

Expectations of refugees in the tragedy of frontiers, the perception of the trajectory and the deafness of rights

Expectativas de refugiados na tragédia das fronteiras, a percepção da trajetória e a surdez de direitos

Aloisio Ruscheinsky¹
aloisior@unisinos.br

Corina Nicoleta Tulbure²
ctulbure@yahoo.com

Abstract

The authors argue that a refugee camp is an exceptional space to put order in the tension, in the spatial and temporal dimensions. There are always multiple borders in refugee camps, whether between countries, cultures and languages, it is the crossing of goods and people. Paradoxically it is a temporary situation and a residence at the same time. From the methodological point of view, the field notebook and the interviews made it possible to learn about the test subjects living conditions, as they are actors within the constraints of their story. The article proposes to expose the voice of the refugees, their vision and the telling of the bumps in the path to Europe. The experience in the camps allows for an analysis of territory through the dissolution of previous social life and the expectation of new beginnings. What shapes the horizon of refugees is reaching fertile soil. Sociability is modeled on insecurity, denial, and depoliticizing humanitarian aid. In summary, a paradoxical space where nothing is taken for granted and everything is disputed.

Keywords: refugees, Europe, border, anthropology.

Resumo

Os autores argumentam que o campo de refugiados é um espaço excepcional para colocar ordem na tensão das coisas, na dimensão espacial e temporal. Sempre há múltiplas fronteiras nos campos de refugiados, seja entre países, culturas e línguas, seja os cruzamentos para as mercadorias e as pessoas. Paradoxalmente, há uma situação temporária e de permanência ao mesmo tempo. Do ponto de vista metodológico, o caderno de campo e as entrevistas possibilitaram aprender com os sujeitos da pesquisa sobre suas condições de vida, porquanto são atores dentro de condicionamentos nos quais fazem a sua história. O artigo propõe expor a voz dos refugiados, a sua visão e leitura dos percalços na trajetória à Europa. A experiência nos campos de refugiados permite uma análise de um território por meio da dissolução da vida social anterior e da expectativa de novos começos. O que molda o horizonte dos refugiados é alcançar o solo fértil europeu. A sociabilidade é modelada na precariedade e na negação e despolitização da ajuda humanitária. Enfim, paradoxalmente, um espaço onde nada está dado como certo e tudo está contestado.

Palavras-chave: refugiados, Europa, fronteira, antropologia.

¹ Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos. Av. Unisinos, 950, Cristo Rei, 93022-750, São Leopoldo, RS, Brasil.

² Universidad de Barcelona. Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 585, 08007, Barcelona, España.

Introduction

This article results from a field study that discusses the perception of refugees on their trajectory, taking a theoretical basis to reflect on their tragedy facing suppression and obstacles at the borders. The measures adopted by European Nations weaken refugees, left at the mercy of their fate since migration flows have become a security problem with the closing of borders. In this study, the authors combine the transnational approach to ethnography, a scholarly work that represents a result of involvement with the trajectory of migrants and political refugees, in the roles of researchers and social activists. Facing different life experiences that move foreigners, we must recognize that those who ask for refuge not only experienced a situation of violence, but also had and have their human rights violated.

There are different relationships that involve the "immigrant" and the "refugee" even though both express the intention to seek better living conditions. Considering they are not interchangeable, the former refers to a voluntary exile while keeping the prospect of return, at least in imagination. The second shares a feeling of an involuntary trip or banishment, reinsertion into the place of origin ceases to exist because of the violation of rights and sometimes the social space no longer exists.

The field research was carried out between August and September 2015, whose main path remotes to the head displacements between Bucharest in Romania, and Sofia in Bulgaria, after a displacement of 250 km to Harmanli by more than one mode of transport and then to other refugee camps, passing through Serbia to Hungary. However, contact and research with migrants in Europe has gone on for more than ten years, a trajectory in which the researcher can experience feeling like an outsider when navigating through other territories and cultures.

Through a qualitative methodology, the analysis assimilates the research interest is affected by cultural understandings of the subject of the investigation. Known only in a certain sense there is a geographical community, and the selection of informants is due to the ability to overcome the linguistic barriers and approval by a general perception of the ongoing antics. There were no proper conditions for resuming multiple contacts with the same respondents due to contingencies, but information from several people was articulated for clarification and contrasting data. The course generated a daily field notebook detailing observations in situations and relationships.

The goal of this careful observation, whether in speech, and both in relationships and practices, was to develop an insider's view of the facts, meaning that researchers not only see, but also try to feel what is going on. The participant observer experiences a double dimension in an environment of several hostilities as an outsider, whose limited experience stems from

the nature of the observed phenomenon. The procedure of trying to "comprehend" means observing social settings as "anthropologically strange".

