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Trapped Mobility: a theoretical framework and literature review focusing on displaced youth at the borders between the Global South and Global North

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces the concept of 'trapped mobility' as a way of analyzing the complexity of the lives of displaced young people at the borders between the Global South and Global North. 'Trapped mobility' results from state policies, for containing immigration and mobility at borders around the world and their impact on the experiences of displaced youth. The article's contribution is to explore this concept both as a way of understanding (im)mobility and as an intersection between power structures and the experiences of trapped youth. Drawing on the notion of 'being misled', I show how 'entrapment' occurs and how borders are used to construct 'trapped mobility'. The paper also synthesizes displaced young people's responses as a means of unpacking trapped mobility. The conclusions provide a deeper understanding of the logic of youth mobility and advance the theoretical comprehension of the new geographies of young people at borders.

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Introduction

In the 'Special Viewpoint Collection: Youth-full Geographies' recently published by the *Children's Geographies* (2019 17, 1), van Blerk (2019, 34) argues for 'the need to decolonize thinking around youth geographies'. She suggests that 'geographers should be challenged to think about the implications of protracted displacement, conflict and war among others and mainstream the outcomes of such issues for research with youth' (van Blerk 2019, 34). Inspired by this line of thought, this article focuses on the link between youth mobility and borders (Hoechner 2015; Hopkins et al. 2019) in order to highlight how geopolitical articulations of space, which correspond to conceptions of territoriality and state power, have the capacity to control the lives of people confined at borders. In doing so, the paper aims to better understand the ways young people moving from the Global South to the Global North are trapped in real and symbolic ways at borders, where the law, fear and security predominate (Hörschelmann 2008; Katz 2008; Pain 2009).

The increased interest in youth mobility in relation to the geopolitics of borders is a result of the global refugee crisis – for the most part young people confined at the borders between the Global North and the Global South. According to the United Nations, over the last decade, more than 68.5 million people have been forcibly displaced by war, violence or political persecution (Fröchlich

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2017). According to Eurostat (2018), the number of first-time asylum applications within the EU-28 in 2017 reached 1.26 million and almost four in every five asylum seekers were young people under 35 years of age. The United States (US), in turn, is the world's leading resettlement country with 85,000 refugees, followed by Canada, which has consistently resettled between 20,000 and 35,000 refugees and asylum seekers annually over the last decade (UNHCR 2018), and Australia, which recognized 11,766 refugees (Refugee Council 2017).

Through a review of the literature on youth (im)mobility at borders, (Cheney 2005; Harker, Hörschelmann, and Skelton 2017; Kallio and Bartos 2017; Hopkins et al. 2019) this paper highlights the concept of 'trapped mobility' as a means of shedding light on state policies for containing mobility around the world that have dramatic consequences for displaced young people, as manifested in the loss of family and in the fear of arrest or torture.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'a trap is a trick by which someone is misled into acting contrary to their interests or intentions; an unpleasant situation from which it is hard to escape'. This research delves into this definition and explores 'trapped mobility' as a dynamic concept, highlighting the notion of 'being misled', as a driver and component of 'entrapment', in which police and state power, as well as that of other agents (for instance, Immigration, Customs and Enforcement (ICE) in the USA; Frontex in the EU) and structures (such as smuggling networks) impose their migration control tactics and norms by exercising various forms of exploitation, detention and by violating human rights. I show how trapped mobility is related to displaced youth, how this 'entrapment' occurs, and how it is experienced by young people at borders. I highlight how we can adequately construct the concept of trapped mobility to connect and theorize about these border experiences.

I argue that 'trapped mobility' is a concept that is constantly present in geographical youth research, such as the analysis of a 'trapped population' (Black and Collyer 2014); 'chaos and crisis' (Mountz and Hiemstra 2014); 'enforcement and detention' (Mountz et al. 2012); and is symbolically interpreted as 'stillness' (Cresswell 2012) or 'fear' (Ansell et al. 2019; Pain 2009). However, existing work barely touches on the significance of space, scale, power and borders, or the consequences of youth displacement expressed through lived experience, which impoverishes the study of border geopolitics in relation to young people. Using 'trapped mobility' as an overarching concept can provide a compensatory approach. While seeking to contribute to the debate on the geographies of displaced youth in both territorial and spatial terms, this concept could also aid understanding of how young people struggle, feel and act in their lives at controlled and securitized borders. This concept is presented here as a way of understanding (im)mobility and as an intersection between global power structures – expressed by the securitization of border exclusion and control – and youth experiences.

