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The free movement of people around the world would be Utopian: IUAES World Congress 2013: Evolving Humanity, Emerging Worlds, 5–10 August 2013

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ABSTRACT
This article contains the text and discussion of a debate held at the IUAES World Congress in Anthropology at Manchester University in 2013. The motion was proposed by Bela Feldman-Bianco (State University of Campinas), seconded by Noel Salazar (University of Leuven) and was opposed by Shahram Khosravi (Stockholm University), seconded by Nicholas de Genova (then at Goldsmiths' College). The debate was chaired by Simone Abram (Durham University).

The IUAES World Congress 2015 was held at Manchester University. The Congress organizers wished to offer delegates the opportunity to consider contemporary issues. One of the means adopted to do this was to hold three debates in the plenary hall. The aim of the debates was to offer a new format to explore timely issues, and provide a platform that might be accessible to a potentially wider audience than the usual panel or plenary format. Many anthropologists are familiar with the debate-form from the tradition of debates at Manchester University organized by the Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory. Arguing for and against the motion is a discipline that encourages speakers to sharpen their arguments and respond to challenging and sometimes contradictory questions. It also offers a format for direct engagement of the audience, who are encouraged to put questions on any aspect of the debate, challenge

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claims made by the speakers for and against the motion and allow for a considered response from four speakers, all addressing the same central point. In specifying the question put to the floor (to use the relevant language), the conference organizers wished to open a space for anthropological critique of popular conceptions and misconceptions. All three propositions were thus deliberately controversial and potentially leading, but each opened for a debate that might reveal many of the anthropological insights that speakers and audience alike could offer. It should be remembered that speakers were invited to speak for or against the motion, which may or may not coincide with their personal or professional viewpoint. The art of debating demands that speakers elaborate arguments that may not represent their own view, and offers them an opportunity to explore a position, whether or not they would actually vote for it themselves.

The third plenary debated the motion: '*The free movement of people around the world would be Utopian*'. If anything, the motion is more significant now than it was even in 2013, but the relevant political issues remain constant. In a world where an increasingly neo-liberal 'globalization' implies the free flow of capital, restrictions on the free flow of human beings not only undermine the response of labour markets to capital flows, but also create untold human misery by stripping poor regions of resources (including economic and human resources). The point was reinforced by the difficulties that many conference participants experienced in gaining UK visas, an irony not lost on the conference organizers, and one bitterly complained about by the host city officials as well. Questions of mobility and globalization have been discussed by anthropologists for many decades, and recent work on migration, in particular clandestine migration, has come to the fore. But 'free movement of people' goes well beyond questions of labour migration, and opens for questions about issues as diverse as luxury tourism and its ecological consequences, the administration of welfare with or without welfare states and the future of citizenship. For this debate, we invited speakers from different continents and different anthropological traditions to address the motion from their own specialist perspective.

The motion was proposed by Bela Feldman-Bianco (State University of Campinas), seconded by Noel Salazar (University of Leuven) and opposed by Shahram Khosravi (Stockholm University), seconded by Nicholas de Genova (Goldsmiths' College). The debate was chaired by Simone Abram (Durham University).

We present here a text of the arguments made by each speaker with a summary of the comments and questions subsequently invited from the

floor of the hall and the responses of the presenters. A verbatim account of the debate is not included, not least since not all speakers identified themselves on the day, but a live stream of the debate can be found here for further details: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oldnYTYMx-k

For the motion: Bela Feldman-Bianco

The free movement of people around the world should be viewed as Utopian

I am honoured to participate in this provocative and timely debate not only because of the growing scholarship and interest on movement, mobility and migration but also politically given the exacerbated prejudice and xenophobia against foreigners (particularly those undocumented and with darker skins) who have been asked to go home or face arrest. Even worse, the British police has perceived foreigners as terrorists and have even mistakenly murdered them, as was the case of the notorious assassination of the Brazilian Jean Charles in 2005.

As this shrewd motion intends to stimulate debate, I will situate my argument against the ongoing and apparently contradictory constructions of borderless and bordered worlds. As financial capital, signs and virtual communication seem to dissolve borders, the numbers of displaced people escalated, reaching around 300 million worldwide, according to a 2011 UN assessment. The numbers are even higher if we add an estimated 740 million internal migrants, some of whom have also suffered displacements because of large development projects and real estate interests. Hence, issues related to the movement of people, in particular transnational migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, have turned out to be high priorities in the public agendas of both multilateral agencies (like the UN, World Bank and OIM) and national governments.

By placing the motion under discussion against the current struggles, the image that comes to my mind is that of the border as a dramatic battlefield. On the one hand, the movements of people across borders have been subjected to discriminatory migration and mobility policies and programmes. In addition to a greater selective control in the issuing of visas and passports, dual classifications and categories differentiating between the so-called 'legal'/'regular' and 'illegal'/'irregular' immigrants have made way for a social construction of illegality, entrenched in the current European and US draconian policies equating migration and crime. As part of the ongoing "war" against trafficking, illegal migration and terrorism, multilateral agencies have been exporting worldwide conceptions linking migration to the trafficking of human beings as

well as the idea of migrants as agents of development through the provision of remittances. Underneath these seeming contradictions, are rational attempts to regulate the demand and supply of labour through migrants' 'temporary work while denying them rights to residence and social benefits. Because of the growing surveillance at the borders, women, men and children have been arrested, confined in detention camps or deported while risking their lives crossing borders either to escape from violent conflicts in their homelands or just to fulfil their dreams, hopes and projects of a better life. Many die, sometimes brutally murdered, during these passages.

On the other hand, the fight against borders – all type of borders – has become a metaphor for the current social movements in favour of the free circulation of people and, thus, for social justice. The expansion of these social movements led to the creation of the Global Social Forum on Migration in 2004 with its claims to universal citizenship and a world without borders.

These strong images exposing the enduring struggles suggest to me that, according to the angle taken, we can agree or disagree that the free movement of people around the world would be viewed as Utopian, and in either case, we would not be wrong or right. Nevertheless, I agree that the free movement of people is fundamentally a matter of social justice and human rights. I further suggest that while Utopia embeds the dreams, hopes and projects of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, Utopian visions are intrinsic to the social movements.

Yet, for a better understanding of the current social processes, we should place the motion within a broader historical context, for while human mobility is millenary, the movement of people around the world has been, ever since the fifteenth century, part of capital formation and thus enmeshed with racialization, colonialism, capitalism expansion and corollary structures of domination and inequalities. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries evoke the era of navigation and exploration and at same time the transcontinental trafficking of African slaves and the invention of racialization (first of the negro and índio), and later also of a free migrant labour force. The seventeenth century points to the formation of nation states and the screening of who can enter (or leave) national borders. Racialized foreignness and otherness have been immanent threats as they bring to the fore question of citizenship and the relation between the state and the nation.

A 1982 song, entitled 'Fruto do sour', sung by Raices de America (Roots of America) – a musical group formed by Brazilians, Chileans and Argentineans who escaped their countries' harsh dictatorships and settled in São Paulo in

1980 at a time of the Brazilian democratic reopening – sums up these long processes that started six centuries ago with poetic license:

The new-founded land was paradise
Corn high, pure the rivers
Buried gold slept, without greed

The Indian reigned over all the land
Conquistadores, Africans and adventurers started to arrive

The noble Indian mixed with the slave
A new American was born
Vested Interests built stamps
Hate raised walls
Bayonets draw borders
Stupidity divided us into flags

I have a son in this land
It was love without passports
If the conception was Brazilian
Don´t call me a foreigner
Each stone, each street has the immigrants touch.
With their dreams, they raised a country without owners

Sweating nurtures the soil and the seed does not ask
Is it Brazilian or immigrant?
Only the crop is important
Don´t see me as an outsider
Don´t devise me geographies
I am your race, your people
I am your brother in the everyday life

Like today's social movements, these political activists who were attacking capitalism and imperialism, fought for social justice as well as for the erasing of borders between natives and foreigners. As the song suggests, the immigrants portrayed in the poem (who at that time came mostly from the Old World) have become part of the social fabric of and contributed to the localities in which they settled even if they have not been welcome. Nevertheless, at the time the musicians of Raices de America were forced to seek exile in different parts of the world, their political displacements were interlinked with the contingents of former colonial subjects who began roaming to Europe (and the United States) as a response to crises in their homelands generated by neo-liberal policies, flexible capital and labour. After the 2008–2009 global economic crisis, there has been a new redirection of migration from the Global North to the Global South.

