

Border Abolitionism

Analytics/Politics

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“We demand protection, as we are living in very unsafe conditions, with the constant fear of being kidnapped.” So proclaimed protesters at a rally of approximately four thousand refugees that began on October 1, 2021, in front of the headquarters of the UN high commissioner for refugees in Tripoli, Libya, demanding to be relocated to Europe. “We have no choice. We will continue this struggle. We have no other place to stay,” the refugee protesters declared. “We have the right to live, to feel safe and free.”¹

Mainly Sudanese and Eritrean nationals, this group of refugees had fled a massive police raid in the city of Gargaresh. Although they had officially received international protection from the UN high commissioner for refugees, Libya does not recognize them as refugees, as it is not a signatory of the Geneva conventions. Not only are refugees in Libya not given any form of basic humanitarian or medical support, but they also are subjected to violent policing and targeted for extortion, indentured servitude, and coerced unpaid labor and trapped in migrant jails, both formal and informal, that are commonly *de facto* torture chambers.² Thus, the self-organized collective struggle of refugees in Libya exposed and denounced the sheer brutality of a confinement continuum to which migrants and refugees are subjected, including in spaces beyond actual detention camps and official jails.³ At the same time, this example reveals how border crossers resist these multiple forms of confinement and abuse through practices and claims that challenge the biopolitical hold over their lives exercised both by states and by various nonstate actors.

After the sit-in had persisted for three and a half months, the protest camp of the Refugees in Libya migrant collective was violently evicted in mid-January 2022: the Libyan police raided the site, rounding up the

migrants and hauling them off into detention. Despite the violent defeat of their protest and the fact that the migrants' demands to be resettled in Europe were not answered, this collective struggle was notable for its self-organization as well as its remarkable self-representation through the autonomous production and circulation of knowledge. In fact, we contend that we should evaluate this struggle not in terms of its ostensible success or failure but, rather, in terms of the substantive claims articulated by this heterogeneous migrant collective: life, freedom, resettlement, and safety, all of which were discordant and exorbitant with respect to the normative legal and procedural provisions and parameters of the adjudication of asylum, unsettling and challenging the very conventions by which we ordinarily understand *protection* and *refuge*.⁴ That is to say, these demands and claims expose anew the politics of asylum and affirm what we have elsewhere called the *autonomy of asylum*.⁵

As the collective mobilization of refugees in Libya illuminates, migrant struggles are often struggles against a confinement continuum. Akin to what Michel Foucault has depicted as a carceral continuum and what Kathryn Cassidy (2019) designates a “continuum of unfreedoms,”⁶ the confinement continuum is reducible not to captivity and detention but to the nexus of heterogeneous modes of confinement that migrants experience, from the fundamental condition of being stuck or trapped in a border zone to the consequent forms of being targeted, exploited, kidnapped, blackmailed, abused, raped, tortured, and sometimes killed. In this respect, migrant detention by border police is ordinarily the most comprehensive, austere, and severe condensation of border carcerality within this continuum, akin to the prison as an “apotheosis of carceral power” and the “centrifugal point” and “constant touchstone” of an irradiation of carcerality.⁷ But it is nonetheless part of an expansive and fluid nexus of carceral and other punitive practices. In other words, the confinement continuum is inseparable from a continuum of other forms of violence and coercion that characterize the larger predicament and more general sociopolitical condition of migrant subordination, which of course extends far beyond any physical border site and commonly encompasses the full spectrum of migrant everyday life, above all for those who are illegalized and thereby indefinitely susceptible to the recriminations of the law.⁸ Inevitably, this predicament also generates a varied spectrum of new forms of disaffection, insubordination, and resistance. Thus, the collective migrant/refugee struggle in Libya is but one among numerous examples that inspire us to propose border abolitionism as a way to deepen critiques of border, migration, and asylum regimes worldwide.

The Promise of Abolitionism

For many years, abolitionist perspectives have been associated primarily with questions of criminalization, mass incarceration, and the prison form of punishment and thus articulated as a project of carceral abolitionism. Importantly, there has also been an increasing recognition of the dramatic escalation in deportation and the unprecedented expansion of migrant detention.⁹ Together, migrant detention and deportation comprise another major pillar of the entrenchment of the carceral state.¹⁰ Simultaneously, while critical migration scholarship has been confronted with this increasing impact of migrant detention, alongside the wider criminalization of immigration and a more general punitive turn in immigration enforcement, the field's engagements with carceral abolitionist perspectives have largely been quite recent.¹¹ As Jenna Loyd incisively notes, "Deportation tended to fall outside the purview of prison abolition, and the criminal legal system has tended to fall off of the radar of no borders."¹² In this regard, the publication of Jenna Loyd, Matthew Mitchelson, and Andrew Burridge's edited volume *Beyond Walls and Cages: Prisons, Borders, and Global Crisis* (2012) marked a crucial turning point.¹³

Still more recently, since the international upsurge in protests for racial justice provoked by the police murder of George Floyd in the United States in 2020, the global repercussions of the Black Lives Matter movement have added renewed force and urgency to abolitionist perspectives on policing and prisons, including an intensification of engagements with those perspectives on the part of No Borders activist projects and scholarship. In the United States, the demand to abolish ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) arose as a natural counterpart to demands to defund or abolish the police. In the European context, where every discourse of migration operates as a proxy for an otherwise disavowed discourse on race,¹⁴ this long overdue convergence likewise seems to be almost inevitable. Similarly, alongside the Black Lives Matter movement, the Ni Una Menos (Not One Woman Less) movement across Latin America highlights the interdependence of different forms of violence and puts freedom of movement at the core of its claims against gender-based violence. Thus, transnational feminist movements further inform the incipient coalescence of carceral abolitionism and activism against immigrant detention and deportation around a central emancipatory project foregrounding the freedom of movement. Consequently, these seemingly disparate struggles increasingly bring into sharper focus a multifaceted critique of what we are calling the *confinement continuum*, through which the urgency of the project of border abolitionism becomes all the more evident.

Border abolitionism refers both to an analytical perspective and to a political horizon. Analytically, border abolitionism bridges critical migra-

tion and borders scholarship and carceral abolitionism by situating a critique of the border and immigration regimes governing human mobility in relation to an analysis of interlocking mechanisms of racialized social control, punishment, confinement, segregation, stigmatization, marginalization, and precaritization. Shahram Khosravi incisively asks, “What do we see if we look at the border from the other side?” and advocates for a way of seeing that avoids “falling into the trap of methodological nationalism, [that is,] reproducing concepts and epistemologies used by the state.”¹⁵ What do we see, in other words, if instead of “seeing like a state” or, indeed, “seeing like a border” we look at the border from the perspective of migrants and refugees?¹⁶ This perspective, which we might tentatively call *seeing like a migrant*, recognizes that the material and practical effects of bordering are not confined to the sites of borders. Hence, rather than seeing from the perspective of the border, and thereby refashioning the border as such,¹⁷ border abolitionism entails a methodological insistence on how migrants and refugees are “bordered,” compelled to inhabit the space of the border wherever they may go, and thus how the practices of border making and border policing saturate the full extent of the sociopolitical formation that is defined and demarcated spatially by a given border. Thus, border abolitionism, as we propose here, prioritizes seeing (the border) like a migrant as a critical analytical perspective for investigating, questioning, challenging, and prospectively subverting bordering mechanisms, both at borders and beyond borders, across the full extent of the ostensible “interior” spaces of the migrant-receiving states’ territorial jurisdictions, even in those expanded zones of externalized border enforcement where people on the move are subjected to border policing and controls long before they have ever reached or crossed an actual international border that may stand between them and their ultimate destination.

