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Event(ual) Queer Crafting of Dublin Regulated Sogie Refugees

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Abstract

The Dublin regulation requires refugee applicants to submit an asylum request in first European country they enter. Yet SOGIESC refugees often fear disclosing their intimate lives or sexual details in early immigration encounters. In times of nationalistic upheavals and contested refugee laws, queer applications can further be met with distrust. Thus, in fear of repatriation, some move onwards to countries where LGBTQI+ rights are nationally celebrated, only to be sent back to the first country. This paper builds on in-depth interviews and walk-along discussions with nine Dublin-regulated SOGIE refugees, as well as documented conversations with eighteen local stakeholders, conducted in Italy and Greece between 2021 and 2023. By tracing the affective residue of events in interlocutors' accounts, this article illuminates how SOGIE experiences were repeatedly invaded by violent bordering, affectively recalled through the memory of sounds. This caused them to submerge their life rhythm as irregular subjects, fitting neither here nor there. When denied protection due to the Dublin agreement, they became homeless, dependent on precarious jobs and transactional sex work. When deported, their accounts echo emotional abandonment and lack of recourses to claim queer time, as they discover their cases expulsed from the system. When re-application was possible, they were put under the stigma of feigning their queer identities and criminalized in prolonged uncertainty. In response, they crafted themselves as event(ual) queer beings or as subjects between temporal events, through naming practices and asserting autonomy over sex time, while also visioning transactions based on emotional dignity and altruism.

Keywords: SOGIE, LGBTQI+, refugees, deportation, Dublin agreement.

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1. Introduction

"I left with the car taking the cows" said a SOGIE interlocutor after describing an event that outed his sexual orientation to his nearest community in West Africa. This event occurred when he was fifteen and he simply fled at the first opportunity he got. Incidentally, he chose the pseudonym[1] Cheetah as he admires the animal's capacity for speed. After almost three years on the run, Cheetah's first country of entry in Europe was Italy. He recounted his outing to the local authorities but was not granted protection on the grounds of belonging to a social group that fears persecution due to their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, or sexual characteristics (SOGIESC), assigned to LGBTQI+/queer refugees (Carnassale & Marchetti, 2022). Cheetah was granted asylum as an unaccompanied minor – only to be expelled from the support system three months later when he turned eighteen. Without the means to survive on the streets in Italy, he sought to have a decent queer life in Germany. There he was left again without state protection, termed as irregular, and told to return to Italy – for he had been discredited as a refugee-tourist. Thus, much like other SOGIE interlocutors in this study, Cheetah described keeping his queer self as "being in low key", indicating a slow, uncertain, and fractured queer life in the European refugee system.

The European agreement, known as the Dublin III regulation, requires people who are in dire situations in their country of citizenship to seek international protection in the first European state of entry (Wieland & Alessi, 2021). That European state is held responsible to evaluate people's claims of irreputable fear that their local government is unable or unwilling to protect their basic human rights. However, people who refuse to wait, and move before, during or after the final legal resolution – are seen as less than credible (Cabot, 2014). They are doubly scrutinized for being worthy of recognition as desperate refugees, or as well-earned leisure tourists (Kalir, 2019). This gives an indication why Dublin-regulated refugees - that is people who are forcefully or voluntarily returned to their first entry state - are continuously met with social suspicion and legal uncertainty (Hasselberg, 2016). Queers' disclosures further reveal a layered suspicion in the European refugee system (Hertoghs & Schinkel, 2018) of racialized refugees not being good queers (Kouri-Towe, 2011), real queers (Akin, 2017), real refugees (Malkki, 1995), or ambiguously suitable as disposable labour (Della Puppa & Sanó, 2021b). Therefore, as this study will show, there is a severe danger of Dublin-regulated SOGIESC refugees becoming and remaining irregular, that is particularly vulnerable refugees without basic legal

[1] All interlocutors chose their pseudomonas. To protect their anonymity, neither the precise location of their upbringing nor deportation country will be disclosed.

protection (Luibhéid & Cháves, 2020), treated with animalistic expulsion by the system (Ferrero & Roverso, 2021), as well as affective social exclusion (Sólveigar-Guðmundsdóttir, 2018) and violent queer bordering (Meir, 2020). As such, participants described being subjects out of time (Griffiths, 2014), recognized as neither here or there, and thus being subjected to the slow burn of a queer death (Shakhsari, 2014). That said, the interlocutors were not bereft of agency – and their tactics spoke of visioning alternative futurity (Munoz, 2009). In so doing, they used their craft (Wahid, 2004) to shift the gendered meaning of the shame imposed on them and counterassembled (Puar, 2007) their event(ual) self by holding on to a futurity where they engaged in speedy practices to gain a neoliberal queer life (Ellenberger & Vilhjálmsson, 2023) while also doing altruism by which they facilitated a tranquil future to explore a queer living.

