

Key figure of mobility: the nomad

This article discusses the relationship between nomadic people and the figure of the nomad in a European context. Based on a discussion of the presence of the figure of the nomad in European folk imaginary and in the social sciences, from Pierre Clastres's (1977. *Society against the state*. New York: Urizen) work on stateless societies, to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of Nomadology (1986. *Nomadology*. New York: Semiotex(e)) and Braidotti's (1994. *Nomadic subjects. Embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*. New York: Columbia University Press) nomadic feminism, the article employs a 'nomadic' perspective on ethnographic work of mobile people. It argues that ideas contrasting the nomadic and the state can be put to use for epistemological purposes.

Key words nomadism, nomadology, Roma, Europe, resistance

Those scattered beyond the boundaries of the city have long been the subject of puzzlement and fantasy by those within its walls, as well as a metaphor for ways of being in the world. (Peters 2006: 141)

Introduction

Much of the founding ethnography in anthropology is about nomadic peoples: the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940), the Basseri (Barth 1965), the pastoral Fulani (Stenning 1969) and the Iban of Borneo (Freeman 1955). Despite the interest in nomadic peoples, the anthropology of nomads did not differ much from ethnographies of sedentary peoples; they concentrated on kinship and social organisation, hierarchy, power relations, religion, rituals, etc. The limited interest in nomadic life as a form of mobility was indicative of the research agenda at that time, influenced by the ties between colonial economies and anthropological research (Noyes 2000), associations between the nomadic and the 'primitive' and a general value placed on state formation and functional analysis in British anthropology.

Despite this initial lack of interest, the nomad as figure plays an important role in present-day heroic conceptualisations of mobility. The Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth (Eriksen 2013; Barth 1965) tells his biographer that of all his field experiences, his travels with the Basseri of South Persia were his happiest and most satisfying. Barth describes the Basseri as the most harmonious people he has lived among. His memories play into the imaginative relationship between movement and freedom, notions at the core of the contemporary figure of the nomad in the social sciences (Salazar and Smart 2011; Noyes 2004; Peters 2006). However, early ethnographies of nomadic people did not make this association between mobility and freedom. Despite his fond memories, Barth's book on the Basseri nomads (Barth 1965) is a sober analysis of social organisation, power relations and economic strategies, although he does write about the joy and expectancy of breaking up camp and moving on. Barth's rather

romantic memories of his time with the Basseri are a product of his reflections through the seventies, eighties and nineties with its celebration of movement and freedom. So how did the nomad transform from ethnographic object to the heroic figure of mobility and post-modernity (Peters 2006)? With this paper, I want to discuss whether and how the nomad as figure can play a role in contemporary social analysis of mobile people.

In the following, I discuss the relationship between nomadic people and the figure of the nomad and nomadology in a European context. I first discuss the presence of the nomad and the figure of the nomad in folk imaginary and in the social sciences, from Pierre Clastres's (1977) empirical work on stateless societies, to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical discussion in *Nomadology* (1986), and Braidotti's (1994) nomadic feminism. Through such analyses, it becomes clear that the figure of the nomad is a product of European obsessions with understanding, encapsulating and excluding 'the other'. What is more, such obsessions map onto conceptual shifts within Europe, from colonialist modernity to post-modernity. Originally conceived as the ultimate 'other' to modernist concepts of territory and the nation-state, as a figure the nomad has become celebrated as Europe moves towards new figurations of territory and state, exemplified in concepts such as 'freedom of movement' within the European Union and critiques of 'sedentary metaphysics' (Malkki 1992: 31) in mobility studies. However, the figure of the nomad has also faced critical opposition because of the way its European origins tend towards exoticising, romanticising and increasing the separation of the conceptual figure from the living nomad. Despite these problems, I will argue that Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology still bears much fruit as an approach to analyse and understand the relationship between mobile people and the state. By analysing my own and other ethnographers' work on Roma and migrants from a 'nomadic' perspective, I demonstrate how nomadology can be put to use for epistemological purposes; how the figure of the nomad may relate to the living nomad.