For interpretation, there was of course a selection of informants who have knowledge or an overview of trajectories. In the sample, a reference chain is formed to emphasize the empirical dimensions of investigation, to obtain clarifications and answers to better understand the circumstances lived. Instead of an explicit hypotheses to approach the phenomenon in question (Zikic, 2016) a concern with emphasis on the meaning attributed to actions by agents or seizing a practical problem as the starting point of the discovery.

Among the thousands of refugees living aimlessly in this investigation, contact occurred particularly with those of Syrian origin. The prospect is to give voice to the refugees themselves and the officials that have the horizon to help in their contingencies. On denial of reception and in the face of humiliation, thousands of refugees have adopted this methodological dimension with the burden of keeping alive the memory of a page of history made by men and women (Benezzer and Zetter, 2015). The exhibition of the results of the field research offers contributions, especially to the social sciences, for studies of the ideological conflict of refugees, for anthropology and the politics of social memory. This interferes in the strategy to present the stories that support these individuals, and the form in which power is given to those who lived the events in question.

The core of the article explores the potential and the contribution of the meaning of tragedy and trajectory in terms of: understanding the experience as performativity looking; reflecting the unique voices of refugees; the dilemmas caused by a double resistance on one side developed countries of Europe restrict access and on the other war victims requiring a route of transit; informing the academy and politicians from a complex understanding of experience by a troubled territory for carrying out the investigation. The authors faced conceptual and strategic challenges in studying refugees in ephemeral and risk situations, in addition to some methodological issues related to research and the issue of different languages and dialects of the individuals.

The text discusses the situation of insecurity, as well as the inability of democratic Governments to act under the logic of universal human rights³. In this sense, the manifestations of reconfiguration, inequalities with respect to different social and ethnic groups, firmly brought to the investigations in the social sciences. The research perspective of the contemporary understanding of the vulnerabilities to which they are subjected large contingents of the population requires a construction in terms of rights, justice, tolerance, and solidarity. Under this perspec-

³ Among the international instruments for the protection of refugees, there is the Geneva Convention of 1951, by which a person can request asylum for "founded fears of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, belonging to a particular social group or political opinions". Along with the 1967 Protocol, it ratifies the "non-return" which is the cornerstone of refugee rights.

tive, the host is the positive quality, while the national defense and the delimitation of well-being are the negative aspects.

Among the causes of displacements, Syrians and others, is an ideological conflict between rebels and rulers and, along with the territorial disputes and control over economic resources, in addition to the racial and religious conflicts. Refugees are direct victims of vulnerabilities and agents of rights widely disseminated in the Western world, which assumes that in many cases end up experiencing various breaks: traditions, identity, family, and nationality.

The dream of Nitain and children's perceptions of the tragedy

The search experience and contact with people demanding the status of political refugees, legal and otherwise, seems to be a relevant factor for the movement in a refugee camp in an unfamiliar territory and languages whose mutual knowledge is precarious. When entering the territory of Harmanli, in Bulgaria, near the border of Turkey, the viewer is faced with space that is home to thousands of people fleeing from the risks and political terror and whose future or imaginary is extended by expectations. The refugees can be marked as a burning social issue in times of intensive transnational movements.

A nice girl, smiling and communicative, with three rolls in her arms, which we met along the way towards the corner of refugee camp of Harmanli (Bulgaria). This refugee camp, predominantly of Syrians, near the town of Harmanli, of about of 18,000 inhabitants, the Turkish-Bulgarian border was Bulgaria's largest in 2015. From the methodological point of view, the author selected the narratives of some characters to introduce to readers, with several of them more than one moment of contact was established.

Nitain is six years old, and in her odyssey from Syria is in the company of only her mother, Kuhar⁴. The interpreter was fundamental to communication since few people among the refugees understand and speak another language in addition to their mother tongue. They have been living in this refugee camp for five months. The family withdrew from Syria amid civil-military war, made a long journey on foot, and crossed the border and most of the Turkish territory walking. She left Qamishli, a city to the North of the country, near the border of Turkey, inhabited mainly by Kurdish ethnicity. This drama has historical and collective dimensions.

The civil war in Syria which began in 2010 has led to a significant migration wave in the region. Many neighboring countries of Syria, especially Turkey, have received a large number of immigrants in their lands. Initially thought to be temporary,

this necessary move has become a significant economic, political and social problem with the intensification of the internal conflict in Syria. According to official figures, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey reached 1.7 million in 2015. The significant proportion of refugees live in camps near the Syrian border and in large cities and towns close to the camps (Bahçekapili and Cetin, 2015, p. 2).

