

From Social Workers to Immigration Officers? Public Welfare Institutions as a Tool for Migration Control

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Introduction

In recent years, national and EU migration policy increasingly relies on internal migration control. In contrast to external border control, which aims at preventing ‘unwanted’ migrants from entering EU territory, internal migration control aims at controlling those irregular migrants who have already entered and often settled in an EU member state. To realize an effective internal migration control, new technologies and institutions such as large-scale databases and electronic surveillance systems like the Schengen Information System (SIS) Eurodac and Visa Information System (VIS) have been developed and introduced (Broeders 2007, p. 72). While these institutions were specifically designed for migration control, also institutions that serve completely different purposes, such as public welfare institutions, are increasingly (ab-)used to support internal migration control. In this article, we employ a theoretical lens that is informed by concepts of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze to analyze and explain this development. We argue that the increase of internal migration control as well as the increasing use of non-security institutions – such as those providing public welfare – to support these efforts, can partly be explained in terms of a broader shift from a “disciplinary society” (Foucault 1995) to a “society of control” (Deleuze 1992). Measures of internal migration control often explicitly target irregular migrants’ social and economic relations (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010) and thus their ‘integration’ rather than immigration (Schweitzer 2017). This is clearly the case in the United Kingdom, where the government’s official policy aim is to “create here in Britain a really hostile environment for illegal migration”.

Our aim is to show how (and explain why?) public welfare institutions are increasingly utilized to create this “hostile environment”. In the light of Foucault’s and Deleuze’s theories, seemingly small and mundane changes in the practices and policies of these

institutions - often justified in terms of (cost-)efficiency - are in fact connected to the very aim of modifying the “milieu” of irregular migrants. Apart from undermining migrants’ fundamental rights, they thereby also pose serious professional and ethical dilemmas for individual actors working in these institutions.

Empirically, we underpin our theoretical argument at various levels: A brief overview of recent policy developments in the UK illustrates the general shift from “discipline” to “control” in migration policy (macro-level). To also gain a deeper understanding of how these changes affect everyday practice, we draw on a series of semi-structured interviews with social workers and NGO representatives in London (micro-level) that were originally conducted as part of one of the authors’ PhD research (Schweitzer, forthcoming). While the theoretical value of the concept of the ‘society of control’ for analyzing recent developments in migration control has already been demonstrated (e.g. Walters 2006), empirical studies that link these theoretical concepts with concrete everyday experiences and practices of the new ‘managers’ of migration, however, remain scarce. Our paper is an attempt to start filling this gap.

Power, the ‘disciplinary society’ and the ‘society of control’

Explaining the concepts of the ‘disciplinary society’ and the ‘society of control’ requires a short excursion on Foucault’s work in general and his historicized account of power in particular. Trained as a historian, Foucault’s intention was always to situate conceptions of power and subjectivity in a historical context and to move away from universal conceptions. The largest part of Foucault’s work is hence concerned with the questions of how the exercise of power changed over time and how these changes shape the subjectification of human beings (Foucault 1982). According to Foucault, disciplinary power and disciplinary societies developed from the eighteenth century, when they gradually started to replace other, older forms of power and societal organization, namely “sovereign power”. In “sovereign” societies, laws are laid down and persons who break them are punished, often in an exemplary way that should prevent others from breaking the law as well. For example, in the middle ages, thieves were publicly executed or tortured to discourage others from stealing. There was a simple binary division between the permitted and the prohibited, and whoever was caught breaking the law was

punished. The exercise of power was less about changing the behavior of the population, but to exemplarily punish wrongdoers.

From the 18th century onwards, the mode of exercising power changed and gradually a disciplinary society developed. In a disciplinary society, the mechanisms of power became more complex: the binary division between permitted and prohibited was accompanied by techniques and mechanisms that aimed at changing the behavior of people. In a disciplinary society, wrongdoers are not simply punished but it became the goal to “correct” undesired behavior or to prevent it in the first place. To do so, subjects on whom power is exercised have to be enclosed, confined and fixed:

Discipline is essentially centripetal. I mean that discipline functions to the extent that it isolates a space, that it determines a segment. Discipline concentrates, focuses, and encloses. The first action of discipline is in fact to circumscribe a space in which its power and the mechanisms of its power will function fully and without limit. (Foucault et al. 2009, pp. 44–45)