The paper is organized into six sections. The first highlights the drivers, types and routes of mobility, connecting youth movement with borders. The second section builds the trapped mobility concept, elaborating on its potential to contribute to the geography of youth mobility. The third section discusses the types of entrapment at borders, manifested by securitization, exclusion and the symbolism of entrapment linked to youth mobility. The fourth section defines the experiences of displaced youth, illustrating how recent studies have expressed and analyzed these experiences, and shows how they intersect and can thus be embodied in 'trapped mobility'. The fifth section synthesizes displaced young people's responses as a means of unpacking trapped mobility. Finally, the conclusions summarize the headline arguments and offer suggestions for future research, providing a deeper understanding of the logic of youth mobility and advancing the theoretical comprehension of the new geographies of young people at borders.

Drivers, types and routes of mobility of displaced youth at the borders

To define mobility as trapped, it is first necessary to summarize the drivers of mobility, the types of movement and the routes taken by the displaced youth. Wars, conflicts, insecurity, oppression

global environmental change, and political violence have displaced millions of young people, affecting mainly the countries of the Global South such as Syria, Somalia, Eritrea and Afghanistan, among others (Bejarano 2017; Cheney 2005; Triandafyllidou 2018). In this way, they represent the principal drivers that lead to the initiation and perpetuation of displaced flows. Moreover, in recent years, repression and the proliferation of terrorism (particularly Daesh, also known as IS, ISIS, ISIL) have turned the Middle East (especially Syria) into a major source of displaced youth due to civil conflicts. The marked income disparity between origin and destination countries and the high levels of unemployment in the Global South (Africa, Asia and Latin America) are other important drivers of irregular migration of displaced youth to the Global North (Triandafyllidou 2018).

Concerning the type of mobility, this research deals both with irregular migrants – whose drivers are economic and who attempt to cross borders irregularly to escape poverty in search of a better life, violating the immigration laws of the destination countries – and refugees fleeing their countries to escape war and violence. Given that it is impossible for refugees to access formal channels, they take routes traditionally used by irregular migrants (means of transport or people smuggling networks) to cross borders (Koser 2010; Triandafyllidou 2018). The overlap between these two flows of human movement helps us to analyze them together. As Ehrkamp (2016, 2) notes, ‘the boundaries between categories are blurred’ and migrants may move quickly from legality to illegality, or from refugee to migrant status. Thus in this paper I use the term displaced youth at the borders to encompass irregular migrants and refugees.

In the EU three routes that cross the Mediterranean Sea are identified: the Western Mediterranean, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Central Mediterranean routes (IOM 2018) to reach the northern countries of the EU (mainly Austria, Germany and Sweden). In the USA, irregular migration flows through Central America and Mexico have diversified considerably and include, in addition to Caribbean migrants, an increasing number of Asians and Africans who use irregular routes to enter the USA. Nonetheless, there are numerous hotspots where concentrated groups of displaced people are trapped due to extreme borders security, a scenario that is often replicated around the world.

Drawing on a broad range of geographical contexts, in what follows I highlight approaches that show an often-unarticulated appreciation of the ways the restrictive border regime and the everyday life experiences of displaced young people are connected.

Choreographing the trapped mobility of displaced youth: ‘being misled’

In their work on ‘populations trapped at times of crisis’ Black and Collyer (2014, 52) argued that to be ‘trapped’ individuals must not only lack the ability to move but also either want or need to move. Accordingly, the capacity to move is a complex and multifaceted indicator that includes a range of potentially relevant policies that may impede movement and access to significant resources. Considering this argument, I use the metaphor of ‘entrapment’ to insert ‘trapped mobility’, anticipating the struggle displaced young people face overcoming their difficult situation at borders.

To construct this ‘entrapment’, I use the notion of ‘being misled’ to help understand how in their attempts to cross borders displaced young people are trapped by state power and confined, controlled, persecuted or deported. ‘Being misled’ here is an abusive global power system, and displaced young people feel its impact in everyday life (e.g. in detention centers, or refugees camp). The deceptions they suffer include capture, exploitation, trauma, oppression and frustration, and I use the term ‘misled’ to explain how, even if they want to move, young people cannot and need to find the abilities to do so.

