

## Chapter 2

### Reading Boundaries through Category Politics

#### *Introduction*

In order to analyse the complexity of the boundary from the perspective of categories, the previous chapter set the scene, to make opening proposals about categories. In reading the texts by Scott, Foucault and Bhabha as well as drawing on some examples of categories invented anew, I found that the categories seem to have two cardinal aspects. Firstly, they distribute names to make people and their movements visible and readable to the state. Secondly, categories are also produced by the ways in which people use these names because they are implicated in the production of categories. This finding clarified the focus of the thesis: bringing the perspective of categories into the analysis of the boundary is necessarily interrogating the politics of categories. It is to investigate the gap between what labels intend to signify and what they fail to signify.

However, the above finding is based on my initial observations on the roles of categories drawn from a small number of texts and examples. Therefore, the aim of the present chapter is to develop the approach that the thesis is taking so that the perspective of categories can be effectively used for my later analysis of the boundary with examples of migrant activism in Japan. As such it aims to discuss the current debates on complex bordering practices from the perspective of categories and dig deeper into the role of categories in relation to the boundary.

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For this purpose, I begin by looking at scholarship which examines the complexity of borders together with category-vocabularies. Calling this scholarship border-migration (BM) scholarship, I will show how the scholarship takes different approaches from other works on migration by looking at categories of migration as not given and by taking the state as constantly under construction. Therefore, the task of this part of the chapter is to draw an intellectual boundary, so to say, to clarify which groups of scholars the thesis is speaking to.

Having identified the body of scholarship the thesis intends to engage, I will move on to look more closely at how BM scholarship addresses complicated bordering practices through category-vocabularies. In this part, I will identify two different ways in which the scholarship problematises the simple image of the boundary as a line. Firstly, it highlights the danger and the problematic consequences of drawing sharp boundaries. Secondly, the scholarship shows various ways to complicate the lined image of the boundary. I will read the approaches with Agamben for the former and Rancière for the latter, to interrogate what kind of theorisation of the boundary sustains the current debates. I will argue that both Agamben and Rancière elucidate the complexity of boundaries and call into question the simple image of the boundary as a line. Agamben does this by demonstrating the creation of ambiguity as being central to social order, while Rancière demonstrates that social order inherently entails disruption of boundaries. The discussion on BM scholarship is crucial for the thesis because it shapes the direction of the remaining thesis.

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The final part of this chapter will discuss strengths and weaknesses of BM scholarship. I will argue that BM scholarship is too quick to dismiss the tenacity of boundary-as-a-line thinking by paying little attention to the implications of the examples where categories are persistently used. Drawing on the examples used by BM scholarship, I will argue that the scholarship fails to address the persistent reliance on category-vocabularies and points to the need for more robust examination on the tenacity of categorising people into groups.

The chapter will conclude with a short section to discuss the implications of discussing migrant activism in Japan within the framework of BM scholarship. The implication of using Japan as an example will be discussed here. Addressing this question is a necessary step for the subsequent chapters where migrant activism in Japan is discussed in the framework set up by BM scholarship.

### *Border-Migration Scholarship*

On July 13 2004, twelve Kurd refugees started occupying the front yard of the United Nations (UN) Building in Tokyo. The main target of their sit-in protest, which lasted for 72 days, was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) housed in the UN building at that time. The protesters comprised two Kurd families from Turkey: the Dogan family (father, father's brother, mother and two children) and the Kazankiran family (father, mother and five children). The protest took place at the height of frustration among the Kurd refugees in Japan. Between 1982 and 2006,

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people from Turkey constituted the second largest group applying for refugee status in Japan.<sup>1</sup> Despite the large number of Kurd asylum seekers, the Japanese government continuously refused to grant them refugee status.<sup>2</sup> Having been dissatisfied with the Japanese government's attitude, the refugees decided to organise the sit-in protest to realise the following three demands:

- (1) Recognize us all as refugees.
- (2) Help us gain refugee status in a third country.
- (3) Assist us in obtaining visas that will allow us to live and work in Japan until we are able to leave for a third country.<sup>3</sup>

The UN building is located in Shibuya, a Mecca for fashion. It was, therefore, not surprising that the 24 hour sit-in protest in this stylish part of Tokyo attracted quite a lot of media attention.<sup>4</sup> More importantly, however,

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Justice. (2007) *(Kouhou Shiryou) Heisei 18-nen ni okeru Nanmin Nintei-sha Su Tou ni tsuite* [Press Release] Regarding the number of people recognized as refugees etc in 2006] <<http://www.moj.go.jp/content/000007991.pdf>> [Accessed 10 September 2012], pp.4-5. See also Ministry of Justice. (n.d.) *Shouwa 57-nen 1-gatsu kara Heisei 23-nen 12-gatsu matsu made no Nanmin Nintei Shinsei Tou no Joukyou* [Regarding the situations of the Applications for Refugee Status] <<http://www.moj.go.jp/content/000095188.pdf>> [Accessed 10 September 2012].