Examples for such spaces are institutions like schools, barracks, hospitals or factories:

The individual never ceases passing from one closed environment to another, each having its own laws: first the family; then the school (“you are no longer in your family”); then the barracks (“you are no longer at school”); then the factory; from time to time the hospital; possibly the prison, the pre-eminent instance of the enclosed environment. (Deleuze 1992, p. 3)

Also modern nation states can be seen as such “enclosed spaces”, which especially becomes apparent in times when many politicians seem obsessed with borders and border control. At least formally, national governments have the power to decide who is allowed to enter and remain in a country and *everyone* who does so should therefore be registered by national authorities and included in the disciplinary institutions of the state: children have to go to school, in some countries there is a compulsory military service, the unemployed are (re-) integrated into the labor market by state agencies, the unlawfully present can be imprisoned, and so on.

As becomes apparent in the current debate about the re-introduction of border controls in the Schengen area - notably in response to the so-called refugee crisis, not to control the mobility of Europeans - this thinking is still widespread (“we have to know exactly who comes into our country so we have to re-introduce border controls”). However, as also becomes apparent in the example of Schengen, the disciplinary society is in a state of

transformation. The Schengen agreement was introduced exactly to make possible the circulation of persons and goods, to loosen up the enclosed spaces of the national states. People who travel through the Schengen area are not “passing from one closed environment to another” anymore. National governments do not know anymore who comes to their territory and who leaves it. Rather, techniques have been developed to manage the flow and circulation of people and goods within the Schengen area without “confining spaces”. We will come back to these techniques later on, but for now we continue with theory.

Foucault, in his later works, recognized that “discipline” was not the predominant dispositif of contemporary societies anymore. Hence, he developed new conceptions of power such as “the apparatus of security”, “neo-liberal governmentality” or “biopolitics”. As he developed and elaborated these ideas in different books and lectures (Foucault, Ewald ca. 2008; Foucault 1990; Foucault et al. 2009), they do not constitute a coherent or monolithic work but are rather fragmented ideas about how the disciplinary society changes and gradually develops and transforms into a new kind of society. After Foucault’s early death, Deleuze (1992) built on those writings to propose that the disciplinary society finds itself in a deep crisis and is about to transition into a new type of society, which he labeled “society of control”:

We are in a generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of enclosure - prison, hospital, factory, school, family. The family is an “interior,” in crisis like all other interiors - scholarly, professional, etc. The administrations in charge never cease announcing supposedly necessary reforms: to reform schools, to reform industries, hospitals, the armed forces, prisons. But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It's only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door. These are the societies of control, which are in the process of replacing disciplinary societies. (Deleuze 1992, pp. 3–4)

In a society of control, the focus is not on “fixing” and disciplining of the population in enclosed environments, but on the management of flows and circulations (Munro 2012). This also changes the modes in which power is exercised: “Rather than intervene directly on the individual person, the neo-liberal apparatus of control seeks to modify the ‘milieu’ or rules of the game, in which the individual makes choices” (Munro 2012, p. 351). This new form of control is apparent in many aspects of life, and its implications have already been examined in a wide range of scientific fields as diverse as accounting and

management (e.g. Miller, O'Leary 1994; Weiskopf, Munro 2011), science of education (e.g. Thoma, Hautz 2017), international relations (e.g. Elbe 2016) or computer sciences (e.g. Galloway 2004). Also in the field of migration studies, the society of control has already been adopted by a number of authors. For example, Walters (2006) wrote about how the transformation from a disciplinary society to a society of control also changes our conception and understanding of border control on a general level and Papadopoulos & Tsianos (2007; 2013) examined how those changes affect (irregular) migrants' subjectification.

In this paper we examine changes in the professional identity and everyday practice of social workers in London, where they serve an increasingly diverse population that inevitably *includes* irregular migrant subjects. That (some of) their practices thereby increasingly overlap with migration control is part and parcel of the same transformation from a disciplinary society to a society of control. To empirically support this argument we will examine recent changes in the migration policy of the UK, before taking a closer look on how those policy changes are affecting social work on the ground.