In the context of this research, entrapment is conceptualized as the work done by power systems at borders, where sovereign and bio-political powers envelop displaced people. These actions involve complicity, dependency and contractual relations between states and non-state third parties (ICE, Frontex, the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) and capitalize on the physical but also symbolic geography of the border as Mountz (2011, 122) rightly argues.

Geographers have engaged both with state control processes (Mountz et al. 2012) and smuggling activities (Vogt 2016) as essential parts of the global power system that ‘entraps’ mobility processes. On the one hand, the state’s power is related to the violence, structural inequalities and discrimination displaced young people face. Strict border controls mean people cannot access protection and are trapped on the ‘wrong side’ of the border. As a result, they become stuck at or drift between impenetrable borders, often with no way to escape to safer countries or to access help or legal protection (Humble 2014, 56).

On the other hand, smuggling people across international borders is produced by and contributes to the global system of control and power, as an expression of being misled understood as component and driver of entrapment. As the countries that receive displaced persons tighten their legal immigration channels, the only way for many to enter is via irregular border crossings, often with the help of smugglers. Unlike human trafficking (which involves transporting people from one place to another for exploitation and does not necessarily involve crossing borders), human smuggling is associated with illegal border crossings. Smugglers, who are instrumental to facilitating illegal borders crossings, mislead people, committing human rights violations that may include rape, physical and mental abuse, food deprivation, abandonment and death (Içduygu and Toktas 2002).

Both the processes of state control and the smuggling activities that intervene in the entrapment process can occur at any stage of the displacement process from departure to arrival at borders, and are reflected in young people’s experiences. This is particularly effective in detention centers or refugee camps where mobility is officially restricted, being subject to conditions of dependency, which deprives displaced young people of possible access to socio-educational resources (Al Shaarawi 2015; Archambault 2012).

Arguably, ‘being misled’ as a driver of entrapment, intersects not only with war, violence but also with the loss of belonging and home (Blunt 2007). Borders become real but also symbolic misled spaces that create variegated perceptions of belongingness and a splintered sense of self. They permeate the daily lives of displaced young people through media campaigns, discrimination and surveillance that restricts their freedom. These actions intertwine with the experiences of displaced youth manifested by an emotional bundle of feelings – fear, waiting, uncertainty or loneliness (Pain 2009; Mendoza, Jael, and Fernández Huerta 2010). The young person ‘carries with him or her portable frontier that is an ideal made out of fragmented dreams’ as note Aitken and Plows (2010, 328). ‘Trapped mobility’ therefore seems to be a real but also symbolic state for young people who have embarked on the path of mobility and become trapped in no man’s land because of their undocumented status.

As a result, displaced young people face borders being multiplied, moved and modified regularly in today’s world. Bodies are thus essential to the control and containment enacted by borders as they intertwine with the phenomenon of trapped mobility. Borders become the ‘misleading’ spaces in which entrapment occurs, and their domination reinforces the inequality between power and human movement dynamics. In this setting, constrained and denied liberties shape the context in which ‘trapped mobility’ is articulated. Nonetheless, entrapment also entails resistance and struggle by those who are trapped. Even in situations of physical containment and surveillance displaced young people ‘as competent social actors’ (Holloway, Holt, and Mills 2019, 458) demonstrate their agency, their capacity to fight against borders and to unpack their entrapment.

While entrapment – as an intersection between the securitization of borders and youth experiences – can be constructed from contradictory logics, these may manifest themselves both relationally and differentially, as we will see below.

Trapped at the borders: securitization, exclusion and symbolic entrapment

The relationship that displaced youth have with borders and the place of borders – both physical and symbolic – are difficult issues to address as they raise questions about security, enforcement, immigration policy and law, as well as responsibility, rights, ethics and social care. Within the specific literature of youth studies, the links between displaced youth and securitization or exclusion

are still not frequent. There are different ways in which displaced youth can be trapped at/by borders of different kinds:

Securitization

The securitization of migration refers to the framing of 'migration' as a security threat to a state or society, leading governments to limit regular migration pathways as governments respond by instituting more restrictive policies against migrants, such as greater surveillance, detention and deportation. Securitization politicizes borders, increasing and reinforcing the capacity to manage and control displaced youth (Collins et al. 2013) 'as part of the economic protectionism, and anti-immigration sentiments' (Johnson et al. 2011, 61). In securitization process, borders are transformed into biometric instruments, regulating mobility by 'amassing digital biological data in shared databases' (Amoore 2006). Geographers conceptualize securitization (Johnson et al. 2011; Mountz 2011; Hyndman 2012) as processes through which displaced people are increasingly subject to enforcement measures implemented to protect national security.