Border abolitionism requires putting migrants’ autonomous subjectivities at the forefront while nonetheless refusing to reify “migration” or to reduce heterogeneous migrants’ and refugees’ predicaments and struggles to any singular homogenized notion of the “migrant condition” or the “immigrant experience.” In this respect, “seeing like a migrant” does not imply any sort of singular migrant experience or perspective; rather, it is a methodological insistence on seeing from the standpoint of migration and therefore seeing through the critical lens of human mobility in all its complexity and contradictions.¹⁸ Furthermore, seeing from the standpoint of migration in fact entails scrutinizing how bordering mechanisms differentially impact those who come to be labeled and racialized as “migrants.” That is to say, the bordering mechanisms that differentially sort and rank various categories of human mobility—above all, those movements that may be governed under the heading of noncitizenship—do more than

merely institute a simple distinction between citizens and noncitizens. By mediating the naturalized correspondence between citizenship and essentialized constructions of “national” identity, they also racialize various formations of human mobility and categories of people who cross borders in ways that suture the most marginalized, precaritized, or stigmatized overt figures of noncitizenship to debased racial formations, even if those modes of racialization may often operate in an ostensibly race-neutral register. In other words, borders also racialize migrants and refugees as “migrants.” The analytical perspective of border abolitionism therefore posits seeing from the critical standpoint of migration as inextricable from an interrogation of borders as modalities for the production of racialized difference and inequality.¹⁹ Seeing from the other side of the border therefore permits a recognition of how borders are modalities not only for the production of state space but also for the ongoing and ever-incomplete production of ostensibly discrete populations governed within those state spaces. The production of those “national” populations, moreover, is inseparable from the production of racial distinctions and meanings within a global/postcolonial sociopolitical order of white supremacy and a global political economy of racial capitalism.

Politically, a critical sensitivity to the punitive features of criminalization, policing, and imprisonment, as well as the pronouncedly racial injustices that these manifestations of state power customarily perpetrate and perpetuate, situates carceral abolitionism as an apt framework for deepening existing critiques of border policing, immigration law enforcement, and what we are calling the *confinement continuum* for migrants. However, beyond these direct correspondences between the abolitionist critique of policing, prisons, and mass incarceration, on the one hand, and border policing, migrant detention, and border carcerality, on the other, the abolitionist perspective is still more capacious by also signaling a profound commitment to an internationalist anticapitalist analysis that commands a far-reaching and synoptic vision of social justice.

The carceral abolitionist project has always been distinguished by a robust and far-reaching radical political imagination. Abolition inherently provokes deeper questions of radical social transformation and demands not only the end of the prison system and of racialized punishment but also an alternative vision of what is to be proposed in their place. Following W. E. B. Du Bois, leading abolitionist thinker Angela Y. Davis invokes the idea of “abolition democracy” to explain that the inherent implication of carceral abolitionism is to bring about an end to the global prison-industrial complex as a whole, which entails not merely the immediate apparatuses of coercive state violence and punishment but also a racialized mode of political disenfranchisement, social stigmatization, and subjugation and an extractive economy whereby prison expansion is inextricable

from global racial capitalism.²⁰ In the same spirit, Stefano Harney and Fred Moten affirm that this means “not so much the abolition of prisons but the abolition of a society that could have prisons . . . and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society.”²¹ Yet, for most contemporary abolitionists there is a resolute and resounding commitment to abolition not merely as the utopian vision of an alternative future but also as a pragmatic guide for action in the present.²² “In thinking specifically about the abolition of prisons using the approach of abolition democracy,” Davis explains, “we would propose the creation of an array of social institutions that would begin to solve the social problems that set people on the track to prison, thereby helping to render the prison obsolete.”²³ As a political horizon, therefore, border abolitionism entails the proposition to create the sorts of social arrangements that could help render borders obsolete by liberating people from the conditions that “set them on the track” to the border—the circumstances and predicaments that impel their migratory projects. Nonetheless, migrants and refugees must be seen not merely as fleeing the misery, violence, and despair that often leave them with little recourse other than to risk their lives during their migratory journeys but also as repudiating and actively deserting the sociopolitical regimes that have otherwise entrapped them and foreclosed their futures.

Border abolitionism thus is fundamentally aligned with the practices of freedom as well as with the demands of migrants and refugees—to recall the proclamation of the protesters in Libya, to live, to feel safe, and to be free. Such elemental demands plainly refer not only to the migratory journey within the extended geographical spaces of border zones but also to conditions following migrants’ arrival in a chosen destination, where bordering mechanisms and their effects do not cease to fundamentally shape their lives and prospects. Maurice Stierl has incisively depicted this “practical border abolitionism,” enabling an appreciation of “the history of slave resistance and the underground railroad in light of contemporary migrant movements and acts of resistance” to “revive what seems lost today—the idea of the migrant as a seeker of freedom.”²⁴ Of course, the recognition of such migrant aspirations for freedom ought not be understood as any sort of uncritical endorsement of the self-congratulatory nationalist mythologies and ideological scripts of a country such as the United States, which has fashioned itself as a “nation of immigrants” on the basis of its putative choice-worthiness as a “land of opportunity” and a “refuge of liberty.”²⁵ Nonetheless, acknowledging this vital desire for freedom (in the fullest and most expansive sense of the word) as a motive for cross-border human mobilities restores a necessary appreciation of the subjective force and autonomy of migration, whereby migrants and refugees are actively engaged in struggles to transform and remake their lives

and thereby can be understood to participate, however diminutively, in larger movements to reconstitute the world.

In Greece, for example, in October 2021 the government stopped giving food and cash assistance to a very large proportion of the people stranded in refugee camps. The suspension lasted approximately four months. Simultaneously, the government implemented new divisions between people who were deemed eligible or ineligible for food and financial support and thereby multiplied the administrative partitions that create and sustain hierarchies among distinct categories of asylum seekers. Assistance was reserved for those whose asylum claims were currently under review and was denied to everyone else, including those who had already officially had their petitions granted and had received official “refugee” status, those whose asylum claims had been rejected, and others who simply could not lodge their asylum applications due to technical and bureaucratic glitches. Asylum seekers in Greece organized collective struggles throughout the autumn of 2021, and through that winter into 2022, to protest the suspension of food provision and financial support. In various refugee camps, asylum seekers raised immediate demands over the lack of food and financial support; notably, they not only refused to starve but also demanded decent food, in some cases physically blocking food delivery vans. Moreover, protests over their immediate sustenance were articulated with more expansive claims, including demands for free movement in and out of the camps, access to public transportation, and education. Thus, they crafted counterdiscourses in response to a minimalist biopolitics: their protests over the most basic humanitarian aid and subsistence became at the same time more capacious claims for their rights to good food, education, and unrestricted mobility. While the authorities moved to shrink the leeway for their autonomous social reproduction activities in the refugee camps, the migrants and refugees staged a collective refusal of the governmental control over their well-being and (life-)time exercised by both states and (“non-governmental”) humanitarian actors, and thereby rearticulated their own vision of what should be the elementary minimal necessities of life, even within the constrictions of these spaces of confinement, coercive waiting, and relative un-freedom.

The examples of refugee mobilizations in Libya and Greece that we have foregrounded are by no means exhaustive of the variety of migrants’ border struggles across the globe, nor is it within the scope of this article to provide any semblance of a full-fledged account of these migrants’ struggles. Rather, more modestly, these two examples shed light on how refugees frequently advance claims that cannot be contained within the legal and political frameworks of asylum regimes. Furthermore, we contend that these examples illuminate an incipient politics of border abolitionism: the migrants and refugees expose and challenge the interlocking

bordering mechanisms that affect them—the (structural) border violence that stems from unequal access to mobility, the exclusionary politics of asylum and its hierarchies of refugee “deservingness,” and the confinement continuum generated by heterogeneous modes of containment and exploitation that are at the core of larger processes of what could be called *migrantization*—while always also repudiating and resisting the biopolitical constrictions that confine them to degraded conditions of life and articulating substantially broader claims for social justice and visions of new and better ways of life.