Mobility and ambiguity: nomads and nomadic representations

Nomads have, as long as we know, represented a threat and a source of wonder to settled populations (Peters 2006; Cresswell 1997). There is no clear, precise definition of nomads, but the term is generally used for pastoralists and people who depend on mobility for their livelihood and shift dwelling places according to their movements; people without fixed settlement (Keesing 1975). But the boundaries between sedentarism and nomadism are not neat. Some form of mobility has always been a part of settled life, and seasonal settlement is part of the mobility patterns for most peoples termed nomadic (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Kabachnik 2012; Favell 2001; Piasere 1992; Keesing 1975). Wars and conflicts have scattered people over vast territories. Peasants and fishers have been dependent on spatial mobility for their economic activities. Wandering merchants, expatriate experts, preachers, beggars, migrants, tourists and other drifters have always been part of the lives of settled populations (Cresswell 1997; Kabachnik 2012). The tension between mobility and stasis, in terms of freedom and security, and the fantasies of an independent, free-floating existence, have perhaps always been part of European settled populations' understanding of

themselves (Peters 2006) and the 'other'. The figure of the nomad as the embodiment of freedom and irresponsibility and a challenge to the order of things is thus deeply embedded in European understandings of mobility and stasis. The threatening image of mobile peoples as destroyers of order and progress is as old as the romantic fantasies. In Europe, Gypsies and vagabonds are the most prominent representatives of 'wandering threats' who have been treated like kings and pilgrims and as criminals and outcasts by shifting political regimes (Kabachnik 2012; Vitale 2009; Fraser 1995; Deleuze and Guattari 1986). Although seldom nomads in the pastoral sense and even after having been settled for long periods, people called 'Gypsies' have been regarded as nomadic and have been subject to forced settlement and persecution by governments (Vitale 2009; Achim 2004; Noyes 2000; Fraser 1995; Deleuze and Guattari 1986), which gained force during modernity and nation-building processes. This nomadic figure is consequently a trope used to frame life-worlds that do not fit into European concepts of territory and the nation-state; a form of othering or framing of the other. Such assumptions echo descriptions by colonial observers of 'natives' and mobile people in most parts of the world (Noyes 2000; Cresswell 1997). These cases illustrate how the connection between a specific mode of production and a mental state – 'the relationship between subjectivity and landscape' (Noyes 2000: 48) – is not an invention of post-modernity. As Peters notes: 'The concept of nomadism, in short, was born metaphorical' (2006: 151).

However, as several researchers show, nomadic adaptations and settlement, mobility and stability have also formed parts of authorities' political strategies in different periods and places (Noyes 2000; Urry 2000; Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). From the 14th to the late 19th century, parts of the enslaved Gypsy population in Romania were nomadic; more or less forced to travel in groups, without fixed settlements, and served the inhabitants of their owners' territories as artisans and workers (Achim 2004; Fraser 1995). Forced settlement of nomadic people all over the world was, however, intensified and systematised in the 19th and 20th centuries. They were connected to industrialisation and labour demands, to nation-building and the idea of the relationship between the soil and the person, and to modernisation with authorities' increased interest in the control of populations.

In Norway the government launched forced settlement programmes for Sami reindeer-herders in the 19th and 20th centuries, and Norwegian Travellers were forcibly rounded up, placed in correction camps and their children forcibly removed from their families and placed in Norwegian fostering. In the late 20th century, a new settlement programme was developed for Norwegian Roma (Engebriksen and Lidén 2010; Lidén and Engebriksen 2010; Hvinden 2000; Høgmo 1986). Even today, when certain forms of spatial mobility are celebrated as the broad road to social mobility, regimes of forced settlement are still with us, and the threat to stability, progress and order by the unregulated mobile subject (migrants, refugees, jihad warriors) is a growing concern.