Across the EU, for instance, displacement and borders securitization have produced complex spatial dynamics manifested by no territorial borders, the restricted Schengen zone, the harmonization of borders and immigration controls as a condition of EU access, and the policy of Neighborhood with non-EU members. Since the EU closed its borders to refugees in March 2016, some 60,000 displaced youth have been trapped in mobility on the Greek border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) eagerly awaiting Brussels' decision on how to manage the migration crisis (European Commission 2017).

On the southern border with Spain, migrants are trapped at the fence as a result of arrests or returns. According to data from UNHCR, in 2018, 28,597 young people arrived in Spain through the Southern Border, the highest figure since 2007. Among them, a total of 249 young people between 18 and 30 years old lost their lives in the attempt (UNCHR 2018). Thus Europe's restrictive policies convert borders into a rigid polarized social space in which the dominating force (borders police and state authorities) excludes and stigmatizes people and groups situated on the other side of the social space (displaced young people).

In the USA, an increased focus on physical security in response to 9/11 and an overall global emphasis on counterterrorism have caused a systemic shift in the borders security landscape, which have had a major impact on the (im)mobility of displaced youth, and which some authors have termed the 'generation of the war on terror' (Kieran 2015). Since his inauguration, president Trump has signed nine executive orders including building a wall along the entirety of the Southern border (Pierce, Bolter, and Selee 2018, 4). In 2018, among the 408,870 people detained on the southern border 145,232 were young and 59,692 unaccompanied minors mostly on the southwest border from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (Department of Homeland Security; US Customs and Border Protection 2016). Youth are unauthorized to live in the US until their immigration status is approved through the US legal process. This can take two to three years, may not be successful and may have negative implications and consequences for young people. All these processes of securitization at borders have had a considerable impact on youth displacement and as Mountz et al. (2012, 530) have noted, 'reify borders between citizens and non-citizens, producing categories of legality and illegality, alien and non-alien'. Consequently, securitization exemplifies the crudest manifestation of trapped mobility: bodies are contained, locked in controlled spaces in the name of enforcing global power. As a phenomenon of entrapment, securitization leads to the interpretation of borders as sites where immobility and exclusion are managed.

Exclusion

In the exclusion process, border is seen as a territory regulated through a series of interconnected agreements and interventions, differentially integrated for the purposes of migration control. Mountz et al. (2012) conceptualize exclusion in the enlarged framework of (im)mobility linked

to containment, bordering and the suspension of civil and human rights. They suggest that the work done by geopolitical borders through exclusion takes place principally within structures and processes of detention articulated around exclusionary practices that become affixed to bodies (Mountz et al. 2012, 533). In turn, Hyndman and Mountz (2007) explore the process of border exclusion as part of the ‘architecture of enmity’ that uses state tactics to strengthen the sovereignty of the states involved, while rendering undocumented migrants and refugee claimants ‘out of place’ (2007, 90).

The critique of the exclusion process has much in common with recent advances in research into (in)mobility. For instance, in the EU, while the controls are implemented inland as well as abroad, there has been no full recognition of the extraterritorial applicability of the rights of displaced youth obstructing their access to international protection and entailing a high risk of refoulement and exclusion (European Parliament 2013, 4). For example, Frontex has set up rapid border intervention teams (Rabits) made up of border guards that move along borders to prevent the entry of unauthorized immigrants.¹ In addition, the EU has signed a series of agreements to stop the entry of unauthorized immigrants. The EU agreed to open up ‘control centers’ in European countries to house disembarked immigrants and determine who of them are entitled to asylum and who should be returned to their place of origin. Only those European countries that voluntarily accept to do so will be able to create these centers in their territory. The acceptance of selected refugees in these centers will also be voluntary.²