Border abolitionism therefore should not be confused with a simple call for abolishing borders. Although an abolitionist perspective about the border regime is certainly sympathetic with mobilizations for subverting or eliminating national frontiers, it cannot be exclusively or reductively centered on such a demand. Rather than a fanciful reformist demand for states to open or even abolish their own borders, border abolitionism must be understood to articulate a political vision that is fundamentally aligned with the real-life stakes that are objectively enacted by illegalized migrant and refugee border crossers who circumvent, subvert, and defy border regimes through the exercise of their actual and elemental freedom of movement, in practice. That is to say, through their actions, illegalized border crossers objectively defy state powers, disregard the law, and subvert borders not simply to accomplish an “abolition” of borders as an end in itself but, rather, for the sake of advancing their life projects and thereby prioritizing their human needs (and those of their loved ones and communities) over and above any law or formation of state power. This indeed is what constitutes the veritable abolitionist horizon of the exercise of their freedom of movement, in practice: implicitly, it affirms that another way of life is urgently necessary and demands that another world must be possible.

In fact, abolishing borders means little if it is not combined with more expansive claims for social justice and for the greater dismantling of (post/colonial) racial capitalism. Border abolitionism’s calls for undoing violent bordering mechanisms are driven by social justice claims that intrinsically seek to further projects for building diverse forms of transversal solidarity. Notably, Davis has suggested, “the refugee movement is the movement of the twenty-first century.”²⁶ In this spirit, Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s call for an abolition geography, we contend, paves the ground for an abolitionist approach to the global border regime and the multifarious forms of migrant carcerality, as well as an appreciation of the rival geography of migrants’ self-organized spaces and the practices of freedom, solidarity, and resistance of migrants and their allies. Abolition geography, according to Gilmore, is “carceral geography’s antagonistic contradiction” and consists in a practice of making freedoms through

placemaking processes that build on what we have and what we can create.²⁷ Gesturing toward an abolition geography of borders and migration similarly entails critical attention and analytical sensitivity to how migrants and refugees appropriate and enact freedoms and engage in such placemaking within and against border regimes through their productions of discrepant and differential spaces and infrastructures of mobility, refuge, and autonomous protection.²⁸

“Irregular” and “unauthorized” (illegalized) border crossings are intrinsically appropriations of space that contribute to the transformation of geopolitical space and the production of new sociopolitical spatial formations and thus enact in practice a great diversity of diminutive but nonetheless deeply consequential objective acts of border abolition. These sorts of border-crossing acts of making freedoms through the appropriation of space figure many migrants and refugees across the globe as what Gilmore depicts as “people who might not call themselves abolitionists” who nonetheless “[have] an abolitionist agenda.”²⁹ A similar claim can be made with respect to many solidarity activists engaged in various forms of disobedience and even humanitarian initiatives that, however quietly or subtly, defy and subvert border regimes by supporting and furthering the objectively abolitionist aspirations of migrants, or, more simply, to “reduce the power and reach of borders in the short and long term, while avoiding reforms that perpetuate the logic and legitimacy of immigration control.”³⁰

Politically, border abolitionism complements a No One Is Illegal / No Borders perspective with claims for freedom of movement that arise from the border struggles of human mobility on a global scale but that nevertheless exceed the customary exclusive focus on borders and migration.³¹ Border abolitionism extends those critiques by highlighting the intersectionality of multiple modes of exploitation, oppression, and criminalization and mechanisms of racialized social control. In this regard, while starting from border struggles and wider struggles over migration and asylum, border abolitionism seeks to denaturalize borders and “demigrantize” the study of migration and migrant struggles.³² Whereas border activism conventionally confronts and challenges nation-state borders and the national (or, in the case of the European Union, supranational) immigration and asylum laws and regulations that govern noncitizens, a border abolitionist understanding of the freedom of movement combines resistance against such juridical and normative orders with other spatial scales of action, where the citizen/noncitizen division may be more readily blurred or eluded. A premier example of such transversal formations of collaboration and common cause that partially suspend the partition between citizens and migrant noncitizens are housing struggles around squatting.³³ Importantly, border abolitionism likewise affords greater ana-

lytical and political space for a critical attention to freedom of movement as one of the crucial stakes of the struggles of not only migrants but also subordinate and criminalized citizens within the space and legal regime of a given state.³⁴

Theorizing through Struggles

Organized migrant solidarity activism, particularly in border zones, is articulated in manifold ways, through diverse methods and tactics. It is beyond the scope of this article to provide a comprehensive account of how various activist tendencies and other migrant support initiatives may be apprehensible as expressions of border abolitionism. Indeed, the variety of methods and tactics adopted by activist projects illuminates the multiplicity of bordering mechanisms and thus the necessity of adapting flexible modes of struggle in the discrepant contexts of distinct borders and bordering regimes. Here, we are reminded that a border is in fact not a fixed and inert thing, and therefore ought not be reified as such, but rather an always contested field of asymmetrical sociopolitical relations of antagonism and struggle.³⁵ Furthermore, we make no pretense of elaborating any presumptive criteria of eligibility for the specific tactics or methods of struggle within the sociopolitical field of migration and borders that might qualify as “genuinely” abolitionist. Instead, we seek to help elaborate an analytical lens through which various political strategies and experiments might be better apprehensible as manifestations of border abolitionism in practice. In this regard, we draw inspiration not only from the evidence of what we have characterized as the veritable border abolitionism in practice that migrant and refugee border crossers enact but also from the theorizations of border abolitionism that are formulated or can be discerned in various activist struggles against the violence of border regimes.

There is a long genealogy of activist movements around migration across the US-Mexico border, originating in the transnational frameworks of analysis that emerged during the Chicano movement of the civil rights era, that have asserted a politics of mobility, community, and belonging *sin fronteras*—without borders. “We do not recognize capricious frontiers on the Bronze Continent,” declared the *Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*, adopted on March 31, 1969, by the First National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference.³⁶ “We Are One People Without Borders [*Somos Un Pueblo Sin Fronteras*],” concurred the Center for Autonomous Social Action, a Chicano social welfare organization devoted to assisting and organizing undocumented Mexican/migrant workers, adding the affirmation, “We are one because America is one.”³⁷ Similarly, a founding premise of Chicano studies has always been the decolonial recognition that “we didn’t cross the border; the border crossed us.”³⁸ This same theoretical outlook, with its

defining disaffection and defiance toward borders, informs numerous contemporary solidarity and humanitarian campaigns around migrant struggles at the US-Mexico border. Pueblo Sin Fronteras (People without Borders), for instance, is a transborder solidarity collective that operates on both sides of the US-Mexico border, committed to the “abolition” of migrant detention and the broader “fight of breaking down borders.” In addition to a diverse array of migrant support practices, including monitoring human rights abuses, providing know-your-rights trainings, and hosting mental health clinics along migratory routes and in detention facilities, the organization also has created and sustained migrant shelters to offer people in transit safe spaces to eat, rest, and shower with dignity.³⁹ Furthermore, most famously, Pueblo Sin Fronteras has been pivotal in mobilizing thousands of migrants and refugees in organized mass caravans to travel together through the migratory corridor through Mexico that links Central America to the US-Mexico border, as a measure of collective self-protection and mutual care against the predations and violence of the migratory route. Here, it is possible to discern a project that is simultaneously about the sort of breaking down of borders and bordering mechanisms and the building up of alternative and autonomous infrastructures of mobility, community, and care that are a hallmark of abolitionist practices in other contexts.

