by six European professional women. Unity's Group had to stop their activity with the end of the lockdown in September 2020 due to the exhaustion of its volunteers who also recovered their jobs. Yet, MORE never stopped their direct support work, which nowadays is still ongoing. This example raises important questions around the relationships between social reproductive labor and the temporalities of solidarity struggles, unpacking the ways they vary upon different positionalities of race, gender, and class. Indeed, literature has paid very little attention to the temporal dimension of care politics, drawing on the assumption of social reproduction activities as atemporal and developed throughout women's lifetime. Such atemporal analysis of social reproductive work is also replicated in literature on social movements, which often looks at how social reproductive politics intersect with issues of gender or race but often dismisses how social reproductive roles become affected by the

temporalities of activism. In what follows, I criticize that this marks an important gap, demonstrating that time is a crucial aspect to be considered in the analysis of social reproductive labor and the politics of care within solidarity struggles.

Chapter 7 analyzed how for 'people without lived experiences of the immigration system', mobilization cycles conditioned the moments of active involvement and disengagement, and the kind of activities that were prioritized at each stage. Busy campaigning moments were followed by burnout and disengagement of many of the citizen-activists in the Network. The example starting this discussion replicates again these dynamics in migrant-solidarity spaces beyond the Network, where very different patterns of engagement and disengagement shaped people's 'with' and 'without lived experiences' involvement in the provision of direct support after the critical lockdown situation. Indeed, engagement and disengagement constitute central aspects to consider when addressing questions of political reproduction of social mobilizations and the politics of care, showing who stays in the movement and who leaves after moments of intense media coverage. A key point in my analysis was that shifts upon cycles were deeply gendered: while political campaigning conjunctures were shaped by strong British-male leaderships, periods in between campaigns were characterized by female leaderships, greater participation of migrant voices, and a stronger focus on care and empowerment. On the other hand, when the Network was more focused on political campaigning, 'people without lived experiences' generally forgot about care and direct support work, which was mostly developed by migrants or other allied groups like MORE and Unity.

Within the previous analysis, I argue that something crucial to consider is how the understandings of the temporalities of activism may vary upon different positionalities of race, gender, and class. A core finding in my research is that 'people with lived experiences of the asylum system' handled different temporal frames. Interviews with folk 'with lived experiences of the asylum system' reflect that for most of them, the struggles against the evictions or hotel detention were part of a longer-term fight for their case. On the one hand, this explains that disengagement operates differently in the cases of people with migrant background: they never stopped coming to the meetings after intense moments of campaigning, showing a stronger sense of care about the social space of the Network. On the other hand, they always kept a focus on care as the movement's priority, since it was the basic mean to sustain a long-term struggle within the asylum system. Rather than being diminished, migrant social reproductive work in forms of material and emotional support

was intensified in campaigning moments since these were critical conjunctures of racial capitalist offensive when direct support was more necessary than ever.

Nevertheless, the fact that refugee activism is generally very tied to the personal struggles to win an asylum case, added to the intensity of such struggles – which come to comprise all aspects of one person's life – also raises further problems in relation to the temporalities of migrant activism. When people get papers, they often get disengaged from the movement and sometimes they cannot care for others. Either because they need to start a new life, because they have no economic means to sustain themselves, or because they are burnt enough that need to move on and walk away from activism. This also creates an important problem in relation to the creation of long-term leaderships. In words of Graham Campbell, SNP councilor for Springburn who has a long trajectory of involvement in refugee activism,

> 'a problem that we have is that once people get established as a refugee activist, when they win their cases, you nearly always, 90% of the time, lose them from activism. You can understand why, because if you have spent five or ten years of your life fighting for the right to have a life, once you get it, first of all you have to relax, and then think about what your normal life is going to be. Then once you have your normal life, you might even not be in the area where you fought and won your case, you might be living somewhere else now. So very quickly the refugee communities have had problems in building permanent organizations, because they keep losing their leaders, either to success or failure, by the way. Successful applicants often move away, no longer are connected with the community in the same way, so you have to keep building these new leaders to build groups around' (Graham Campbell, 26th February 2020).

In this quote, Graham introduces a central aspect shaping social reproductive labor and the temporalities of migrant solidarity activism and which refers to emotional drain and burnout. Although burnout has been largely addressed in several works on migrant solidarity (Tyler, 2012; King, 2016 ; Márquez, 2021), literature focuses on citizen-activists, while little attention is paid to the aspects Graham was analyzing above and how burnout affects those with migrant backgrounds. Burnout generally appears conceptualized as the distinctive mental drain resulting from activist's exposure to situations of heavy stress and hardship, ignoring other forms of political drain which inevitably shape all kinds of political campaigns. This focus on citizen-activist's mental burnout implicitly reproduces assumptions of citizen-activists as 'carers' and migrants as those 'being cared' within humanitarian logics. Towards the end of the chapter, I criticize some of the limitations of the migrant support networks that flourished in Glasgow during the pandemic, arguing that sometimes they were informed by service models and humanitarian logics. As exposed in

the beginning of this section, racialized divisions between those 'caring' and 'cared for' marked the termination of Unity's Direct Support Group activities after the lockdown. The six European women volunteering in the group needed to recover their jobs, also sharing in the last meeting of the group that they were suffering mental and emotional drain and even trauma after the work done during that time, expressing they needed to quit for some time (Fieldwork Diary, 30th August 2020).

Despite the exclusions in literature, burnout and mental drain were topics that came out in many of my interviews with migrants and asylum seekers in the Network, showing different experiences that evidence a problematic omission. Samir, who was fighting against hotel detention in the McClays Hotel, told me how 'after all that happened… after all this stress… we got burned, like everyone else… so we decided "just let's stay in the hotels, c'est la vie, this is how it is". We have got very tired to talk about specific things… we need to go and talk about something else. I can see people, they talk to me more relaxed and getting a little bit back to their normal life' (Samir, 29th July 2020). Here, Samir shares a kind of political burnout rooted in the practice of asylum seekers' own agency and which radically differs from the notions of burnout that dominate discussions on migrant solidarities, which most of the times is focused on citizen-activists' exposure to situations of hardship through their involvement in supportive actions. Rather, Samir's approach to burnout recalls Delyse's assertion of people's responses to border violences shaping black cartographies of struggle: 'Sometimes you shut down, your body shut down, your brain shut down, your spirit is like your strength, you have no strength… and this is why we are talking about self-care, self-care is crucial in these times' (Delyse, 4th September 2020). This sets a distinctive approach that links discussions around burnout to the lived experiences of migration and the previous idea of 'self-care', again emphasizing the constitutive character of 'political reproduction'. The next section precisely engages with some of the self-caring spaces opened-up by migrants in the Network that contributed to people's empowerment and unity, mitigating burnout, and encouraging struggle. It looks at 'storytelling' as a key form through which social reproductive politics were performed within the Network.

8.3. Migrant Voices: Storytelling Workshops, Collection of Testimonies, and other Migrant-Led Initiatives within the No Evictions Network

As a political practice and strategy, storytelling is gaining increasing importance in the context migrant rights movements globally, disclosing as a powerful political tool for those whose voices are excluded from the public political realm (Swerts, 2015). Under the

label of storytelling, I include all the practices of the Network oriented to share and communicate the personal stories of 'people with lived experiences of the asylum system', both externally – e.g., in the form of public communications or political demands – and internally – in safe internal organizational spaces. Although these practices were both informal and formal, storytelling became progressively incorporated into the Network's organizational activities as a result from the demands and needs of members with migrant backgrounds. Throughout the argument, I demonstrate how practices of storytelling in the Network became a key political tool in the development of counter-narratives of asylum (Fernandes, 2017; Erwin, 2021), community-building (Swerts, 2015; Polletta, 1998), mobilization (Mohanty, 2003; Erwin, 2021) and claims-making (Swerts, 2015). I conclude with an analysis of the problematics and challenges of storytelling as a political practice.

8.3.1. The Role of Storytelling in the Construction of Counter-Hegemonic Political Imaginaries of Migration

The politics of storytelling can create counter-narratives that disarticulate problematic dominant storylines of migrants and refugees within the social imagination (Erwin, 2020). This is particularly relevant in a context in which the far-right and proliferating forms of contemporary right-wing populism are themselves increasingly making use of storytelling to promote hate speeches and gain electoral support. The criminalization of asylum seekers, the dangers of the 'border crossings', or ideas of insecurity are not elaborated in abstract terms but often promoted through the communication of individual racist stories concerning people's everyday lives. For instance, analyzing the strategies of the far-right party VOX in Madrid (Spain), I have addressed elsewhere how racism was promoted by media through the sharing of fake stories of 'unaccompanied migrant minors mugging old women' in working-class neighborhoods (Santamarina, 2021). Writing at the dawn of Thatcherism and neoliberalism, Stuart Hall analyzed how the 'policing of the crisis' and the growth in repressive state apparatuses became articulated in racist stories that appealed to people's everyday lives (Hall, et al., 2013 [1978]). Since asylum matters and the 'migration crisis' are the central node in contemporary racist discourses and a key racialized way in which 'the crisis' is lived (Hall, 2018 [1980]) – not only in the UK but elsewhere –, it is increasingly important that solidarity movements and particularly migrant self-organized spaces work towards the production of alternative meanings and stories. Explaining the importance of storytelling, Delyse argues that

> ‘dehumanizing begins with a story. When the Nazis were dehumanizing Jewish people, all they had to do is to tell a story that they were inferior. It starts with a story and it starts with an ideology… What we see on television is we are asylum seekers and we are here to steal. For us, in order to break that down, it’s about telling your own story, owning your own narrative” (Delyse, 4th September 2020).