In the USA, Mexico acts as an operational arm of US immigration control on the border between Guatemala and Mexico (1500 km south of the border where President Trump wants to build a wall). Hundreds of migrants, most of them Hondurans, jumped the border control in Tecún Umán with the intention of continuing their journey to the United States despite the threats of President Trump to close the southern border with Mexico and to cut economic aid to Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.³ The Executive Order, ‘Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into The United States’, raised fears about acts of exclusion and potential violence against Muslim migrants and even citizens in the USA. The first version of the Order, issued in late January 2017, banned Syrian refugees indefinitely.⁴

In 2018, the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security (USA) implemented a ‘zero tolerance’ policy at the US–Mexico Border, under which they pledged to work together to criminally prosecute everyone who crossed the borders without authorization for the crimes of illegal entry or reentry.⁵ The most controversial aspect of the zero-tolerance policy was the separation of migrant children from their parents (Pierce, Bolter, and Selee 2018, 4). It is in this no man’s land to which they have been ‘misled’ that the entrapment of displaced youth without rights takes place. The entrapment is manifested by the exclusion suffered by detained young people waiting for an interview. Distanced from lawyers, interpreters and advocates, it may take years to determine their future: whether they are granted the status of refugee and enter a country that welcomes them, or returned to their country of origin. Excluded and kept away from the media and from public view, they are deprived of their rights and abandoned in detention centers or refugee camps. ‘Because displaced young people arrive in territory where access to asylum is mediated, they do not necessarily become asylum seekers or refugee claimants, but remain instead in interstitial legal categories without citizenship status in the territories traversed en route’, as Mountz (2011,121) notes. Exclusion thus activates the symbolic notion of entrapment at the border.

Symbolic entrapment

A symbolic border becomes a complex system enabling the creation of perceptual distinctions between the actors of the dominated and dominant poles. On the one hand, state power uses the forces of borders to categorize displaced youth into desirable and undesirable. ‘Hostile’ identities, embodied both in the war against terror and in the fear of displaced persons and asylum seekers whose ‘culture’ and ‘ways of life’, are seen as a threat and considered incompatible with or undesirable within Western societies (Anthias 2008,7). According to a survey carried out in May 2017, in

many EU countries (especially in central Europe) displaced young people confined at the EU's borders provoke negative reactions in over 56% of citizens (IOM 2018). The majority of Europeans want a ban on immigration from Muslim-majority countries. Identities are, thus, closely linked to the formation and existence of borders that, as symbols, establish differences between 'us' and 'them' that are perceived by migrants not only in a real but also in a symbolic way (Sporton, Valentine, and Bang Nielsen 2006).

On the other hand, borders become a fractured place made up of several boundaries that shape belonging. Lacking documentation, the displaced become aliens and are thus unable to draw on the legal frameworks and resources available to citizens (Chopra and Dryden-Peterson 2020). These symbolisms intersect and produce a mutually productive relationship between state power and displaced youth that tends to be multiplied and strengthened. In this context, the border is sized as a symbol of identity and belonging that may lead to the management and negotiation of movement (Adams 2009; Swanson 2010). Both restricting movement and the symbolic interpretation of otherness engenders in displaced people the sense of being in a trap. While trapped at the border, they perceive and navigate the symbolic limits of their belonging. The multiple and different cross-border spaces in which displaced youths live show the complicated entrapment they experience at both real and symbolic borders.

The experiences of displaced youth

As seen above, in addition to the different features of border crossing, the experiences of displaced youth are also distinct from those of adults. Many of them leave their country of origin as children, or are born elsewhere, while others have to abandon their training to endure displacement. The responsibilities they face force them to become adults much faster than other children. With limited access to education, with no rights to work and with no certainty of a durable solution, they are unable to plan for a future life, and this situation contributes to their loss and thus to the entrapment of their lives. There are several theoretical ways of exploring these experiences of trapped mobility.

Departure

First, the departure from their countries and arrivals at the border are a critical factor in youth displacement, highlighting the significance of the geographical and social space in and across which their experiences take place. The separation from family, the loss of parents, siblings or friends, the terror and fear of bombs, looting, extremists, reprisals, and of being arrested, tortured, raped or killed all represent risk factors linked to the departures of young people trapped at borders. Setting this departure in a global political context, Mainwaring and Brigden (2016, 244) turn their attention 'to how migrants arrive at the borders, to the vehicles, networks, multiple border crossings and hardships that constitute the journey to the borders of developed countries.'