Similarly, the Puente Movement, based in Arizona, is a migrant-led membership organization that combines antideportation activism with broader campaigns against oppressive anti-immigrant laws and enforcement policies and racist policing more generally. Puente’s mission articulates what could be considered a characteristically abolitionist perspective by combining the goal of combating “inhumane laws, racism, and police violence” with the more long-term vision of “[building] a world where everyone has respect, dignity and a good quality of life.” Puente articulates its organizing strategy as “a Closed Hand / Open Hand philosophy”: the closed-hand tactic signals the objective “to abolish oppressive policies and enforcement . . . through direct action, civic engagement, education, advocacy, and civil disobedience,” while the open-hand tactic signals an ethos of community building, “providing a space for community members to come together as one people, despite legal status and past criminal conviction.” Importantly, while much of the organization’s work specifically focuses on the policing of migration and the border, its mission also addresses the “most marginalized” and emphasizes an antiracist struggle for “human rights” and against both (migrant) illegalization and criminalization, which defies and transcends the citizen/noncitizen partition.⁴⁰

Analogously, in the United States, where racial Blackness has customarily been presumptively affiliated with African American US citizens and widely tends to be systematically disarticulated from the category

“immigrant,” a key plank of the platform of demands of the Movement for Black Lives, a collective of more than fifty Black-identified organizations and a prominent organizational expression of the wider Black Lives Matter struggle, explicitly recognizes that the punishment of migrants is disproportionately experienced by those who are racialized as Black and thus that migrant struggles are a vital concern of Black liberation. The movement’s analysis emphasizes the specific conjunctures between migrant “illegality,” detention, and deportation and the broader criminalization of racial Blackness, as well as the more general criminalization of poverty.⁴¹ The UndocuBlack Network, another US advocacy organization foregrounding the struggles of Black undocumented migrants, demands a moratorium on all deportations and interior immigration enforcement, as well as the closure of migrant detention jails. The network’s activist practice and campaigns promote not only specific demands with ramifications for the radical diminution of border and immigration enforcement, which could very appropriately be affiliated with what abolitionists endorse as nonreformist reforms, but also an incipient theorization of the racialized specificity of bordering mechanisms and the intersectionality of migration with racial justice. The UndocuBlack Network is a constituent of a larger network, Detention Watch, that explicitly advocates for the abolition of migrant detention as “irreparable, unnecessary, cruel, and racist by design” and promotes “abolitionist values to ensure that we do not inadvertently replicate or create new harmful systems.”⁴² Similarly, the California-based Freedom for Immigrants organization, another project committed explicitly to the abolition of migrant detention, posits that slavery, colonialism, and white supremacy on a global scale persist and are reconfigured by racial capitalism’s contemporary systems of mass incarceration, of which migrant detention is but one variation.⁴³

In the European context, the Welcome to Europe Network has explicitly affirmed its abolitionist interpretation of activism in support of migrants’ and refugees’ freedom of movement against the racist post-coloniality of Europe’s border regime. Building on established traditions among solidarity networks such as Welcome to Europe and the NoBorder Network,⁴⁴ the WatchTheMed Alarm Phone project, initiated in 2012 and launched in October 2014, encompassing a transnational network of (migrant and nonmigrant) activists and activist researchers in Europe and North Africa, has put in place a hotline for migrants in distress during their maritime border-crossing journeys in the Mediterranean Sea. After mobilizing various geospatial monitoring techniques to locate the exact maritime position of potential or actual shipwrecks, the activists notify border policing authorities in Europe to demand that they take action to rescue and disembark the migrants. In this manner, their strategy has sought to appropriate and repurpose the technologies and infrastructures

of border surveillance and control for the ends of search-and-rescue missions, in real time. They have thus interacted directly with thousands of so-called migrant boats. In cases where border enforcement authorities disregard the appeals of migrants in distress, the network gathers and publicizes diverse types of documentary evidence of these state actors' violations of international law, including the documentation of migrant deaths.⁴⁵ Deliberately confounding the conventional constraints of purely "humanitarian" action, however, the strategy of this project has been conceived in terms of claiming and enacting a right to look and listen, "[challenging] the borders of what can be seen and heard," converting the organized "practice of disobedient observation" into an expressly "political intervention" whereby border surveillance is turned against itself.⁴⁶ Furthermore, these activist projects explicitly invoke the inspiration they take from (and their affinities with) the antislavery abolitionism of the Underground Railroad, in their efforts to support "migratory acts of escape," directly and materially supporting unauthorized migrant mobilities across European borders.⁴⁷

Taking this approach further, in the wake of the increasing criminalization of humanitarian nongovernmental organizations dedicated to the maritime rescue of migrants in the Mediterranean, the renewed subcontracting of the Libyan Coast Guard to serve as the externalized border police of the European Union, and the 2018 closure of Italian ports to all vessels transporting migrants and refugees (including those who had been rescued at sea), the Italian social and political platform *Mediterranea* launched a solidarity project that involved purchasing and launching a rescue ship. Rather than yet another strictly humanitarian rescue mission, however, *Mediterranea* expressly sought to transform the maritime rescue of migrants from a purely defensive (and, commonly, explicitly "apolitical") response to border violence, remaking such rescues at sea into an "offensive" and "political" practice of resistance, "prepared to act even outside the established legal frameworks, in the belief that new rights are rooted in and produced by conflict."⁴⁸ The project was also grounded, explains Beppe Caccia, on "the idea that we need to build infrastructures that are able to support, to facilitate, to give more space, to migrants as central actors. Even in our search and rescue operation, we feel that the core is not humanitarian activity, but the ability of migrants to organise their escape." In this respect, as Sandro Mezzadra elaborates, "what is primary is the movements and struggles of migrants and [the activists'] intervention is secondary. In such a conjunction, it is not possible to think of [the rescue] intervention as technical and neutral: it is immediately political, and this politicality expresses itself through the building of infrastructures that support the migrants' movements, migrants' practices."⁴⁹ Moreover, renouncing the title of "nongovernmental orga-

nization” and embedding its efforts within a much wider range of solidarity practices among political movements on both shores of the Mediterranean borderscape, *Mediterranea* was conceptualized as a platform: “a mobile and flexible device of connection . . . [that] at least in the best moments, [was] able to turn such a logistical rationality into a powerful tool of political organisation that enabled the cooperation between quite different actors . . . [by seeking] to find alternative forms of organising through the hybridisation of existing ones.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, the *Mediterranea* intervention was posited as an open-ended “process of collective construction” toward “[building] a world where we can at least breathe more freely.”⁵¹ Here, too, we recognize the theorization of radical new experiments in solidarity and resistance oriented by migrants’ and refugees’ exercise of the freedom of movement, which could productively be called *border abolitionism*.

Abolitionist Convergences

Border abolitionism does not mean simply transposing the carceral abolitionist framework into analyses about migration and borders. On the contrary, it implies revisiting and revising existing abolitionist perspectives through the critical standpoint of migration, in a way that further destabilizes and blurs the migrant/citizen divide itself, allowing us to focus instead on a differential continuum of degrees of non/citizenship,⁵² whereby the sociopolitical conditions of the vast majority of ostensible citizens—their putative citizenship—may be more readily understood to be a form of subordination to state power. Such a perspective would take seriously the political implications of Gilmore’s insight regarding the US racial state that the historical affinities “among masculinity, state power, and national belongingness” have rendered “everyone else . . . to some degree alien.”⁵³ In other words, approaching the question of abolition from the other side of the border offers the prospect of radicalizing the critique of citizenship itself and thereby potentially untethering our political visions of emancipation from citizenship altogether. This indeed would be a crucial expression of how border and migration studies might aspire to meet the call of abolitionists like Gilmore to “disrupt assumptions such as the idea that politics happens” exclusively or primarily “in the milieu of the state” to “renovate and make critical already existing activities, categories, and concepts to produce freedom from surplused capacities.”⁵⁴

Yet, advancing the overdue and still nascent dialogue between critical migration perspectives and carceral abolitionism requires us to also reflect on two distinct bodies of theoretical-political work with partially different starting points and distinct empirical targets: carceral abolition-

ism and critical migration and border studies. Carceral abolitionism has foregrounded racialized punishment and the hierarchies and inequalities of citizenship that it fosters. In so doing, it has tended to call particular attention to the criminalization of racially subordinated citizens. Critical scholarship in migration and border studies takes as its presupposition the figures of the foreigner, the migrant, the refugee, and thus is predicated on the experiences of noncitizens. Taking a cue from the vital legacy of diverse critiques of the subordinate citizenship of minoritized racial groups, such as African Americans, whereby white supremacy has systematically rendered many ostensible citizens “to some degree alien,”⁵⁵ we contend that these critical perspectives can productively complement each other.