<sup>2</sup> It was widely speculated that the Japanese government was afraid to jeopardise its friendly relationship with the Turkish government by accepting Kurdish refugees from Turkey.

<sup>3</sup> The Kazankiran Family and The Dogan Family (2004), 'We, Two Kurdish Refugee Families, Have Been Sitting in at the Entrance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Tokyo to Demand the Following:' <<http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/~pyonpyon/fjc/04/sit-in2e.htm>> [Accessed 15 March 2007].

<sup>4</sup> See *The Japan Times*, 'Kurdish Asylum-seekers State Sit-in in Shibuya', 17 July 2004, <<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20040717a7.html>> [Accessed 1 March 2007]; *Asahi Shimbun*, 'Suwarikomi 20-nichi 1-ri Nyuin' [The Sit-in Demonstration Reaching for 20 days, 1 Person Hospitalized], 4 August 2004; *Mainichi Shimbun*, 'Hakugai' [Persecution], 24 July 2004; *Saitama Shimbun*, 'Kawaguchi no Toruko

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the refugee-led protest was a significant event because it demonstrated, in two respects, what it meant to be classified into a specific category of people. Firstly, the protest was aimed to publicise how refugees were treated by the Japanese government.<sup>5</sup> The protesters revealed that, once classified as ‘illegal’ foreigners, they were subject to state control over their lives. Not having been recognised as refugees in Japan, the protesters were in the middle of a lengthy legal battle to overturn the government’s decision. Consequently, their legal status was in limbo, implicating them directly with the discourse of illegality where they were perceived and treated as the ‘illegal’. The lack of legal status restricted the protesters’ lives in many ways. For instance, they were neither allowed to work nor eligible to receive financial assistance from the government. In order to live, however, they had to work without permission, which instantly made their status ‘illegal’. Not having a legal status also meant that, despite being in the middle of the refugee application process, the protesters were occasionally detained in detention centres, often on the whim of immigration officers.<sup>6</sup> Their freedom of movement was controlled not only by confinement to detention centres but also by restrictions outside detention centres. Every month on an appointed

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Kokuseki Kurudo-jin 2 Kazoku “Kuni wa Nanmin Nintei wo” [Two Kurdish Families in Kawaguchi ‘The Government Should Recognize them as Refugees’], 24 July 2004; *Tokyo Shimbun*, ‘Nihon Anshin dekiru Kuni dewa...’ [Japan, It is Not the Country to be Safe...], 29 July 2004.

<sup>5</sup> The Supporters Meeting of 2 Kurdish-Refugee Families. (2005) *Nanmin wo Oitsumeru Kuni: Kurudojin Nanmin Suwarikomi ga Utaeta Mono [The Country that Hunts Down Refugees: What the Kurdish Sit-in Appealed]* (Tokyo: Ryokuho Shuppan), p.26.

<sup>6</sup> There is no clear rule to determine, under what conditions, one is to be detained (or released). See Amemiya, Tsuyoshi and Erdal Dogan. (2006) *Watashi no Jinsei, Kore Nani? [What is My Life?]*. Self-published; Yagishita, Misaki. (2007). Shuyo Shisetsu ni Okeru Nanmin Josei heno Boryoku [Violence Against Female Refugees at the Detention Centres], *Women’s Asia*, No. 2150, pp.20–21.

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date, the protesters had to visit immigration offices where officials decided whether they should be detained again or not.<sup>7</sup> When detainees are released from detention centres in Japan, immigration officers also decide how far from their registered addresses the detainees can move freely without permission. Following this rule, the protesters had to obtain a 'Permit for Trip to the Outside of Place of Residence' from the Immigration Detention Centre whenever they visited places beyond their residential areas, even to visit friends, to go shopping or to attend school trips.<sup>8</sup>

Secondly, the Kurd refugee protest demonstrated how people resisted state control over their lives. As Hannah Arendt astutely points out, a lack of (legal) status in a political community of the state takes the voice away from humans.<sup>9</sup> Their asylum claims having been rejected, the refugees did not have any legal status in Japan or anywhere else, which made their presence invisible. Crucially, however, the Kurd protesters refused to remain silent. They appeared in public, disclosed their identity and, in this way, effectively claimed a legitimate part in the public sphere.<sup>10</sup> For them, appearing in public and speaking on their own were crucial aspects of their demonstration: 'As long as we remain silent, the Japanese government will not change'.<sup>11</sup> The refugees strategically selected the UN space because UN premises were

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Justice, (n.d.) *Karihoumen Toriatsukai Youryou [Guidelines for Provisional Release of Detainees]*, Chapter 5, Article 17 and 18.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Chapter 5, Article 21 and 22.