Since we are here in Manchester, this symbolic gateway city of immigrants once upon a time at the vanguard of industrial capitalism, it is worth remembering that:

(1) The historical mass migration of Europeans to the New World also followed the turmoil of the global political economy.
(2) Those immigrants were faced with European governmental policies attempting to close borders to prevent emigration and, thus, separate families in order for the state to profit from the remittances sent back home by migrants, as was the case with Portugal.
(3) National immigration policies have always selected who are the desirable and the non-desirable foreigners.
(4) In the 1920s, Europeans and other migrants to the US confronted deportation, closed borders and US preference for temporary migration.
(5) International migrants in the US were considered second- and third-class citizens both at home and in the localities of settlement.
(6) The struggles between capital and labour of the past encompassed an international mobilization calling for workers of the world to unite for social justice and against difficult labour condition.

Today, the juxtaposition of neo-liberal policies, multicultural ideologies and flexible capital and labour have led to the loss of the achievements of the labour mobilizations of the early twentieth century. Again, there has been increased exploitation, economic vulnerability and the criminalization of migrants. Once more, there are new forms of social mobilization against the status quo.

It is from this long-duree perspective that I propose it is important to ask if we should view the free movement of people around the world or as Utopian or as matter of social justice and human rights. These are the claims made by the current social movements such as the report presented by the South American Espacio sien Fronteras coalition to the United Nations High Dialogues on Migration and Development that states:

> We understand that is fundamental that nation states recognize migration as a right. We insist that all migrants should have access to similar labor, economic, social, cultural and political rights.

From this viewpoint, I propose that that the Utopian vision is intrinsic not only to today´s social movements favouring the free circulation of people around the world but also to the social mobilizations organized around workers' strikes or by the politics of identity on behalf of gender and race equality. I further advocate that is equally crucial to understand the Utopia embedded in the desires, hopes, dreams and projects of immigrants, refugees and other displaced populations both in the present and

the past. What is the meaning of the dreams, hopes and projects in the everyday lives of migrants, refugees and other displaced individuals in specific localities?

By way of a visual ethnography that I made in 1990, entitled SAUDADE or Nostalgia, I have portrayed how women and men whose immigration history encompasses the transition from pre-industrial task-oriented activities in the rural areas of Portugal to industrial work in New Bedford, Massachusetts, have tended to develop a romantic nostalgia for their immediate past of non-industrial labour. The reinvention of their immediate past reflects their experiences with and perceptions of different rhythms and different meanings of time, work and life: from natural rhythms to the time discipline of industrial capitalism.

While immigrants like Basílio (portrayed in the video) are, during their work shift, proletarians, in their free time they continue to be peasants and artisans. Above all, these symbolic representations and social practices of their past of non-industrial labour further provide the basis for self-reconstitution as Azoreans, Madeirans and mainlanders.

Link to video extract:http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYmATiTWgJg

Immigrants of other nationalities have reacted in similar ways to changing modes of production. Immigrants like Basílio and other Azoreans have built strong transnational social fields and networks and have dual citizenship and nationality rights due to the incorporation of the diaspora into the Portuguese nation. More recently, in a period marked by the retraction of Portuguese immigration and the closing of borders, undocumented migrants from Latin and Central America have come to New Bedford, replacing the Portuguese as unskilled workers in the remaining industries of the locality. These new immigrants have been exposed to home security raids in both 2004 and 2007, attracting national news coverage in 2007 as homeland security agents arrested 300 women and men, mostly from Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Mexico that resulted in the separation of a number of mothers from their small children and even their deportation. How do people manage to live and transform their lives in such dramatic situations when they have denied conditions of existence (as undocumented migrants) while their labour is exploited? How can we understand the human condition without taking into account the subjectivities, the dreams and the hopes that drives us and makes us transform our lives further, leading us to social mobilizations against the status quo?

Summarizing my points:

(1) I tried to show that, according to the angle taken, we can agree or disagree with the motion the free movement of people around the world would be viewed as Utopian and we would not be wrong or

right, in either case.

(2) I suggested that while human mobility is millenary, the movements and migration of people around the world have been enmeshed since the fifteenth century with racialization, colonialism, capitalism expansion, imperialism and, thus, with structures of domination and social inequalities.

(3) Within this broader context, I side with the current social movements claiming the free movement of people around the world is fundamentally a matter of social justice and human rights;

(4) I further proposed that that there is a need to discern the role and meaning of the Utopia. In this regard, I suggested that Utopian visions have been intrinsic not only to today's social movements favouring the free circulation of people around the world but also to the social mobilizations organized around workers' strikes or by the politics of identity on behalf of gender and race equality.

(5) I further advocated that it is crucial to take into account that Utopia embeds the dreams, hopes and projects of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as part of the human condition. Thereby, we can understand how migrants reconstitute their selves in face of the dramatic changes they confront and, I will add, with human dignity.

Against the motion: Shahram Khosravi

Is a world without borders Utopian?[1]

Dystopia/night dreams

Utopia is an imaginary future. It is safe and just. Utopia is a longing for a future that would replace the untoward presence. The need for Utopia is to escape from the present time, a dystopian time, far from an ideal society. Rather than being the opposite of Utopia, dystopia is a Utopia gone wrong, a situation in which Utopian ideas are available and accessible only for a particular group of people. This is exactly the case of the current border regime and the right to mobility. Free mobility exists already, but only for a small category of humanity who enjoy unrestricted mobility rights, while most people are caught within borders, between borders or, as Balibar (2002) put it, *as borders*. The present situation is dystopian for more than 50 million forced-displaced people, categorized and labelled as refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, and stateless people. Our time is likewise a dark and terrifying predicament for travellers without papers, so-called illegal migrants, illegalized human beings. This dystopia is our contemporary world, built on visible and invisible borders. Utopia is, thus, the

negation of the current world. It offers an alternative way of organizing humanity, liberated from borders.

Borders and mobility restrictions have not stopped or reduced human mobility and migration. The borders do not stop the mobility across borders but make it, in many ways, more costly for migrants. Travellers without papers are paying the price for harsher border controls not only with their money, but also with their lives. Since border crossing by air has become almost impossible for travellers without papers, migration brokers and facilitators (so called human smugglers) now use land and sea routes. To circumvent the most controlled border areas, smuggling routes have been relocated to more inaccessible and dangerous places. The closure of the most accessible border sections means that 'geography would do the rest'. And it does.

The harsher border regime has not reduced the number of migrants, but increased border fatalities. The annual budget of Frontex (The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders) increased 10 times between 2004 and 2014. During the same period, the average number of persons who die along the borders of Europe has increased from slightly above two persons to more than 10 persons per day. The borders between the poor world and the rich world are turned into an exhibit of death.

While a majority of people around the world are supposed to be immobilized by borders, free mobility exists for commodities, capital and jobs. Commodities are free to move. Not surprisingly, travellers without papers are hidden in containers and trucks among commodities, or rather *as* commodities, to be able to cross borders. They, getting a chance to cross borders, only squeezed between boxes of merchandises, camouflaged as a 'thinglike' (Coutin 2005) *en route* of the global trade structure, depict the paradox of our time; global capitalism stimulates and illegalizes border crossing at the same time.