Demonstrating how event(ual) queer assemblages occur, first the theoretical approach will be explained, followed by fieldwork contexts. After that, results will be presented where the affective outings on queer rhythms will be covered first, then how out-of-time subalternation shifts from queerness to poverty due to European legal irregularity and border events, and lastly how interlocutors resist by counter-assembling a vision for a queer future.

2. Event(ual) approach to queer temporalities

The European conception of time and temporality has been shown to be grounded in a capitalistic ideology aimed to measure able-bodied productivity (Bonde, 2010), and internalized docility to the biopolitics of reproductions (Foucault, 1978). Thus, time appears linear, built on a capitalistic and masculine perception of which time-related practices are considered valuable – and successful lives are measured through ableist, gendered, racial, heteronormative, and class-based milestones. These milestones become indicators of moral and productive citizens (Ingvars, 2023). Another measurement related to time and temporality is the capacity for consumption and leisure. It is through such aspects that the hierarchy amongst worthy citizens is formed - and the ideal position is to be an autonomous male owner of a successful business enticing consumption and managing other people's working and leisure time (Blagojević, 2013). The more control over time a person accumulates, the more godlike a person can become – manifested through the invisibility of time-power over others and the perceptions of time as hovering above bodies and practices (Fabian, 1983). While such ascensions have been traced to industrialization and controlling local labour, it has further been analysed as grounded in colonialism and post-colonial creations of disposable labour in

Europe through shifting immigration laws, irregular enforcement of border regulations and conditional, temporal benevolence towards refugees and other migrants (Carastathis, Kouri-Towe, Mahrouse & Whitley, 2018; Della Puppa & Sanó, 2021a; Kukreja, 2023). For with godlike time-power comes the capacity to influence the shared sense of who can become a worthy citizen – that is, which outsider can assemble traits that become beneficial cogs in the capitalistic wheel of time.

To briefly demonstrate, with the growing urbanization during the 1920's in the West, queer spaces began to emerge. However, with the rise of Nazism in the wake of economic crisis and racist reproductive ideologies, gays were severely punished, and lesbians closeted. The affective resonance of such policies on queer lives were drastic. Queers were considered abnormal and thus not good citizens (Foucault, 1978). Indeed, they were considered sick, physically, and mentally – and thus, dangerous as they might infect others with their immorality of desiring different lives outside the reproduction cycle. Paradoxically, it was the rise of the HIV virus in the economic boom of the 80's, that gave mostly gays and lesbians the tools to fight for the human right to an open liveable queer life (Ellenberger, 2017). Thus, it is in the aftermath of the HIV virus that queer lives started to gain access to society as citizens. In Western-European societies, it was considered sensible for queer identities to be assembled into the national imagery of a developed, civilized European state. It must be stressed, though, that the queer struggle is ongoing and emerges in regional political contexts. Moreover, as a recent historical scholarship reveals "radical visions of queer liberation in Europe have often been overlooked in favour of liberal agendas of tolerance and assimilations, framed through hegemonic narratives of progress" (Anderson, Davis & Raha, 2021, p. 5). It is this tactical enfolding that Jasbir K. Puar (2007), has framed as Homonationalism, pointing out how white national images are formed through assemblages that appropriate some rights of marginalized groups, as to appear more civilized than the foreign other, thus maintaining the developed country gap. Therefore, Puar suggests to scholars to pay special attention to events – as events can illuminate the priority in national identity assemblages; reveal the inconsistencies such assemblages hide; and show how counter-assemblages are formed in relation to such tactics. For this citizenship invitation has been proven both fragile and limited due to the surveillance of SOGIESC people and the way their queer lives must be formed in adherence to heteronormative temporalities with recognized milestones, such as to monopolized relationships at a certain age, civil or church marriages, and followed by the gendered role-taking of parenthood. This internalization of heteronormative life has been framed as homonormativity (Duggan, 2003). Furthermore, while the citizenship inclusion has been particularly aimed at white, middle-class gay men - it has

been demonstrated that gay men needed to perform the happy-go-lucky citizen, not stuck in past grievances but openly working on their well-being and with patience in order for local fears to subside, to be accepted as worthy neoliberal subjects (Ellenberger & Vilhjálmsson, 2023). Such subjectivity is formed in response to the hegemonic neoliberal ideology that implies that modern societies have reached structural equalities, and thus responsibility for their own well-being is transferred to the individual. Because of this, any discussion of gaps or unequal access to economic, social and mental resources is silenced. Moreover, in the pursuit of a good life every moment should be used for individual gain (Duggan, 2003). Therefore, altruistic future visions are moved to structures of benevolence where time and finances are bestowed on the exceptionally vulnerable (Ingvars, 2019). In this way, the responsibility for previous harm, and even ongoing discrimination, is displaced and modern society is paraded as progressive and its heteronormative members as benevolent citizens towards the worthy but marginalized others. This is in coherence with other studies demonstrating that in European states, exemplified as queer friendly, there is an acceptance of the good queer that has assimilated heteronormativity, while people considered as bad queer are still excluded or fractionally excepted (Kouri-Towe, 2011; Tschalaer, 2022). Thus, queers who are believed to be dangerous, to threaten the normal way of life and are dependent on state support fall into the bad queer category – and this can include queer persons who are also Muslims, disabled, HIV infected, migrants, radicals, and refugees (Ellenberger, 2017).