What happens to abolitionist critiques when the racialized subjugation of the most marginalized citizens and, indeed, citizenship itself are subjected to the critical scrutiny made possible when they are analyzed from the standpoint of the de facto juridical rightlessness of noncitizen migrants and refugees? Border abolitionism builds on and intertwines these analytical angles, bringing them into productive dialogue. Hence, the encounter between these perspectives that we are advocating is not merely a matter of addressing a gap in the academic literature or providing a theoretical overlay for emergent activist practices. Rather, it is a question of bringing complementary analytical-political critiques into more fulsome articulation in order to advance a *global* critique of contemporary racial capitalism as a postcolonial formation, which of course could never be adequately analyzed through the customary reflexes of methodological nationalism and requires the sort of anticapitalist and internationalist outlook that has always been the greatest promise of an abolitionist perspective. Relatedly, by interweaving carceral abolitionism and critical migration scholarship, border abolitionism crafts a critique of the border regime that builds on the recursive instability of the migrant/citizen divide and unsettles any reification that would essentialize the categories of “migrant” and “citizen.”⁵⁶ Thus, the abolitionist framework enables situating the illegalization and criminalization of migration within wider interlocking mechanisms of social control, punishment, and subjugation to analyze how these are coconstituted at the intersections of class, gender, and race. In light of this larger analytical-political strategy, the idea of a confinement continuum helps foreground the blurred boundaries between “migrant” and “citizen” and the interlocking modes of racialization and hierarchies of non/citizenship.

Border abolitionism nonetheless starts from the border, asking the question, How do particular categories of people on the move come to be labeled, governed, and racialized as “migrants” or “refugees”? That is, it interrogates the confinement continuum from the specific standpoint of

processes of migrantization. Revisiting Khosravi's question, "What do we see if we look at the border from the other side?"⁵⁷ border abolitionism simultaneously asks, What do we see if we look at policing, imprisonment, and racialized punishment from the other side of the border—from the standpoint of noncitizenship? In fact, across the globe, minoritized and marginalized categories of people (ostensible citizens) are increasingly rebranded as "migrants" without ever having crossed any national boundaries, as they are subjected to state projects of political and juridical "illegalization" that entail being stripped of their birthright citizenship or targeted because they were never formally registered as citizens of the country where they were born.⁵⁸ Border abolitionism exposes and foregrounds the persistent mutability of the category of "migrant" and the instabilities of detainability and deportability in a manner that therefore mobilizes migration as a critical standpoint to elucidate the contradictory nexus conjoining subordinate citizenship and outright noncitizenship, thus elucidating the blurred boundaries between them.⁵⁹ That is, rather than taking citizenship as the norm, border abolitionism starts from the equivocations of such categories and the instability of their implementation to highlight degrees of non/citizenship as well as processes of migrantization. In this respect, border abolitionism unsettles the liberal complacencies that inform conventional civil rights politics and restabilize the formal promise of egalitarian and inclusive citizenship; thus, border abolitionism further amplifies carceral abolitionism's most radical potentialities.

Undoing the Confinement Continuum, Disrupting the Politics of Innocence

The question of how to advance a more robust and far-reaching critique of migrant detention should be intertwined with an interrogation of the nexus of migrantization, degrees of (non)citizenship, and detainability that becomes more starkly apparent when we confront the confinement continuum and the multiplication of hybrid spaces and mechanisms of punishment. The mobility of the Roma across the space of Europe and thus also across the juridical boundaries of EU and other European citizenships presents countless examples of the sorts of racialized processes of criminalization and migrantization that reduce ostensible citizens to de facto "aliens."⁶⁰ The Italian context, for instance, exposes both the instability of the category of migrant and the deportability of nonforeigners. The Italian nationality law that regulates the acquisition and loss of citizenship is based on *jus sanguinis*, which establishes that citizenship is exclusively determined by the nationality of one or both parents. Hence, children born in Italy of non-Italian parents do not automatically receive

Italian citizenship as a matter of legal birthright: when they reach the age of eighteen, they can apply for Italian citizenship, a status granted only if certain eligibility conditions are met. On that basis, people born in Italy, who frequently may have never left the country, can become deportable “migrants” upon turning eighteen. This happens in particular for Roma people, born to noncitizen parents, who at the age of eighteen lose the legal protection of being a minor and thereby come to be summarily illegalized by Italian law and susceptible to detention and deportation (often to countries where they have never been).⁶¹ Yet, it is noteworthy that official data and statistics about the detention and deportation of “migrants” do not distinguish the foreign-born and those who were born or grew up in Italy: people confined in immigrant detention centers are classified on the basis of their official noncitizenship, regardless of Italian birth and lifelong residence. Hence, the population of such migrant detention centers is universally classified and uniformly recorded as a “foreign” population, irrespective of their substantive claims to citizenship or any sense of Italian identity, belonging, or entitlement based on where they were born or have been living for virtually their entire lives—which migration scholars have interpreted in terms of a “politics of presence.”⁶² Moreover, the very real and palpable prospect of being abruptly reclassified as detainable and deportable “foreigners” in the country of their birth reinforces the more general fact of their racialized subordination and social marginalization as “minorities” in their own country. The border regime is thus instrumental and inextricable from their racial subjugation as denizens of the state: border abolitionism, therefore, becomes an essential critical resource for understanding their struggles for racial justice and, indeed, for their civil rights (their rights of citizenship).

Many critiques of migrant detention are notably grounded on the assumption that those who are detained commonly did not commit any crime and are therefore undeserving of such punitive treatment because of their actual innocence of any criminal offense. The truth of this proposition notwithstanding, such critiques inadvertently tend therefore to reinscribe the normative (and deeply racialized) assumptions that equate carceral punishment and confinement with “criminal” culpability, and reify their presumptive legitimacy. Border abolitionism therefore also offers another tactic for challenging the politics of what Gilmore has designated the “problem of innocence.” The “innocence defense narrative,” in which it seems reasonable and just to imagine that the strategy for undoing wrongful incarceration must be to discover or identify how the “innocent” have been wrongly condemned, rests inevitably on the dominant logic of criminalization itself: “By distinguishing degrees of innocence . . . there are people, inevitably, who will become permanently not innocent, no matter what they do or say.”⁶³ The enduring legacies

of racialized criminalization predictably tend to implicitly reinforce the long-established moral economy of racialized punishment and thus to recode or restabilize “innocence” as racially white. Analogous processes of racialization pervade the production of migrant “illegality.”⁶⁴ Such a racialized politics of innocence pervades both reformist critiques of the prison system and campaigns against migrant detention and deportation. As Gilmore contends, “For abolition, to insist on innocence is to surrender politically because ‘innocence’ evades a problem abolition is compelled to confront: how to diminish and remedy harm as against finding better forms of punishment.”⁶⁵ The challenge of abolitionism consists therefore in refusing the pervasive “human sacrifice” that is central to carcerality, and especially to relegating people to cages, to build solidarities among all the heterogeneous categories of people who have been variously criminalized so as to challenge and subvert their subjugation.⁶⁶

In the United States, during the era of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), compromises and complicities with the hegemonic narratives of “American” assimilationism and the moral economy of eligibility for a path to citizenship have worked to ideologically interpellate and recuperate some undocumented youth brought as small children to the United States by their undocumented migrant parents. The dominant discourse around DACA sought to “redeem” these so-called Dreamers (those who were able to qualify for DACA) only by repudiating and commonly (re)criminalizing those undocumented youth and other undocumented migrants (including the Dreamers’ parents, of course) who could not satisfy the program’s stringent eligibility requirements.⁶⁷ A refusal of the treacherous investment in the hegemonic moral economy of “guilt” and “innocence” thus constitutes a key conceptual linchpin that connects carceral abolitionism with radical critiques of the border regime and its confinement continuum for illegalized migrants.