Pierre Clastres's *Society against the state* (1977) has formed a basic empirical argument for the later post-modern development of the figure of the nomad. Clastres's claim is that many of the stateless societies of the world today have survived, not as reminiscences of a primitive past where people do not know how to develop or run a state apparatus. On the contrary, stateless societies are the result of social mechanisms that are developed and reinforced to prevent the concentration of power. The difference, says Clastres, between chiefs in stateless society and the state is that:

The state is defined by the perpetuation or conservation of organs of power. The concern of the state is to conserve. The chief is more an honorary leader or representative or a star, than a man of power, and is always on the verge of being disgraced by his people. (1977: 11)

The resistance to the concentration of power is what makes stateless society a threat to state control and incorporation. The political philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1986) uses Clastres's work as its point of departure, founding ideas that are crucial to the development of the post-modern figure of the nomad. Deleuze and Guattari's 'Nomad' stands for the stateless subject and habitus that Clastres discussed. They developed their philosophy on the idea of difference as the shattering of classification. They argue that classification is the controlling force at the basis of hegemony and sovereignty. Instead of overcoming differences by generalising them and rendering them subjected to control, Deleuze and Guattari develop a notion of difference that one must embrace and acknowledge as the possibility for transformation. They thus reject dialectics that see the negative as the power of change and instead install difference as a negative/positive force that always has an element of what it differs from (Kristeva 1982). By rejecting and shattering classification, difference also rejects incorporation into 'common ground' and thus evades being made the object of a discourse that forces one to seek agreement or consensus. Thus, difference is fluid, it dissolves the notion of the 'centre' by changing and being unpredictable.

Difference and becoming are closely interconnected as that which is not classified, that which is always becoming on the verge of stabilising, but then differing into a new becoming. In this sense, their nomad is difference and 'a war machine' against the state (classification, fixation and stability), but always has elements of the state inherent in her being. The state then stands for stasis, for unity, for conservation and for control, but always has the nomadic element present in its being. By being exterior to the state, and thus being defined as impure, the nomad challenges state control by shattering classification, occupying un-striated space and by embracing difference as a principle (Deleuze and Guattari 1986). The figure of the nomad, then, borrows features from ethnographic nomads, archaic or modern, but is developed to imagine the mentality of movement, a mobile habitus. The nomad in this sense does not necessarily move, because movement is her mode, just as Peters (2006) notes metaphorically that nomads' desire is to be at home everywhere. Nomad and state, nomad thought and state thought are thus interdependent; the one wants to control, the other to destroy or evade control. As the nomad is 'becoming', she is always possibly controlled and although the state is 'stasis', it always has inherent nomad elements.

Rosi Braidotti (1994) has taken up this philosophy of difference. She writes: 'Historically, the notion of difference is a concept rooted in European fascism that has been colonized and taken over by hierarchical and exclusionary ways of thinking' (1994: 147). However, instead of waging war on the concept or distancing herself from it, Braidotti (1994) builds her feminist philosophy by appropriating it for her own purposes. This position is inspired by poststructuralist feminists like Luce Irigaray (1987), who recommended a shift away from what she saw as reactive criticism of hierarchical difference, and a turn towards affirming positive counter-patriarchal values. In opposition to what she sees as a hasty and superficial dismissal of sexual difference for the understanding of gender relations, or as a utopian idea of a society beyond gender, Braidotti develops a feminism that valorises sexual difference as project.

She calls it a nomadic political project ‘because this emphasis on the difference that women embody, provides positive foundational grounds for the redefinition of female subjectivity in all its complexity’ (1994: 147).

Here, the nomadology of Deleuze and Guattari is the inspiration. By embracing and acknowledging difference as central to female subjectivity, hierarchical classification is exhausted as a way to control women. Nomadology, in Braidotti’s philosophy, is a feminist philosophy based on women as different, becoming rather than being, not subject to universalism and thus subversive and outside state/male control. To Braidotti, the nomadic figuration is a politically informed account of an alternative subjectivity (1994: 100). Masculine and feminine subjectivity cannot be reduced to ‘sameness’. By feminising the nomadic figure, Braidotti challenges both the traditional view of the nomad as male and the gendered critics of male supremacy by rejecting any ideas of such supremacy and hierarchical difference between men and women and instead valorising sexual difference as nomadic and female.