The British case: From border control to internal migration control

As Broeders (2007) pointed out, a general trend away from "border control" towards "internal migration control" can be observed not only the UK but throughout the European Union. As he showed by example of the Schengen area, new technologies and techniques are being developed to monitor and control (irregular) migration flows. Obvious examples are databases aimed at the surveillance of irregular migration such as the Schengen Information System (SIS), Eurodac and the Visa Information System (VIS) (Broeders 2007). This trend to internal migration control can also be observed in the UK, on different levels:

First, although not part of the Schengen area, the UK still participates in the Schengen Information System (Broeders 2007, p. 81) and Eurodac. This is not particularly surprising, given the UK's close connection to other EU member states and hence to the Schengen area, and the fact that Eurodac is not confined to the Schengen-area. What is interesting is that the UK has refrained from joining the Schengen Agreement and thus kept its national border controls in place, but still joined the SIS. This indicates the fact (as well as the government's recognition of that fact) that in spite of the UK's geographical

position as an island-nation and its strong political commitment to stay an “enclosed space”, external border controls cannot stop the influx of irregular migrants. As a response, also here, migration control turns inwards, which also becomes apparent in official policy statements of the UK government. In October 2013, then home secretary Theresa May publicly defended the government’s ‘hostile environment’ approach to irregular migration by claiming that

it can’t be fair for people who have no right to be here in the UK to continue to exist as everybody else does with bank accounts, with driving licences and with access to rented accommodation. [...] What we don’t want is a situation where people think that they can come here and overstay because they’re able to access everything they need.¹

Accordingly, the three main objectives of the 2014 UK Immigration Act were “to make it (i) easier to identify illegal immigrants [...], (ii) easier to remove and deport illegal immigrants [... and] (iii) more difficult for illegal immigrants to live in the UK” (Home Office, 2013). Clearly, all three goals require control activities to be carried out *within* the country. The latter in particular is to be achieved by introducing an obligation for private landlords and public welfare providers to check the immigration status of their tenants, patients and clients; a prohibition on banks opening accounts for irregular migrants and new powers to check driving license applicants’ immigration status and revoke the licenses of those who have overstayed. The clear aim of these policies is to combat irregular migration through the curtailment of social rights and the control of unlawful residents’ social and economic relations with others (Walsh, 2014; Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010; Schweitzer 2017).

What becomes apparent is that these changes aim precisely at the “milieu” of irregular migrants, who cannot simply all be detained and deported (Gibney 2008). Power is thereby not exercised by confining, fixing or enclosing the bodies of irregular migrants; rather, according the logic of a society of control, their milieu and social environment has to be manipulated in a way that makes a stay in the UK as uncomfortable as possible for them. The underlying rationale is that by increasing their marginalization and risk of destitution, unlawful residents (including many refused asylum seekers) might be

¹ T. May, speaking on BBC Radio 4’s ‘Today’ programme, cited in The Guardian, 10 October 2013: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/oct/10/immigration-bill-theresa-may-hostile-environment>.

persuaded to leave ‘voluntarily’, even though a growing body of evidence suggests that this is not the case (CORAM, 2013; Crawley et al., 2011; Refugee Council, 2012). At least according to official government statistics, however, this strategy seems to work: in the period between 2004 and 2015, the numbers of enforced removals have significantly declined, while the number of so-called “voluntary returns” dramatically increased (Blinder 2016, p.5). It is important to note, however, that this data must be viewed with caution, since data collection methods have been changed during this time, and in a way that (over)emphasises the effectiveness of officially communicated government policies (Blinder 2016). Moreover, the term “voluntary” is misleading, given that most returns that are officially recorded as “voluntary” actually occurred only after enforced removal has already been initiated (Webber 2011). Hence “[t]he term ‘voluntary’ describes the method of departure rather than the choice of whether or not to depart” (Blinder 2016, p.3). Nevertheless, the mere fact that the government employs this rhetoric - and relates it to the ‘hostile environment’ approach - suggests that their policies increasingly function according to the logic of a society of control.

Importantly, this shift can not only be observed in official policies and government rhetoric, but also in the way these policies are being implemented. As Jordan and his colleagues (2003, p.211) have argued, policy implementation is always “pre-determined to a certain extent by the prior stage of policy formulation and is a continuation of the social and political environment in which policy decisions were taken”. In the following section we look at concrete changes in the everyday work and professional identities of social workers, who are among those individual actors who (have to) implement internal migration control policies ‘on the ground’ and through their own everyday dealings with the local population.