Borders impose a forced immobility on 'unqualified' travellers, fixing them in camps: refugee camps, transit camps, detention camps. Temporary camps become permanent. Refugeeness becomes protracted. Undocumentedness becomes lifelong. A permanent status of statelessness, of being just a human being, is incompatible with the logic of the current border regime. Statelessness is regarded as a temporary status, even though it may last for generations. Those outside this order, the stateless, constitute a 'leftover' population. In the nation state system, all human beings are supposed to belong to a state. Outside the nation state system, there is no space for humanity, for the pure human being in herself, beyond legal and political status. Only in the nation state system, this universal form of the organization of humanity (in terms of citizenship), as Hannah Arendt (1951)

put it: 'could the loss of home and political status become identical with being expelled from humanity altogether'.

Borders are used by the states to expose migrants to exclusion, discrimination and exploitation. Borders legitimate the states to use their discriminatory power against refugees, travellers without papers, non-citizen migrants. Borders even target citizens who find themselves having turned into quasi-citizens whose rights can be suspended, rejected, delayed and denied because of their religion, ethnicity, colour of skin or class. The internal border controls in European countries are an illustrating example. The racialized profile of so-called illegal migrants, reminded many non-citizens as well as citizens that the state still does not recognize them as real citizens. Borders violate not only human rights but also citizen rights. Another example is the case of Roma people deported from EU countries. They are EU citizens and have the right to stay in another EU country for 3 months. The mobility of Roma people is different from the mobility of other EU citizens. Their mobility is undesirable because of their ethnicity and class. Their mobility is the mobility of the mob. As Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos (2008) show, the term *mobility* refers not only to movement but also to the common people, the working class, the mob. Borders are instruments for mobility control of the mob, the working class. Borders allow employers power over workers. Borders are part of the capitalist mode of production. Borders produce 'good workers'. In some countries like Dubai, migrants' passports are confiscated by their employers, making the migrants immobile. They are placed in labour camps outside the city. Workers cannot change jobs. If they leave their employers, the so-called 'sponsors', they become fugitives, unlawful. They appear in the newspaper in wanted-like notices with their pictures, described as 'runaway workers'. Migrant workers should have a 'good work attitude' to get their visa extended. Borders also produce 'good wives', docile prostitutes and many other members of the mob (Anderson, Sharma, and Wright 2009). Borders are instruments to keep migrants in their places in terms of the class, and racial, gender hierarchy.

The current border regime has resulted in a hierarchy of mobility–mobility of 'qualified' travellers and mobility of 'unqualified' travellers. The vocabularies used, not least by academics, are telling. One group is called 'expats', the other one 'migrants'. Children of one group are 'third culture kids', children of the other one are 'second generation'. The lifestyles of expats are regarded as cosmopolitan, the other group live a diasporic life. One group does investment, other group's investments are 'remittances'. One group has 'transcultural capital', the other group has 'migrant capital'. The whole border issue is about 'unqualified' bodies of foreigners, those who never stop being a foreigner, no matter how long they have lived in the country, no matter how integrated they are in the society, people with black

skin, Jews then, Muslims now, Roma people or vagrants. As Étienne Balibar puts it, borders have become invisible borders, situated everywhere and nowhere. Hence, undesirable people are not expelled by the border, they are forced to *be* border. The question is not what or where the border is, but who is the border? Borders do not restrict mobility, they restrict rights. Borders discriminate. Borders kill. Borders preserve and reproduce social inequalities and global injustices.

Utopia/daydreams

A world without borders is possible because: firstly, borders are social constructions, so they can be remade and unmade; secondly, human beings moved freely for a long time before free mobility became regulated and criminalized; thirdly, free mobility is already carried out every single day by those who do not recognize or respect borders, by travellers without papers. This kind of border crossing, done by hundreds of thousands every year, indicates the failure of the border regime. Reports show that up to 80% of the Afghan young men deported to Kabul attempt to start a new migratory adventure within a short period of time after their arrival. A similar pattern is seen among deported Ethiopians. Deportation, thus, is not the end of the migration cycle but rather just a phase of recirculation. The repetition and replication of their claims to the right of mobility, despite continuous rejection, show human agency and hope. For Ernst Bloch (1996), daydream and Utopia are identical. He showed in contrast to night dreams, which look back, daydreams are oriented toward the future and possibilities that have 'not yet' become. In that way, we can understand how unfulfilled hopes inherited from past failures alongside a hopeful sense of 'not yet', become pull factors and motivations to repeat and replicate political and social demands, claims, and stands by travellers without paper against the border regime. Daydreams, hope, Utopian ideals are therefore anticipatory and not messianic. They mobilize rather than deactivate.

If Utopia is understood as an illusory and unattainable state and condition, then what is Utopian is the idea of a successful and effective border control. A look at our world, every part of it linked to other parts through roads, cables, flight routes, media, economy, war or personal connections, tells us that stopping the mobility by those who are motivated to move is unrealistic. What is unrealistic and illusory is the belief that we can keep the current border regime and, at the same time, respect and follow human rights and citizenship rights. The Declaration of Human Rights is illusory. Article 15: *Everyone has the right to a nationality*. The Declaration is, however, silent on the obligation of states to grant immigrants a nationality. The Declaration 'promises' many other rights, such as right to work, safety and being with one's family, but not the right to mobility – which is the basis for realization of the mentioned rights. The Universal Declaration of Human

Rights offers, thus, available but not accessible rights to those who need them – stateless people.

As a mirror of the current dystopia, Utopian thinking offers a dynamic and critical way of seeing the world. It displays our desires and longings. The problem is that the Utopia of a small group of humanity has become a dystopia for the majority of the human beings on the earth. This is why instead of thinking about the possibilities for a radical change, we extend a dystopian situation for displaced people through humanitarian interventions by building larger and better refugee camps far from Europe, granting a few more asylums, giving a little more money to UNHCR.

Radical Utopian thinking does not mean opening borders but rejecting the idea of borders altogether. Open borders can be closed again. Open borders are selective and discriminatory. The regulation of mobility operates according to social sorting that involves sexual, gender, racial and class inequalities. They let only those come in, who are most useful, who can produce more. Borders are a technique to measure the worth of foreigners.

A radical change, unlike open-border politics (a romantic cosmopolitanism), rejects the notion of the entity which borders are drawn around, i.e. home and homeland. The Greek etymology of *Utopia* means no-place. While the idea of home(land) is a fascination with the past, history, identity, ruins, night dreams, the idea of *no-place* (Utopia) is future-oriented, triggering hope for, in Bloch's words, a 'not-yet' experience, expectant for possibilities for a different and better time – daydreams. *No-place*-thinking means not recognizing anywhere as home. Only in that condition is humanity not territorialized; the plagues inherent in the nation state system can vanish, and the 'botanical' way of thinking about human beings, in terms of roots, and the uncritical link between individuals and territory can fade away. *No-place* thinking designates de-territoriality, discontinuity, inconsistency and interruption, all in contrast to the botanical and nationalist image of identity. *No-place* thinking as a paradigm, as a way of being in the world, as a lifestyle, as ethical and aesthetic normativity, opens the door to accept the other as she *is*, not as how we want her to be. Utopia, no-place-thinking, generates new possibilities for questions and political visions, for critical ideas. The idea of a world without borders is an inspiring vision for a better future than the one that awaits us. The fact that millions of people do unauthorized border crossing every year, demonstrating that free mobility is factually possible, shows us concrete Utopian horizons.

For the motion (2): Noel Salazar

The free movement of people around the world would be Utopian

This motion situates itself within the triple M-track of this conference, *Movement, Mobility and Migration*. The topic seems timely since we live in an era in which a world with penetrable borders is strived for as the ideal state of human affairs. Any historian or archaeologist will tell you that 'it was only during the course of the twentieth century that we came to accept and expect states physically to limit and control the movement of people into their territory' (Moses 2006,184). The ability to move freely is spread very unevenly within countries and across the planet. So is free movement a Utopian idea? In order to voice an informed opinion, I first need to unpack the keywords of the motion and the assumptions they carry with them.