Here, storytelling is conceived as a means for asylum seekers to challenge the hegemonic political imaginaries around migration promoted by racist media and political discourses in the UK. The quote above also inspires a strong sense of agency where migrants own and produce their stories. Storytelling becomes hence a site for constructing hegemony through the creation of counter-narratives that break down the narratives told by mainstreaming political discourses (Fernandes, 2017). In what follows, I draw attention to some of the ways the Network achieved this through communicating alternative voices. Beyond this external impact, the discussion emphasizes the various ways storytelling operated as a tool towards re-empowerment, community-building, and healing; all of them necessary steps for ‘political reproduction’, linking to the ideas raised in the previous sections.

8.3.2. Practicing Politics of Storytelling: The ‘Storytelling Group’ and the Collection of Testimonies

Storytelling was practiced in different ways and with different goals within the Network. It took two main shapes: Firstly, the demands of people with migrant backgrounds to have a space to share their stories took shape in the creation of a ‘No Evictions Storytelling Group’. Secondly, storytelling was also performed through the anonymous collection of lived testimonies of people facing evictions or in hotel detention. In the two cases, the aim was to center migrant voices within the Network, both in terms of the internal dynamics and the external communications, situating people’s experiences in the center of the movement’s narratives.

The ‘No Evictions Storytelling Group’ appeared as a non-mixed self-organized group by migrants in the Network. The creation of non-mixed spaces in solidarity struggles is inspired in historical feminist and antiracist forms of organizing and it is intended at opening spaces of reflexivity and action free from structural oppression. The idea behind it was to create a safe space where people ‘with lived experiences of the asylum system’ could share their stories and select some of them to be shared in a public performance. Katy contends that ‘sharing stories was something that came out again and again in meetings’.

She reckons that 'what people wanted from the meetings or from No Evictions was just actually a space to come and be heard in a world where they are ignored or dismissed, not necessarily drive the campaign in any direction or think about the strategy of the campaign' (Katy, 30th September 2020). At this point, 'sticking to the agenda', 'planning actions' and certain notions of 'discipline' discussed in chapter 6 became subtle ways to silence voices and reproduce uneven power relationships by privileged activists with strong political backgrounds, in line with some of the dynamics analyzed in the previous two chapters. Collective reflexivity attempted to reverse these dynamics precisely through opening-up this space of mutual support.

As an internal process, storytelling bolstered strong friendship bonds and a collective sense of community. The workshops on Friday evenings were followed by a community meal where people came along with their families and socialize. In my interviews, asylum seekers told me that 'people in the asylum system tend to hide their situation from their own communities', in a context where being an asylum seeker is a 'mark of lower social status' (Ayesha and Hamza, 13th December 2019). Storytelling broke this systemic isolation and allowed asylum seekers to share their everyday struggles and find a space of mutuality, in what Swerts (2015: 350) has addressed as a 'collectivization of personal experiences and a personalization of collective experiences'. The emotional transaction taking place through this process was strongly linked to feelings that ranged from anger to empowerment opening the potential for making connections and friendships (Askins, 2016). Although for obvious reasons I did not attend any of the non-mixed workshops, I have several notes from meetings where the sharing of everyday stories – e.g. how Serco's housing officers use to come into peoples' houses without previous notice nor knocking the door – led to collective expressions of anger that triggered a strong sense of unity and became translated in the articulation of particular demands. Here, testimonies and life story narratives bolstered the development of a collective political consciousness (Mohanty, 2003). It operated as a 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (Freire, 1975 [1968]), whereby people in the Network reflected about the structural violence oppressing them as a collective beyond their own individual experiences of evictions or hardship. This process involved questions of self-examination, overcoming fear, traumas, and challenging internal racism, creating a feeling of unity in struggle (Fanon, 2008 [1952]; hooks, 2013). In this regard, storytelling enhances and moves beyond the 'terapeutic effects' of political activism (Kouki & Chatzidakis, 2021).

Externally, storytelling also played a key role in the communications of the Network. On the one hand, the 'Storytelling Group' decided to create a series of workshops aimed at

organizing a public performance to tell the people of Glasgow a selection of the stories that people were sharing in the safe space of the group. Nasima, facilitator of these workshops, recalls how they 'got the CCA – a prominent venue in the center of Glasgow – to agree to give the space and the idea was that in July 2020 we would do a performance' and have a 'shared conversation with the rest of Glasgow' (Nasima, 21st October 2020). Theatre performances have been used as forms of political resistance to racial and capitalist oppression (Erwin, 2021). When I asked about the dynamics of the group, Nasima highlighted how the elaboration of the performance was a collective process, where people who wanted to share a story were 'getting dynamic feedback from others' in a way that individual stories were going to be told 'in a way we all discussed'. They also planned to include some music: 'Hina, Sannaf, and a couple of other women were part of a choir, so as a storytelling we thought it might be quite nice to have a bit of singing' (Nasima, 21st October 2020). Overall, Nasima highlighted that 'if you can share your story with people and take them into your world then I think it's better for community cohesion and challenge hostility… Asylum seekers have concerns you can empathize with and that's really important'. McGarry (2018) foregrounds the role of theatre as transformative and catalyst for conscientization through empathetic learning. Although the outbreak of the pandemic frustrated the performance, the collective bonds forged during the workshops were crucial in encouraging practices of friendship, mutual care, and support during the first moments of the lockdown. In this regard, storytelling triggered important processes of 'political reproduction'.

Storytelling was also widely used by the Network to promote political mobilization and attract the interest of media and sympathetic politicians. A core tactic consisted of the militant gathering of testimonies of people with lived experiences of the evictions or hotel detention to elaborate media releases, mobilize the community, and articulate political claims. Testimonies were collected by a 'No Evictions Testimonies Group' following an internal guidance to ensure the anonymity and literality of people's accounts. This strategy was inspired by initiatives like 'Detained Voices', an activist project that gathers oral and written testimonies of stories, experiences and demands by people held in UK immigration detention centers. People offering testimonies could choose how they wanted their words to be used, which were generally published in the Network's social media, and communicated as anonymous quotes to the press and politicians. Through these practices, storytelling allowed sharing hidden stories and silenced voices, as well as connecting everyday practices to large-scale political issues (Hall, 2020). Although this was a way to make sure people could make their voices be heard avoiding risking their status, there were also cases of

asylum seekers wanting to give their testimonies in media, often seeking advice in the 'Comms Group', which operated as a key supportive structure – alerting about right-wing media, recommending people to not show their faces, or concerting interviews with people wanting to express their voices.

8.3.3. The Limitations of Storytelling Practices

Overall, this section has evidenced how storytelling became a central political strategy in the Network, both internally – fostering empowerment, mutuality, and emotional support – and externally – through the articulation of political demands, media communications, and mobilizing strategies. Nevertheless, the politics of storytelling also entailed some problematics that warrant further discussion. Very often, asylum seekers' stories within the group, the media communications and testimonies had a very strong focus on hardship and vulnerability. For instance, a testimony of someone in hotel detention published on the 29th of June of 2020 reads 'The hotel is not safe, we are scared people, we don't know who to trust, we are afraid to take the lift, we are locking ourselves in our room'. Denouncing last summer's deaths in the Channel, the Network also spoke about 'desperate families' being sent to France because 'we' – the UK – 'don't wanna do our bit' (No Evictions Facebook, 25th November 2021). These narratives have disclosed as particularly effective in a conjuncture in which emotional language and the 'politics of compassion' dominate great part of the left-wing approaches to migration. Nevertheless, compassion reflects a colonizing ethic that seeks to find the emotional empathy of the dominator culture and depoliticizes migrant struggles (Sirriyeh, 2018). Very often, I argue that the Network failed in countering this discourse, reproducing the hegemonic political imaginaries on asylum and migration. Rather, echoing bell hooks, 'challenging and eliminating an ethos of victimhood is essential to black-determination and self-actualization' (hooks, 2013: 198). In this regard, I argue that it is important to foreground that storytelling as a political act requires a politics of complexity, strategizing the stories we want to share and how we want to share them, in order to avoid dominant narratives of victimhood (Erwin, 2021; Fernandes, 2017). In such way, movements might need to think about the terms they are using and how they relate to hegemonic narratives of migration. Rather than seeking to reproduce a 'politics of compassion' compelling to people's humanitarian reason (Sirriyeh, 2018), an antiracist politics of storytelling entail making visible migrant narratives and trajectories of agency. This is a form of challenging 'internal racism' (Fanon, 2008 [1952]) and the subjection of black minds to the 'mystifications of the very racist ideology which imprison and define them' (Hall, 1986: 26), and which assigns them to a particular place in relation to the

political. Beyond storytelling, the next section looks at some of these trajectories in the conjuncture of the Covid19's racial crisis, where migrant collectives built important political infrastructures of survival and 'political reproduction'.