In the case of the young subject, to reach Bulgaria, she hid in a truck, on a dark path that seemed to have no end. Now with difficulty for family reunification, wait in this refugee camp for the arrival of her father and her brother to give continuity to the antics of this journey of unknown steps. In the same housing area, like a big room, about thirteen people share the same space without furniture.

They have just received a meal in the morning and the children bring to the shelter a few sweet rolls and a plastic plate with milk. Commenting on the food at the shelter she said "I don't like cookies, but mom bakes them". In a hallway, her mother with a makeshift heater, Kuhar prepares the *kulich*, which she considers a sweet Syrian wonder.

"I came alone with mom. My father and my brother are still in Istanbul. Mom told me we were going to a place that was like in Syria before: no *boom-boom* and is called Germany and then I will go to school. I went to school one day, there was a strong boom in the courtyard, and dad would not let me go back. But, I just want the war to end and go back to our house, with dad and my brother. Here I do not leave the field, I am in a school with other classmates. I like school, where we dance. But I'm in a place that is not pretty and it smells very bad." In other words, we observed a muddy field full of trash, dotted with tents and small icy huts.

Among her perceptions and memories, Nitain remembers a foreign internment center with a closed regime in Elhovo, a town a few kilometers from Harmanli. This was the first place they were taken when the Bulgarian police, children included, found them. She and her mother have passed a week in this refugee camp after crossing the border: "Before I heard the aircraft too low and here it is better, the planes are not approaching the houses to make *boom*, as in my country. In the last months we did not leave the house, I make drawings for my friends, and since we left I don't know anything about them. Syria scares me now, but it is the most beautiful country in the world without bombs".

Along with three other families and a pregnant woman, Nitain, under the care of her mother, crossed the border hidden in a truck, highlighting the perception of trajectory. "I spent a lot of time in a truck; I can't tell you how many hours. It was very dark and cold. Now at night I wake up and feel cold because I think I am in that truck. Mom was not afraid, but I was and she had me in her arms. Mama told me: while we are on this truck do not open your mouth, so the police does not hear you, and did not talk anymore".

⁴ There was no intention of checking the accuracy of the names of the informants due to conflict, where identification can be aggravating. Reason why the names are fictitious, but the characters are real.

Some give their children sleeping pills to anguish inside the truck while crossing the border, explains Kuhar, Nitain's mother. Throughout the journey to cross borders, the doors remain closed and the interior is all-dark. This ordeal, as Kuhar and her daughter describe this phenomenon, lasted about 28 hours. Moreover, by not having legal documents nor the status of refugee, they face major constraints to move which increase the search for the service of traffickers.

However, Kuhar believes the transfer through the truck still seems like a safer route of entry into the EU (European Union) than a route on foot through the Woods (the crossing of a few kilometers, however, is very open) or on boats by sea. The matter is that other legal routes do not exist. She is emphatic: "more than half of the children who are in Harmanli came in trucks. Inside it nothing can be seen, it is like a ghost trip".

When they meet with the family, they intend to continue all together towards Germany by land, mostly on foot, on a route that will pass through Serbia-Hungary and so on as possible. The girl and her dream will go more than 3,000 kilometers with her backpack.

Effectively there are different problems, and access to documentation is recurring; the government of the country in which this study was performed and applies anti-migration and restrictive refuge policies, tending to deny the status of political refugees to requesters. A family can spend several months in the same enclosure field until they get the resources to move forward or the documentation. During this time, adults and children can come and go, but with little money cannot enjoy almost anything outside. Strategically, the meager reserves are stored for the road or strictly urgent in months they remain protected at the refuge. The contacts state that they especially make a purchase if any relatives, still in Syria or already fixed in Europe, send some money. Therefore, it is usual to see people coming and going from the field with nothing in their hands or with a small bag with little room for objects.

Living in Harmanli means living among the ruins. This refugee camp is located in former police dependencies and military headquarters from the communist times. Places where they kept the prisoners reclude a few decades ago and taught them the tactics of the cold war. Now refugees in transit "lodge" in a damaged building. In fact, people settle in among the ruins: cracked or chipped doors and walls, broken windows, in summary, buildings falling apart.

Children are the only joy that is seen: they play, shout, and sing. Of the approximately 2,000 people living in seclusion, about 200 are minors. By giving voice to the children, in addition to categories defined by others, and by highlighting individual stories, according to Danforth and Van Boeschoten (2012), we find and recognize actors for the construction of mutual recognition and the healing of persisted traumas. Some that are between three and five years old show us the victory sign with their fingers raised and ask for a photo between spurts of laughter, however Nitain regrets: "Look, this is Germany," pointing to a drawing in a half sheet of crumpled paper, "a plane that

doesn't throw bombs. Sometimes it makes me sad to think that not all my friends here will go to the same school in Germany. We won't see each other again and this is bad".