Drawing our attention now to refugees, it has been illuminated that people who apply for protection on SOGIESC grounds need to the meet certain criteria proving that they are really queer (cf. Akin 2019). This assessment has been built on the linear story of coming out as represented in media stories covering coming-out histories of gay white men, which, as discussed above, was built on the internalized neoliberal self. This confined measurement has been criticized by queer organizations, pointing out that the "coming out" story is always based on cultural tools, such as the words at people's disposals; that awareness of non-normative sexual orientation can come at various stages in life and vary during life courses; that not all same sex attraction is physical, that it can be purely romantic, social or mingled; that asexuals can also face discrimination; that gendered body movements are not merely in the opposite gender assigned identity at birth for people that do not align with the sexual and gendered normativity; and that people that identify somewhere on this queer spectrum may be pushed into a hetero-reproductive life and thus giving the social impression of a hetero lifestyle, both locally and digitally (ILGA-Europe, 2020). Yet the mere shadow of suspicion of sexual or gendered non-normativity can put SOGIESC people in danger (Luibhéid & Cháves, 2020), sometimes

even if legal state protections have been implemented but are inappropriately guaranteed (Carastathis, 2018; Shakhsari, 2014). Therefore, and in accordance with the 2006 Yogyakarta principles, the UNCHR (2012) published critically queer-informed guidelines for evaluators of SOGIESC applications, and after the increase of refugees in Europe in 2015, several training programs were offered for members of camp facilities and administrative programs aimed at exceptionally vulnerable refugees. Yet implementations of such programs are sensitive to shifting political environments where the increased visibility of refugees is appropriated by state politicians to implement new regulations, change immigration laws, or push toward a particular public understanding of international conventions and agreements (Carnassale & Marchetti, 2022), such as the Dublin III agreement. Indeed, it has been shown that the Dublin agreement is deliberately vague in order to unite the European states in their approaches to migration, providing states with time and autonomy on how to implement, interpret and enforce these regulations (Cabot, 2014). That said, Council of Europe member states are encouraged to follow rulings from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) that can, due to special circumstances, halt repatriations to a home country or Dublin deportations (Wieland & Alessi, 2021). Still, such rulings tend to be temporary, as EU funding can also be used to amend facilities and procedures in the first country to allow Dublin deportations to restart (Ingvars, 2019). Thus, SOGIESC lives often fall into abysses within such systems or tightening's that macro events create, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of irregular border regimes is for states to maintain the superiority on *how* and *when* to implement basic human rights to undocumented people – providing politicians with means to soothe economic disruptions and keep the numbers of the suffering under the perception of a modern management (Carastathis, et al., 2018). Moreover, in contrast to state irregularities, SOGIESC refugees must steadily demonstrate the aspiring neoliberal subject (Ellenberger & Vilhjálmsson, 2023) while also demonstrating the exceptionally – yet easily categorized - vulnerable refugee (Saleh, 2020). These bordering practices illuminate how the SOGIESC claimants are required not only to show that they are real refugees or real queers – they must also show that their queer time and queer futures are aimed towards being the good queer so they will not disrupt the perception of the heteronormative, linear flow of modern time.

Under such continued scrutiny, Dublin-regulated applicants are positioned in waithood where they face starvation, extreme temperatures, homelessness, contagion, and drug exposure – to name but a few potentially fatal situations. They also need to carefully navigate which social groups or individuals they mingle with and when they meet with them. For it has been shown that some networks, such as migration ties, kinship connections, religious communities,

border solidarities, and queer organizations can provide much needed resources (Carastathis, et al., 2018; Storato, Sanó, & Della Pubba, 2021), but such networks can also include subgroups or individuals that can cause SOGIESC people harm (Wieland & Alessi, 2021; Ingvars & Gíslason, 2018). Moreover, navigating such uncertain environments, legal and social, can lead to a feeling of exhaustion. This has been termed emotional border work, which is a response to affective border violence (Meir, 2020). It is embedded in the irregularity of a violent event and the uncertainty about where it will come from yet knowing it will arrive – hence the affective resonance, emotional, cognitive, and physical. Being so buckled up, mentally, physically, and socially, can thus lead to what Sima Shakhsari (2014) has termed as queer death within the bordering system. Therefore, I state that Dublin SOGIESC lives are being crafted as event(ual) in the bordering system.

By following Puar's (2007) theory on nationally assembled images, I view each event as enfolded by EU states to highlight sensible modernity. In resonance, a singular event or accumulations of events, infuse a counter-assembling of people outside of full citizenship - that is how they negotiate the need to belong when faced with shame, rejection and the sense of self. Thus, I suggest drawing out what kind of events appear vividly when people account for their migration trajectories and experiences of the refugee system. As noted above, such events can affectively leave a residue on the experience of being a subaltern persona in time and space. Furthermore, events affect the recollection of memories, and as such, they inform how identities are assembled in relation to emotions. Thus, by illuminating the affective resonance, it is possible to detect how assemblages are formed in relation to life courses, as well as social, economic, and bordered temporalities. Lastly, affective resonance draws out the way people make sense of themselves as beings aligning with cultural meaning in time, as fragmented beings in time or as beings out of time. This informs the way the counter-meaning of beings-in-time is crafted.