8.4. Social Reproduction, Racial Capitalism, and the Pandemic: Migrant Solidarities in Glasgow during Covid

This section looks at social reproductive politics within migrant solidarity movements in Glasgow during the pandemic, addressing this conjuncture as a profoundly racialized crisis where matters of survival and self-care gained a central importance. Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic has situated care and social reproductive politics at the core of the left-wing solidarity responses to the crisis, triggering the proliferation of heterogeneous networks of mutual help and support worldwide (The Care Collective, 2020; Jun & Lance, 2020; Pleyers, 2020; Della Porta & Steinhilper, 2021; Gilmore, 2020). Mostly organized from the bottom-up and often focused at the neighborhood level (Kavada, 2020), these networks have exposed the deeply racialized, classed, and gendered dimensions of the crisis. Against the slogan that 'we are all in this together', grassroots solidarities emerged addressing the uneven impact of the pandemic within their communities. In different spaces across the world, impressive steps have been taken entirely at the grassroots, involving forming coalitions and organizations which expanded their work to matters of food insecurity, collective economies, mental health support, grassroots domestic violence support and other activities that became crucial to ensure community well-being (Jun & Lance, 2020). In so doing, many of these networks have implicitly put in practice some of the principles of feminist and Black Power organizing around community care and social reproduction, and they have performed some key elements of autonomous politics such as mutual aid, prefiguration, horizontal organization, and rejection of coercive authority. The crisis of social reproduction and the limits set by lockdown policies to claim-based street mobilizations provoked a shift to locally embedded solidarity initiatives tackling social reproductive community needs. Addressing similar moves in the aftermath of the Greek crisis, Kouki & Chatzidakis (2021) explore how turns towards social reproductive politics embraces feminist principles and solidarity cultures in practice. The rise of feminist movements, anti-austerity, and Black Lives Matter mobilizations during the past decade across the world have set important grounds for the principles and practices developed by support networks during the pandemic.

In many places, community networks often got involved with migrant self-organized and solidarity groups in setting up support to local migrant and refugee communities, in a global conjuncture that was shaped not only by an intensification of border violence against migrants (Milan & Trere, 2020; Libal, et al., 2021) but also by the antiracism inspired by the rise of the Black Lives Matter mobilizations that followed the brutal assassination of the Afro American George Floyd by the US police in the midst of the pandemic. Intersections between race, class, gender, and mobility make migration a very complex terrain, where a heterogeneity of precarious situations converge – homelessness, access to health systems, racism, institutional violence, legal status, financial struggle, etc. – reaching unprecedented levels during the pandemic and turning social reproductive politics into a matter of survival. Since social reproductive politics are racial issues (Roberts, 1997) and capitalist crisis are fought over social reproduction (Federici, 2019), I have already argued how black forms of political organizing have historically drawn attention to the importance of enhancing self-care through community-based social reproduction strategies (Heynen, 2009; Tyner, 2006).

This section explores how different grassroots organizations supporting local communities and refugees in Glasgow built informal networks that practiced powerful social reproductive politics of care against a situation of critical poverty and extreme precarity. Firstly, I analyze the pandemic as a racial crisis, addressing the ways it had a particular impact over asylum seekers and racialized populations in Glasgow, and how it became a conjuncture for the expansion of the political economy of the border in line with the workings of racial capitalism. Secondly, I draw on my fieldwork with migrant groups in the city during the pandemic to deepen my arguments around the racialized, gendered, and classed character of social reproductive politics within the Network.

8.4.1. A Racial Crisis: The Covid Pandemic in Glasgow

The question of human mobility is inextricably tied to the Covid pandemic, exposing the uneven classed and racialized power geometries shaping the processes of mobility and immobility (Massey, 1999). While the virus travelled by hand of financial capitals and the hypermobility characterizing contemporary global capitalism, the crisis became an opportunity to reinforce exclusionary migration policies and violent border regimes against ‘undesired’ populations, coupled with renovated nationalist exclusionary discourses. Libal et. al. (2021) denounce that the impact of the Covid pandemic on the millions of people forced to migrate for safety and economic reasons has received little attention. Troubling situations include tougher entry restrictions, the expansion of the detention state,

implementation of deportation policies, rising economic hardship, overcrowded camps, or lack of access to health systems. The racialization of the crisis is also reflected in the ways in which migrants have been blamed for the spread of the virus, not only as carriers through the act of border-crossings but also as urban dwellers with communitarian-based 'cultures' and 'bad habits' (Bieber, 2022), linking to longstanding tropes of pathologizing poor racialized minorities and migrants.

Recalling Ruth Gilmore's definition of racism as the 'state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death', the Covid pandemic unfolds as a racial crisis. Twenty-nine asylum seekers lost their life in asylum accommodation in the UK during 2020 (The Guardian, 15th December 2020) and reports have addressed the deadly global impact of the management of the crisis on racialized populations and people with migrant backgrounds across uneven geographies (Amnesty International, 2020; Milan & Trere, 2020). In Glasgow, three asylum seekers died in only the months between May and August in 2020. The 5th of May, Adnan Walid Elbi, who was experiencing trauma after fleeing the war in Syria, took his life inside his room of the McClays Hotel (Grayson, 2020)[32]. He was moved there alongside hundreds of other asylum seekers also expelled from their private accommodations and placed into hotel accommodation by Mears. The pandemic meant an opportunity for *Mears* to deal with their own housing crisis, since the company was struggling to find cheap and affordable flats in a city experiencing rising rents and processes of urban regeneration over the past decades. Mears found in hotel accommodation a profitable solution, showing again how capitalist reproduction and racism intersect in critical conjunctures. Besides, Serco – the previous contractor that still holds a £6.8m contract for the provision of asylum accommodation in several areas of England – expects to double its profits on back of Covid contracts after expanding their activities to run large parts of the NHS test-and-trace service (The Guardian, 30th June 2021; The Guardian, 24th February 2022). Despite the 'Stop Hotel Detention Campaign' emerged to denounce the seriousness of the situation within the hotels – where asylum seekers were being denied the right to self-isolate, access to cash, mental health support and even medical assistance (see Guma, et al., 2021) –, a new incident took place on the 26th of June when Baddredin Bosh, who had been forced to self-isolate for 28 days in his room, was shot dead by the police after stabbing five people in the Park Inn Hotel in the midst of a mental health crisis (Aljazeera, 26th June 2021). Both Baddredin and Adnan had reported mental health problems to *Mears* that were ignored for days before they died. Only

[32] https://irr.org.uk/article/adnan-olbeh-killed-by-the-state/

two months after this incident, Mercy Baguma, who was financially struggling after her right to work in the UK expired having to claim asylum, was found dead in her flat in Govan (The Guardian, 25th August 2020).

In effect, these were not isolated cases, and they expose how struggles over social reproduction and survival reveal the underlying workings of racial capitalism accentuating a conjuncture of extreme economic poverty and mental health hardship for migrant communities in the city. Alongside hotel detention, the lockdown meant that physical spaces of community and support shut down, leading to an exacerbation of material hardship and isolation where access to essentials became a matter of survival. The £35 Home Office weekly financial support of people seeking asylum has never been enough to cover basic needs. Asylum seekers in the UK rely on charities, foodbanks, and often illegal work to be able to survive and make a living, what creates strong cultures of dependency and makes asylum seekers vulnerable to exploitation. The inaccessibility of these resources shaped unprecedented geographies of migrant food poverty in the city, a situation that was further aggravated in the case of those who were destitute, did not have a legal status in the country, or couldn't face their financial obligations. Umar, Nigerian activist from *MORE* who has been supporting migrant communities during the pandemic notes how he was 'going to folk that are like… "I'm in debt, I can't work, I have HRAs to pay, I've got council tax to pay, and I don't know how I can get support to reduce all these arrears where there are no jobs" (Umar, 13th October 2020). Financial struggles and social isolation were accentuated by the experiences of waiting – a core element structuring the British Asylum System (Gill, 2016) – since the Home Office ceased its activity processing asylum applications, with many asylum seekers finding their cases 'stopped'. Overall, Umar reckons that 'people are struggling in different ways, the impact can be overwhelming for some people and a lot of people have attempted suicide, things are becoming so difficult that they can't keep going, they want to go, to take their lives' (Umar, 13th October 2020).

Umar's testimony denotes the centrality of 'self-care' and mental health issues within a very critical situation, where people were lacking economic means and any sort of psychological support. The ways race, class, legal status, or gender intersected in the lived experiences of the pandemic led to the extreme marginalization of asylum-seeking communities, exacerbated by the closure of charities, integration networks, and the generalized inability of the third sector organizations to give a response to a social reproduction crisis of these dimensions. In this conjuncture, the self-organized solidarities of migrant groups and networks was key in building the means for collective survival. The

next section draws attention to the caring practices and social reproductive strategies staged by these groups during the pandemic in Glasgow, addressing the ways they set an impressive example of solidarity, mutual support, and political advocacy. In so doing, the analysis brings to the fore the uneven conditions in which care work was developed in this conjuncture, emphasizing the need of exploring reproductive experiences based on racial, gendered, and classed locations.