Crossings with obstacles or subtle movements at borders

The task of crossing the line of obstacles at the border surveillance is to detect a vacuum in surveillance as an opening in the wall of the fortress, and through which they can penetrate or make a hole in the fencing. Traffickers watch the most susceptible places of the border for hours to find the right moment. Some are able to arrange different checkpoints at the same time or observe all movements from the Turkish side, with the aid of others from the Bulgarian side. On the other hand, the police ostensibly perform surveillance on the border area. "The border is not crossed at a given or previously chosen point, or we lurk to see where there is a gap. This is a trade secret. We walk kilometers to find the point of entrance, or sometimes we walk for days", explains Jihad. In fact, all agents are watching all or others. Still "apparently we dodged a war to run into another: the battle of the frontiers". Without a doubt, the refugees of this internal war clearly aspire for a passage to the other side of the border, whose meanings are multiple.

In the adventure and of great risk to their own lives, they will try as many times as necessary to be able to achieve their purpose. In the opposite case, if they had remained in the midst of the civil war in Syria, would perhaps be dead. "We have a map, we keep a detailed map of the border in memory", Jihad tells us, as if revealing a secret. It is understandable that they seek to know the shape of virtually every bush from the point of view of the location and the capacity of concealment. The actual border barriers are crossed in minutes, but before this time there is a lot of apprehension and surveillance for hours, as well as the moments after to not be caught red-handed.

To cross, they form groups that will be accompanied by a smuggler to guide, as the respondents call them. Trails or road walkers, for obvious reasons, cannot take heavy belongings and an appropriate proportion of children, namely, since reduced groups, the speaker explains to us, on average may not have more than three or four, in order to be able to escape in case the border police sees them.

Other traffickers of the network, who, within certain conditions, transfer to dependencies considered safe, such as the socially recognized camps, usually receive refugees in this country. At this point, the circumstances are rearranged so they can be on their way toward Central Europe, avoiding getting their fingerprints taken. They certainly have their reasons to fear, have seizures, or be afraid that the Bulgarian Government will grant them refugee status. This concession on the part of the national Government sounds like an imposition since, in this way; they will not be able to work for three years nor reside in another nation besides this country. This is also the time that

refugees will not be displaced or resettled in any other country. At the same time, it seems like a quarantine waiting for the situation in their country of origin to improve for a possible return trip (Ozlatimoghaddam, 2012). In this critical circumstance, they are living in very limited perspective as to whether or not to travel to another European country as they intended, return cannot be sent (for now), and, on the other hand, there is no opportunity to be resettled and to work.

"Some Syrians who has received refugee status and work here for less than one euro per hour for six euros all day" Alidlib accounts, which currently is in possession of the permission only applies to the country in which it is. It appears that with this employment income they cannot live, not here nor elsewhere. That is why he dreams of reaching rich Germany. However if the Bulgarian police take their fingerprints when entering Germany, and at some point they have to present documentation, would be deported back to Bulgaria according to the Treaty of Dublin II. Even if the Government of Berlin is informed, it ensures that it is failing to enforce this agreement in the case of Syrian refugees. These contradictions covered in the text that says:

Although the vast majority of Syrians flee to neighboring countries, an increasing number is trying to reach European soil. On one end of the spectrum, individuals escape their war-torn country seeking protection elsewhere and on the other end the European Union (EU) and its Members States bear specific obligations for granting protection, stemming from their international and regional legal commitments (Karageorgiou, 2016, p. 10).

Nevertheless, he explains, business persons do not go through the same ordeal: "we hike extensively or throw ourselves into the sea to go to Europe". At the other end of the tragedy of rekindled inequalities by international relations, he continues, "many Syrian rich people go directly to Canada to open a business. They have no problems with the papers, since they are considered investors instead of refugees".

With regard to the town of Harmanli, Alidlib says, "the refugees mix with business for a lot of people, not only traffickers. If Europe opened a legal door for us to enter, we wouldn't have gone through all this here". In fact, it refers to the fact that part of the economy of this city, as well as others, briefly lives in opposition and in the light of all the surrounding the

thousands of Syrians and other nationalities⁵. Finally, according to Danforth and Van Boeschoten (2012), exposure of subjects effectively weakened by political and ideological struggles, such as refugees, configures active agents rather than passive victims.