What's in a name?

Movement. Human movement involves much more than mere 'motion'; it is a complex socio-cultural assemblage infused with both attributed and self-ascribed meanings. We have come to imagine that movement, certainly of the long-distance kind, is border crossing, as though borders came first, and movement, second. The truth is more the other way round (Ludden 2003,1062). The twentieth century saw an increase of mobility control and this both along international and internal borders (Nyíri 2010). As Zygmunt Bauman has noted, 'Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values – and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern times' (Bauman 1998,2). Currently, dominant mobility discourses link movement to three positively valued characteristics: (1) the ability to move (also called 'motility'); (2) the ease of movement; and (3) the tendency to change. This translates into three taken-for-granted assumptions, which have been influenced partly by neo-liberal and free-market ideologies: (1) there is (increasing) movement; (2) movement is a self-evident phenomenon; and (3) movement generates 'change' (mostly of the positive type).

Free(dom)

> It has often been assumed that mobility equals freedom, and that freedom requires mobility. Certainly, constraints on mobility are experienced as a loss of freedom (think of enslavement as one extreme); and dreams of mobility are often experienced as dreams of freedom. *Mobility, Freedom and Public Space* (Sheller 2008, 25)

Although the motivations to cross borders may vary widely (and are certainly not all positive), movement is generally perceived as a marker of

'freedom'. Already during colonialism, colonial administrators and anthropologists alike secretly admired mobile people and heavily romanticized their perceived freedom from authority (Salazar 2010a). It is a widespread idea that much of what is experienced as freedom lies in mobility (the Utopia of the twenty-first century that stands in sharp contrast with the sedentary territorialism of the twentieth century). However, restrictions on border crossing movements are commonplace. Freedom of movement is often more limited for minors, people charged with or convicted of crimes, women and for members of disfavoured racial and social groups. Also, specific circumstances, such as war or conflict, may affect the freedom of movement.

Free movement (in the sense of 'libre') implies that people can cross state borders, back and forth, to live, work, study or retire elsewhere, permanently or temporarily. On a global scale, freedom of movement refers to 'the right of people to circulate without restrictions across the surface of the world' (Pécoud 2013, 1). By 'right' is meant only that others have a duty not to interfere with people's attempts to cross borders.[2] While this is just wishful thinking globally, there are regional examples. In Africa, the 15 countries of ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States, have been developing free movement policies since the 1970s. The European Union is the most advanced example of a regional entity committed to free circulation, within its borders, with legal provisions extending well beyond the basic economic logic. Indeed, fostering the free movement of people has been a major goal of European integration since the 1950s.[3] However, the opening up of intra-EU borders has gone hand in hand with the heavy patrolling and control of external borders.

Arguments in favour of free movement pertain mostly to economic (or political) efficiency and to ethical considerations (Pécoud 2013, 3). From an economic perspective, freedom of movement would create a 'unified world labour market' (Pécoud 2013, 2). The long-standing ethical argument is often traced back to Immanuel Kant's essay *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795), where he argued that states needed to submit themselves to cosmopolitan laws, embracing all the peoples of the earth. This was based on the premise that the peoples of the earth (*not* rulers or states) own the earth and therefore must be free to travel anywhere on its surface. As Robin Cohen (2005) has pointed out, even in this generous formulation of free mobility, there are clear limitations imposed by Kant himself and some that we may infer.

The link between movement, freedom and rights has long been recognized and is well established. Article 13 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: (1) 'Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state'; and (2) 'Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his

country'. Importantly, these rights are entirely framed by the organization of the world into sovereign states. There is no human right of free movement across borders and no right to access or to settle (immigrate) within another country (Pécoud and De Guchteneire 2007). The arguments against the latter were formulated decades ago:

> problems of finding housing and employment, of graduating political participation in order to prevent the "swamping" of a social or cultural system, of extending educational, health, and other social facilities. Finally, there is a separate problem of limiting births to culturally acceptable levels so that people would not feel they were being displaced by raw Darwinian tactics. (Nett 1971, 226)

Moreover, also the right to leave one's country is not uncontested as it is connected with 'brain drain, political use of information, loss of subjects (e.g. military draftees) and the implied rejection or loss of popularity of a country or its leaders when people have left it' (Nett 1971, 226).[4]

Mimi Sheller (2008) argues that the freedom of movement is not just a personal right or capacity but also has sovereignal dimensions that are socially relational and civic dimensions that are collective and public:

> Personal freedom of mobility centres on the scale of the body: how the body moves, where it can move, when it can move. Sovereignal freedom of mobility, in comparison, extends beyond the individual body to encompass issues of governance, legitimacy, and the exercise of power whether in a familial home, an organization, a city or a nation; thus it concerns mobilities at larger scales. And civic freedoms of mobility likewise extend beyond the individual body to the collective mobilities of multiple publics, of social movements, of bodies of citizens and far-flung networks of communication. (Sheller 2008: 30)

As Sheller rightfully remarks,

> sovereignal freedom has often been exercised as a freedom of movement which immobilizes others; in fact the sense of freedom of movement often depends on the denial of others' mobility. Hence it produces what we might refer to as mobility injustice. (Sheller 2008, 28)

Freedom of movement, then, appears as an issue for global justice (Pécoud 2013, 2). When movement is disrupted in one realm, it may actually be met with efforts to increase mobility in another. Personal mobility freedom, for instance, has led to new kinds of resistance against mobility injustice, such as the embrace of nomadism as a counter-tactic against sovereignal and civic forms of control over mobility, access and collectivity (Braidotti 2006).

Another important point is that 'freedom as mobility' is composed both of opportunities to travel when and where one pleases and of the feasibility of the choice not to travel (Sager 2006, 465). As Tore Sager writes,

> Freedom as mobility may be valued for two main reasons. First, the possibility of travelling might be valued in itself. In order to experience freedom as

potential travel, there must be possibilities allowing for more transport than the number of trips actually taken. The individual must also be in a position to autonomously decide whether to act on the possibilities. That is, the potentiality aspect of mobility means that the individual has a choice between travelling and not travelling. This is an essential aspect of freedom as mobility; freedom of movement implies the right not to move. (2006: 469)

It is doubtful, for instance, whether there are many 'existential migrants' (Madison 2010) – people who freely move, not in search of a better life or to expand their options, but merely for the sake of moving.

The cultural assumptions, meanings and values attached to movement need to be empirically problematized rather than assumed (Salazar 2010b). The ideological associations with liberty, freedom and universalism contain serious shortcomings and neglect the social costs. Indeed, notwithstanding low-cost airlines, free movement is far from 'free' (in the sense of 'without costs'). People's mobility 'choices' are pertinent to and normalized within the dominant ideologies and mobility regimes with which they engage (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). In fact, critically engaged anthropologists were among the first to point out that modern forms of mobility need not signify privilege (Amit 2007). Recent research on the human costs of hypermobility among managers of multinationals, for instance, shows the importance of questioning the 'voluntary' aspect and individual desirability of mobility (Gherardi 2011). There is only a tiny economic global élite 'which financial capitalism has liberated from all spatial constraints and which, therefore, produces the only social group able to choose freely between mobility and immobility' (Gherardi 2011, 108).