John Urry’s *Sociology beyond society* (2000) follows up this new openness to mobility, not only as a way of living, but also as a way of thinking. Urry’s quest was to develop a concept that could overcome the limits of bounded categories such as the sociology of migration, tourism and nomadism, and develop a category that could embrace all movements of things, people, images, information and their interdependencies and consequences. He claims that the social should no longer be seen as society, but as mobility, and that the concept of society in the future will be a powerful national force to control and moderate mobile forces that undermine its boundaries. Moreover, Urry concludes his discussion on society and sociology by urging for the development of a sociological metaphor that ‘focuses upon movement, mobility and contingent ordering, rather than upon stasis, structure and social order’ (2000: 18). Thus Urry’s concepts of mobility and society and Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of the nomad and the state may both be seen to further new ways of thinking about the social, about movement and stasis, and about place.

Critique of the figure of the nomad

With the re-installment of ‘imperial powers’ in Europe in terms of globalisation and the so-called free movement of resources across boundaries, the post-modern development of the nomadic figure advanced as a new leading paradigm. Although fantasies of mobility and nomadism always seem to have been present in sedentary populations in Europe (Noyes 2000; Cresswell 1997), the idea of movement and mobility became in many fields a leading metaphor and antithesis to the boundary keeping, classification and identity-obsessed, and unifying ideology of the modern era. Thus mobility as a liberating way of being and the nomad as a liberating figure and an agent of change fit hand in glove with the new political ideology of globalisation in the West. The notion of sedentary metaphysics (Malkki 1992) is an expression of this necessity to see beyond the blind spot of sedentarism in anthropology. The nomad became a figure that condensed the feelings and thinking of the era, and thus a hero of post-modernity among European and US intellectuals (Peters 2006). Fredrik Barth’s 21st-century recollections of his 20th-century fieldwork may be an expression of this Zeitgeist of nomadism as freedom. However, this popular nomadic figure is not subversive to the new era of state-instigated

globalisation, which it embraces, but rather to the old era of modernity with the nation-state as static power.

Social scientists have pointed to the mismatch between the idealised idea of mobility and the nomadic figure, and the actual regimes of mobility and settlement that both forced populations to move and restricted the movements of others (see, for example, Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Salazar and Smart 2011; Noyes 2004; Favell 2001; Cresswell 1997). Others have discussed the ethnographic mismatch between conditions and political organisations of living nomads and the figure of the de-territorialised free, modern nomad (Kabachnik 2012; Cresswell 1997). Migration researchers have pointed out that most of the labour and refugee mobility of our time is the outcome of unequal power relations and not at all a result of rebellious nomads attacking the walls of 'the polis' (Büscher 2014). Moreover, it is worth adding that mobile subjects, as for instance refugees, are actually seeking a livelihood protected by a state apparatus, are happy to, and seek to, be incorporated into that state. Those refused as illegal migrants may, however, have no other choice than to join the hordes of vagabonds outside state control (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2007). Critics have also pointed to the severe restriction on mobility of unwanted categories of people such as the mobile poor populations in Europe and elsewhere (Engebretsen *et al.* 2014; Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Noyes 2004; Vitale 2009; Cunningham and Heyman 2004). Just like nomads and mobile groups in all times, they are seen as threats to state stability today (Miller 1993 in Bogue 2010).

As John Noyes has noted, one of the problems of the concept of the nomad today lies with the dual productivity of mobile subjects: 'mobility casts subjectivity between the ideal freedom of the disembodied wanderer and the brute reality of the refugee' (2004: 160). Noyes's point seems to be that the nomad as an analytical concept is too far removed from the reality of empirical nomads to be analytically valid. However, the figure of the nomad is not without ethnographic grounding. Deleuze and Guattari indeed built their nomadology on historiography, myth and ethnographic knowledge. So, the question we need to ask with John Noyes is: 'How do we take the conceptual model of a lifestyle, a socio-economic regime, a mode of production, such as nomadism, as a model for critical thought?' (2004: 164). In other words, how closely must the figure of the nomad and the concept of nomadology represent an ethnographic reality in order to have analytical power?