Border abolitionism is not reducible to critiques of (migrant) detention and incarceration, however. In fact, in our effort to broaden the focus to a confinement continuum, we call particular critical attention to hybrid spaces and economies of migration confinement that are entangled with, or disguised by, humanitarian logics. Indeed, migrants’ movements are often disrupted through mechanisms of containment underpinned by the humanitarian “confine to protect” rationale or “compassionate confinement.”⁶⁸ Many protest campaigns and civic mobilizations against migrant detention support programs that endorse “alternatives to detention,” which instead of denouncing and refusing incarceration altogether suggest “more humane” solutions for monitoring, containing, and de facto punishing illegalized migrants.⁶⁹ Hence, the more expansive horizons of abolitionism forewarn us against complacency in the face of putative alternatives to detention. Our point is not only that such so-called alternatives reca-

pitulate and reconfigure border policing and migrant surveillance through systems of remote control but also that they ultimately (re)legitimize the overall “guilt” and punishability—deportability, detainability, incarceration, and expulsion—of racially subordinated, migrantized mobile subjects.

Escape, the Freedom of Movement, and the Historical Memory of Struggles

Border abolitionism, we contend, combines a method of investigation that is capable of exposing and challenging borders as mechanisms of racialization and racial subjugation with an analysis that nevertheless foregrounds emergent practices of defiance and collective spaces of struggle. If migrants are not only being blocked, stranded, and confined at borders but also thereby robbed of their time, as Khosravi has poignantly emphasized, then bringing together a spatial and a temporal perspective on borders in our global/postcolonial political present is one of the main theoretical and political stakes of border abolitionism.⁷⁰ One aspect of this heightened attention to temporality is necessarily a question of historicity and the examination of how contemporary border struggles correspond to longer and less self-evident histories. The abolitionist literature has highlighted the temporal dimension of struggles, which is to say, it has foregrounded how past mobilizations, forms of organization, and protests come to inform contemporary ones and underscore the crucial role of historical memory and its transmission for contemporary struggles.⁷¹

Beyond the specific contributions of carceral abolitionism as such, an abolitionist framework can never be detached from the larger historical memory and deeper political legacies of African/American struggles against enslavement and the organized movements for the abolition of slavery during the nineteenth century. As Davis has pointed out, revisiting Du Bois’s idea of abolition democracy, carceral abolitionism itself has its political roots in this longer heritage of Black abolitionism, for which freedom could never be reduced to the mere end of slavery alone.⁷² By acknowledging these conceptual and political affinities, we are cautious to not imply or assert any sloppy or slippery parallels between contemporary migrants and enslaved people struggling for their liberation. Nor do we seek to mobilize the analogy of the Black Atlantic in a purely evocative sense and thus contribute to dehistoricizing the present historical context and sociopolitical specificities of postcolonial migration. Yet these historical antecedents are indispensable tools for thought.⁷³ Hence, we propose border abolitionism as a vital and necessary conceptual framework to advance the unfinished political and theoretical work of critiquing and actively struggling to bring about the material and practical demolition of

(post/colonial) racial capitalism in its contemporary manifestations, for which a racialized global politics of borders has become so central and constitutive.

Border abolitionism thus foregrounds the insurgent (if often incipient) political claims and conjunctural political spaces that arise from migrants' and refugees' struggles as noncitizens, which intrinsically cannot be contained within a state-centric politics of citizenship and frequently articulate or embody a politics of incorrigibility that implicitly posits political questions that have no plausible resolution within existing sociopolitical arrangements.⁷⁴ As Davis notes, in Du Bois's perspective, the abolition of slavery could never be fully achieved through the merely juridical abolition of chattel slavery alone: it required cultivating new social relations and institutional forms that could establish a new sociopolitical and economic condition whereby Black people would achieve full equality with whites, truly flourish, and attain real freedom. "In order to achieve the comprehensive abolition of slavery—after the institution was rendered illegal and black people were released from their chains—new institutions should have been created to incorporate black people into the social order," Davis explains. "[There was] an understanding among former slaves that slavery could not be truly abolished until people were provided with the economic means for their subsistence. They also needed access to educational institutions and needed to claim voting and other political rights. . . . Du Bois thus argues that a host of democratic institutions are needed to fully achieve abolition—thus abolition democracy."⁷⁵ Precisely because abolitionism "is not only, or not even primarily, about abolition as a negative process of tearing down, but it is also about building up, about creating new institutions,"⁷⁶ the work of border abolitionism cannot be circumscribed to a narrow critique of border policing and bordering mechanisms alone. Instead, the multiple struggles against racializing bordering mechanisms are also struggles for building alternative collectivities and transversal coalitions, which at least implicitly insist that another world is possible.

Thus, not uncommonly, migrant struggles, which tend to exceed and confound the parameters of the status quo, tend to be inherently transformative. Even when resisting the uneven politics of differential inclusion at stake in the unequal enforcement of border policing and mobility control, these struggles are compelled to invent new tactics for displacing or delaying the interventions of states' border regimes and thereby also come to invent new political lexicons. Furthermore, precisely by acknowledging that "migrants actively shape their migration projects, though rarely free of elements of coercion,"⁷⁷ and recognizing that "a freedom in and through movement is nonetheless . . . not an abstract, essentialized, or absolute autonomy but one that is necessarily limited, compromised, contra-

dictory, and tactical,”⁷⁸ it is possible to discern how freedom and coercion are intrinsically entangled in migrants’ and refugees’ experiences. In this respect, there is a poignant analogy to draw with the combined exhilaration of pure and open potentiality and the veritable terror of capture and life-threatening punishment embodied in the experience of fugitive slaves. That is, while such an analogy should not be understood to subsume or exhaust the specificities of contemporary migrants’ subjectivities and struggles with the often subtle coercion at play in migration experiences, or to conflate migrants’ and slaves’ conditions, the figure of the runaway slave can nonetheless serve to interrogate the contradictory nuances of the many layers and heterogeneous forms of border violence as migrants navigate and negotiate such perils in the quest to realize their mobility projects.

The “right to escape,” as conceptualized in the literature associated with the concept of the autonomy of migration,⁷⁹ has begun to be put into productive dialogue with the long-standing history of fugitive slaves’ desertions and escapes as well as with the experience of the Underground Railroad’s infrastructures of solidarity in North America.⁸⁰ Black abolitionism and the struggles for liberation across the Americas (particularly in the United States and the Caribbean) have also entailed prolific historical legacies of discrepant forms of social organization and modes of knowledge, political and ethical claims, and distinctive cultural and political lexicons and emancipatory visions, with profound repercussions through their circulation across space and their transmission over time, encompassing what Paul Gilroy memorably depicts as no less than a “counterculture of modernity.”⁸¹ The memory of rebellions and fugitive practices were circulated by escaped slaves, as well as sailors and buccaneers.⁸² The shared knowledge that was carried across and outward from the Caribbean, in particular, has been described by Julius Scott as the “common wind” that whispered through a “masterless underground” and facilitated “a crucial transatlantic connection.”⁸³

Today, alongside the opening of safe passages and temporary safe spaces for illegalized migrants in transit, migrants’ underground routes and their “mobile commons”⁸⁴ similarly rely on the circulation of counterknowledges, both among migrants and between migrants and others acting in solidarity. These dispersed counterknowledges resemble countermaps in action that consist in sharing information in real time, via digital or other channels of communication, including, of course, word of mouth, to support migrants’ cross-border passages and stays.⁸⁵ The transmission over time of tactical counterknowledges and the memory of historical struggles is at the core of “abolitionist vistas.”⁸⁶ An abolition geography of migration implies an attention to what Mezzadra has called the “split temporality” of activist research: strategically struggling

to abolish the systemic reproduction of the continuum of border policing and migrant illegalization while, simultaneously, tactically opening up, within and against the current context of border restrictions, conjunctural spaces for transversal alliances in support of migrants' movements.⁸⁷ The political legacies of Black abolitionism give us a vocabulary of emancipation grounded not only in the historical memory of slave rebellions and enslaved people's everyday insubordination but also in the struggles of runaway slaves and what we may recognize to be a politics of desertion and escape enacted through their appropriations of mobility, as well as the transversal alliances of solidarity that supported those acts of insubordination. Discerning in that politics of escape what were truly enslaved people's appropriations of freedom through the exercise of the freedom of movement offers us a precious analytical resource for understanding contemporary migrants' and refugees' struggles over cross-border mobility.