Smuggling is undoubtedly an essential part of the entrapment. Smugglers usually organize the departure of displaced youths (with the help of cashiers – trusted individuals who act as conduits for money exchanges between the migrants and smugglers) from their localities and take them from the previous smuggler and hand them to another one in order to facilitate the illegal border crossing (Içduygu and Toktas 2002).

These complex departures increase vulnerabilities of displaced youth forced to wait at particular nodes along the route producing numerous risks and traps for them. When the smuggling operation fails, the deception suffered by people manifests itself at two points: when the smugglers disappear and abandon them; and when the smuggling operation fails and state power intervenes, capturing the displaced people at the borders. States fulfill competing mandates to enforce borders and provide protection for those displaced, and migrants face these contradictions during their departure and journey (Mountz 2011, 119). In adopting policies and practices to control people, states face a basic dilemma: policies have perverse consequences. By making irregular displacement more difficult, excessive state control measures indirectly push unauthorized people into the hands

of smugglers. In this vicious cycle, mobility becomes more difficult and expensive, raising the risks of smuggling, which in turn raises both costs and profits, luring in sophisticated criminal organizations with large resources. Smuggling becomes both the cause and the effect of harder border controls. For displaced young people, departure therefore becomes a ‘survival strategy’ (Adji 2019, 3), but also brings the continuous threat of being deceived and trapped at any border crossing.

Refugee camps

Second, and linked to the departure and arrival at the border space, is to focus on the camp as a temporal and spatial site of detention that plays a crucial role in the experiences of displaced youth. Minca (2015, 76), following Agamben (2002), interprets camp as an ‘extraterritorial spatial container as a modern institution and as a spatial bio-political technology’. The camp is a place of social dissolution, where displaced young live in a state of ‘liminality’ (Couch 2017), or ‘long-term uncertainty’ (Al Shaarawi 2015).

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol remain the cornerstones of the international refugee protection system. Nonetheless, states such as Syria, Iraq or Indonesia are not signatories of this Refugee Convention or its Protocol. Additionally, established international standards governing young people’s rights explicitly address the needs of young people seeking protection. According to Amnesty International (2016), the road to the Global North for young refugees has turned into a hell where many of them die, where others are deported and those who are most fortunate remain in detention centers where they do not enjoy the recognition or guarantee of any of their rights.

The traumatic nature of the refugee experience in the camps can have a longstanding impact on a young person’s physical and mental health and may have implications for the settlement journey (Coch 2017). Connected to the experiences in the camps, it is essential to highlight the educational experiences of displaced youth. Authors identify empirical issues such as language barriers, teacher-centered pedagogy and discrimination in school settings (Dryden-Peterson 2016).

Hence, the entrapment is determined by the experience of loss of family, health problems, difficulty accessing school or continuing with it or other types of training. All of these factors affect the traumatic memories of painful events and the physical endurance of young people and their precariousness (Hek, Hughes, and Ozman 2012; Mynott and Humphries 2003). In their work on the securitization of southern African youth, Ansell et al. (2019, 3) emphasize how insecurity experienced by young people as fear and uncertainty – related to food, to livelihoods or to health – becomes ‘a key way in which young people’s lives are oriented to the future’. Existing studies describe the social and psychological difficulties displaced young people face (Ansell 2016; Chavez et al. 2019; Cheney 2005). Authors emphasize the psychological and mental health perspective, especially related to trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (Marshall 2014; Fazel et al. 2012).

Another expression of entrapment is the deprivation of liberty. Although camps provide an immediate solution to short-term protection needs, they also establish conditions of complete dependence, depriving displaced youths of possible access to resources that would allow them to move on, effectively trapping them in the camp (Mountz 2011; Minca 2015). Displaced young people are trapped in ambiguous, remote and isolated spaces surrounded by wire walls where they survive in fear but also frustration. Each camp becomes a space of entrapment and of struggle and resistance between displaced people and the state’s power of control.

Citizenship and the emotional experiences of entrapment

A third theoretical way of exploring experiences surrounds the issue of citizenship and emotional entrapment on the border, which is associated with the difficulty reconstructing their identity and the complex access to citizenship (Nunn et al. 2016; Staeheli et al. 2012).