Activists amid humanitarian mitigation pedagogical actions or tensions

In another walk near the refugee camp, we kept in touch with a group of people with a different kind of relationship with the conflict. Armand Colin (2015) analyzes that humanitarian aid is in deep identity crisis, like that at a crucial moment in its history⁶, which would involve international solidarity organizations to review their position, the values of sharing, the meaning and the role of the refugees. The volunteers that we contact revolve in this capability to meet the great challenges and wonder about the causes of the tragedy, but with enthusiasm and altruism, that resets a new framework for the future of humanitarian action.

With a professional air, Sheuva Kadikaws works a few hours as a psychologist at the camp, which qualifies her to narrate stories in which report that several children cry because of nightmares and have symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Often minors suffer from disorders because of the experiences through which they pass. This free service is also subject to challenges: to win confidence in a reduced time or facing the urgencies and the issue of language for communication. However, such approaches by the volunteers often generate a feeling of insecurity or discomfort facing contradictions among the people in the host countries, as well as open tensions between them and the population running from the terror according to Aleksandrova (2015). In addition, Sheuva ponders if the refugee traffickers are in a process similar to any other black market: it thrives where there is a ban and a demand or reverse persistent demand.

That is precisely why Ahipan and six other young Kurds decided to join an initiative to assemble, on a voluntary basis, an activity where they teach languages, history and geography, areas in which they have some skills. Volunteer activists in the pedagogical actions deploy entertainment activities involving gymnastics, music and dances, among other activities. Another

⁵ Nazanin Armanian (2016), political scientist, wrote "Refugiados: una cuestión geopolítica más que humanitaria": "las miles de personas que están siendo devueltas por la Unión Europea a la zona de guerra o a países con regímenes dictatoriales (Siria, Turquía, Irak o Afganistán), pertenecen a la primera categoría, y los Estados que se declaran democráticos están obligados a protegerles por la Convención Internacional sobre el Estatuto de los Refugiados de 1951. Por otro lado, ¿cómo unos gobiernos europeos, que han sido corresponsables, junto con EEUU, de la muerte de al menos millón y medio de personas en las recientes guerras contra Afganistán, Irak, Yemen, Siria, Libia, Sudán, Pakistán, Somalia, Mali, etc., y han desmontado allí la vida de al menos 100 millones de seres humanos y han provocado la huida de otros 25 millones de sus hogares, pueden tener siquiera voluntad de ayudar a sus víctimas? Pedir peras al olmo confundiría a los ciudadanos... Mientras Turquía acoge a cerca de 3 millones de huidos del infierno sirio, Jordania a 2,6 millones (un 40% de su población), o Líbano a 1,4 millones, los 27 estados de la UE (salvo Alemania) hospedarán tan sólo a 160.000".

⁶ *Revue internationale et stratégique* themed "Devenirs humanitaires" comes to this subject with approaches on guidelines of humanitarian aid or a framework of policy interventions.

founder of the "daycare", Dilshad, believes that under these circumstances children lack mediations that stimulate them to integrate, move, entertain, express, and unload all the fears and apprehensions that keep arising from conflicts in which they are inserted.

This morning in front of our presence, the children perform, whether sad, bored, happy or certainly hungry, a cheerful *break-dance*, which seems to us action against stress. More than this, the playful activity seems to serve them everything, including to reduce the pressure they exert on their parents or family requesting financial or emotional spending to placate flared tempers. Sheuva and Ahipan are, in agreement that the entertainment provided by the activities of diversified form, helps also to appease the spirits or to mitigate the anxiety faced with so many uncertainties and unpredictability. Zhyznomirska (2016) analyzes the conditions of conflict in which the EU perform the migration flow management as erratic from the Eastern European countries with the spread of sound practices such as remote control.

They talk simply about the role of aid to withstand the adverse foreign forces and to mitigate the results of conflicts and tragedies, but unable to act on the causes. "Through this school, a daily routine is established. Otherwise, what would they think about all day while waiting for some closure? You'd see up all he has lived through", says Dilshad. For all parents especially, but even for young people and adults in General, the future weighs heavy on their shoulders. More than the mishaps they have suffered, they are affected intensely by the conflict, hunger, cold, uncertainty, fear, and repression. In this sense, Ahipan adds that "therefore rejoice that the kids have an activity with which they are entertained. So, the everyday anguish is less transmitted, mutually". Somehow, the conflict is debated and at the same time masqueraded.

The question related to diverse activities is consolidated as a conflicting process among the local population, the humanitarian and refugee groups, which in the end may have an outcome of intolerance with minorities or relations of racism and xenophobia. According to Rodier (2013, p. 13), a "deal of xenophobia in the controlled proposal of migration flows", would be in course... the utility of migratory controls, we postulated that the energy and resources devoted to curb the movement of people respond to objectives different from that which is exhibited, that of 'managing flows'. History and experience show that this management is part of a misleading project: without denying that policies aimed at dominating these flows can have short-term effects, they do not have, in the long run, more than a marginal impact on population".