Conclusion

Responding to and building on Gilmore's invitation to elaborate an abolitionist geography, we have sketched a preliminary outline for our proposal of border abolitionism as both an analytical grid and a political horizon. Border abolitionism is not conceived here as a comprehensive analytics for radical critiques of the global border regime. Nor does it have the ambition of advancing an exhaustive and monolithic understanding of racialized borders. Rather, border abolitionism complements, enhances, and advances both the more established (prison) abolitionist project and a radical critique of the border regime, in several ways, by

Focusing analysis on the economy of migrant "illegality" and the sociopolitical and legal production of a continuum of illegalization, which precedes and exceeds the specificities of any particular border enforcement practices

Shifting critical attention away from a narrow or exclusive focus on any discrete border to a consideration of how a much wider border regime is implicated in sustaining heterogeneous racializing mechanisms through various tactics and techniques of bordering

Situating the border regime's racialization of migrant and refugee noncitizens in a continuum with the racialized subordination of ostensible citizens

Identifying the confinement continuum of migrants and refugees and analyzing its intersections with the carceral geography otherwise perceived to be "internal" to the space of the state and thus apparently unrelated to the border

Highlighting the racialized dynamics by which border and immigration regimes come to be deployed for the migrantization, and consequent illegalization and denaturalization, of those who have never migrated

In fact, it could be argued that an abolitionist perspective on the border regime enables another crucial vantage for grasping “the relationship between the organized death of living labor (capital punishment) and the oppression of the living by dead labor (the punishment of capital).”⁸⁸

Border abolitionism engages in tracing connections between interlocking forms of punishment and racialization that target (migrant/refugee) noncitizens and citizens, respectively, while at the same time challenging the simplistic binary opposition between “migrants” and “citizens.”⁸⁹ The opposition between migrants and citizens is also unsettled by transversal struggles and solidarity practices, in which heterogeneous social justice claims intersect. The critical standpoint of migration that informs border abolitionism methodologically situates the freedom of movement at the heart of larger questions of freedom and thereby also reframes struggles over the freedom of movement as a transversal analytical frame that can unsettle and blur any strict partition between migrants and citizens. In this regard, it is crucial to disarticulate the freedom of movement as a practice from any liberal conceits about “rights,” as ordained by law and granted by state powers. It is also necessary to further complicate the nexus between freedom and mobility by refusing any naive or simplistic romanticization of movement as such in light of the subordinated and frequently racialized forms of movement, as well as related forms of forced hypermobility. Thus, border abolitionism advocates for the freedom of movement by refusing to isolate questions of mobility from wider and more far-reaching disputes over freedom, thus resituating such claims and appropriations of mobility in practice within broader anticapitalist struggles for social justice. These indeed are the stakes and greater promise of border abolitionism.

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Notes

1. Refugees in Libya (@RefugeesinLibya) tweeted about this event as it was happening in March 2021. The tweets have since been deleted.
2. Achtnich, “Accumulation by Immobilization”; Global Detention Project, “Libya Immigration Detention Profile”; Human Rights Watch, “Pushed Back, Pushed Around”; Urbina, “Secretive Prisons.”
3. Macías-Rojas and Tazzioli, “Detention/Confinement/Containment.”
4. Nyers, De Genova, and Tazzioli, “Protection”; Fontanari et al., “Refuge.”
5. De Genova, Garelli, and Tazzioli, “Autonomy of Asylum?”
6. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; Foucault, *Punitive Society*; Cassidy, “Where Can I Get Free?” See also Moran, Turner, and Schliehe, “Conceptualizing the Carceral in Carceral Geography”; and Hamlin and Speer, “Politics of Conceptualizing the Carceral.”
7. Hamlin and Speer, “Politics of Conceptualizing the Carceral,” 800; Moran, Turner, and Schliehe, “Conceptualizing the Carceral in Carceral Geography,” 672.
8. De Genova, “Migrant ‘Illegality’ and Deportability.”
9. On the escalation in deportation, see Anderson, Gibney, and Paoletti *Social, Political, and Historical Contours of Deportation*; De Genova and Peutz, *Deportation Regime*; Fekete, “Deportation Machine”; Golash-Boza, *Deported*; Kanstroom, *Aftermath*; Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation*; and Khosravi, *After Deportation*. On the expansion of migrant detention, see Conlon and Hiemstra, *Intimate Economies of Immigration Detention*; De Genova, “‘Doin’ Hard Time on Planet Earth’”; Flynn and Flynn, *Challenging Immigration Detention*; García Hernández, “Immigration Detention as Punishment”; Hernández, *Migra!*; Hernández, “Amnesty or Abolition?”; Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation*; Hall, *Border Watch*; Hernández, Muhammad, and Thompson, “Introduction”; Hester, “Deportability and the Carceral State”; Hiemstra, “You Don’t Even Know Where You Are”; Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*; Mountz et al., “Conceptualizing Detention”; Dow, *American Gulag*; Simon, “Refugees in a Carceral Age”; and Welch, *Detained*.
10. Hernández, *City of Inmates*; Hernández, Muhammad, and Thompson, “Introduction.”
11. Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*; Stumpf, “Crimmigration Crisis”; Dowling and Inda, *Governing Immigration through Crime*. For works from abolitionist perspectives, see Aiken and Silverman, “Decarceral Futures”; Bradley and de Noronha, *Against Borders*; Brankamp, “Camp Abolition”; Brown, “ICE Comes to Tennessee”; Evans, “Crisis, Capital Accumulation, and the ‘Crimmigration’ Fix”; Mezzadra, “Abolitionist Vistas of the Human”; Moffette, “Immigration Status and Policing in Canada”; Nath, “Curated Hostilities”; Paik, “Abolitionist Futures”; Roy, “City in the Age of Trumpism”; Sharma, “States and Human Immobilization”; and Stierl, “Of Migrant Slaves.”
12. Loyd, “Abolitionist Perspectives on No Borders.”
13. See also García Hernández, “Perverse Logic of Immigration Detention.”
14. De Genova, “‘Crisis’ of the European Border Regime”; De Genova, “European Question”; De Genova, “Migration and Race in Europe”; De Genova, “‘Migrant Crisis’ as Racial Crisis.”
15. Khosravi, “What Do We See?,” 421. See also De Genova, “‘We Are of the Connections.’”
16. Scott, *Seeing like a State*; Rumford, *Cosmopolitan Borders*.
17. De Genova, “‘We Are of the Connections.’”; De Genova, “‘Crisis’ of the European Border Regime.”