Utopia

In effect, what pushes from behind is, negatively, desertion from the miserable cultural and material conditions of imperial reproduction; but positively, what pulls forward is the wealth of desire and the accumulation of expressive and productive capacities that the processes of globalization have determined in the consciousness of every individual and social group – and thus a certain hope. (Hardt and Negri 2000: 213)

In the sixteenth century, the humanist Thomas More (1478–1535) coined the term *Utopia* for an ideal, imaginary island nation somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. Its seemingly perfect socio-politico-legal system stood in sharp contrast with the contentious social life and chaotic politics in Europe at the time. More's book inspired people to set up real intentional communities that attempted to create ideal societies. Interestingly, Utopian imaginary communities provided 'one of the first spaces for working out the "particular shapes and boundaries" of nation-states' (Wegner 2002, xvi). Utopian projects are characterized by impracticable perfection. The belief is in the possibility or desirability of not just a better but a perfect society where

everyone lives in harmony and everything is for the best. As a variation on power, Utopias propose an alternative by designing a future that aspires to become (Ricœur 1986). Nowadays, Utopia has come to be reviled as illusory, dangerous and against human nature.

Philippe Couton and José Julián López (2009) argue that, from its inception, movement has been central to the Utopian tradition.[5] In their words,

> The power of Utopianism indeed resides in its ability to instantiate the tension between movement and place that has marked social transformations in the modern era. This tension continues in contemporary discussions of movement-based social processes, particularly international migration and related identity formations, such as open borders transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. (Couton and López 2009: 93)

Original Utopians used travel to express a complex exploratory intent: 'the opening of geographical space permitted offshore imaginings of social perfection. Travel would open passages, and therefore help to draw new cartographies of the rapidly expanding physical and social universe' (Couton and López 2009, 101). As the discoverers of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries came to venture to the edges of the(ir) world, it was supposed that, eventually, they would encounter some of the mythical geographical Utopias whose existence was, at least for a great number of them, beyond dispute (Salazar 2013). In the words of Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'When they moved into unknown regions they were more anxious to verify the ancient history of the Old World than to discover a new one' (1961, 78).

The fundamental shift brought about by the Industrial Revolution was centred on the control of the movement of people (Couton and López 2009, 104): (1) displacing farmers to feed emerging industries; (2) controlling the movement of this emerging geographically mobile class within well-defined borders; and (3) encouraging the movement of traders and colonialists. Gypsies came to be regarded as the epitome of the greatest threat to population control: vagrancy. From the late nineteenth century onward, a Utopian figuration developed around a more enduring type of movement, migration, often overlapping with 'civilizing' colonialism. Movement abated as the world seemed to settle into the bordered world of firmly emplaced nation states in the years following the First World War. The limitations of a system that presumed mutually exclusive citizenries became very evident. In 1921, a conference of the International Parliamentary Union met in Stockholm to condemn the passport system and to call for more freedom of movement (Moses 2006, 51).

Some argue that 'capitalism transformed the force of the freedom of mobility into competitively organized upward social mobility' (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008, 204). While in (late) capitalism, subjectivity seems to be increasingly defined by mobility, movement

across space and time need not necessarily imply change in identity or people's unsettledness, as some feel 'at home in movement' (Rapport and Dawson 1998, 27) or even 'settle within mobility' (Morokvasic 2004). The irony is that in the era of globalization, marked by its free movement of capital and goods, the movement of people is subject to greater restrictions than at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution (Barry and Goodin 1992).

Contemporary Utopia, Couton and López (2009) argue, has preserved the original kinetic impulse, the necessary movement that brings people to new shores, but has reversed the priority:

> For many, the defining places of modernity turned out to be mostly restrictive cages of bureaucratized coercion … The opening of space *qua* space – roaming rather than journeying to a new place – is the source of contemporary Utopian imaginations, the process rather than the destination. (Couton and López 2009:101)

Dominant Utopias are now chiefly those of free movement and placeless space, replacing 'roots' with 'routes' (cf. Clifford 1997). This is maybe because imaginaries of a better world 'out there' are countered by rapidly circulating news in the global media about the places people imagine (Salazar 2011b). Contemporary Utopias of itinerancy are conceived in terms of the idealization of universal frictionless movement. It is in this context that we have to situate discussions of how to (de)regulate global migration and the ongoing 'open borders' debate and 'no borders' activism (Hayter 2004; Moses 2006).[6]

In the words of Anna Tsing, various 'kinds of "friction" inflect motion, offering it different meanings. Coercion and frustration join freedom as motion is socially informed' (2005, 6). Nikos Papastergiadis uses a similar metaphor when talking about 'turbulence' in the context of global migration as 'the best formulation for the mobile processes of complex self-organization that are now occurring' (2000, 4). Border-crossing movements have, since the end of the 1980s, been the object of increasingly restrictive policies, based on the assumptions that migration leads to uncontrollable flow of people and to threats to the security and stability of receiving states. This has led to practices such as the detention and/or forced expulsion of illegal migrants, the increased militarization of borders, reduced access by migrants to welfare provisions (health services, education), cooperation with undemocratic states of origin or transit to curb migration and the conditionality of development aid upon cooperation in the migration field (Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 2004).

In this context, complete borderlessness is a hoped-for universalization of liberalism, but it is also, and perhaps more importantly, an upgrading and rethinking of the site of political imagination from the national to the global through Utopian figuration. Stated differently, 'much in the same way that Utopian migratory itinerancy envisages the detachment of individuals from

place through the erosion of national borders, it equally emphasizes a new type of postnational citizen equipped with a cosmopolitan subjectivity' (Couton and López 2009, 107). Cosmopolitanism, whose discourse draws on many of these predicates, is a powerful contemporary figuration of itinerancy in the global world (Friedman 1994). This is not only an issue in migration but, perhaps even more so, in transnational tourism (Salazar 2010a, 2011a).

The Utopias imagined in new mobility discourses (cf. Hannam, Sheller, and Urry 2006) range from the 'death of distance' idea, the hypermobile society, in which most people behave as if they are footloose and fancy-free, to demands for 'de-acceleration', new modes of 'making oneself at home' and a flourishing world society that is characterized by eco-justice and equity with regard to climate emissions. Whether approaching the one extreme or the other, questions of ethics, identity, gender, environment and religion are sure to crop up (Bergmann and Sager 2008).

Beyond the utopia of 'free' movement

A right to mobility is ethically defensible and usefully complements the human right to emigration… A right to mobility may appear as a naïve Utopia… Considering mobility as a right is a provocative way of questioning the justification of policies that are now taken for granted. Today's Utopia may be tomorrow's reality and innovative debates and ideas are necessary to ensure new directions. (Pécoud and De Guchteneire 2006, 82)

Mobility ideologies equate geographical movement with social fluidity, negating the fact that social structures also contribute to mobility behaviour, that movements are subject to social constraint and that opportunities of upward socioeconomic mobility to which the individual seemingly responds by being physically mobile are as much 'freely' wanted and realized opportunities as choices by default (with the legal structures regulating who can and cannot move being crucial). According to Couton and López, 'The debate lies between two extremes: movement to a place, where, as in More, most movements become redundant (and dangerous: travel is severely limited in Utopia, and never occurs alone), or movement in a placeless space' (2009, 111). As they argue, 'Utopia is built not just on the idea of movement, but on forms of sociability that might harness movement and intimate new communal dynamics' (2009, 113).

There is an inherent paradox in the contemporary idealization of freedom of movement: '"freedom" entails developing the infrastructure to defend the free movement and operation of some, and to strictly curtail the freedom of others' (James 2005, 27). Not all movements are valued equally positively, and the processes that produce global movements also result in immobility and exclusion (Cunningham and Heyman 2004; Salazar and Smart 2011). Restrictions on mobility also limit people's

freedom to circulate, thus leading to a higher rate of permanent migration and discouraging seasonal workers from returning, temporarily or not, to their country. Mexican migration to the United States illustrates these points: migrants keep trying to cross the militarized border until they succeed and, given the difficulty of doing so, tend to remain on a more permanent basis in the country (Holmes 2013).