By irony of the history, unlike the locals, refugees do not have problems, they are a problem themselves. In other words, the refugees in transit are a barrier to social relations in the local space. There is an ambivalent situation and the impact of the ac-

tors can be highlighted. It is related to the existence of refugees classified as a problem to the commandment of humanitarianism. Humanitarian action can deny the conditions of actors or agents, especially when it prefers the vision of victims. Extremely vulnerable refugees may induce the delimitation of externally attributed identities, movement that suppresses the representation of subjects and causes forgetting about the ability to act.

Throughout the refugee camp, there are several groups of school age children from four to seven and eight to fourteen years of age, coordinated by different associations or initiatives. Dilshad, the professor of drawing and music, says that initially in all drawings, bombs and tank trucks are projected, since they bring it in their luggage: "there are three words that scare and panic Syrian children: police, bomb, ISIS⁷. The word police gives them shivers: in Syria they were very frightened by the association to the bombs, here by repression and control over the movement. When they see the police here or when they are addressed by them, they get very scared". Young Miula panics and no longer wants to meet men in uniform: "Mama told me here I shouldn't be afraid, that nothing bad will happen to us anymore. But here I have seen a lot of cops".

These narratives are in the voice of some characters walking in the refugee camp in Harmanli at the Turkish-Bulgarian border. In the circumstances of multiple conflicts in the field of research as researchers did not want to be identified with any organization that deals with refugees, as it could affect relationships with people and aspects of data collection. The refugees, with their tragic experience, seem very sensitive facing organizations related to refugees, largely due to the possible subordination, dependence or feeling in the hands of others.

Territories in conflict: Solidarity and reverse action of the outsiders

The information is different, which adds points to nervousness. Information is circulating that until yesterday, the buses took people to transfer to the refugee camps for police record. We spotted the group of volunteers who traveled to the border to take food and blankets. Without a doubt, the actions of the police vary constantly. "No one knows what they will do tomorrow", said a volunteer from Migzsol that communicates in English.

A broad-based civil campaign to collect clothes, donate food or money, deliver Bulgarian language courses and help with registration and accommodation unfolded during the first months of the Syrian presence. The work of tens of volunteers organized through the Internet platform "Friends of the Refugees", the "Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria" and the humanitarian activities supported by the New Bulgarian University are to be mentioned (Aleksandrova, 2015, p. 243).

⁷ Reference to the jihadist group ISIS-Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, with operations in Syria and in Iraq.

However, the restrictions of solidarity are many, such as offering food and lodging, says the volunteer. Yet, "it is considered an offense to transport people without documents, so the locals don't help. Only some activists approach at night fall and try to lead them in their vehicles".

In the chaos, many elect to go directly to the highway bypassing the police cordon. They walk for hours on the asphalt and somehow expect that someone will take them in any means of transport. This is the option chosen by Rojeen and Leroy, a young Kurdish couple from northern Syria. She is pregnant and they are exhausted after a week of navigation in the shadows between the borders. Without a doubt, before the obstacles and mishaps to be suffered there is still room for happy faces due to partially touching their dream of being on European soil. They want us to take their first picture on this zero point of the border, near or next to the fence that they just crossed.

The tragedy in the homeland is alive in the memory of Rojeen: "in Syria only those who are implicated directly in the armed struggle have remained, because they feel secure or protected. We do not want nor participate in the war we are threatened. I am sure all the young people will go if we do not put an end to armed conflict. For our parents it is more difficult to abandon the Syrian territory, since they would have to walk many kilometers and it would cost them a lot. Like the Kurds, Christians are also afraid because of the Islamic State and the other militias that fight each other". However, most people cannot even escape; they need cash, but lack it even for food, while the problem of drinking water also persists. The desperate people walk under the missiles to collect water in the street.

Like other young people, Rojeen and Biken are also nervous, because they are worried. The only question that is very clear is that they do not want to go to the refugee camp, nor place their permission for permanence, because their set destiny is Germany. The wait, the uncertainty, and the crying of children fill the air at the border as the hours slowly pass. Construction is underway to strengthen the border ditch and they develop quickly: along with the installed fencing and the barbed wire, posts that certainly reach four meters high are added. In return, or on the other side, children who are crossing the border only earn a little something as a snack, fruit, and a few sips of water, broken down by a group of volunteers from humanitarian aid. To the observer it becomes visible that facing the indifference of most local people and the repressive measures of the government, the volunteers offer some products of first necessity and attempts to transport the refugees.