Azrini Wahidin (2004) assigns crafting time to playing the game cat's cradle with a string. Through collaboration and imaginary crafting, the string can be endlessly formed – even when it seems impossible - into something else. Wahidin applied this analysis when she observed female prisoners alternating the meaning of penalty time. As the refugee system is riddled with confinements, I find it amply suited as a parallel in this study. Furthermore, crafting resonates with Athina Athanasiou's (2020) call for queering impossibilities by envisioning alternative solutions. Lastly, such crafting can complement José Muñoz (2009) take on queer futurity where claiming queer time is visioned with the capability to create an unruliness, or as alternative future to heteronormative moral temporalities. By delving into crafting, I believe it is possible to detect how queer time is sometimes assembled to align

with heteronormative desires, but also counter-assembled with the vision of queer futurity.

3. Paper-queer: Dublin-regulated SOGIE refugees

This article draws on fieldwork conducted in 2022 in Italy and Greece, and revisited in 2023. In so doing, I built on networks made with migrant scholars, feminist and queer networks developed during my PhD fieldwork conducted in Greece between 2012-2018, and preliminary work in northern Italy in 2021. People within these networks became gatekeepers in the sense that they distributed translated introduction letters to possible participants and acted as guarantors for me, assuring potential participants that I am a solidarity activist and gender-sensitive person. That said, being keenly aware of the power imbalance and interlocutors' precarious dwellings, I offered each participant time to engage with me personally without any commitment to the study. Another method suggested was doing a city-walk with participants, as it would give them more time and a different racial, aged, ableist and gendered kinetic dimension to evaluate the researcher (Ingvars, forthcoming). Thus, interlocutors in this study often chose to observe me before the interview through lengthy WhatsApp communications, by doing a show tour around their dwelling places or by conducting domestic practices together - and afterwards engaged in a more leisured walk, where the amalgam of sexual vulnerability and aspirations were further discussed. An engaged consent (Ingvars, 2019) was applied by inquiring about their sentiments as time passed and I remained at their disposal through digital apps. Lastly, in the realization of the improbability of the results having any immediate positive impact on interlocutor's lives, the research program offered a financial gift after the interview, in reciprocity for the time and trust given. Due to temporal funding and interlocutors' dispersed locations, this methodical design is built on the feminist and queer approach of patchwork ethnographies (Gökçe & Watanabe, 2024) rather than traditional ethnography. Such designs may have affected the narrative disclosures of interlocutors as well as the analytical procedure. That said, the narrative writing style is also tactically employed for the reader to build a comprehensive sense of out of time subjectivity of the interlocutors.

In this study, nine SOGIE interlocutors provided lengthy information on their bordered lives. Additionally, conversations with eighteen stakeholders, equally Italian and Greek, have been documented. The SOGIE interlocutors traced their previous citizenships to Syria, Nigeria, and Ghana. All identified as cis males, except one who identified as gender fluid. They were aged between 20 and 30. Six identified as gay, while three described being sexually, socially, or

romantically attracted to human individuals, or as pan. Three arrived in Europe as unaccompanied minors, and one of those described discovering his queer longings in transit. Five carried torture scars on their bodies, mostly due to disciplinary violence. Three showed signs of cognitive impairments. They moved on during various stages of the refugee applications. The majority had been regulated back from Germany, though this sometimes intersected with deportation from other European countries, such as France and Austria. Others were regulated from Denmark, and Holland. Three other possible interlocutors, deported from Sweden and Iceland, were traced but deemed in such a fragile state that speaking about their expulsion could cause them irrefutable harm. In a sense, they were living the queer death (Shakhsari, 2014).

When the interviews took place in 2022, three were without any identification papers and thus without any state protection. Three had been able to re-submit their application for asylum and had been provided with an ID which gave them access to some integration programs, such as studying the local language, applying for precarious work, and getting housing in municipality-sponsored camps if spaces were made available (Storato, Sanó, & Della Pubba, 2021). Two interlocutors had been granted a subsidiary protection and one a refugee permit which provided them with access to legal state protection and some citizenship rights. Yet, this kind of residency is still precarious as it must be renewed on a regular basis with looming danger of the protection being withdrawn due to the political climate (Schröder, 2023). By 2023, all interlocutors had been reduced to irregular status except two. Thus, I apply the term *paper-queer* to draw out interlocutors' continued surveillance of being "real" – but this term is also put forth as a refusal to irregularity. For even a paper can be crafted and coloured into a queer futurity.