8.4.2. Experiences of Care and Solidarity in Glasgow

This section explores the politics of care staged by migrant solidarity groups in Glasgow during the Covid-19 pandemic, arguing that these experiences exposed the deeply racialized character of social reproductive politics in migrant activist spaces. Hence, I address some of the ways migrant-led groups like MORE, Zagros or Unity pushed forward collective strategies that tackled the impacts of the pandemic upon their communities, whereas the Network sometimes failed in addressing social reproductive issues. I assert that such division was not accidental, and reproduced the breach between social reproductive work and campaigning analyzed earlier on in the chapter and which responds to racialized and gendered imaginaries of the political. Despite work has drawn attention to the strong gendered patterns shaping social reproductive politics within migrant solidarity spaces (Kapsali, 2020), their racialized dimension is generally overlooked and remains unexplored in literature. Rather, I develop here a nuanced engagement with race and with the ways Black Geographies shape struggles over social reproduction, moving towards a more comprehensive account of the agencies shaping politics of care within migrant solidarity spaces.

While social reproductive politics constituted the main priority for migrant-led groups during the pandemic, the No Evictions Network often failed in caring about its relationships with the migrant community during this time. On the one hand, the Network often relegated care and social reproductive work either to the previous groups or to charities and third sector organizations. On the other, the asylum families who were active in the meetings before the lockdown were left aside when the Network started campaigning against hotel detention. The Network did not check on them nor made concrete efforts to include them in the new online campaign (Fieldwork Diary, May 2020). Lucy reckons this failure when she claims ‘we failed in taking care of the relationships, people were just focused on writing letters to Mears’ (Lucy, 7th October 2020). This meant that the Network lost part of its previous migrant social basis and a focused more in ‘formal’ forms of political

campaigning. To give another example, after the far-right attack to the 'Stop Hotel Detention' demo in June 2020, the Network was very concerned about dealing with media and challenging the criticisms coming from the third sector whereas Samir and Abdo, who actually participated in the demo, told me they felt very disappointed by not being contacted by anyone from the Network after the attack (Fieldwork Diary, June 2020). Both the 'outsourcing' of direct support work and the few examples outlined above evidence the Network's failure to embrace its struggles building caring links with the communities. This lack of care was not accidental, and it radically contrasts with the attitudes of many of the 'people with lived experiences' participating in the Network. For instance, Hamza, Hina, Aisha and others phoned me periodically during the first months of the lockdown because they knew that I was doing my PhD away from my family and they wanted to check if I was alright (Fieldwork Diary, May 2020). Aisha also told me that although most of the people were not participating in the Network's online meetings anymore, they were supporting each other on a daily basis. She got successful in her application for the *Zakat* funding spending it on buying *halal* meat for four different families from the Network (Fieldwork Diary, 25th April 2020). The previous notes show divergent collective and individual approaches to social reproduction and the politics of care. They demonstrate how while social reproductive political work was outsourced and assumed by other groups, migrants in the Network did develop strong caring and mutual support relationships with each other. The lived experiences of the pandemic as a dire social reproductive crisis brought people to develop collective survival strategies, linking to earlier discussions in the chapter on how the workings of racial capitalism situate struggles over social reproduction at the core of Black experiences of struggle (Heynen, 2009).

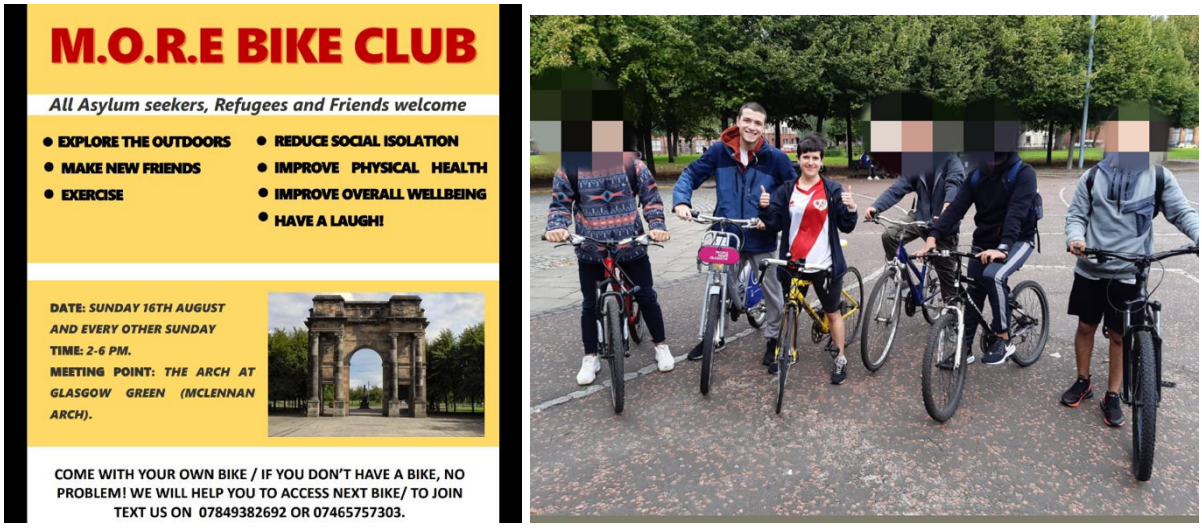
Mutual support strategies were not limited to individualized relations. By the contrary, different migrant-led groups in Glasgow started to work together during the pandemic to reinvent forms to break isolation, food poverty, emotional hardship, and lack of access to health amongst their communities, building a strong structure of support at the edges of racial capitalism. A main way in which isolation was broken was through MORE's 'Phone Top-up' initiative, which aimed to ensure that everyone in the immigration system had access to internet data to keep in touch with their families, friends, lawyers, and GPs during the pandemic. Actively involved in the team, Umar claims that 'people seeking international protection in the UK only get £5 per day so they can't afford to top-up their phones most of the time. MORE wants to make sure people have access to connection and information' (Umar, 13th October 2020). Since one of the main campaigns of *MORE* is about asylum seekers' and refugees' access to education, the group has also been supporting people

with laptops and devices to join Zoom classes. This initiative also favored political connections and participation, since it opened the door of the online spaces of activism and encounter to those who were so far excluded from the pandemic's virtual worlds.

Migrant-led initiatives also sought to directly tackle food poverty amongst the community. The situation in the hotels, where people had no access to cash, together with the poorness of the food provided by foodbanks and the criticisms on the profit made by big capitalist companies like Asda or Tesco with the 'food vouchers' offered by the third sector organizations, pushed MORE to start a 'Dignified Access for Food' (DAF) initiative, which consisted in providing cash support allowing people to access meat and food in their local community shops. Indeed, Umar contends that the ambition of the DAF project was 'to support people to buy culturally-based food' (Umar, 13th October 2020). MORE 'supports people to buy their countries' food themselves and access the food they want to eat, not what people and charities want to offer them'. Alongside MORE's DAF initiative, the Unity Centre organized a 'Direct Support' group, which organized teams in five different areas in the city supporting over 100 households weekly. The group was fully coordinated by women and unlike MORE, no people 'with lived experiences of the immigration system' were involved. Zagros – the Kurdish-Scottish association – also addressed food poverty in the hotels, delivering food packs to anybody in hotel detention during the pandemic.

Beyond fighting against hunger, support to access health care was also crucial, particularly considering the negligence of the NHS Asylum Bridging Team and the constant denial of access to health care to those staying in the hotels (Bella Caledonia, 16th June 2020). Volunteers of MORE, Unity, and Zagros often accompanied people to the hospital, dentist or GP appointments, and raised formal complaints to the public authorities denouncing the failure of Scottish institutions to meet asylum seekers' rights during the pandemic (Refugees for Justice, 2020). Emotional support became essential, provided through a spreadsheet system that allowed volunteers of MORE and Unity to keep in regular touch with over 2000 people across Glasgow, sharing conversations over the phone and resourcing mental health support when need. The fact that MORE achieved to involve some of the people receiving support as new volunteers made possible the practice of mutual support in different languages –Arabic, French, Farsi, Urdu, Hindi, Spanish, Kurdish, etc. Throughout this process, emotional transactions turned material support into strong links amongst people in the community, often developing in friendships (Askins, 2016). An example of this community-building outcome was the creation of a 'Cycling Club' amongst people involved

in MORE, asylum-seeking families, and people staying in the hotels which organized fortnightly cycling routes once restrictions became eased.



Pictures from MORE's bike club advertising poster and one of the trips in which we cycled from Glasgow Green to Loch Lomond and back, August 2020. Source: Own camera.

Very often, migrant-led initiatives were supported by the people of Glasgow. This was the case of the impressive wave of solidarity that followed the incident in the Park Inn Hotel. With the hotel declared crime scene, people were left without their personal belongings. The Unity Centre, in coordination with other migrant activist groups, made a call to the community for the donation of clothes and mobile phones that would be collected in Unity's office the following day. This resulted in thousands of donations from neighbors in Glasgow which were stored in GAS and distributed by a group of volunteers amongst all the hotels (Glasgow Live, 29th June 2020).