Linking law and everyday life, Staeheli et al. (2012, 640) introduce the concept of 'ordinary citizenship' 'as the importance of authority, standing, office, custom, what is commonplace and standard'. They explore the case of US young unauthorized immigrants, known generally as DREAMers. The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors' Act (DREAM Act) is a legislation created to legalize some unauthorized immigrants who arrived in the USA as children, but which failed several times in Congress. In 2014, the US administration issued an executive order providing temporary relief from deportation for undocumented parents of citizens or permanent residents. This measure, along with the 2012 reprieve from deportation for children who arrived as minors, was the first measure to provide any kind of status to undocumented migrants since the 1986 regularization (Valdez 2016, 640). Nonetheless, in January 2017 the new US administration paralyzed all resettlement programs.⁶ Likewise, (as we can see above) the USA proposed to repeal the Program of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which has halted the deportation of 750,000 undocumented young 'dreamers'.⁷

Trapped mobility experiences at the borders reconfigure citizenship in different ways which interact with each other. By belonging neither here nor there, displaced youth challenge the assumed link between nation, state and citizen. These interactions can mold into marginalization and exclusion, but they can also connect to inclusion, creation of a new identity, and belonging. On the one hand, young people want to cross the borders, to apply for asylum and to obtain rights and citizenship in the host country, while on the other they struggle to maintain their initial belonging (Archambault 2012).

This is a psychological entrapment formed of a desire to feel safe and to feel a sense of belonging in a new country and the sense that their identity is located elsewhere (for instance, in their country of origin). Trapped mobility is thus manifested through emotional ambivalence.

The trajectories of displaced young people are replete with periods of extreme turbulence, fear, stillness, expectation and uncertainty (Ansell et al. 2019; Pain 2009). In her work about emotional citizenry, Askins (2016, 520) notes that 'for refugees, this desire to belong is an emotional aspect of daily life in quite specific ways: fearing claim refusal and deportation, a pervading sense of exclusion from mainstream society, marginalization in employment, and sometimes outright racism in local neighborhoods, complicated by the anxieties of arrival and asylum claim-making'.

Emotional entrapment is manifested through the experience of being located between the memories of the lost land of childhood and the difficulties escaping the situation in which they find themselves. They live in fear, having witnessed lies, killing, deportation and torture without no capacity to intervene. The fear of the war they are trying to escape, of deportation and violence, of the smugglers and of the state power catches them in a state of mind between the dark past and a future they imagine. In this emotional entrapment, there is thus a place of hope to go out and see the light at the end of the tunnel. It is at this point that symbolism intersects with the real experience of young people seeking survival strategies to unpack their trapped mobility.

Unpacking trapped mobility. Youth responses

To unpack trapped mobility, the involvement and responses of young people is fundamental, both those who are displaced and those of the host societies. There are two forms of action involving young people: The first is political agency, meaning the responses of displaced youth to unpacking trapped mobility. It was observed that the efforts of states to immobilize displaced people at the borders led to more radical attempts at and forms of mobility. Conceptualizing agency, Jeffrey (2012) describes the relevance of young people's resistance. Although displaced youth have few opportunities to fight against injustice, they aim to express their agency (Holloway, Holt, and Mills 2019; Katz 2008; Hörschelmann 2008), and in doing so they 'negotiate political and social subjectivities and identities in which they imagine certain kinds of futures' (Al Shaarawi 2015, 40).

In the EU, for instance, the chaotic and tragic consequences of migration policies have called into question the efficiency of the European model and uncovered profound divisions within the EU

over how the continent should respond to what NGOs and refugee organizations have called the most severe humanitarian crisis since World War II (UNHCR 2018). Changes in the features of borders control politics have led to the construction of new spatial strategies of resistance and protest. In the USA, Burrige (2010) examines the No Borders movement, highlighting how young people fight against immigration controls, the incarceration of undocumented migrants, deportation programs and construction camps on each side of the national borders. In recent years, European capitals have organized what Jeffrey (2012, 247) called ‘global forms of youth mobilization’ against mass deportations, the EU’s borders policy and its support for the construction of deportation prisons, the EU’s biometric monitoring database, and against the reactionary agreement between the EU and Turkey, which prevents hundreds of thousands of refugees from entering Europe.

The second form of youth action to unpack trapped mobility is related to social and cultural agency. It has been suggested that youth work should stretch from providing immediate aid to training courses and capacity building of displaced youth and provide social rights education to refugees and migrants (McNeely et al. 2017; Plener et al. 2017).