British social workers as border guards

Policies and measures of social assistance and protection are aimed at reducing the social and economic vulnerability of the poor or otherwise marginalised or excluded members of society. At the same time, the local provision of such services is always underpinned by various mechanisms of inclusion *and* exclusion as well as control, which can easily overlap with (internal) immigration control. When dealing with (potentially) irregular migrants, individual social workers and other street-level bureaucrats thereby have to manage the

contradictions between their professional obligations (e.g. to protect children and vulnerable adults from destitution or abuse) and those imposed by immigration law (Price & Spencer, 2015; Schweitzer 2016), particularly in the context of significant cuts to public welfare spending.

Irregular migrants living in the UK have '*No Recourse to Public Funds*' (NRPF), a condition defined under immigration legislation² that renders certain persons who are 'subject to immigration control' ineligible to receive any public support or benefit (whereby primary and emergency healthcare and compulsory education are not classified as 'public funds'). While it also applies to increasing numbers of 'regular' immigrants holding certain temporary residence permits, it is clearly a central element of the government's 'hostile environment' approach to irregular migration. The resulting legal framework only acknowledges very few and narrowly defined situations in which unlawful residents can avail themselves of public assistance. If they have minor children who are (about to become) destitute they might be eligible for support provided directly by their local authority (LA), which has a duty under Section 17 of the *Children Act 1989*, to ensure the welfare of *every* child in need within its jurisdiction (CORAM, 2013; NRPF Network, 2011). LAs are not reimbursed by the state for these expenses and are only *allowed* to support unlawful residents where a statutory case assessment has established that withholding such support would result in a breach of the child's (or a vulnerable adult's³) human rights.

This underlines that irregular migrants' accessing of any public support or social assistance – even if funded from local budgets – can only constitute an exception from the general rule that demands their absolute exclusion. Seen from this perspective, the '*No Recourse to Public Funds*' condition also fulfills a very symbolic function in *demonstrating* to the wider public that *because of their irregularity* (or limited right of residence) they cannot benefit from *any* public spending. While this hides the fact that they are entitled to schooling and basic healthcare, for example, it is also not surprising (and maybe not even unintended) that also among professionals there is a lot of misunderstanding about the

² In Section 115 of the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*.

³ The *Care Act* of 2014 establishes a similar duty towards particularly 'vulnerable adults', whose needs do not just arise from their destitution but from a mental or physical illness or disability (NRPF Network, 2015).

NRPF condition itself as well as the legal basis for so-called *section-17-support* to vulnerable families in irregular situations. The following quote from an interview with a representative of the *Children's Society* demonstrates this:

I still hear all the time from [local authorities'] *Duty and Assessment teams* that 'oh no, no, we can't support them, they are *NRPF*'; and when you say, 'oh well, that's not correct, you need to look into it and do a human rights assessment', they don't know what we're talking about and they are just... they are very much like 'Oh no, no, no, we can't support, if they've got *NRPF*', *we can't provide any support*' (lonA22).

This is in line with findings of Price and Spencer (2015, p.29) whereas the *NRPF*-label increases the likelihood of certain physical or mental health needs and even child protection concerns to be inadequately addressed by statutory services. Quite clearly, the exclusion of certain migrants threatens to undermine the important role that social services have to play for society as a whole.

This development is further exacerbated by the lack of an effective *firewall* between local social services and national immigration enforcement agencies. UK immigration law places a legal duty on local authorities "to supply information for the purpose of establishing where a person is if the Secretary of State reasonably suspects" that a (former) resident of that area has committed an immigration offence⁴. More specifically, the same law also requires the LA to inform the immigration enforcement agency when an unlawful resident requests support from social services (NRPF Network, 2011). Having this close relationship with the Home Office (HO), in combination with the notoriously slow decision-making of the latter, thus seems to push local welfare bureaucrats to question even more the deservingness of irregular migrant families and to treat their claims as illegitimate or at least suspicious. The following accounts of representatives of an NGO (1) and a local authority (2) exemplify this:

(1) If [the HO] are taking 4 years to make a decision and the person isn't able to access any services in the meantime, nor to access benefits or work, then that's gonna fall on the LA. And I think *there is an incentive in a way for the LA to inform the HO* about a person who is 'appeal rights exhausted', because then they would speed up removal and they won't have to support them anymore (lonA16).