Volunteers helping to organize the donations at the Unity Centre, 01/07/20. Source: Unity Centre

Overall, in all the previous experiences, direct support meant more than delivering food packages, accompanying people to appointments, or providing clothes or phone top-ups to people. Rather, these strategies shared a focus on the relationships with people and were aimed at what Delyse addresses as 'capacity building' through establishing the basis for further links and bonds amongst communities. On the one hand, these solidarities were not isolated but 'acted in Network' (Routledge, 2003), generating new connections between grassroots organizations. Very often, migrant-led groups sought the collaboration of community associations such as Maslows, Bikes for Refugees, the Glasgow Gurdwaras, Cranhill Development Trust, Al Khair Foundation and others strengthening the links amongst them. Here, the forging of new coalitions and networks between very different organizations – from political groups, to churches, community spaces, neighbors, etc. – inspired a powerful sense of solidarity that adds on to the histories of the dispersal city and which echoes other activist grassroots networked geographies of the pandemic across the world (Pleyers, 2020; Gilmore, 2020). On the other hand, a core difference that characterized these solidarities is that they were often organized and provided by migrants. They sought to involve those receiving support in the organization's practices of mutual support, through delivering food and money, translating, chatting with other asylum seekers, etc. At this point, social reproductive solidarity politics during the pandemic not only became the means for many migrants to survive but also to construct 'struggling communities' that may be the seeds of future transformative politics and political change (Arampatzi, 2017; Johanson and Vintagen, 2019). Through caring about relationships, migrant agencies pushed a re-politicization of direct support achieving to build models that contested the power dynamics involved in the hegemonic charitable service approach. As such, they staged an example of politics of care that fostered mutual aid, empowerment, and capacity building.

Nevertheless, as anticipated in chapter 7, I argue that this success was only partial and there were important gaps that deserve consideration. Firstly, very often the ways activist spaces dealt with direct support sometimes reproduced the 'humanitarian common sense', not always contributing to people's empowerment. Drawing on my own experience as one of the members of the Unity Direct Support Group, I wrote how

> 'with time, I became a bit critical about what was being done with the group. We established a system of checking on people, signposting them to different organizations for different kinds of support, collecting food from foodbanks, and bringing it to people's houses. Initially this was manageable, but when we ended up with over 100 households to cover amongst 6 people, it became a service: we just ring people to offer food, arrange the deliveries, and bring the stuff. Sometimes this

> created good relationships with people, but other times it generated problematic dynamics. We started receiving daily calls from people in our phones asking for food to be delivered, sometimes including a shopping list. This wasn't addressed as a problem in the meetings as people just spoke in the language of 'capacity' and 'stress', but I wasn't very comfortable with the underlying dynamics. We were assuming people were vulnerable and we were acting in quite vertical and humanitarian ways to the point that sometimes it was difficult to explain people that Unity wasn't a charity' (Fieldwork Diary, 17th August 2020).

Indeed, challenging charity logics in a system in which they were deeply rooted sometimes turned very difficult, particularly considering that no one in the Unity Direct Support Group had 'lived experiences of the asylum system'. In this regard, the exceptionality and urgency of the pandemic's situation deeply affected activist's personal and political limits. I learnt from my personal experience that critical moments often pushed people to do things that they considered politically problematic in terms of power dynamics but that became justified by the extreme conjuncture. In this regard, the fact that institutions and charities were not being responsive to the challenges raised by the pandemic led to a situation in which the gap left by their inactivity became filled by political activism. Feminist scholars have signaled the 'double character of social reproduction' within capitalist societies and how it is inscribed in a dialectical relation where domination and refusal are indivisible (Jeffries, 2018). Hence, activist social reproductive work was at the same time filling the institutional gap and building the means for people's survival (Katz, 2008). In this regard, the contradictory character of grassroots responses to institutional gaps in the pandemic has been signaled in current debates (Leap, et al., 2022). At times, the work of the previous organizations contested state logics but at other times it was deeply shaped by them. Tensions between disruption and reproduction have indeed been a key focus in critical literature on migration (Swerts & Nicholls, 2021; Swyngedouw, 2021; Swerts, 2021). Clear evidence of this contradictory character was the role of funding in enabling many of MORE's activities. Although part of the funds were raised through self-organized fundraisings, the bulk of the organization's funding came from grant applications to different left-wing agencies and foundations. In this regard, research has signaled the role of funding in the cooptation and social control of antiracist struggles (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 2005), with discussions around money being a central problematic within migrant activist spaces. Furthermore, the level of demand of work that MORE was facing led them to use part of their money to pay some volunteers. This replicates service cultures where peoples' agencies and skill-sharings become overshadowed by formalized hierarchical structures and assignments of tasks between 'staff members' and 'volunteers'. The next section pushes

forward some of these arguments addressing the hybrid character of the political solidarities built throughout the 'no evictions' and the 'stop hotel detention' campaigns.

8.5. In between 'Radical' and 'Humanitarian' Care Politics: Processes of Hybridization Through the 'No Evictions' and 'Stop Hotel Detention' Campaigns

This section builds upon some of the previous developments to discuss some of the ways migrants' social reproductive politics challenged the hegemonic humanitarian logics that dominate the asylum policy framework in Glasgow, pushing forward asylum seekers' voices and contesting disempowering charity narratives and practices. Nevertheless, research findings demand problematizing the strict division that exists between 'humanitarian' and 'autonomous' forms of solidarity in literature (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020), since the campaign was shaped by complex dynamics of hybridization between the different organizations involved (Della Porta & Steinhilper, 2021). In this sense, Karaliotas (2021: 491) has observed the 'impurity of democratic politics', arguing that processes of de-politicization and re-politicization 'intersect, become entangled, and are mutually constitutive'. Overall, I argue that despite the limitations addressed along this thesis, the solidarities built through the 'no evictions campaign' transformed the relationships between the asylum-seeking community, migrant groups, and charities. Coming from a position in which caring means, first and foremost, recognizing people's agency to have a say and build their own means for political change, the Network challenged the exclusions of migrant voices from the political terrain and contested humanitarian and monetarized understandings of care.

In our interview after the 'summer of the evictions', Liam addressed how the Network had been 'facing a lot of pressure from the charities who were saying like "look, please, don't approach asylum seekers to get involved in your campaign, or even refugees, because they are too vulnerable and too sensitive at the moment… they have mental health issues, they don't want to get involved, it's too political" (Liam, 23rd November 2019). This quote captures the initial approach of the Coalition towards the struggles against the evictions and the 'problematic' role of the Network, reflecting a long-standing common sense on asylum matters amongst the Glaswegian third sector which operates as a disciplining discourse that denies the agency of migrant subjects and depoliticizes care. In what follows, I demonstrate some of the ways the solidarities between the Network, the Coalition, and migrant struggles reshaped this common sense through contentious processes

of negotiation that led to a situation in which the Network and the Coalition 'complemented one another' (Lauren, 7th August 2020).

In the outbreak of the campaign against Serco evictions, meetings of the Coalition gathered 'all service models where there wouldn't be a single person with lived experiences of the asylum system in the room' and where 'everyone was making decisions on behalf of other people who have very different experiences to them' (Delyse, 4th September 2020). This non-accidental exclusion of migrant voices was the main reason behind the need of building an activist-led space like the Network. Yet, migrant groups in the Network not only challenged the lack of representation of migrant voices within the third sector organizations participating in the campaign, but also started to stage a powerful critique of the system raising questions about the role of these organizations exploiting asylum seekers and acting as 'gatekeepers' of the immigration system. Critical about this, Delyse argues that

> 'people in these charities and organizations are saying "yes, we welcome refugees, we are against the Home Office, asylum policies, this, and that…". But they do the very same thing in their own because it feels as if asylum seekers, there is a price on your head. You are being exploited, you become a commodity. Your experience is commodified, your life is commodified, you as a person are being commodified. Because if you go to the Scottish Refugee Council, they get funding for how many people come in. If you go to Govan Community Project, they get funding. Wherever you go, everywhere you go it seems you are being commodified, however you are not involved in being the service provider, and not only that: the system, the third sector who profess to be supporting us, they are the ones who are the barriers. This is not about the Home Office. We can't say this is about the Hostile Environment policy, no. This is about the third sector organizations. They are the ones who have become the gatekeepers' (Delyse, 4th September 2020).

Delyse stages here a strong criticism of the 'charity industrial complex' in Glasgow. She critically denounces some of the ways the political economy of humanitarianism relies in the commodification of migrants' suffering and every aspect of their existence (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020), assessing the role of funding in the reproduction of this system (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 2005). Nevertheless, overall, the interviews I conducted with representatives of migrant activist groups in Glasgow share a reformist-oriented approach towards the current system. A core vindication shared by them is the greater representation of people with lived experiences as hired staff in third sector organizations (Aisha, 27th August 2020; Delyse, 4th September 2020; Umar, 13th October 2020). Generally, there is not a rejection of the hegemonic service-based structure of migrant support provision in their accounts, but rather a critique of the lack of representation of refugee and asylum-seeking communities in both the decisions and the development of these 'caring services'. This lack of representation

is addressed as a form of exploitation mediated by the marketization of asylum services, where racial and colonial hierarchies structure the relationships between the 'carer' and the 'cared for'. However, these claims for representation implicitly denote that the necessary character of these services remains a generalized assumption, bolstered by the precarious situation in which asylum seekers find themselves and their exclusion from welfare systems and public provisions in the UK. Hence, with the existence of charities not being questioned, what is actually at stake are the nature and dynamics shaping the operation of these charities. This denotes important gaps in terms of political engagement with the spaces of racial capitalism. Despite the strength of the criticism above, reformist approaches and the assumption of the necessary character of charity institutions reflect the strength of the humanitarian culture of dependency and encloses a radical struggle against the foundations of racial capitalism. In this reformist-oriented direction, Aisha claims

> 'see the clear example of MORE. It's being founded by women with lived experiences, and look the different work they are doing. Any blind person will tell the difference from this charity to this charity. Because these women suffered, because I suffered, because we are suffering' (Aisha, 27th August 2020).