Let us return to the celebrated example of the European Union. European freedom of movement is a unique legal and political construction in the modern world, in which one has the right to move, travel, live, work, study and retire without frontiers (Favell 2008). However, as Ulrich Best writes,

> The EU combines a Utopian discourse on borderless Europe as a new, larger 'inside', with sophisticated mechanisms of discrimination. Inside, these also include transition periods for the citizens of the newly joining states of Central and Eastern Europe, who are not granted the full rights of mobility for an open-ended number of years. The elements of anti-Utopia are numerous. At the 'outer borders' of the EU, rigid boundaries are erected. (Best 2003, 198)

Since the very beginning, each step of EU enlargement has been accompanied by fears of massive migration flows that turned out to be ungrounded. While the EU allows for free movement of citizens among member countries, the migration factor is actually lower in the EU than in the world at large. Indeed, free movement has not resulted in increased but decreased migration.

In 1971, Roger Nett wrote that the right of free movement of people on the face of the earth was the civil right we are not ready for. This still seems to be the case today. Although the majority of the world's population stays put, there is a fear that as more people will have the ability to cross borders they will automatically do so. This rests on a failure to distinguish between mobility and motility – the ability to move. There is no global uniform trend towards more mobility, anywhere, anytime. More people are enacting their right to stay put than their right to move (Salazar 2011c). Another persistent misconception is the assumption that free movement equals more migration (in the sense of permanent settlement) instead of mobility (movements back and forth). Scholarship is still too focused on the former. We urgently need to address the latter as mobility raises a whole different set of issues, the most important probably being the question of sustainability. So, would the free movement of people around the world be Utopian? Yes, and for multiple reasons.

Against the motion (2): Nicholas de Genova

The fulcrum around which this debate pivots is the word 'Utopian'.

As in the very first formulation of the idea of Utopia by Thomas More in his eponymous work of social satire (1516), the very notion of *Utopia* playfully evokes simultaneously a 'good place' – indeed, the most perfect conceivable place – and 'no-place,' a place that does not exist and, by implication, could never exist. Thus, the term is equivocal. It is suggestive at one and the same time of a good place that is genuinely conceivable – which is to say, it is possible to conceive of it! – and yet, so elusive under current circumstances as to seem unfathomable.

Another locus classicus for the term 'Utopian' – and one that seems highly pertinent to the way in which the word has been deployed in the motion for this debate – is the pamphlet, quite well-known is some circles, by Friedrich Engels: *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (1880). In this polemical juxtaposition, the adjective 'Utopian' comes to signal everything that may be disparaged as *not*-'scientific'; thus, *Utopian* becomes a virtual epithet with which to denounce and dismiss all that is fanciful, speculative, illusory, ungrounded, unrealistic, unscientific. After all, Engels understood his critical task to be 'to make a science of Socialism,' to ground it firmly upon 'a real basis.' In his terse sketch of the historical context of the first socialist theories arising in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution and gaining currency in the first decades of the nineteenth century, Engels refers to social conditions that were, in effect, immature from the point of view of the emergence of independent political self-assertion by the new class of modern proletarians. To the extent that the historical prerequisites were lacking for the modern working class to resolve the contradictions of capitalist society in practice, Engels contended, so also for socialist theory. Engels explains:

> To the crude conditions of capitalistic production and the crude class conditions correspond crude theories. The solution of the social problems, which as yet lay hidden in undeveloped economic conditions, the Utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain. Society presented nothing but wrongs; to remove these was the task of reason. It was necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments. These new social systems were foredoomed as Utopian; the more completely they were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure phantasies.

Hence, the word 'Utopian' comes to be derisively equated with the fantastical, with wishful thinking and pipe dreams, with idealism, pure and simple. Nevertheless, Engels was as unreserved in his admiration as in his criticism. Even as he repudiated 'the Utopians' for their unfounded and ungrounded

blueprints for socialism, he celebrated their anti-capitalist aspirations. 'We delight,' remarked Engels, 'in the stupendously grand thoughts and germs of thought that everywhere break out through their phantastic covering.'

Thus, even in its most flamboyantly polemical usage, where the term 'Utopian' is relegated to the status of a veritable curse word, there is also the acknowledgment of this equivocal sense of the *Utopian* as something that may be insufficient but which is, in fact, utterly and indisputably *necessary*.

In this respect, with regard to the specific subject of contention of this debate, if we are inclined to believe that the free movement of people around the world would be a *good* thing – that such a world of free mobility would be a truly 'good place' and in that sense, would be a kind of 'Utopia' – then we could only accept to argue *for* the motion. Because it *should* be Utopian! Such a 'good place' would be 'Utopian' by definition, and must necessarily also be the 'no-place' toward which we project an emancipatory vision of that which does not (yet) exist – what Henri Lefebvre conceived as 'the possible impossible,' through which we move in both thought and action towards a horizon of virtualities, realizing in both theory and practice the actual possibilities which are latent in our contemporary reality and thus which constitute that horizon. Although I might otherwise rise to the defence of *this* sort of Utopian thought, however, I have been assigned the role of arguing *against* the motion. It is my task here today to insist that the free movement of people around the world would *not* be Utopian.

Thus, let me affirm in no uncertain terms, that the human freedom of movement is *not* Utopian. Indeed, it is one of the most elementary objective and scientific truths about the human condition. It is an already established, actually existing, verifiable, and indisputable fact.

Here, I begin from what we might call first principles – elementary and foundational starting points for thought.

To be human is to be mobile. For us, to be alive is to move. We are not plants, rooted to a single place from which we grow and expand in more or less constrained or restricted ways. Our defining capacity as a species to creatively and purposefully transform our surroundings and productively and consciously modify our circumstances – our existential vocation for *labour*, if you will – is inseparable from our fundamental freedom of movement. This likewise means that our inherently *social* character as a species is also contingent upon our mobility. Hence, the freedom of movement of the human species is an absolutely basic and non-negotiable aspect of our most general mode of life. This is not merely a philosophical predilection or a theoretical conceit, much less a dogmatic political position – it is an indisputable and immutable objective fact. To be human and alive, under any semblance of natural or normal or healthy circumstances, is to be mobile.

Furthermore, this freedom of movement that we naturally and ordinarily take as a presupposition comes to be constrained or delimited only through

the interference of obstacles and barriers, of various sorts. Such obstructions may be natural ecological or geological features of a particular environment, in which instance our freedom of movement has almost always, eventually but inexorably, circumvented or surpassed them. We are, after all, a species that has even transgressed the limits of our own planetary and atmospheric habitat and ventured to explore the surface of the moon. Hence, our freedom of movement as a species has ultimately manifested itself as a freedom to move around the entire globe, and beyond. The free movement of people around the world therefore would *not* be Utopian; it is already a proven fact.

More important, however, for our purposes here today, the obstacles and barriers to our free mobility may be *artificial* ones, erected through the more or less calculated machinations of social and political forces. In other words, various historically specific configurations of our own social life – and the deployment of our political, juridical and military capabilities toward the ends of sustaining separations, boundaries and borders between distinct categories of humans – have paradoxically been the source of the most decisive and consequential constrictions of our freedom of movement as a species. Thus, our existential freedom of movement as a species has been actively suppressed or restricted, distorted or perverted, and made to appear more and more *Utopian* by the active interference and deliberate interventions of our own misguided, self-defeating and counterproductive politics. We may therefore affirm that the free movement of people around the world is *not* Utopian; rather, what is Utopian is the absurd fantasy of territorially defined so-called 'national' states – the fantasy of total control over presumably separate and discrete human populations and our mobility, the perverse fantasy of border policing. What is Utopian is the statist delusion of border policing ensuring a comprehensive control over geopolitical space; our freedom, however, is not Utopian at all.

We move now from first principles to the objective facts verified by history and ethnography. Some may object at this point that it is I who am blowing Utopian pipe dreams, 'stupendously grand thoughts' (to recall Engels' phrase) of a human freedom of movement that has been almost everywhere subservient if not utterly subjugated, a free mobility that has been abundantly shown to be subordinated if not outright defeated. The objective fact is that we now live in a world that more than ever before resembles what Hannah Arendt memorably called 'a barbed-wire labyrinth'. The human freedom of movement is beleaguered if not besieged, as never before. This is indeed true. We have the evidence of history as well as the evidence of contemporary ethnographic research to corroborate this pitiful state of affairs. But may we reasonably take this deplorable condition to mean that the free movement of people around the world would be

Utopian? Let us proceed scientifically, judiciously and carefully. Let us not jump to undue conclusions.