(2) Our relationship with the HO is... an interesting one, because part of it is

⁴ Section 129 of the *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002*, see: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/41/section/129>

working together; we are two statutory organizations, [...] we are spending taxpayers' money on providing financial support and we are keen to make sure that if there is a 'genuine claim' – well that's HO terminology, but you know what I mean by 'genuine claim' – that they are granted [a residence permit], and of course if there isn't then you pursue removal; but we don't like limbo, we don't like people just hanging about. [...] So, the argument for data sharing, or not the argument but the reason, is that a LA *can't actually fulfil its statutory duties without knowing someone's immigration status*, because we need to know whether those exclusions apply (lonA15).

Since in these cases the immediate costs of irregular migrants' limbo have to be borne by the LAs, getting them 'resolved' also becomes *their* number one priority, even though it primarily hinges on the HO to sort out the underlying immigration issue. Arguably, this leads to a dangerous conflation of the claimants' destitution with their (potential) irregularity.

While the necessary human rights assessment opens up some room for individual discretion, the tremendous financial pressure under which such decisions have to be taken renders inclusionary interpretations of the access rules unlikely. The following accounts of a social worker clearly reflects both of these aspects:

There is a lot of... ahm... opportunity for discretion and for interpretation, and people can be lucky and perhaps access somebody who is in a good mood that day and who might feel like allowing them access to something without perhaps probing so deeply. But more generally it seems that *increasingly people are meeting gate-keepers who are very worried about not exceeding what they are allowed to give* and very concerned about making sure that all the procedures are very strictly adhered to, and that can result in people being actually excluded from a service or a provision to which in fact they were entitled (lonA27).

Independent reports show that the general reluctance of LAs is also underpinned by a widespread perception that offering support to a family that lives in the UK unlawfully will reduce the likelihood of them returning 'voluntarily' (or at all) to their country of origin (CORAM, 2013). One of the Council workers interviewed expressed this feeling:

Increasingly LAs are being seen by applicants and [their] advisors, to a large extent, as a means by which someone, particularly if they have a child, can continue to remain in the UK, but without having to be involved with the HO, and that is in itself a huge issue for us. Because actually that's not our role, our purpose is not to facilitate someone to be allowed to stay, when they have reached the end of the road as far as the HO is concerned, just because actually removal of families is technically difficult; and nor is it our role to facilitate them being able to make multiple applications, which they wouldn't be able to do if they weren't being supported by us (lonA30).

While some of the social workers interviewed in different Boroughs of London admitted that the lack of a firewall gives them a certain power over (some of) their clients, they generally tried to play down their own role in informing the HO about a suspected immigration offence:

We say it right upfront, *not as a threat, but as a piece of information* that is 'you need to take this into account as to whether you wish to proceed or not'. Because it is important that they know that there is a consequence, potentially. But [...] the reality of the situation is that there are so few [family] removals that they don't see that as much of a risk, I don't think. It certainly hasn't had much of a deterring effect on people... withdrawing or walking away from an application for assistance from us (lonA30).

Personally I have not heard of anybody who has volunteered such information, other than the [client's] address, which *is actually not even done by us but by somebody in the finance department* who monitors the grant claims, and occasionally we get asked a question like... if somebody is not sure about the address or thinks that something hasn't been recorded correctly or whatever... But *that isn't even our job*. That's the job of the finance department (lonA27).

By the same token, social workers are often also expected to consider the possibility and likelihood of their clients' returning or being deported to their country of origin. In the UK this happens quite systematically – although without any statutory guidance or training (Price & Spencer, 2015) – and often even before having assessed a family's actual needs. The following account of a social worker clearly reflects this nexus, which in itself becomes an argument for working closer with the HO:

The HO will provide information about whether there is a barrier in place for removal; *that's really what we are looking for in the information from the HO*. If there is no barrier to removal, then you could be [...] trying to do a child-in-need assessment and a human rights assessment to offer tickets home, as an... as that's being the limits of your powers. But if there is a barrier in place [...] then it's not going anywhere, so you are not going to be able to discharge your social services duties by offering tickets home, but you are back to thinking 'is the child in need because the child is destitute?' So it changes our assessment process; *the information from the HO will change our assessment process* (lonA15).