4. The subaltern queer: affective loss of life-rhythms and queer curiosities

An outing - that is being exposed involuntarily as gay, bi, pan, or non-gender regular[2] – was an affective bordering event in the lives of the interlocutors. This emerged in the words that participants used, such as "keep it [queerness] slow" and "everything down to yourself", indicating how they embedded the uncertain surveillance. This discourse was imposed on them from early childhood, or as Wizzkid remembered his father saying: "If you see this kind of thing, *or keep*[3]**,** the police will come and catch you and throw you in

[2] In countries of origin termed as irregular.

[3] Italics done by the author.

a cell". Here the word "keep" hints to sexual orientation being a free choice but other words they often used "keeping it down" indicate the opposite and internalizing heteronormativity by submerging their sense of self, and thus, slowing life down. Moreover, being outed as teenagers, some experienced parents relocating their education to a nearby school or college. This suggests some awareness by parents but also families being socially pressured to abandon children upon an outing. In this way, the looming danger affected interlocutors' fear of abandonment as well as learning opportunities, as reflected in other studies (cf. Okanlawon, 2020). All who attended college or university, however, found a hidden collective of SOGIESC people and through gatherings they were able to explore their queer curiosities. Incidentally, the gatherings put them in danger – and another event echoing through four informants' tales was an incident where the police came knocking during a collective meeting. It was that sound that became primary in the interviews and staged the event as an affective violent bordering (Meier, 2020). These events caused most of them to become persons on the run, as it confirmed their queer identities to the local authorities and kinship networks - and thus, caused their families to distance themselves, even if some financially assisted them to leave. In the case of Salam, the only one who was out to his chosen friends and family, it was first being drafted into the national army and then being targeted by Isis that forced Salam to become displaced. For all, however, this exclusionary moment of the flight, where abandonment was keenly felt (Sólveigar-Guðmunsdóttir, 2018), was described with great haste. Lovers and friends were separated, and every resource used to rapidly leave. Therefore, an enduring affective violence that the outing had was the loss of autonomy over queer bodies and queer time – in the sense they were left absent of time and a place to explore an alternative life.

In the haste of the departure, none described a sense of direction. Most common was to go as far as finances and social networks allowed. Yet none found a permanent safety to explore their queer lives – and they often went into debt to move on, sometimes to people close to them. They described their predicament as "so I am holding some debt to pay" or "because holding debt, you are not free". In this way, "holding" resonates with "keeping" as it indicates an embedded and resisted subalternity - imposed through European postcolonial structures and discourses of black and brown Africans inherently unable of conducting good finance (Loftsdóttir, 2022). Being in debt thus increased their sense of isolation and signalled the queer death (Shakhsari, 2014). An example of how social death then merged with physical death was when Tupac described a journey across the desert:

> It was a very difficult life and I drink, that was *my first time*, I drank from a water where somebody died inside. …it was a big well, so someone died

> there three days ago, and it was smelling and that was the water we were drinking to survive.

The way he says "first time" suggests a recurring event, and as such a slow death. Like several others in this study, he was tortured in Libyan camps as he had no relatives that answered if his phone number called and could not be ransomed. Furthermore, he described being held captive alongside twelve people in a small room with only a small window "and there not everyone could see outside, and everywhere was dark". In such a way, Tupac and others explained how their bodies were contained with only glimpses of an outside life. Even if they were not locked up in camps, they dared not be about on the streets due to surveillance being upheld by gangs in the poor neighbourhoods where they stayed. Those who travelled through Turkey, described how they felt safe in touristic areas – but only if they had the finance to pass as tourists. Therefore, on the semi-borders of Europe, interlocutors would start experiencing their bodies being marked not only as queer, but increasingly as poor and racialized refugees, being used as pawns in political negotiations (Carastathis, et al., 2022). Or as Cheetah put it, while emulating shooting into the air:

> "Hey, go to Europe". … Libyans with guns, saying also "hiiiiijajajaja" … That is how two hundred and seventy people went in the boats without life jackets. … I think, the Libyans, really hate you, the Europeans. They said they can [slight silence] the only way they can punish the Europeans or make them feel bad is by sending people, ... lot of people to Europe.

This account illuminates how the European migration control - that is who decides who should wait and who should be moved – starts to appear as a godlike figure of time (Fabian, 1983), being shot at through the air by people with more power to resist. Respectively, after arriving in Europe, interlocutors described some easing of the queer surveillance but increased of being the racialized poor – and hence, that they were not real war refugees (Malkki, 1995) and that due to their financial predicament they were abusing the system and thus, not real queer (Akin, 2019), and as such, less likely to become the good queer (Kouri-Towe, 2012). Thus, the hidden enfolding of the European queer politics appears, and interlocutors' accounts of events reveal a shifting of how their queer lives were buckled down.