18. De Genova and Tazzioli, “Minor Keywords of Political Theory.”
19. De Genova, “‘Crisis’ of the European Border Regime”; De Genova, “Introduction”; De Genova, *Working the Boundaries*; Sharma, “Racism.”
20. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*; Davis, *Abolition Democracy*; Davis et al., *Abolition. Feminism. Now*; Gilmore, *Abolition Geography*.
21. Harney and Moten, *Undercommons*, 42.
22. Berger, Kaba, and Stein, “What Abolitionists Do.”
23. Davis, *Abolition Democracy*, 98; see also Loyd, “Race, Capitalist Crisis, and Abolitionist Organizing”; and Roy, “City in the Age of Trumpism.”
24. Stierl, “Of Migrant Slaves.”
25. Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, 73–106; see also De Genova, *Working the Boundaries*, 56–94.
26. Davis, *Refugee Movement*.
27. Gilmore, *Abolition Geography*, 452.
28. De Genova, “Border Struggles in the Migrant Metropolis”; Fontanari et al., “Refuge”; Gambino, “‘Gran Ghetto’”; Jones, “Spaces of Refusal”; Lafazani, “Homeplace Plaza”; Nyers, De Genova, and Tazzioli, “Protection”; Papodopoulos and Tsianos, “After Citizenship”; Simone, “People as Infrastructure”; Tazzioli, “What Is Left of Migrants’ Spaces?”; Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos, *Mobile Commons*.
29. Quoted in Loyd, “Race, Capitalist Crisis, and Abolitionist Organizing,” 51.
30. Bradley and de Noronha, *Against Borders*, 15.
31. Anderson, Sharma, and Wright, “Why No Borders?” See also Kein Mensch ist illegal, <https://www.kein-mensch-ist-illegal.org>; No One Is Illegal, <https://noii-van.resist.ca>; and NoBorder, <http://www.noborder.org>.
32. Anderson, “Methodological Denationalism”; Anderson, “New Directions in Migration Studies”; Dahinden, “A Plea for the ‘De-migrantization’”; De Genova, Garelli, Tazzioli, “Autonomy of Asylum?”; Garelli and Tazzioli, *Tunisia as a Revolutionized Space of Migration*; Tazzioli, *Spaces of Governmentality*; Riedner et al., “Mobility.”
33. Lafazani, “Homeplace Plaza”; Mudu and Chattopadhyay, *Migration, Squatting, and Radical Autonomy*.
34. De Genova, “Doin’ Hard Time on Planet Earth”; De Genova and Roy, “Practices of Illegalization”; García Hernández, “Perverse Logic of Immigration Detention”; Nyers, *Irregular Citizenship*; Riedner et al., “Mobility”; Rosas, “Managed Violences of the Borderlands”; Rosas, *Barrio Libre*; van Baar, “Evictability”; van Baar, Bhandar, and Tazzioli, “Eviction”; Yildiz and De Genova, *Roma Migrants in the European Union*.
35. De Genova, “‘Crisis’ of the European Border Regime.”
36. Anaya and Lomeli, *Aztlán*, 1.
37. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 190–91.
38. Acuña, *Anything but Mexican*, 109.
39. Pueblo Sin Fronteras, <https://www.pueblosinfronteras.org>.
40. Puente Human Rights Movement, “About Us.”
41. Movement for Black Lives, <https://m4bl.org>.
42. Detention Watch, “Ending Immigration Detention.”
43. Freedom for Immigrants, “Why Abolition.”
44. Welcome to Europe, <https://w2eu.info>; NoBorder Network, <http://www.noborder.org>. See Heller, Pezzani, and Stierl, “Disobedient Sensing and Border Struggles.”
45. Watch the Med, <https://watchthemed.net>.

46. Heller, Pezzani, and Stierl, “Disobedient Sensing and Border Struggles,” 4, 6; see also Stierl, “WatchTheMed Alarm Phone”; and Stierl, “Sea of Struggle.”
47. Heller, Pezzani, and Stierl, “Disobedient Sensing and Border Struggles,” 7; see also Stierl, “Of Migrant Slaves”; and Welcome to Europe, “From Abolitionism to Freedom of Movement?”
48. Mezzadra and Caccia, “What Can a Ship Do?”
49. Caccia, Heller, and Mezzadra, “Mediterranea.”
50. Caccia, Heller, and Mezzadra, “Mediterranea.”
51. Mezzadra and Caccia, “What Can a Ship Do?”
52. Anderson, Gibney, and Paoletti *Social, Political, and Historical Contours of Deportation*; De Genova, “Denizenship”; Nyers, *Irregular Citizenship*.
53. Gilmore, “Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference,” 21.
54. Gilmore, “Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference,” 15, 17.
55. Gilmore, “Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference,” 21; see also De Genova, *Working the Boundaries*, 76–79; De Genova, “Stakes of an Anthropology of the United States”; and De Genova, “Introduction.”
56. Anderson, “New Directions in Migration Studies.”
57. Khosravi, “What Do We See?”
58. De Genova, “‘Doin’ Hard Time on Planet Earth”; De Genova and Roy, “Practices of Illegalization”; Nyers, *Irregular Citizenship*.
59. De Genova, “Production of Culprits”; De Genova, *Working the Boundaries*; De Genova, “Migrant ‘Illegality’ and Deportability.”
60. van Baar, “Evictability”; Yildiz and De Genova, *Roma Migrants in the European Union*.
61. Esposito et al., “Voices from the Inside.”
62. Bosniak, *Citizen and the Alien*; Bosniak, “Being Here”; Darling, “Forced Migration and the City”; De Genova, “Queer Politics of Migration.”
63. Gilmore, *Abolition Geography*, 448.
64. De Genova, “Legal Production”; De Genova, *Working the Boundaries*; García Hernández, “Perverse Logic of Immigration Detention”; Hernández, Muhammad, and Thompson, “Introduction”; Hester, “Deportability and the Carceral State.”
65. Gilmore, *Abolition Geography*, 453
66. Gilmore, *Abolition Geography*; Loyd, “Race, Capitalist Crisis, and Abolitionist Organizing,” 53.
67. De Genova, “‘Doin’ Hard Time on Planet Earth”; Ramírez et al., *Precurity and Belonging*.
68. Tazzioli and Stierl, “Europe’s Unsafe Environment”; Brankamp, “Camp Abolition.”
69. Holmes, “Dismantling Detention.”
70. Khosravi, “Stolen Time.”
71. Davis, “Freedom Is a Constant Struggle”; Jeffries, “Black Lives Matter.”
72. Davis, *Abolition Democracy*.
73. De Genova, “Racial Theory of Labor.”
74. De Genova, “Queer Politics of Migration.”
75. Davis, *Abolition Democracy*, 97.
76. Davis, *Abolition Democracy*, 75.
77. Stierl, “Of Migrant Slaves,” 460.
78. De Genova, Garelli, and Tazzioli, “Autonomy of Asylum?” 243.
79. Mezzadra, “Right to Escape”; Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos, *Escape Routes*.

80. Mezzadra, “Abolitionist Vistas”; Stierl, “Of Migrant Slaves”; Welcome to Europe Network, “From Abolitionism to Freedom of Movement?” See also Cantat, “Rethinking Mobilities”; and El-Shaarawi and Rasza, “Movements upon Movements.”
81. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.
82. Rediker, Chakraborty, and van Rossum, *Global History of Runaways*.
83. Scott, *Common Wind*, 44.
84. Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos, *Mobile Commons*; Papadopoulos and Tsianos, “After Citizenship.”
85. Álvarez Velasco, “Trespassing the Visible.”
86. Mezzadra, “Abolitionist Vistas.”
87. Mezzadra, “Double Opening, Split Temporality, and New Spatialities.”
88. Linebaugh, *London Hanged*, 1; see also Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*.
89. Anderson, *Us and Them?*; De Genova, “‘Doin’ Hard Time on Planet Earth”; De Genova and Roy, “Practices of Illegalization”; Ramírez et al., *Precarity and Belonging*; Sharma, “States and Human Immobilization.”

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