Importantly, the difficulty of dealing with these contradictory demands has triggered responses not only at the level of individual actors but also the institutional level. As one interviewee indicated, many local social service departments have changed their organizational structure in order to deal more effectively with irregular migrants' claims:

Certain social service departments now have *NRPF*-teams and so they seem to have... I mean, whereas I would dispute that that makes them better at judging

whether the child is in need or not, they at least know a bit more about the immigration situation, and so they seem a little... *they are less reluctant to get involved in it* (lonA22).

From the perspective of LAs, having such a team seems to favor a more consistent application of the rules and more efficient internal referral procedures, but also allows for more effective gatekeeping, as the manager of an *NRPF*-team is keen to emphasize:

They will only be able to get support [...] through my team, the 'No Recourse team', and then it's only provided conditional on various other things. So, for example, they have to be able to show that they are territorially the responsibility of [this Borough], that they are destitute, and that they have either an on-going application with the HO or are imminently about to make one [...] And that's the point about having the dedicated team, that when this function was spread across the authority's social care and health service, applicants could come in repeatedly, and they still do that, but what wasn't being picked up across so many people was patterns; information that was spread across a wide number of assessments that meant it was impossible to identify a scenario that had been heard before. When you have a small discrete team you can spot patterns very very quickly. And one of the things that we do is we pick up on patterns of information that is out in the community [about] what worked and so other people would then come in repeating [the same story]. And we spot that much more quickly now (lonA30).

That *NRPF*-teams tend to perceive their role mainly in terms of gatekeeping, rather than safeguarding and providing social care to vulnerable residents, reflects the conditions under which they were introduced. In one Borough the annual costs of supporting a total of 278 *NRPF*-cases reached more than 6 million pounds by 2014 (compared to around £150,000 in the years before 2008).

Apart from helping to reduce local authority spending in this area, however, a crucial function of *NRPF*-teams precisely consists in linking local social service departments even closer to the HO. In the eyes of a 'normal' social worker interviewed together with the *NRPF*-team manager, this again appears to be a mutual approximation:

I do think that there has been over the last few months a change from the HO as well, and I don't know whether or not that's the work that the *No Recourse Team* has been doing, because they are much more open to us. We had a visit, [...] they are coming and doing some training for us and we have a point of contact if we have got concerns over any person or any areas, which actually is something that is practically unheard of. [...] They didn't have an open-door-approach at all. And I think that has changed because *they have seen the value of actually working much more in partnership*; and we hope to build on that as well (lonA30).

Discussion

In this paper we have shown how changes in immigration policy that can be explained by the transformation of a disciplinary society to a society of control affect the work and professional identities of social workers, and the institutional logics of welfare providers in the UK. This change is most apparent is that social workers are now taking over tasks that are traditionally performed by migration officers. What comes as a bit of a surprise is that there is relatively little resistance to those changes by social workers, which suggests that under certain conditions the interests of social service providers and immigration officers can overlap to a quite significant extent.

The job of professional providers of social services always involves a significant element of control over the client and his or her actions and behaviour. Social workers are generally expected to not only sanction certain wrongdoings, but potentially also trigger law-enforcement if they discover (serious) breaches of the law. Traditionally, this was mostly in relation to the safeguarding of others but not in terms of immigration control. But as soon as their personal engagement with and the exact measures through which they can provide support to vulnerable residents depends on immigration status, they are required to know and act upon a client's administrative irregularity.

The so-called NRPF-teams thereby institutionalize the exact opposite of a firewall between local social service departments and the national immigration enforcement agency. Even though they are institutionally integrated in the former, they at least partly fulfill the function of the latter. An important part of this function is to not merely to establish the immigration status of 'suspicious' clients (by checking their documentation), but also to share this information with the immigration authority. Instead of resisting or at least contesting some of these developments, local social service departments in the UK are developing strategies that allow them to evade those already very limited statutory responsibilities that they might still have towards destitute local residents in irregular situations. Even more than health centres and hospitals, and certainly more than schools, these local institutions are thus becoming part and parcel of the 'hostile environment' that the government seeks to create for these people. To a significant extent they do so voluntarily, even though in the context of increasing financial pressure resulting from repeated cuts to social welfare budgets.

These changes (and the relative lack of resistance they face) can be explained by the shift from a disciplinary society to a society of control, on four different but interconnected levels: global, national, institutional and individual.