5. The subaltern racialized subject: affective bordering events

A few described their first encounter with European officials as benevolent – and first camps being tolerant while their initial arrival was being assessed. Subsequently, however, they were met with suspicion. For example, when interviewed by the border guards, Cheetah was shamed for not being in touch with his mother:

> I told them the only number I knew of in Zazzau, wasn't going anymore. It was a *dead number.* … I hadn't heard from my family for a *very, very long time.* And the man [officer] got angry: How could I say that I haven't heard from my family, I am lying, I am a liar! And I showed him the number – I still had the number of my mom on the phone, still waiting if someone would pick up the call - I gave him the number and he started *calling, calling, and calling for a long time.*

Here Cheetah's story echoes uncertainty (Hasselberg), and the feeling of being in queer death (Shakhsari, 2014). Moreover, this response from the border officers mirrors the bordering violence (Meir, 2020) conducted by the armed gangs in Libya and the moral police in Nigeria – affectively carried through a sound. Incidentally, most closed off their SOGIE emotions during encounters with the authorities. This border event, furthermore, shows how shaming reverts from being queer to being too poor without a family, not a good son and a liar – therefore potentially a bad queer. To demonstrate further, James's second outing in West-Africa was life threatening but he was saved by his mother who brought him to a hospital on a bicycle. When recounting this event at the border, the Italian authorities didn't believe that a black sub-Saharan mother assisted an outed gay son. Thus, James was handcuffed and repatriated within a few days. Comparing these experiences illuminates how shame is irregularly used regarding young, poor black men to create out of time subjects (Griffiths, 2014). This hovering of irregularity was further detected in Salam's story, though his higher education gave him more resources to work with humanitarian actors. When Salam arrived on a Greek island in late 2015, he was informed that internal EU borders had been closed except for exceptionally vulnerable cases, which certain EU state representatives believed he was a good candidate for. Yet to apply, he had to give up his Greek application. Furthermore, he had to wait for six months to be transported to Athens where the formal interview for quota resettlement was held. While he was very stressed about whether he had exemplified his gayness enough in the interview, three months later he was informed that he had passed - but unfortunately exceptional relocation had ceased. This indicates that while his

queerness was not questioned, his demographic in fulfilling the welcoming vulnerable refugee image in the receiving country was less needed. As such he was Dublin-regulated, without even moving over another EU border. Furthermore, this time located in Athens, he was told he had to start his asylum request in Greece all over again, as the assessment was conducted differently in the capital than in the islands. As such, Salam's experience of accumulated temporal events is revealing how the changing migration controls interact within Europe (Kalir, 2019) and thus prolong labour precarity and emotional insecurity.

After being regulated back, either voluntarily or forcefully, it was quite common that the interlocutors would find their cases lost or closed in the system, much as Salam did. This often came as a shock, described as affective event. For instance, Ronaldo agreed to voluntarily return after being irregular in a Nordic capital amid the Covid lockdowns. Previously he held a status as an unaccompanied minor in the first European country he had arrived in. However, after returning there he was notified that his residency had been rescinded. He experienced such a state of shock that he lost his bearings, his sense of direction, and in that midst, he lost his phone. In the case of forceful returns, interlocutors disclosed being apprehended on the streets and not allowed to collect their other belongings, such as essential identification papers and phones. Mike, for example, who experienced such deportation from a country often exalted as a queer utopia, described his loss as such:

> They [police] *hold* me in street and took me to deportation camp. … My phone was not with me then. … My contacts, my clothes, everything was left behind. … [on return] my Facebook was blocked. ... So, I lost all my contacts.

This loss was particularly dramatic for Mike, as he had been invited into an SOGIESC WhatsApp group were everyone spoke English with an accent – and he finally felt at ease exploring his sexuality. This highlights how phones are essential for queer refugees. According to the Dublin agreement, special care must be applied when transferring vulnerable applicants, so they become immediately hosted in safe areas upon return (Carnassale & Marchetti, 2022). None in this study had experienced such care – instead, they lived in the absence of safety as they had to sleep their first nights in parks or train stations with no money, such as Mike:

> In the airport, they [deportation escort] just hand over my documents to the police in Italy and then they went back. … So, they [Italian authorities] later gave me a paper and told me to go to this town … I spent like two days in the train station, nowhere to sleep.

In some cases, such as for Harry who returned during Covid-19 lockdowns, this became an enduring homelessness, with his legal counsel being dependent on providing sexual favours. Even if SOGIE vulnerability had been revealed to the deporting authorities, a safe return was left to individuals and transnational queer networks. This is further problematic, as it has been demonstrated that during restrictive migration politics, queer solidarities become fearful of assisting paper-queer refugees, as that may limit their funding and state implementation of queer rights (Martorano, 2020). As such, the deportation event mirrors the emotional violence of the outings and absent phones reflect a digital queer death.

Increasing their sense as out-of-time subjects was the eventual abandonment of precarious friends or lovers who secretly hosted them in camps or rented apartments. This uncertainty and oscillation between safe places at safe times, unfolds as a fragmented temporality in Tupac's account:

> I made some calls with a friend that I had in my [old] camp … but there was no accommodation. … So sometimes at night I was around, but I left maybe early morning, before she or he [camp personnel] came around. … *Then* I spoke [through phone] with a gay ... he was the guy I met in my camp *then* [another old camp]. So, he decided to assist me *then* in accommodation. … so, we start knowing each other better and having a good feeling together. … he assists me in terms of who to know, and also the boss in that camp was a good person. … So, I was lucky at that point. … *Then* Nat [his lover] started to make the move to travel to Germany.