Nomadology and living mobile people

The critique of romanticising nomadism is closely connected to the critique of the lack of correspondence between living nomad populations and figurative nomads. In *Nomadology*, Deleuze and Guattari (1986: 15–17) write that one of the problems they see in Clastres's discussion in *Society against the state* (1977) is that he misinterprets the formal exteriority of 'primitive'/nomadic peoples from the state into a real independence. A similar misinterpretation is also the basis of much of the critique of the romanticising of nomadic life and of the figure of the nomad and nomadology.

However, Deleuze and Guattari never claimed that the nomad is free. It is precisely because she is exterior and dependent on the state apparatus that she represents a war machine against the state; or in other words a figure for critical thought. Deleuze and Guattari's Nomad is the subject that, in line with Michel de Certeau's (1984) 'tactical pedestrian', 'resides on the territory of the other, and always is subject of the law of the

other' (1984: 37), but without subsuming to its power. The figurative nomad is not defined by travel of physical movement, but in Braidotti's words 'by the subversion of conventions' (1994: 5). Being a war machine means being an agent of change by challenging the conceptual 'walls of the polis', the concepts and classifications that state power rests on and must preserve. Deleuze and Guattari's nomad is neither good nor bad, neither free nor bonded, she is both; a destructor of perfect order. She can be seen both in the gangs of street children in Bogotá, in the offshore economies described by John Urry (2014), in mobile and stateless jihad warriors and in peaceful nomadic groups evading incorporation in states (Scott 2009). The conceptual gap between the figure of the nomad, mobility, the ethnographic reality of living nomads and mobile people can best be bridged by thorough anthropological work. In the following, I will discuss the relationship between the figure of the nomad as it is developed in nomadology, with two cases of mobile people. My claim is that nomadology and the figure of the nomad can enlighten our understanding of mobile people and their relations to the state apparatus.

Without referring to nomads and war machines, Scott's accounts of different forms of resistance to state power are vivid exemplifications of Clastres's ideas and of the nomadology of Deleuze and Guattari. His book *The art of not being governed* (Scott 2009) is a historical account and political analysis of the mountainous regions of Southeast Asia as a sanctuary for state-evading peoples. This account ranges from the expansion of the Han Dynasty in 202 BC–AD 220 to the People's Republic of China in the 20th century. Apart from being involuntarily displaced by wars, the burdens imposed by expanding states that made people flee, include control of labour, taxation, access to populations for recruitment of soldiers, servants, women and slaves (Michaud in Scott 2009). These expansions made vast numbers of people seek salvation in remote areas. Scott's argument is that all over the world we find people, groups, populations, 'zones of insubordination' (2009: 132) that defy simple description and classification, that are shuffled together in a common search for sanctuaries from state control. Scott's is a broad overview of the consistent past and present process of people who for different reasons flee from the centres to the margins such as mountains, forests and deserts to resist state control, with Southeast Asia as his core case. Scott's book is an account of the ongoing social and mental process of the battle between control and resistance, of stasis and metamorphosis and between centre and periphery, nomadic organisation and state control.

One of Scott's examples of people evading state control is the European Gypsies (Roma and Travellers). Although most Roma and Traveller populations have been, and still are, settled, they have been regarded and treated as threatening nomads throughout their history in Europe, as today (Achim 2004; Fraser 1995; Vitale 2009). As already noted however, the boundary between settlement and nomadism is not clear-cut and populations that have been settled for a long time may, for economic necessity or other reasons, become dependent on more or less permanent mobility for their livelihood. I am not claiming that Roma *per se* can be seen as Deleuze and Guattari's Nomads, but that their nomadology opens up new understandings of the Norwegian state's efforts to integrate the Roma living in Oslo today and of the Roma's tactics (de Certeau 1984) to avoid incorporation (Engebriksen and Lidén 2010).