On a global level, the development of a control society is quite evident: globalisation leads to an ever increasing flow of goods and people, national borders increasingly lose importance, global capital is highly mobile, and so on. While the increasing mobility of goods and capital is welcomed by a majority of British society, the same is not true for the mobility of people (Walker 2017). In other words, while the British public embraces the economic benefits of a control society, they prefer to stick with disciplinary mechanisms when it comes to immigration. The UK Government understands this discrepancy, which leads to immigration policies that aim at upholding the illusion of Britain as an “enclosed space”.

This brings us to the national level: Although the British government and lawmakers want to maintain the ‘enclosed space’, or at least the illusion of it, they realize that disciplinary technologies like border controls are bound to fail in a global society of control. Therefore, they employ mechanisms that clearly correspond with a society of control, such as the “hostile environment” approach, ironically exactly to “administer[...] the[...] last rites [of the disciplinary society...] until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door [, i.e.] the societies of control” (Deleuze 1992, p.4).

It is this mixing of disciplinary and control logics that leads to tensions at the institutional level: One of the most obvious (and most problematic) transformations of the institutional logics of welfare providers is the demolition of the “firewall” between social services and immigration authorities. Without this firewall, irregular migrants are hesitant to make use of (even basic) rights and services that they are legally entitled to, which sometimes results in the breach of human rights and British law.

Lastly, on the individual level, also the professional identities of social workers are being transformed in significant ways. While we did not conduct a quantitative survey among social workers, the interview data suggests that there is relatively little resistance to, and internal problematization of, the institutional transformations described above. It is important to note that universal access to public services and assistance on the basis of individual need rather than social, economic or other status was one of the founding

principles of the British welfare state and its institutions, including the National Health Service (NHS). As Foucault (1982) pointed out, human beings are made into subjects by power relations they do not consciously control. Therefore, when power relations change, the (professional-) identities of human beings are affected as well. The relative lack of resistance to the increasing demolition of the firewall between social services and the Home Office, along with the abolition of the principle of universal provision on the basis of individual need can hence be explained by a change in the (professional) self-subjectification of social workers. Social workers are not (or not sufficiently) aware of these problematic transformations, exactly because they have inherited (adapted to?) the logics of a control society, where it is out of question that irregular migrants have to be registered, tracked and monitored within the country, since classic (external) border control alone is not sufficient anymore.

Conclusion

The transformation of a disciplinary society to a society of control severely affects not only the life of irregular migrants (as the targets of this control) but also the everyday-work of social workers. Although in this paper we have concentrated on the more problematic effects, it is important to keep in mind that not all aspects of this development are bad. What is particularly problematic is the conflation between disciplinary and control logics within the UK's recent immigration policy: while the government still sticks to the illusion of an "enclosed" Britain (disciplinary logic), it already resorts to control-society mechanisms to uphold this illusion ("hostile environment").

The crucial question is how can this conflict be resolved? In principle, there are two possible solutions: Firstly, to go back to a disciplinary society with nation-states and border controls that inhibit the circulation of people, goods and services. Although this solution is proposed by right wing parties all over Europe and enjoys remarkable public support in some countries (including Britain, as the Brexit-referendum has shown), it is highly unlikely to happen. The transformation from a disciplinary society to a society of control is a global phenomenon, and going back to being an enclosed space would have dramatic negative consequences for a single country (as the current developments surrounding Brexit show as well).

The second option, then, is to accept the shift to a society of control in all aspects of life,

which obviously includes the free circulation of people. If we have invented technologies to manage the free circulation of goods, services and capital across national borders, we should be able to also manage the free flow of people. Instead holding on to the disciplinary logic of enclosed spaces (nation-states) with regard to migration is nothing more than what Deleuze calls “administering the last rites of a disciplinary society”.

In this paper we have primarily shown the negative consequences that the shift from a disciplinary society to a control society entails for irregular migrants. However, as Deleuze points out, the same transformation also holds opportunities, which can only be uncovered by asking the right questions:

There is no need to ask which is the toughest regime, for it's within each of them that liberating and enslaving forces confront one another. For example, in the crisis of the hospital as environment of enclosure, neighbourhood clinics, hospices, and day care could at first express new freedom, but they could participate as well in mechanisms of control that are equal to the harshest of confinements. There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons. (Deleuze 1992, p.4)

It is up to us to find new weapons to let the liberating forces prevail. Finding ways to overcome the increasing irregularisation of migration would be one of them.

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