Tupac's words further reveal that their trusted queer network consists mostly of other paper-queers, as therein lies the real comprehension of a bordered life. These networks became an entanglement of support and precariousness. For example, interlocutors employed such queer kinships (Vesce, 2017) to become connected to transactional sex work and through them, interlocutors described learning how to navigate dating sites such as Romeo or Grindr, read the customer and set out the terms. Thus, crafting time emerged in their accounts as they emphasized their own autonomy in the transaction, for example demanding to meet a potential customer in a coffee place beforehand. This crafting was further applied in categorizing sexual others: a "gay friend" meant someone from their own paper-queer networks or someone local who assisted them beyond payment for a sexual favour, while a "sugar-daddy" was someone who consistently helped but whose emotional claim needed to be resisted, and a "client" was an unattached useful person but

potentially dangerous[4]. Crafting autonomy thus became prominent when negotiating what was done during a queer time and crafting names a resource to save time. That said, if transactional sex work is read as doing queer time, it was haunted by bordering violence (Meir, 2022). This is revealed by following Buju's trajectory. Upon his Dublin return, he started to live with an old lover who introduced him to transactional sex work. When he became financially able, he rented an apartment without providing a residency permit. He stated that with clients coming to him, he was better able to negotiate the transaction before the act. However, in 2022, one became so loud that it caused Buju's landlady to find out about his work and sexual orientation, throwing him out on the same day. Having become homeless once again, he partnered up with an old friend and together they would go to clients' houses. In 2023 they increasingly experienced clients unwilling to pay after the act and twice clients have called the police claiming they are being ransomed in their own houses. While prostitution is not illegal in Italy, extortion is – and with the rise of extreme nationalistic politics, the local clients tend to be believed. Thus, Buju was in prison when his interview for SOGIE protection was scheduled, and as non-attending he was ruled irregular. This demonstrates, like other studies on border sex work, that while prostitution is legal, the governing of workers' docility is controlled by creating an improbable structure dictating the circumstances under which the act can legally take place (Sampethai, 2022). This account further illuminates why local members of SOGIESC solidarities repeatedly advised paper-queers to "lay low and wait" as noted during fieldwork. At the same time, SOGIE interlocutors described being invaded by events that evaporated their struggles to claim queer time, forced them again to submerge their queer beings and reduced their capacities to catch up with the neoliberal queer subject.

6. Crafting queer futurity

When inquired about his chose for pseudonym, Cheetah replied: "I like Cheetah's, because they are very fast. … Their feet are moving up, accelerating, whiiisssssssshhh, running! Moving fast in life." Considering how queer lives in this study have been buckled up, forcing the interlocutors not only to move about carefully but also to keep their queer beings in slow mode – this choice exemplifies the desire for a quick access to the image of a good queer life (Ellenberger & Þorsteinsson, 2023). Much as doing drag despite surveillance can be an example of refugees claiming queer time (Tschalaer, 2022), the choice

[4] For example, clients increasingly demanded all involved doing drugs during the act

of pseudonyms can be viewed as similarly for interlocutors in this study. They already went by secret names in their queer networks, so this new choice of pseudonym became like an identity performance. It was a way of bypassing surveillance and to conjure a vision where they were free to have a queer future. For a few chose names that implied magical capacity to transform lives, such as Harry, while others chose names of media stars that represented a vibrant life. Either way, their choices represent desires to quickly reach their queer dreams, for they had so adamantly described that the only way to be a free queer was to be a rich queer. In this way, I see crafting a name as doing a cat's cradle (Wahidin, 2004) with the string of neoliberal time that continually held them back.

For emerging in their tales were events that described catching glimpses of a wealthy queer life and most saw it as representative of a good queer time. For example, while engaging in sex work in a Nordic state, Ronaldo was invited to a summer house:

> The one I showed you [good gay friend], … he is having a *nice* house. Everything is *nice* in Vanaheim, people are living a good life. … people are gay, they have jobs … people are open, wearing all kinds of clothes. … I was having one friend … he has a *nice* summer house. It was *tranquil* being with him, everything was *nice*.

While not as drastic as the confinement some interlocutors experienced in Libya, Ronaldo's words nevertheless describe a brief glimpse of the "outside" life. A life affectively represented as *nice* due to the ability to have a good job, house, nice clothes, freedom of movement – and to assert autonomy over sounds, aka *tranquil*. His choice of words can also indicate a world absent of constant worries. Thus, this was the life interlocutors held onto to imagine a queer future. Furthermore, it made them look back to their country of citizenship and discuss how rich persons there could be queer or non-normative on social media without punishments from authorities. Thus, imagining a queer future as rich, was to imagine a life where being repatriated would not cause them irreputable harm. In this context, even if advised to lay low while in waithood, paper-queers would see their lives irrefutably as falling behind the good queers (Kowi-Touri, 2011), and repeated that they were tired of the slow bordering temporalities. Therefore, engaging in a fast, dangerous life, such as sex work or facilitating drugs can be observed as crafting unruly queer futurity (Munoz, 2009).