The small population of approximately 700 Norwegian Roma have lived permanently in Oslo since the 1950s. Their ancestors travelled between Norway and central Europe between the 1870s and the Second World War. They left Norway around 1930 when a harsh assimilation programme that targeted Norwegian Travellers

threatened to include the 'foreign' Roma in their programme. This programme comprised forced settlement in training camps, removal of Traveller children to Norwegian orphanages and foster homes, and sterilisation of Traveller women. When trying to re-enter Norway some years later because of increasing persecution in Germany, their Norwegian passports and birth certificates were rejected and they were sent back to Germany. Almost all were killed in the Nazi camps. The survivors and their relatives, around 50 people, were gradually admitted and granted Norwegian citizenship after several lawsuits between the early 1950s and the 1970s. Today they make up a tight-knit group of about 700, all related by family or kin. Their mother tongue is Romanes of the Vlach type, which shows that their ancestors probably left Romania/Hungary after the abolishment of serfdom and slavery in the 1860s. They have their own legal system based on ideas of collective guilt; they have their own marriage rituals and their own cosmology. They make up a strong moral community based on ideas of personal autonomy and collective solidarity, and combine strong values of autonomy with perpetual conflicts for power and domination. They form a community of family and kin, without leaders, their 'kings' have little or no legitimate power among the people (Kaminski 1987). They represent and perpetuate a widespread form of nomadism that is based on fixed winter quarters (Kabachnik 2012; Piasere 1992). The majority travel extensively, as families, during spring, summer and autumn to the rest of Europe. They travel for business, to religious gatherings and to visit their kin networks. In addition, they travel in Norway for business, and move incessantly between flats in Oslo. As many families are rejected by neighbours, or do not pay rents punctually, they are regularly expelled and constantly on the move between dwelling places. From their arrival, the Roma have consented to all programmes presented to change them, but rejected or avoided them in practice. After 20 years, the last programme was shut down and assessed as a failure; two children had completed secondary school, most were still illiterate, no adults were employed and most families still travelled.

The authorities see the Roma as a backward, conservative group that does not know what is best for them. Seeing them as Deleuze and Guattari's Nomads, however, opens up other interpretations; they are struggling to keep the mental sanctuary they have developed through the centuries, in spite of malevolent and controlling states. They are waging a silent but insistent war against state control by consenting to it verbally and defying it in praxis. The Roma agree that wage labour is a good thing and that they really want it, but as they are illiterate, they are not eligible. As their real earnings are by more or less 'shady' business ventures, they generally do not pay taxes. To evade taxation on their earnings, they register as unemployed and most adults are thus on social welfare. They speak Norwegian, but they speak it broken, although most adults can speak it without an accent. They arrived in Norway as Catholics, then converted to Pentecostalism and have now a separate Pentecostal community in Norway. They send their children to school, but only sporadically, and find reasons to take them out as much as possible. Their ongoing internal conflicts over respect, morality and influence make any centralised institutions of power impossible. They only sporadically have any permanent relations with Norwegians, and as most children only occasionally go to school, this segregation is perpetuated. They are economically dependent on Norwegian society, but from a 'nomadic' perspective, they struggle to maintain political, social and mental independence. It is important here to note that parts of the Roma population in Norway are poor and are living a life in some sense at the fringes of society, but they are still insisting on their autonomy, language and

way of life as better than that of the non-Roma. This complex amalgamation of consent and avoidance, of adaptation and resistance, of dependency and autonomy is what makes these Roma difficult to control: their psychological remoteness, not their physical remoteness. They see themselves as free from state control and consciously guard what they see as their freedom. In Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) sense, this is 'the battle' between the nomad and the polis, and in de Certeau's (1984) sense between the strategies of 'the powerful' and the evading tactics of 'the powerless' (see also Vergunst 2017, this issue).