Chapter 6 already examined some of the ways migrant rights movements often need to follow institutional strategies and frames to achieve short-term goals in the struggles for rights and regularization. Nevertheless, throughout the chapter I have evidenced how MORE or Unity are examples of how migrant activist spaces in Glasgow have articulated distinctive forms of service provision that seek to contest the commodification and depoliticization of direct support. The previous section analyzed how they not only intend to involve people receiving support in the provision of support to others but also integrate this support within broader political campaigning frames, breaking divisions between campaigning work and direct support. I explored how creating relationships of friendship and mutuality that escape racial capitalist logics is the goal behind individual actions of direct support. Expanding previous argument on temporalities of social reproductive work, migrant groups not only disrupted the subjects of care but also its timings. Firstly, care is understood as a reciprocal relationship, mediated by friendship and political solidarity. Although uneven relationships of power continue to influence the ways it is developed, care can never be unidirectional or detached from personal and political emotions. Secondly, migrant agencies expose that relationships of care are sustained throughout time. Rather than flowing from one appointment to another, care as a social relation is timeless and it cannot be subjected to a fixed schedule. This is the idea underlying the 24 hours No Evictions or Unity phones, which can be contacted at any time and for any matter.

Notwithstanding, despite building alternative forms of support and caring to those of racial capitalism, migrant activist groups in Glasgow still share a strong focus on service provision. Most of their direct support work follows case-working dynamics that evidence processes of hybridization where the strategies of these groups risk replicating the logics of assistentialism – as my Fieldwork Diary quote shows in the previous section. This aligns with what Schwiertz & Steinhilper (2021) call 'strategic humanitarianism', as an 'hybrid form in which migrant support actors combine the strategic employment of predominantly depoliticizing, narrow and humanitarian framing with a contentious repertory of action'. Indeed, self-victimizing and humanitarian language remains particularly strong within activist groups in Glasgow. For instance, Aisha's quote above also naturalizes suffering as the shared experience of seeking asylum. In earlier sections of this chapter as well as in chapter 7, I already evidenced how the overemphasis on vulnerability and the 'politics of compassion' (Sirriyeh, 2018) have been common outreach strategies staged by migrants and activists in the campaign, both in their internal discussions and public communications. This is problematic insofar it encourages forms of caring based on uneven relations, shame, and compassion undermining the transformative potential of political solidarities. Nevertheless, I argue that the relationships between the Network, the Coalition, and other migrant group throughout the 'No Evictions' and 'Stop Hotel Detention' campaigning conjunctures have contributed to a re-politicization of the asylum debate in Glasgow and a progressive transformation of the exclusionary and vertical character of existing asylum support structures. Yet, due to the limitations addressed above, I contend that a focus on hybridization captures better the dynamics which led to an increasing empowerment of migrant voices in asylum matters.

8.6. Conclusion

This chapter has made an essential contribution pushing forward discussions on social reproductive politics within spaces of migrant solidarity. Despite social reproductive politics are constitutive of the spaces of migrant struggle, literature on migrant activism has tended to focus on protests and other forms of 'visible' political mobilizations. Drawing on black radical theory and feminist principles, this chapter has criticized this gap positioning social reproductive politics at the core of the processes of building the 'mobile commons' (Federici, 2019). Engaging with migrant agencies in the Network, I demonstrated how care work and social reproductive politics became collective means for empowerment and 'political reproduction'. As such, I contended that migrant voices challenged racialized and patriarchal dichotomies between political campaigning and direct support within the

Network. Central to my argument is the way that race unfolds as an essential marker shaping the subjects and practices of social reproductive politics, moving beyond approaches that focus on only gender as the privileged optic through which these have been theorized (Raghuram, 2021). A nuanced engagement with the situated articulations of racialized, gendered, and classed identities shaping social reproductive work allows unpacking how care is performed distinctively within migrant solidarity settings. In the Network, research findings show that it was mostly pushed forward and developed by migrants and women. This becomes clearly evidenced through addressing the racialized and gendered temporalities of the Network, the opening-up of caring spaces by migrants, or the division of activist work between the Network and other migrant collectives in the crisis of social reproduction triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall, the chapter demonstrated how migrant social reproductive politics not only negotiated normative assumptions around activist work but also hegemonic humanitarian logics governing the asylum and migration terrain. Nevertheless, the last section of the chapter suggests hybridization as the appropriate framework to address the contested dynamics generated by the interchanges between the Network, migrant groups, and the humanitarian sector throughout the campaigns, reckoning some limitations to the transformative potential of migrant social reproductive politics.

CHAPTER 9
Conclusion

'I Never Lose. I either Win or Learn' (Nelson Mandela)

This thesis has explored the spatial politics of the No Evictions Network in Glasgow, pushing forward debates on migrant solidarity and agency in the struggles against borders. Bringing critical race theory and insights from the Black Geographies literature to these discussions, it has made strong contributions to the theory and practice of these struggles, unpacking how they unfold in the articulation of multiple relationships of power. Due to the centrality of migration and borders producing the spaces of contemporary global capitalism (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013), the arguments staged throughout this work are of paramount relevance in the present political conjuncture, shaped by the rise of outright racist and reactionary nationalisms and the harshening of bordering politics worldwide (Valluvan, 2019). As a result, the thesis' insights not only apply to the theory and practice of migrant solidarities, but overall, to a plurality of trajectories encompassed under the umbrella of contemporary left-wing politics, where salient questions around race, gender, class, ethnicity, or sexuality are issues that both connect and divide in the crafting of political alliances and solidarities. This chapter concludes this thesis, coming back to some of its core arguments and political interventions. Following a brief outline of my work, I assess how the research questions have been addressed, finishing with a discussion of the broader relevance of the thesis.

9.1. Situating the Key Contributions of the Thesis

The struggles of the No Evictions Network are one of the many examples of situated political experiences challenging exclusionary migration politics across uneven geographies. It does not differ in essence from others that have captured the interest of many academics in the field (King, 2016 ; Walia, 2014; Garcia Agustin & Jorgensen, 2018). What makes this thesis distinctive is the ways migrants' positions and analyses in the political spaces of the Network inspired my different take in key debates around solidarity politics and migrant struggles, shaping some of my core contributions. In this light, many of the analyses developed throughout my work have been a result of my engagement with individual voices and collective debates within the Network. It was the relationships of trust and comradeship built through my long-term strong involvement in its political spaces what allowed me unpacking participant's positions and understanding the Network's shifting dynamics.

Drawing on a scholar-activist approach informed by a social reproductive politics and a caring methodological framework, I attempted to perform an antiracist research practice and agency that was consistent with my politics and with the Black Geographical theoretical framework through which I was looking at the struggles against borders.

One of the first things I realized about when getting involved in the political spaces of Network was how these were bringing together people with very different life stories, political trajectories, and experiences of the world. These were crisscrossed by uneven geographies of power shaping different subject positions within the Network. Interested in questions of solidarity-making, I observed the processes of negotiation of this heterogeneity. This involved from organizational and strategical questions – how to frame the Network's struggles, what was going to be the organizational structure, how the decisions were to be made, etc. – to issues of positionality – how to address power differentials across axis of race, status, gender, class, ethnicity, or sexuality in the Network. These queries shaped the orientation of my project and my research questions from the outset. Insofar I spent time listening to migrant collectives and migrant leading voices, I noticed theoretical and practical analogies with wider black and brown politics, experiences of organizing, and criticisms over key forms of whiteness often shaping left-wing politics in Europe. For instance, the ways social reproductive politics were a necessary step to 'build capacity' to struggle resonated with the black radical tradition in the US and the writings of relevant black intellectuals. Tracing the links between these political experiences and migrant struggles in the Network brought me to a critical stance: literature on migrant solidarities has tended to detach migrant politics from wider race politics. Race theory and literature on Black Geographies provided key tools to reframe this relation.

Positioning migrant politics as constitutive of wider black and brown counter-cartographies of struggle against 'racial capitalism' threw light on the nature and spatial dimension of the struggles against borders. Racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983), Marxist articulation theories (Hall, 2018 [1980]), and black feminist writings (hooks, 2013; Mohanty, 2003) offered different perspectives to grasp the mutually constitutive character of racism, capitalism, patriarchy, and other oppressive systems. Influenced by this work, literature on Black Geographies has identified racialized populations' 'premature death' as the defining element shaping Black Geographies of struggle (Gilmore, 2007; Shabazz, 2015). I realized that developing these analyses into an approach towards 'border regimes' and migrant struggles was, notwithstanding, still a pressing task. Critical migration studies have barely addressed migrant struggles from a focus on race, and much less from an

engagement with black scholarship. This thesis has done so, navigating what this perspective entails for the understanding of the struggles against borders and for the negotiation of the forms of agency coming together within migrant solidarity movements. This gaze allowed me to grasp the role of neoliberal companies such as Serco *or* Mears in the everyday reproduction of postcolonial border regimes on the one hand, and situate the Network's struggles as generating cracks in racial capitalist systems on the other. Centering questions of race made me move beyond the struggles against State borders – and its multiple manifestations and spatialities – to address those waged in the terrain of political subjectivities, assessing the power dynamics shaping the negotiation of difference and agency within the Network from a focus on decolonization. An engagement with 'premature death' as the outcome of Serco's and Mears entrepreneurial strategies in line with the racist politics of the Home Office, brought me to examine the articulations of race, gender, and class shaping the differently situated approaches to the Network's politics. Overall, my engagement with the research questions has brought important inputs to academic and activist knowledges sowing the seeds of a black geographical understanding of migrant struggles. Developing some of these points, the following lines trace my approach to the research questions in detail. Thereafter, I conclude addressing the broader relevance of this thesis and signaling possible directions for future research.