The first fallacy is to see only what is most obvious, only what is flagrant and flamboyant, only that which makes an ostentatious spectacle of itself, and commands our attention. The first fallacy is to perceive only the political, juridical and military enactments of state projects upon territory, which so commonly manifest themselves as the patrol and enforcement of relatively exclusionary borders. As I have long argued, these sorts of Border Spectacle make a robust and grandiose display of their technologies and techniques of ostensible exclusion, above all directed against the most humble of human border crossers. But they also conceal something. Border patrols and the diverse efforts of state powers at border control have everywhere arisen as reaction formations. They are responses to a prior fact – the mass mobility of human beings on the move, the autonomy of migration, the manifest expression of the freedom of movement of the human species. Even to designate this mobility as 'migration' is already to collude in the naturalization of the borders that serve to produce the difference between a state's putative inside and outside, and thus which constructs the very profoundly consequential difference between the presumably proper subjects of a state's authority and those mobile human beings branded as aliens, foreigners, 'migrants.' But there is one objective truth that must not be lost in the shuffle: the free movement of people around the world, and hence across these border zones, came first. The multifarious attempts to 'manage' or control this free mobility have come always as a reaction. The maintenance and enforcement of borders, we may therefore affirm, is a reactionary Utopianism, indeed.

A second fallacy is to believe that these efforts at border control are purely exclusionary. As a matter of scientific fact, much of what these border controls actually do is a work of *filtering* human mobility, sorting and ranking the free movement of people around the world into a differentiated hierarchy of more or less permissible and more or less prohibited varieties of mobility. Thus, the spectacles of border policing and immigration enforcement present themselves as essentially exclusionary, but conceal what is frequently a massive process of inclusion, albeit a kind of inclusion that seeks to subordinate our human freedom of movement into sufficiently docile and tractable categories of purportedly desirable or undesirable, deserving or undeserving, welcome or unwanted human mobility. In this way, the border and immigration regimes that have proliferated – largely, only over the last century or so, and often much more recently than that – are less about precluding or eliminating the freedom of movement and rather more about facilitating it according to various formulae for control and management. Thus, we may note that the free movement of people

around the world – far from a Utopian fantasy – is in fact one of the central and defining dynamics that constitutes our contemporary global condition.

Yet another fallacy about the Border Spectacle: while increasingly militarized and securitized borders around the world conceal various state projects for the selective importation of migrants, in spite of their ostensible premier task of exclusion, they also conceal the fact that even those migratory movements which are officially prohibited and supposed to be absolutely rejected are in fact, objectively speaking, actively encouraged and enthusiastically facilitated. So-called 'illegal' and officially unauthorized migrations are, to various extents, actively and deliberately imported, and welcomed by prospective employers as a highly prized variety of labour-power. In other words, the Border Spectacle and its grand performance of exclusion is accompanied almost everywhere by the objective fact of illegalized human mobility on an ever-expanding scale. Again, this mass mobilization of cross-border migrants is deeply inflected by its own intrinsic and heterogeneous forms of autonomy. Again, we witness that the free movement of people around the world is already an actually existing scientific fact, an objective truth. The allegedly Utopian no-place of a world of human mobility is the world in which we live.

Now, there is no question that this sort of freedom of movement – the autonomy of illegalized migrant mobility – is hardly the Utopia of a perfect world. But freedom is not given, it is taken. Freedom is not a 'right' stipulated by state powers on dry parchment and allocated fastidiously by bureaucrats or border policemen. The indisputable objective fact of the free movement of people around the world that is everywhere in evidence and verified by social science, on an ever more mass scale, confronts a truly horrifying panoply of material and practical impediments and obstructions. But in spite of it all, everywhere, on a global scale, human beings continue to prevail in their mobility projects, unceasingly and tirelessly establishing migration as a central and constitutive fact of our global present, and our freedom of movement as a species asserts itself anew, staking a claim to the space of the planet as a whole. The proliferation of ever more obstreperous borders therefore only confirms for us the birth pangs of the agonistic arrival of a world without borders.

'Utopianism!' some may pronounce, incredulously or contemptuously, bewildered or aghast at the fearless audacity of a truly *critical* social science. But there is nothing Utopian about what I have depicted for you – it is the objective truth of the world in which we live. As Marx and Engels memorably asserted with regard to their own theoretical conclusions, my contentions here today 'merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing … struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes.' It is the task of a genuinely critical

social science to theorize these struggles, to analyse the objective truth of these agonistic and antagonistic dynamics that constitute the decisive and defining contradictions of our planetary present. In the spirit of the theme of this conference – 'Evolving Humanity, Emerging Worlds' – our science must risk such accusations of Utopianism in order that we may better comprehend how to act in the world to effectively usher in a radically different global sociopolitical way of life that would be adequate to our freedom of movement, by reconsolidating and securing a new relationship between the human species and the space of the planet. Please allow me therefore to declare, once more: The free movement of people around the world would *not* be Utopian. It would be simply an intensification and enrichment of our actually existing freedom. It would be simply one key facet of reaffirming and reconstituting the freedom that is our birthright. The free movement of people around the world would *not* be Utopian. It would be an elementary expression of our creative capacity and productive power as a species.

Discussion

After the presentations by each of the speakers, the debate was opened up to the floor for questions and comments. These are summarized below under thematic headings.

Visas and state capitalization of mobility

The irony of the question of mobility was not lost on the delegates to the conference who were aware of panels whose presenters had not been able to secure visas to attend the congress itself. John Gledhill confirmed that the conference organizers had worked very hard to facilitate visa accession, an issue that would be (and was) addressed in the general assembly. He also congratulated all the speakers on their presentations and argued that *not* moving might also be considered Utopian. He reported on the experience of Latin American migrants attempting to cross the Mexican border to the USA, who ran a high risk of being kidnapped in Mexico, where criminal gangs have realized that holding people as slaves was more lucrative than killing them for non-payment of ransoms, a despicable, but profitable practice. Contrast this with the actions of the state, particularly the USA, which has constructed a hugely profitable industry constructing walls and border fences, with private corporations constructing detention centres. In the UK, visa charges have also created an income stream for the state, leading to mirrored systems in which states and other actors feeding parasitically on migrants. For Gledhill, the only way to prevent this would be for people not to move, and to deal with the absence of freedom at the point of origin.

Freedoms are taken not given

Several comments related to the idea that freedoms are taken rather than given. Borders can also be considered as taken, not given, as many state-borders were constructed relatively recently and could therefore also be dismantled. Certain kinds of borders (e.g. around Free Trade Zones) are points where the freedom of capital is constructed through state intervention, with its own utopic and dystopic aspects. Such borders are not absolute – they filter movement, offering differential freedoms within as well as between states.

Plants move too! Against human exceptionalism

In response to De Genova's comments that 'we are not plants, we move', voices were raised in defence of plants that do, in fact, also move: by growing, for example. Such movement is dismissed, since mobility as a paradigm implies the displacement of a completed entity from one point to another, whereas the roots of plants grow through the soil, for example. Human movement might thus also be considered not only as the displacement of individual entities from one point to another, but as diverse forms of growth, where limiting movement means limiting growth and limiting life. Such movements vary throughout the life cycle, as well as between human groups. Speakers also paid attention to movement that is imagined, referring to Kant's formulation on cosmopolitanism. Since freedom of movement might also refer to ideas, the panellists were asked if their texts would be made freely available.