Thus the living and struggling Roma in this case present themselves in much the same romantic image as the criticised image of the nomad; they see movement as freedom from state power, see education and wage labour as threats to what they see as their freedom. Applying nomadology to analyse their relations to state authorities further illuminates their position as war machine; not by waging a war, but by subtle actions of evasion and resistance woven into their habitus and way of life. Being a living nomad means struggling to evade extinction or territorialisation, 'by playing along and exploiting the cracks in the enemies' armour' (de Certeau 1984: 37). Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of the nomad and the state are thus salient for the anthropological interpretation of the social, political and cultural relationships between the Norwegian Roma and the state.

The migrant as nomad?

So what about other mobile groups, such as migrants? Can nomadology shed light on their situation? Deleuze and Guattari claim that migrants are not nomads in their sense, because they move between places and stay; they move in order to be re-territorialised. Contrary to Deleuze and Guattari, but inspired by their nomadology, Dimitris Papadopoulos and Vassillis Tsianos illustrate how the figure of the nomad can illuminate the fate of illegal/undocumented migrants who actually never arrive to stay. In 'The autonomy of migration: the animals of undocumented mobility' (2007), they write about the increasing flows of undocumented mobility as a 'Deleuzian force'. Not being documented, defined and individualised, and by being more or less forced to endless becoming, they represent the nomadic war against sovereign control. The claim is that by perpetually changing identity and shape, by force, necessity and/or will, illegal migrants escape control by becoming 'nobody', imperceptible. Papadopoulos and Tsianos give the example of one of the interviewees they met in a refugee camp in northern Greece. He was Chinese by birth and on his way to France. On his route, he was forced to stay in Romania where he married and received a residence permit. He then applied for an EU visa, and was first rejected, but later got a 3-month work permit and travelled to Paris where he overstayed his visa by over 12 months. He was caught and sent back to Romania. There he changed identity and gender, married again, now as a woman, and applied again for an EU visa. She travelled to Paris again, changed identity again, married once more and finally got a residency permit. The researchers later received a letter from her from Canada.

Their other examples are refugees in Calais burning their identity documents and becoming 'no-one or everyone = imperceptible'. Given animal nicknames such as 'coyotes' (USA/Mexican border), 'snakeheads' (China), 'sharks' (by British sailors), 'ravens' (Greek/Albanian border) and 'sheep' (Turkey), the traffickers/guides across

national borders signify the de-humanisation of the undocumented migrant (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2007). The authors underline that their intention with the paper is to counteract what they call ‘the discourse of migration as a humanitarian scandal or as a deviation from the evolutionist human rights doctrine of western modernity, that also supply both the humanitarian discourses and the xenophobic and racist politics of forced repatriation’ (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2007: 6). Instead, they employ a nomadic perspective to ‘approach migration as a constitutive moment of the current social transformation, a moment which is primarily sustained by cooperation, solidarity, the usage of broad networks and resources, shared knowledge, collective anticipation’ (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2007: 6).

Concluding discussion: a nomadic science?

Considering the European origins of territory and its relationship with the modern nation-state (Elden 2014), and how these conceptualisations feed the ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003) still inherent in many studies of mobile people, the alternative European figure of the nomad creates space for different understandings of identity, movement and stasis, thus providing perhaps the best foil to our own conceptual limitations. However, the figure of the nomad, as a conceptual tool, does require careful ethnography to function as more than a superficial trope. Careful ethnographic attention allows us to complicate a reductionist notion of the nomadic figure by illustrating the relevance of mobile people’s life-worlds as challenges to state and territory-centred understandings of humanity. Braidotti’s (1994) subversive analysis of gender relations, based on the celebration of difference as a means to destroy hierarchical classification, the strategic situation of the Norwegian Roma as a ‘war machine’ against incorporation by the Norwegian state, and Papadopoulos and Tsianos’s (2007) ‘animals’ of illicit migration, are only three examples of the analytical fruitfulness of nomadology and the figure of the nomad as analytical concepts.