As young people are ‘symbolically connected to the future’ (Ansell 2016, 8), social agency may be reflected in the way in which displaced youth may be recruited and employed or even have self-driven initiatives aimed at creating livelihoods, the purpose of which is the social and economic integration into the host societies. The agility of the mobile young, constrained by the precarious circumstances in which they live, may be used to build the skills needed to become energetic movers in an increasingly globalized social, political, and economic landscape.

Conclusion

This article introduces the concept of trapped mobility as a way of analyzing the complexity of the lives of displaced young people confined at the borders between the Global North and the Global South. Its contribution lies in how this concept is explored both as a way of understanding (im)mobility and as an intersection between global power structures – expressed by the securitization of border exclusion and control – and youth experience, advancing the theoretical understanding of the new youth geographies at borders. I have explored ‘trapped mobility’ as a dynamic concept, emphasizing the notion of ‘being misled’ as a driver and component of ‘entrapment’, in which global power structures impose their border control tactics and rules, exercising atrocious forms of exploitation, detention and violation of human rights. ‘Trapped mobility’ is thus a consequence of containment strategies used by state powers, (but also agents and structures) and border policies, as well as the lack of freedom and socio-legal status granted to displaced youth (Ansell et al. 2019; Lewis et al. 2015).

The contribution of this paper to contemporary debates in youth mobility geographies is important for several reasons: First, in today’s society, the complex split in development that separates the Global North from the Global South places young people trapped on the borders at the center of the debate, and this issue requires agile, concerted and multilateral management. Therefore, it is urgent to raise awareness of the need for displaced youth to leave the borders and camps, and to receive a rapid response in the host societies. Second, I highlight the potential of their human capital and contribution to aging societies such as those of the Global North. Finally, understanding borders as an element of securitization and exclusion is vital to unpack migration policies in the Global North.

The analysis of youth mobility as trapped reveals the need for more research on borders enforcement and the experiences of displaced young people that, intersecting each other, may contribute to better understanding the complex structure of the trapped mobility issue. Future research concerning the ‘trapped mobility’ of displaced youth could encompass themes of exploitation and smuggling, or how to respond to the needs of youth who have experienced trauma, or how to resolve issues of their future learning needs and the potential of their human capital and contribution to aging Global North societies.

Similarly, research on the mapping of youth work and initiatives on youth agency and youth policy currently being carried out in connection with young refugees, as well as the active participation of refugees, could help to unpack trapped mobility. Debate about the extent to which youth action may offer social support to displaced people is needed. Youth actions in host societies could provide information on the situation of displaced youth from a human rights perspective and the right to mobility, as well as the political context affecting the arrival of refugees. New research could give a deeper understanding of the profile of displaced young people seeking to reach the Global North: their diversity and conditions, mobility practices (departure and arrival) and future aspirations. This should produce narratives to combat the growing rhetoric of fear and prejudice, and the rise of nationalism and its consequences in the host societies of the Global North.

While the refugee issue is now gaining more attention, studies on the integration of displaced youth including second-generation migrants should continue, looking at their access to citizenship, social rights, their input into the host society, and the processes of integration and belonging. All these actions will help to build confidence, provide role models, open up new experiences and give displaced youth a sense of fluid mobility, belonging and freedom.

Notes

1. Frontex and the RABIT operation at the Greek-Turkish border; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-130_en.htm.
2. Managing migration: Commission expands on disembarkation and controlled centre concepts; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-4629_en.htm
3. Caravan of 3,000 Central American migrants crosses into Mexico The Guardian; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/19/mexico-caravan-migrants-prepares-us-border-crossing-latest>
4. Executive Order 13769 Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorists Entry into the United States; <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-02-01/pdf/2017-02281.pdf>
5. Attorney General Sessions Delivers Remarks Discussing the Immigration Enforcement Actions of the Trump Administration; <https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/attorney-general-sessions-delivers-remarks-discussing-immigration-enforcement-actions>
6. According to UNHCR, by 2017, 100,000 refugees were expected to be relocated to the United States.
7. DACA recipients wait for Trump moves on young immigrants' program. Available at: <http://www.scpr.org/news/2017/02/17/68305/daca-recipients-wait-for-trump-moves-on-young-immigrant/>

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I dedicate this paper to all displaced people 'trapped in mobility' between the Global South and the Global North.

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