9.2. Assessing the Research Questions

Research questions one and two were deeply interrelated, meaning that the discussion of the former anticipated some of the answers of the later. The first question inquired the relationships between space, borders, and solidarity politics. This question has been addressed throughout the thesis raising important discussions around the spatial politics of migrant solidarities. Overall, the discussion has built upon a relational understanding of space – as the product of interrelations taking place from the everyday to the global (Massey, 1999a) –, borders – as both material and epistemological devices structuring social relations according to questions of race, gender, class, sexuality, or ethnicity, often materialized in particular projects of belonging (Yuval-Davis, et al., 2019) –, and solidarity – as a political relation challenging forms of oppression (Featherstone, 2012). Stuart Hall (2018 [1980]) has analyzed how questions of race, gender, class or sexuality appear in articulation in specific contexts. Hence, borders are contextual and subjected to the specificities of place. What he calls 'tendencial articulations' – meaning the hegemonic forms in which the previous systems are bounded together in certain settings – are contingent, and they are hence potentially opened to transformative change. Here, solidarity holds the potential to subvert

hegemonic articulations through generating alternative relations to those defined by political, economic, social, and cultural powers (Featherstone, 2012). As such, solidarities can reshape the ways borders structure relations of dominance in particular contexts.

On the basis of this theoretical elaborations, the thesis has explored the relationship between space, solidarity and borders from multiple angles. Firstly, addressing the co-constitutive dimension of the 'global' and the 'local' (Massey, 1999a), the thesis has foregrounded how migrant politics in Glasgow are constitutive of – and shaped by – wider black and brown countercartographies and histories of struggle. From situated grassroots politics, their agency challenges from below a postcolonial and neoliberal system of racial oppression. The ways the struggles against the evictions achieved to defeat a multinational company like *Serco*, pushing their loss of the asylum accommodation contract in Scotland and cutting off their benefits, sets an example of place-based politics generating cracks in the working of border regimes across scales. Likewise, images of the Kenmure Street protest stopping the Home Office's immigration van in May 2021 travelled the world, setting an example of struggle for solidarity movements elsewhere. Secondly, the discussion underscored the spatial dimension of solidarity politics, observing the ways the everyday spaces of the Network bolstered the articulation of relationships of trust amongst the participants, as well as their politicization and the formation of collective political identities (Swerts, 2015). Spaces of proximity and care – such as collective meals within meetings – allowed the negotiation of structural borders through 'building solidarities across differences' (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021).

In understanding the relations between the 'local' and the 'global' and between differently situated struggles, the idea of the network has been key. Indeed, networking allows movements cross borders and practice solidarity from different spaces. In the No Evictions Network, these connections were not only 'territorial' – in terms of linking the struggles in Glasgow to those elsewhere, as discussed above – but they also linked different grassroots movements in the city. In this sense, the No Evictions Network operated as a space of convergence of migrant and housing struggles, joined by other left-wing collectives and individuals. Hence, through linking struggles, the shared spaces of the Network bolstered the overcoming of borders that separated migrant struggles from broader anti-capitalist agendas. I addressed this as a contentious spatial process, where collective discussions in the Network's political spaces encouraged wider understandings of the struggles moving beyond single framings.

My engagement with the second research question – which interrogates the spatial politics of the No Evictions Network – expanded some of the previous analyses. In addition to the more generalizable discussions advanced above, this question entailed situating the Network in relation to Glasgow's politics of place. Drawing on Stuart Hall's contextual approach, this brought me to inquire the Network's narratives and strategies from a spatial perspective, drawing attention to the particular articulation of the relations between borders, space, and solidarity in Scotland. This approach brought the following key critical insights:

Firstly, I explored how the articulation of migrant and housing struggles in the city, as well as grassroots opposition to UK immigration policies, drew on historical memories of struggle from the beginning of the century (Bates & Kirkwood, 2013; Haedicke, 2017). Most of the Network's strategies against the evictions learnt from the example of forms of community organizing in the deprived areas during the first years of the dispersal policy, when neighbors organized solidarity vigils to watch the Home Office's immigrations vans and prevent the removal of asylum-seeking families. The discourses of the Network often recalled these narratives, and these histories were the grounds to affirm Glasgow's solidarity identity and its refusal of the Home Office's immigration policies. From here, I analyzed how solidarities emerge through – and give rise to – shared histories of struggle and collective political identities, opening up political possibilities that are in constant reinvention. As an old Spanish left-wing claim states recalling anti-fascist past histories: 'Porque fueron somos, porque somos serán' ('because they were, we are; and because we are, they will be').

Secondly, the thesis situated the Network's politics in relation to the Scottish political context and the hegemonic institutional approach to migration. I addressed how the struggles of the Network unfolded in a conjuncture shaped by the post-independence referendum and debates around Brexit. Here, migration has been a key terrain where antagonisms with England – and UK politics – have been framed, portraying a 'welcoming Scotland' against a racist 'England'. Under this framework, racism is often positioned as external to Scotland. I explored how these questions strongly shaped the Network's political strategies. On the one hand, these had a heavy institutional focus, due to the friendly institutional façade drawn out by the nationalist pro-immigration discourses (Kyriakides, 2005). On the other, Scottish 'racial denial' – which contrasts with a history of colonial endeavor and racist violence in Scotland (Davidson, et al., 2018) – sometimes hindered a nuanced engagement of the Network with questions of race in Scotland, as well as it prioritized a nationed understanding of the struggles that targeted the Home Office and often saw in independence a way forward.

These reflections led me to assert how certain interpretations and identities of place in relation with left-wing nationalisms in Europe can foreclose movements' outward-looking potential, undermining the capacity of solidarities to cross borders. While Scottish Nationalism sometimes encouraged strong solidarities, at other times it constricted the possibilities of overcoming State borders in their discourse and practices.

Furthermore, my analysis also unpacked how the neighborhood became a key site for political organizing. The 'No Evictions Neighborhood Groups' articulated in dispersal neighborhood strong politics of presence, both ordinary – through regular stalls to inform the community about the evictions, or through visiting churches, local shops, and community centers – and extraordinary – organizing protests and solidarity vigils. Likewise, the 'anti-raids' groups that flourished from the Kenmure Street protest in 2021 also followed this neighborhood-based strategy. Drawing on these experiences, the thesis made a key intervention centering the neighborhood as the everyday political space where borders can effectively be contested. While geographical and urban literature tend to prioritize the space of the 'city' in discussions of the local, I have argued that cities are increasingly crisscrossed by more and more complex relations, borders, and narratives of place. The neighborhood, as the most 'intimate' public space, holds the potential for distinctive solidarities that can challenge hegemonic politics of belonging (Santamarina, 2021).

Finally, the third research question interrogated if 'no borders' solidarity spaces are truly borderless, inquiring the racialized, gendered, and classed dimensions of the politics of the Network. Through a nuanced engagement with questions of power dynamics and the uneven geographies converging in its political spaces, the thesis concluded that solidarity spaces are crisscrossed by multiple borders. This means that although advocating for a border abolitionist politics, the micro-politics of the Network often reproduced the power relations and borders that they aimed to overcome (Swerts, 2018; Montesinos Coleman & Bassi, 2011). Through a structuring distinction between activists 'with lived experiences of the asylum system' and those 'without lived experiences of the asylum system', the Network distinguished amongst different participants according to how they were affected by State's borders. This is a typical division within 'no borders' struggles and migrant solidarity movements, receiving different names in literature (activists and locals, migrant activists and citizen-activists, etc.). Nevertheless, my research shows that the ways this distinction becomes conceived and performed gives rise to different ways to handle difference in power dynamics. Although the aim of this distinction was ensuring people's 'with lived experiences' presence in the Network's debates, the thesis unpacked how an

unproblematized essentialist distinction between these two obscured the ways these groups were traversed by further issues of gender, class, or ethnicity. It discussed how for instance, María – a Spanish activist 'without lived experiences of the asylum system' – accounted how she faced notable borders when trying to get involved in the Network's 'Comms Group'. Despite having a professional background in political communication in Spain, she felt excluded by the British male activist culture which presumed her lack of knowledge. Moreover, the previous distinction often assigned 'people with lived experiences' a particular position within the Network, taking for granted that they would be likely to develop certain roles and not others, therefore foreclosing their agencies. For example, there was a clear British domination in the Network's 'Comms Group', based on the assumption that safeguarding asylum seekers from media harassment and communicating with politicians and journalists were people's 'with lived experiences' tasks. In this way, I unpacked how activist divisions of labor followed strong racialized and gendered dynamics. This found the clearest evidence in the performance of social reproductive politics. The political experiences throughout the pandemic show how social reproductive work was mostly developed by migrants in the Network. Those 'without lived experiences' were focused on formal campaigning and media engagement, and only a few women and non-binary people got involved in direct support activities. Rather, for migrants 'with lived experiences of the asylum system', organizing material and emotional support were necessary steps to build capacity to campaign. Processes of collective healing and mutual support were the grounds enabling further political struggle. Overall, my engagement with this research question explores how the 'undoing' of these racialized, classed, and gendered borders was a learning and contentious process. Throughout the different chapters, I assessed some of the ways migrant criticisms pushed forward decolonizing strategies that contributed to the ongoing reshaping of power dynamics.