In this sense, according to Aleksandrova's approach (2015), the bio-political control individuals in transit on behalf of the defense of a territory is evident and, at the same time, organizational and technical cooperation between the police and the secret service widen. In the days following the field research there was a resurgence and repressive new legislation, which provides prison sentences of up to three years for anyone who damages or crosses the 3.5-meter high barbed wire fence with installation forecast throughout all the kilometers of the

border. Also in the vicinity, a violent clash between a police contingent and refugees tore down the fence. This happened when the script of the empirical research was completed.

Solidarity actions were observed in all the spaces of that cluster. Another dimension observed does not seem to assert that the closer to the center of Europe, the less control or suppression. Plans to expand the camps or the announcement of new refugee camps on the outskirts of small towns has caused anxiety with in reaction chains. Parallel to this, social workers start a diversified base humanitarian campaign as informal groups, associations, organizations, and academia (Aleksandrova, 2015) whose potentiality refers to mitigation.

In the middle of the survey, there are excessive demands for journalists and researchers. "Instead of asking things and taking pictures, why not wonder official how long we will remain roofless?" The scolding comes in the comment of a young Syrian who comes from Homs and has been sleeping on the floor for the last five days. Worse than that, you do not know when you will be able to move forward.

However, in the midst of so many desperate people, perhaps hundreds of people organize and move independently to provide help of solidarity (Karageorgiou, 2016). Beside us, journalist Andrea Kóbor opines: "Hundreds of people came together in the city independently to provide food, clothes, including something to entertain the children. In fact, it is what she does in the evenings: talks to the parents and plays with the kids.

The other day, we arrived at dawn at the camp and observed the NGO Migrant Aid offering quick meals and providing coats for children and babies. By nightfall, essential products were divided, such as toiletries, and bath showers are improvised. As a form of complaint "do what the liberal democratic State, defender of the universal declaration of human rights, should have done", said Veronika Kozma, an activist on issues of migration and political refugees to explain why they offer solidarity. Some volunteer doctors join to help, especially women according to the lists of attendances. In turn, the mafias of offsets are present, and also symptomatic that spend weeks raising or lowering the values charged for transportation beyond the border, certainly in accordance with the degree of obstacles or hazards.

Amid hundreds of people with more questions than answers, we had the monitoring of a journalist who speaks English and understands the language of the Syrians. A woman, about twenty-five years old, who identified herself as Nahar, tells us that three days ago she paid 1,800 euros for a private car to cross the border with all family members. However, the police intercepted them and they had to return and lost the investment. We watched her husband ask with insistence, or desperation, the volunteers "what can happen!" She has been sleeping for several days with her two children, three and four years old, on the cold ground and during the day are out in the open.

Another young man from Iraq, with understandable English and a degree in engineering, expressed anger that he could not contain, "look at this, Turkey, Bulgaria, it took me months

walking. And now I am barred here and I never want to stay here". These are expressions of confusion, concern, and disturbance. Complicated to evaluate, before the comments from events and the expressions of the faces were taken in, the main enemy of the refugees from the border may be confusion or information fragility (Wall *et al.*, 2015). However, the possibility that border controls will tighten remains a suspicion.

On the other hand, the different information that reached the disappointed and hopeful people at the same time, in our field of research, about the contradictory behavior of the EU member States. Their voluble decisions regarding the situation of refugees just adds doses of nervousness and uncertainty facing the chance to register before proceeding. "According to the law, all refugees must register before entering the EU. It's very confusing, since Germany reports that they can go and the next day that they must register", comments Kóbor.

It is clear that these circumstances of political conflict involve suffering and uncertainties for the refugees. In a report that circulated sometime at the end of the day that from 200 to 500 people were seized and forcibly re-located to be registered. Others were literally on the train tracks or the highways almost aimlessly, to Europe. Given this fact, a volunteer of Migrant Aid explains: "I'm almost certain that this won't succeed, because if you take refugees to pass the border you can be stopped." Nevertheless, the expectation follows the wait, but the confusion did not leave the scenario of uncertainty: "the problem is that the border opens, the border closes", said Nahar, a young Syrian who had been tricked. Since she was informed that her brother came to Munich, it completes her insecurity: "it's all chaos. The panorama changes from one hour to another".

Especially in this country, the hardening of the laws is underway the volunteering agents believe, in addition to the controversies as to the application of the conventions endorsed by the respective countries. In addition to hardening and raising fences or deepening the trenches on the border, a bill is in debate to grant the police and the army greater power to act on the border, including breaking into homes if there is suspicion of housing people without documentation. "If the EU law prevails or the uncertainty as to the right to seek international protection, these people will continue suffering from cold and hunger. It is hard to see what the commitments are. Here everything is blocked; there are thousands of people, while hundreds of volunteers are trying to help. If it was not for the government, these people would have died. No official body has offered even a blanket. On the other hand, the legislation requires them to go to the refugee camps, but nobody wants to go", says a volunteer of Migrant Aid. In other terms, the humanitarian aid has its price charged of the rescued.