Moreover, at the same time as they desired to become the neoliberal queer subject (Ellenberger & Þorsteinsson, 2023), they also applied altruism in their daily lives and future visions. It became a counter-assembled tactic to reclaim

dignity against the racialized poor shaming. This appeared, for example, after Buju's interview when we strolled together back to the central train station. While struggling with the ticket machine, Buju accepted help from an older poor black man, and in return Buju gave him some coins. Explaining this transaction, Buju said that the man helped because he *wanted* to help – and he paid him because he *wanted* to pay him, but there was no obligation. In this way, he emphasized his own autonomy as well as altruistic visions. Later he followed his ideology by sharing his food with white, Italian speaking, homeless persons in the station and spent a long time conversing with them. His practices thus provide a curious difference to transactional sex payments. They indicate aligning somewhat to neoliberal subjectivity but more vividly a counter-assembled resistance to the stigmatization of the poor. This kind of queer crafting was also demonstrated in others' descriptions of how they wanted to see Romeo or Grindr work – that people encountered there would at least show some respect, listen to their stories, and emotionally respond. Similarly, interlocutors would imagine queer futurity as inclusive – sometimes including non-queer refugees and homeless locals – but always as a space that supported exploring queer desires in safe environments and respecting people's rhythm to do so. Thus, they demanded dignity by applying an altruistic ideology to everyday practices. They crafted new meanings about capitalistic time and claimed the desire for queer time on their own terms.

7. Conclusion

In this article, it has been demonstrated that SOGIE Dublin-regulated refugees, termed here as paper-queers, form their beings in response to bordering violence (Meir, 2022) that they experience in transit towards and within Europe. By tracing bordering events that emerged in interlocutors' recollections, it has been shown that such exclusionary moments (Sólveigar-Guðmunsdóttir, 2018) lead to the internalization of being subjects out of time (Griffiths, 2014). The bordering events further illuminate how paper-queers are seen as shameful irregularities in the heteronormative lifestyle and capitalistic measurements of time, or the bad queer (Kowi-Touri, 2011; Ellenberger, 2017). In response, paper-queers start their subalternation by submerging queer desires in countries of citizenship, then by being in debt to family, friends or traffickers, and lastly by internalizing the stigmatized gaze of racialized poor subjects in Europe. By engaging in illicit or precarious labour, such as sex work, they attempt to earn a living and thus, becoming a "good queer". However, through constant emotional border work, such as of avoiding danger and uncertain payments, they become trapped inside liminality that annihilates such

aspirational choices. This has been demonstrated through analysing their choice of words that represent a fragmented temporality and slowing the body down – and therefore the tempo of being a curious, mobile, and alive queer person. In this sense, they described not only losing the autonomy to choose a place to explore their queer desires, but also the time and rhythm to do so.

Their own accounts of bordering tactics further expose how the hovering violence vibrates through their recollection of sounds, such as the knocking of the moral police, the dial tones ringing in border camps or shouting of clients, outing them to landlords and leading to arrests. Interlocutors' memory of sounds was therefore read through the affective resonance of emotional abandonment and surveillance of their shameful irregularities – that they never quite represent the ideal subject, be it as a local student, as a labouring migrant man or as a submissive, easily labelled, queer refugee. Paper-queers being so formed by the imposed irregularity, thus reveal the enfolding of assembled national identity images (Puar, 2007), where they are positioned as the bad queer, irrevocably on the way to physical, social, and digital queer death (Shakhsari, 2014) through European legal structures. Thus, bordering events informed paper-queers about how to act and how to be – creating the precarious event(ual) being.

As an act of agency and counter-assembling subalternation, the paper-queers crafted new meanings of their beings in the out-of-time temporalities (Wahidin, 2004). This was done by refusing the lay-low waithood, claiming time before transactional sex, crafting sexual categories of other persons to save time, and through the performance of pseudonyms, choosing names representing abilities to catch up with the neoliberal queer subject (Ellenberger & Þorsteinsson, 2023). Queer futurity (Munoz, 2009) was thus visioned with the capacity and capital of being untouchable by the bordering representatives. In this sense, they coloured their performances with life possibilities. Interestingly, this neoliberal vision was carried through the absence of bordering sounds or being able to have a tranquil queer life. This represents the desire for autonomy over time – about when to be loud about queerness and when to safely enjoy quiet intimacies and the freedom to oscillate between such spaces. At the same time as envisioning neoliberal queer life, interlocutors also practiced and imagined a life of altruism. Thus, while being positioned as irregular, transactional practices were visioned in the manner of equal reciprocity and allocated time for emotions to be treated with dignity. In so doing, they carved out an assembled time, where their event(ual) beings claimed belonging.

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