9.3. Broader Relevance of the Thesis and Possible Directions for Future Research

In the long run, the findings of the thesis open up a range of relevant political interventions, both theoretically and practically. In this sense, the thesis concerns a plurality of debates of broader relevance in critical academic research and left-wing politics which deserve further attention:

Firstly, situating migrant struggles in relation to black and brown cartographies of struggle centers questions of race in discussions around migration and the geographies of border regimes. Theoretically, this demands re-visiting work on borders and solidarity from

engagements with black and postcolonial theory. While my argument has brought selected work on Black Geographies alongside contributions by black feminist writings and literature on 'racial capitalism' (Robinson, 1983), there is still a lot that could be learnt from the extensive work by black and brown writers and political experiences. Hence, I would like to use the final lines of this thesis to make a call to critical academics to deepen this line of research, and to explore the various contributions that black critical theory can bring to the understanding of migrant struggles. Politically, this intervention demands centering anti-racism in the organization of solidarities against borders. This includes critically interrogating forms of whiteness shaping movements' practices and discourses and decolonizing spaces of activism. Furthermore, situating migrant struggles in relation to other black and brown political trajectories means advocating for a kind of politics where migrant and other anti-racist struggles are understood and articulated together. For instance, the ways the BLM movement in the US got involved with migrant struggles against the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) during the pandemic – differing from most of the experiences in Europe – sets a clear example of the importance of centering race in these struggles and constructing alliances that overcome divisions between 'migrant solidarity movements' and antiracist struggles.

Secondly, underscoring how struggles against borders are waged in the terrain of political subjectivities brings attention to everyday spaces of activism as sites of negotiation of racialized, gendered, and classed borders. Theoretically, this brings several interventions. On the one hand, it challenges 'no borders' romanticizing approaches (Anderson, et al., 2009), making a call for a critical and nuanced engagement with the power dynamics shaping the organization of political resistances. This is not only relevant for migrant solidarity movements but rather it is central to the articulation of left-wing politics against oppression, speaking to a wide range of struggles. On the other hand, this position moves beyond approaches that focus on 'formal' political protests or public forms of disruption (Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016; Swyngedouw, 2021) to foreground the centrality of everyday and informal spaces as constitutive of these experiences. Likewise, a focus on the everyday also evidences the limits of discursive practices in attempts to overcome racialized, gendered, and classed power dynamics, arguing for a complex engagement with the ways narratives and discourses are translated into political praxis. Here, my thesis advocates for a critical reflexivity within spaces of activism on how far divisions of labor or prefiguration strategies are subverting hegemonic structures.

Thirdly, developing a substantial contribution on the political geographies of migrant solidarities in Glasgow, the thesis has not only written about the Network's struggles, but it has also recovered hidden histories that are silenced in the extensive policy-focused literature on structures of support and dispersal in the city (Wren, 2007). Nevertheless, my research suggests that there is still a lot more work needed in this direction, due to the scarce sources available to trace these histories. This gap demands attention of geographical, historical, and political academic research, for which my work offers a point of departure. In close relation to this, the findings in this thesis are a sample of what struggles in Glasgow can tell to broader claims of solidarity. On the one hand, the thesis' engagements with the politics of the Network set important lines for discussion in activist spaces and solidarity movements in Scotland, making a direct potential contribution to struggles. Collective activist debate can reflect, reframe, or contest some of my ideas, bringing the outcome of these discussions into political practice. On the other hand, and on a broader scope, Glasgow can be part of wider debates on migrant politics and solidarities. The ways solidarities from below became performed, as well as the invention of political tactics and ways of organizing can enlighten the experience of many situated border struggles across the world, setting an example of political possibility and transformative change. In this regard, a relational notion of space acknowledges the ways situated struggles develop from and enrich collective knowledges on political organizing, built upon multiple and differently situated political experiences. This position enhances the generative character of solidarity (Featherstone, 2012). Furthermore, the negotiation of difference and power asymmetries within the spaces of the Network raises important debates on the crafting of political solidarities that are relevant for the heterogeneity of spaces aiming to subvert borders. Hence, the arguments and the experiences analyzed in this thesis are part of ongoing debates in migrant theory and practice, and in politically committed research.

Fourthly, centering the space of the neighborhood in the articulation and crafting of political solidarities offers a nuanced approach towards cities, opening up new directions for urban political research. Recent debates on borders and migration have increasingly addressed cities as key spaces of performance and disruption of border powers (Darling, 2017). Indeed, critical work has examined differently situated urban solidarities challenging both epistemological and material borders (Karaliotas & Kapsali, 2021; Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016). This thesis draws attention to the particular space of the neighborhood within these experiences. Politically, this has important practical implications insofar neighborhoods are spaces where different politics of belonging can potentially be articulated, challenging hegemonic racialized, classed, and gendered relations (Santamarina, 2021).

Fifthly, centering social reproductive politics in the articulation of black and brown counter-cartographies of struggle expands current theoretical work on social reproduction from a perspective that draws attention to the articulation of racialized, classed, and gendered borders in its performance. This approach moves beyond gender as the privileged lenses in which care and social reproduction becomes theorized, underscoring how care is performed differently in strongly racialized settings (Raghuram, 2021). This shift opens up new theoretical debates and lines of investigation that concern a wide range of fields and wider debates in Feminist and Black Geographies. Tackling 'premature death' as the main outcome of racial capitalism, my thesis urges attention to social reproductive politics in spaces of migrant struggle from an anti-racist perspective. The concept of 'political reproduction' grasp how social reproductive politics are generative of migrants' capacity to political struggle. The practical implications of this argument are of central importance. Firstly, linking social reproductive politics to 'capacity building', the notion of 'political reproduction' overcomes divisions between 'direct support' and 'political campaigning' within migrant solidarity movements, unpacking how these two are mutually constitutive. Secondly, it positions social reproduction as a first and necessary step in the construction of black and brown counter-cartographies of struggle and the crafting of solidarities. And thirdly, this stance advocates for a form of agency that challenges the implicit whiteness shaping the hegemonic humanitarian frameworks.

Finally, the thesis developed an original methodological approach opening up key debates on how we can better contribute to political movements from a position that attempts to challenge racialized, gendered, and classed borders. Also in this direction, it interrogated how the structural boundaries between academic epistemic environments and precarious communities can be overcome. My answer to these key political questions has been centering social reproductive politics in my methodology and research praxis, as something I learnt through my own activist-research engagement within spaces of solidarity in Glasgow and Madrid. Coming from this experience, I would like to encourage future activist-researchers in the field to engage with this position, rethinking research practices from a place that pays attention to questions of knowledge production, and cares about the ways our positionalities come into play within activist spaces and how they relate to other agencies. Decolonizing university starts by embracing these distinctive power dynamics, becoming conscient of how we can transform academic knowledges through our own practice. Pushing forward this proposal, I have revisited some of the current approaches on scholar-activism in Human Geography, which I criticized as sometimes tending to reproduce divisions of

activist labor and over-emphasize the intellectual role of the researcher (see e.g. Derickson & Routledge, 2015).

9.4. Power Lies in Unity.

Overall, the findings and developments of this thesis would have never been possible without the contributions of all those forming the impressive struggles of the No Evictions Network in Glasgow. Years ago, Malcom X claimed, 'the future belongs to those who prepare it for today'. Returning to the first pages of the thesis, the Kenmure Street protest, which a year ago challenged the Home Office's attempt to re-start dawn raids in Scotland, showed the flame of solidarity radiantly burning in Glasgow. The No Evictions Network was the steering element and the fuel of that fire, a 'future' that did not emerge from a vacuum. Unfortunately, the days to come do not picture an easier political scenario. We are expecting a new Conservative Prime Minister to replace Boris Johnson, and we have been witnessing the first attempts to implement the appalling 2022 Nationality and Borders Act, not to mention the global conjuncture of escalating racism and political enclosure. Successes such as Kenmure or the recent struggles across the UK to stop the deportation of asylum seekers to Rwanda evidence people's power uplifting struggle as the only way forward. Four years after the beginning of the struggles against the evictions, the Network keeps standing for a future that does not understand of deadly borders and that belongs to all. I have no doubt that thanks to efforts such as the ones of the Network, solidarity still has much to write in the story of Glasgow, as a place that stood for the many, and which has given inspiration and strength to many standing beyond its confines. I hope the struggles and thoughts developed in this thesis will make its bit to serve to this purpose. It has been more than an honor to me to take part in this long-term struggle, and to learn that no matter how harsh they come, solidarity will win.

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