Final considerations

The narratives presented consolidate part of the reality of the crisis for granting political refuge or of people relegated

to human misery by the regrettable conditions of improvised cities or camps for refugees that expect either the reopening of borders between nations with a democratic regime, or something better than the civil war from which they are fleeing. As researchers, even walking through the concentration spaces, one can imagine, but it is hard to feel to what extent the circumstances of so many who live without their rights as refugees deteriorate.

In a sense, one can strengthen the argument that the prospect of combating displacement of refugees thrives on the cornering direction of the EU nations in their own logic. If the formal level governments, and eventually the population, continue to affirm the historical legitimacy of human rights and respect for ethnic and racial differences, are between a rock and a hard place. In the reality of the tents and in the border demarches, the measures for which the rights are not fully exercised are stamped. In the circumstances, the contradictions are manifested when a small portion of volunteers move through humanitarian assistance, many others show another facet turning to conservatism and occasionally to radicalism.

Information on strange territories seems to become fundamental occasion for the decisions on the refugee route, because refugees huddle in official and unusual places. The conditions of shelter, hygiene and food, particularly bad, vary according to the areas surveyed. Similarly, the tensions are everyday scenarios and collective manifestations explode circumstantially.

In the specific context of the field of research, the crisis of liberalism and freedom of movement is manifested due to the fact of the national States: allowing movement of material goods; strengthening the obstacles at the border; minting more strict rules against migration flows in the tragic situation that the war imposes. In addition to this cultural resistance manifested by the acceptance of foreigners (not to split the cake) and in whose midst the nationalist upsurge occurs, when not xenophobia.

With respect to the control or obstacles to the granting of conditions for political refugees, in the face of overt approaches, the democratic regimes now approach that from their own condition profess the universalization of the civil and political rights, are paradoxically on the wrong side of history since in practice this premise is indeed not held. From the critical point of view, it points to a number of inconsistencies. Besides, pointing to a dialogue with the difference and attention to the experiences of those who have lived and continue to live with the blurring of historic moments can create a space that respects rights and the bases for coexistence and tolerance.

References

- ALEKSANDROVA, B. 2015. Security in Times of Migration: Towards a Global Definition and Practice of Security. The Case of the Syrian Refugees in Bulgaria. *Balkan Social Science Review*, 4:227-253.
- ARMANIAN, N. 2016. Refugiados: una cuestión geopolítica más que

- humanitaria. Espacio Público. Available at: <http://www.espacio-publico.com/que-debe-hacer-la-ue-sobre-la-inmigracion#comment-5407>. Accessed on March 28, 2016.
- BAHCEKAPILI, C.; CETIN, B. 2015. The Impacts of Forced Migration on Regional Economies: The Case of Syrian Refugees in Turkey. *International Business Research*, 8(9):1-15. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v8n9p1>
- BENEZER, G.; ZETTER, R. 2015. Searching for directions: Conceptual and methodological challenges in researching refugee journeys. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 28(3):297-318. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fev022>
- COLIN, A. 2015. Présentation. *Revue internationale et stratégique*, 2(98):3-6.
- DANFORTH, L.M.; VAN BOESCHOTEN, R. 2012. *Children of the Greek Civil War: Refugees and the Politics of Memory*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- KARAGEORGIU, E. 2016. Solidarity and sharing in the Common European Asylum System: the case of Syrian refugees. *European Politics and Society*, 17:10-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2016.1121007>
- OZLATIMOGHADDAM, M. 2012. "We live like sea foam": experiences of liminality among afghan migrants in ceza city-turkey. *Master in the program of social anthropology*. Ankara, Turquia, Middle East Technical University, 156 p.
- RODIER, C. 2013. *El negocio de la xenofobia ¿Para qué sirven los controles migratorios?* Madrid, Clave Intelectual, 152 p.
- WALL, M.; CAMPBELL, M.O.; JANBEK, D. 2015. Syrian refugees and information precarity. *New Media & Society*, 16:1-15.
- ZHYZNOMIRSKA, L. 2016. At a distance: the European Union and the management of irregular migration in Eastern Europe. In: R. ZAIOTTI, *Externalizing Migration Management: Europe, North America and the spread of 'remote control' practices*. New York, Routledge, p. 134-153.
- ŽIKI, B. 2016. Qualitative Field Research in Anthropology: An Overview of Basic Research Methodology. *Issues in Ethnology and Anthropology*, 2(2):123-135.

Submetido: 18/11/2016

Aceito: 15/05/2017