Nomadology is also relevant for analysing the epistemological underpinnings of social science itself and thereby the foundations of anthropology. I close here by discussing Deleuze and Guattari’s (1986) notion of state science and nomadic science, and how this analytical pair can parallel notions of migration and mobility. Deleuze and Guattari discuss state science as interested in theorems, the rational order, while nomadic science is about the problems that are affective and ‘inseparable from the metamorphoses and creations within science itself’ (1986: 19). This distinction has direct bearing on general problems concerning research today. Several critics have pointed out that social scientists are becoming increasingly dependent on competition for funding from private and public institutions. As funding is progressively organised through government institutions, and research is increasingly being modelled on the interests of states or private institutions in labelling, surveilling and controlling the population, the researcher may become a political agent for the powerful. Thus, the possibility for independent research is threatened and research may become a continuation of administration more than expressions of wonderment (Lithman 2004).

Seeing this development as a turn towards state science questions science’s ability to serve as a critical ‘force’ against the individualising, unifying and preserving forces

of public administration. This is especially the case in what is known as ‘migration research’. I see the concepts of the migrant and of migration as products of state science. These concepts are based on a specific political view of the world where nation-states make up the foundational ethos. In general, migration means movement between nation-states. Of course, the concept also implies internal migration, but in this era of globalisation it is transnational migration that is in focus. The concept thus presupposes that the nation-state, its borders and thus control of it, is the frame of reference. This frame further implies the preoccupation with crisis, with difference and labelling, with legality, with control and documentation; it presupposes ideas of ‘them and us’, and questions about this relationship (Lithman 2004; Favell 2001; Audebert and Dorai 2010). In migration politics, as in migration studies, integration becomes the key concept to understand this relationship, together with concepts of identity, racism, ethnicity, discrimination, etc. Integration in this epistemology means one-way incorporation into the core; the nation-state and its values. When the social sciences are enmeshed in the interests and concerns of the political-administrative system, as they are for instance in Norway, researchers are more or less driven into accepting the premises, definitions and concepts handed down to them through this dependency. This has led to waves of similar analyses of ethnic minorities and their ways into majority society, in integration studies and studies of different aspects of otherness.

While some illuminating research has been published inside this epistemology, the majority only feeds into political demands without contesting them. The article on forced migration and exile in this issue (Hackl 2017) argues for transgressing the idea of exile as bound up in territorial displacement and suggests instead seeing the exile as ‘a certain interplay of power and identity in space and over time’. In contrast, movement analysed from a nomadic and mobility-centred perspective, as developed by Urry (2000), Deleuze and Guattari and others, can illuminate the relationship between state and nomadic science, between mobility and stasis as power relations in Deleuze and Guattari’s sense. Nomadic perspectives stand for continued wonderment of social phenomena that take social, inductive processes as their point of departure.

Based on ethnographic exploration of nomads and on nomadic life, the nomad as figure may both enrich and explore our understanding and analysis of the social world. Not by any romantic vision of freedom and independence, but by making visible and insisting on the subversive possibilities of social life and science. In this vein, I see the concept of mobility as a nomadic tool that has opened up new fields of inquiry and new perspectives on today’s social world. However, as with nomadic forces, the concept of mobility stands in a perpetual interdependency with state science and is always on the verge of being incorporated. In order to keep their character of becoming, mobility studies should be inspired by nomadic science by developing its critical potential as a multi-layered, vague and indefinitely becoming concept.

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Le nomade comme figure clé de la mobilité

Cet article traite de la relation entre les populations nomades et la figure du nomade dans un contexte européen, à partir d'une analyse de la présence de la figure du nomade dans l'imaginaire quotidienne européenne et dans les sciences sociales. Il se base sur l'étude de *La société contre l'État* de Pierre Clastres (1974) qui a travaillé sur les sociétés sans État, la philosophie de Deleuze et Guattari dans *Traité de nomadologie* et du féminisme nomade de Braidotti (1994). Nomadic subjects. Embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory. New York: Columbia University Press). L'article développe une perspective « nomade » sur le travail ethnographique des gens mobiles afin de montrer que des idées opposant le nomade et l'État peuvent s'employer dans une perspective épistémologique.

Mots-clés nomadisme, nomadologie, Roma, l'Europe, résistance