On Utopia

Paul Ricoeur defines Utopia as the struggle in the present about the meaning of the future, which is immediately always political. Different understandings of Utopia were discussed: Is Utopia a destination rather than being the movement itself, for example? Or is it the borders themselves that are Utopian, offering the potential for inclusion in a Utopian state from which others are excluded? The idea of a border-free world could also be seen as Utopian for multinational corporations, with a neo-liberal interpretation of free movement for capital rather than for all-comers.

Inequalities of (selective) movement

Any discussion about movement and/or prevention of movement should consider international responses to the crossing of borders by Roma and Gypsies, and to the extended histories of attempts to settle them and other

nomadic peoples. According to Judith Okely, gypsies in the UK describe forced settlement as being trapped in bricks and mortar. Internal movement within the UK is effectively forbidden to nomads whose forebears have been in the UK for centuries.

In contrast, there are people who have no desire to move. Should they be encouraged to 'see more of the world'? Or is it an environmental advantage that fewer people travel? The environmental costs of tourism in particular are significant, and also fall unequally. Simple moral judgements that set migrants and tourists into separate categories deserve closer examination, since the effects of encouraging one type of travel and not the other are profound in ecological, sociological and economic terms.

Responses from the speakers

The speakers were invited in turn to give a short response to the questions and issues raised by the audience. Their responses are reported below.

For the motion: Bela Feldman-Bianco

This was a very stimulating discussion, and we are not disagreeing so much. I tried to show here that according to the angle taken here, we can agree or disagree with the motion, and we wouldn't be wrong or right. But I suggested strongly that human mobility is millenary; the movement of people around the world, or migration, or just tourism, emerged since the fifteenth century in the capitalist system with structures of domination and social inequality. At the same time, there is a history of domination and control over people, and a simultaneous history of people who are trying to move or stay – whether they want to leave or not, there is human agency. This is why it is important to look at the dreams, the hopes and the projects of these people as the basis of the struggle between the structures and the people. This is what supports the claim that we have to look at inequality, capitalist expansion, and to look at social justice and human rights. In this sense, it is important to look at the Utopian visions that are engrained in social movements. If the claim is that movement is a right, we have to give strength to this right in terms of borders. But it is more than this; it is also about access to resources. My position here, in this panel, was based on fieldwork and the experiences of people from Congo, for whom the project is just to have a house, a job, and this is Utopian for them, and the sense in which I am using the term 'Utopian'. My students have done research with political exiles from Salazar's Portugal, or with those who went from Brazil to Mozambique. Why? To bring about a revolution and make a socialist nation that they could not build in Brazil. This is the drive – there is some Utopian

vision driving this movement of people. This is the sense in which I talk about Utopia here.

Against the motion: Sharam Khosravi

Listening to reflections form the floor, I say in my presentation: of course free mobility is not free. The case of Roma people is an example. This is why I didn't say 'a political vision for open borders' but 'political vision for no borders'; that my argument is against the nation state system and when we say we are not ready for free movement, my question is who are 'we', who say we are not ready for free movement? Tell this to people who are in detention centres, or in shaky boats in the Mediterranean Sea right now. Something that is good with Utopian discussion is that we can look at the present and at history and historicize migration and mobility. If you look back in history, and 50 or 60 years ago, just after WWII, and said to western Europeans that a day will come that there will be no borders between France and Germany, people would laugh at you. Go back only 25 years and say that there will be no border between eastern Europe and western Europe, they would not believe you either. But this is reality today. So why are we so scared and sceptical when we say, there will be no borders and free movement will be a reality in the future? I'm not speaking, again, for open borders, I'm speaking for no borders. It's not about cosmopolitanism, to feel yourself at home everywhere. My argument is to reject the notion of home, to argue for homelessness, not recognizing homelands, because the notion of home is exclusionary; when we include people in our home, at the same time we exclude others. Of course, we should think about inequality, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality. All of these will be included in the idea of no borders thinking (not open borders), which puts in question the nation state system and the capitalist system of production.

For the motion (2): Noel Salazar

I would like to thank the floor for some very interesting input. Like all the debates, we are dealing with very complex issues, and anthropologists have this urge to stress how complex it is, but we are here to debate and to vote on a motion and so we have to take sides. I'm here to defend one side, and the art of rhetoric is such that good orators are able to distract the audience from what we are talking about and what we should be talking about, and I want to remind you of the actual motion, and every single word of that motion is important. We should not change the words of the motion. And the motion is, 'the free movement of people around the world would be Utopian'. So the verb is very important, it's not 'is' Utopian but 'would be' Utopian; it's not freedom of movement, but 'free movement'. That's a very

important difference and I don't have time in two minutes to explain the difference between free and freedom. But we are here to vote about the motion. I want to stress some of the arguments that I made. Free movement: 'free' as a concept contains different meanings, and we have talked a lot about free in terms of freedom, but there is also free in terms of no cost. I'm very surprised that no one has been thinking as a Utopian, what if there would be no borders, and what if travel was so cheap that all people would have the means to travel. What a disaster that would be, can you imagine the environmental consequences and the social consequences? This is what some people have been arguing, so we should consider these different parts of the debate, and we should definitely delink – we're talking about movement, not migration, not going elsewhere and setting up a life there, we're talking about movement. Movement means going around, so it's not necessarily just from A to B, but A to B to C, or back to A, so there are many different patterns, and this is what we should be talking about. Talking about migration and building up a life elsewhere, that's only one of the many possible options. All peoples around the world actually do have the freedom to imagine a life elsewhere but also a better life at home, so I've been stressing that when we are talking about movement, mobility is not good *per se*. It's not *per se* what we should all be aiming for or what we should be defending. We should also be defending the right not to move, and that should be definitely considered when we are thinking and make a final decision and voting.

Against the motion (2): Nicholas de Genova

My opponents in this debate presented two pieces of evidence that I would like to marshal in favour of my position, against the motion. Someone in the audience said that it was a neo-liberal point of view to celebrate the idea of a world without borders. This is false. Neo-liberalism is a strategy of capitalism. Noel Salazar presented a piece of visual evidence, an advertisement from Rabobank that said 'some see countries with borders, we see markets with opportunities'. I don't think the neo-liberal credentials of that bank or any other can be questioned. Neo-liberalism does not envision a world without borders, because neo-liberalism is a strategy of capitalism, and capitalism requires borders, because borders produce differences in space, borders produce inequalities, and capitalism capitalizes on those inequalities. Capitalism exploits those inequalities. The second piece of evidence was the very enduring song lyrics presented by Bela. There were two lines that I wanted to call our attention to. The song said 'stupidity divided us into flags', that's exactly right. Utopian stupidity that ultimately culminates in the ultimate reactionary Utopianism, fascism. But there is another phrase in the song 'love without passports'. Love without passports is not Utopianism. It is

love. Similarly, freedom of movement without passports is not Utopianism, it is freedom.

Members of the audience were invited to vote for or against the motion, or to abstain. The motion was defeated by two to one.

Notes

1. A shorter version of this argument was published by the Silent University thesilentuniversity.org
2. This is trickier than it seems because the freedom of movement experienced by one person might be conceived by another as a threat of intrusion.
3. The main provision of the freedom of movement of persons is Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which prohibits restrictions on the basis of nationality.
4. These arguments have been recycled over and over again. Some of the most common arguments used to spoil attempts at broadening the migration discussion are: 'concerns about the number of anticipated immigrants, the potential for brain drain, the Utopian nature of the proposal, and the effect of immigration on national culture and security' (Moses 2006, 164).
5. This was partly due to the general context within which Utopian writing emerged: as an extension of travel writing, itself a product of the exploratory expansion of European commerce.
6. Early liberal thinkers considered the freedom of movement to be a natural right, giving it precedence over all prerogatives asserted by the state. Although many modern liberals have subsequently devalued the right of free movement, it is still defended by some contemporary observers, and this prerogative lies at the core of most open-border arguments.

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