<sup>9</sup> Arendt, Hannah. (1968) *Imperialism: Part II of the Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harvest).

<sup>10</sup> Shindo, Reiko. (2009) 'Struggle for citizenship: Interaction between Political Society and Civil Society at a Kurd Refugee Protest in Tokyo', *Citizenship Studies*, Vol.13, No.3, pp.219-237.

<sup>11</sup> My translation. See [http://www.freewebs.com/kurdjapan/exp\\_world.html](http://www.freewebs.com/kurdjapan/exp_world.html). [Accessed 21 October 2007].

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beyond Japanese jurisdiction. 'If we had organized the sit-in in front of the Ministry of Justice, or some other government-related organizations, we would have been immediately sent to detention centres and deported back [to Turkey] because of our illegal status'.<sup>12</sup> The Kurd refugee protest highlighted that the refugees resisted the state's monopoly to decide who was able to speak. Despite the lack of status, the refugees asserted their legitimacy in the very political community which rejected their presence.

In other words, the Kurd refugee protest exemplifies the moment when categories—in this case, the category of refugee—become sites of control and struggle. The Kurd protesters were made 'illegal' by the government's refusal to recognise them as refugees. The state monopolised its power to name who the Kurd protesters were: they were not refugees. Not recognised as refugees, the protesters were subject to various controls imposed by the Japanese government. The state decided, quite literally, where the refugees could move, what they could do and how they could live in Japan. At the same time, the Kurd refugees also challenged the state's control over what they could do. They claimed that they *were* refugees and demanded that they should be recognised as such. The protesters refused to be categorised as 'illegal' foreigners (or 'illegal' immigrants) and argued that they should be categorised as refugees.

The Kurd refugee protest highlights the need to interrogate the politics of categories to examine contemporary migration phenomena. Categories are not simply names to identify people but are by themselves a site of

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<sup>12</sup> Amemiya, Tsuyoshi. (2005) *Watashitachi Doushite Ningen ja Naino? [Why Aren't We Human Beings?]*. Self-published, p.70. My translation.

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contestation where different claims are made and unmade. As a way to interrogate categories in this manner, a growing body of research has unpacked the process and contexts in which people are identified by specific labels.<sup>13</sup> They question the categories used in migration and investigate the political implication of the ways in which these categories are used. Since this body of works is scattered across different sub-fields of IR, such as border studies, citizenship studies and refugee studies, each of which is an interdisciplinary field of studies, it is futile to try to pin down exactly what this body of literature is. However, for the purpose of the thesis, it is possible to identify two prominent characteristics which set this emerging group of research apart from other research on migration. For the purposes of this thesis, I name this group of scholarship border-migration (BM) scholarship.<sup>14</sup>

Firstly, BM scholarship differs from other approaches in migration which assume that the categories in migration are given. As I will further elaborate in the next section, BM scholarship does not simply take categories, such as refugees and immigrants, as a priori entities. Instead, it examines the politics in which people are grouped by specific labels and the implications of classifying people as such for control and resistance, for instance. In this

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<sup>13</sup> For the reference, please see the following two sections where I introduce a number of BM scholars: '*Problematizing Categories: Categories as Control*' and '*Challenging Categories*'.

<sup>14</sup> Given the approach taken in BM scholarship, it can be surmised that it largely consists of what Guild calls 'critical migration studies', and what Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos calls 'autonomy of migration'. See Guild, Elspeth. (2009) *Security and Migration in the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press); Papadopoulos, Dimitris, Niamh Stephenson, and Vassilis Tsianos. (2008) *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the 21st Century*. (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press); Papadopoulos, Dimitris, and Vassilis Tsianos. (2008) 'The Autonomy of Migration: The Animals of Undocumented Mobility', in Anna Hickey-Moody and Peta Malins (eds.) *Deleuzian Encounters. Studies in Contemporary Social Issues* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan), pp.223-235.



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regard, BM scholarship differs from other research which assumes, in varying degrees, the normality of describing someone with specific labels, and in this way, de-politicises category-vocabularies.

A reading of some of the main, often ‘must-read’, texts in migration-related scholarship attests to the assumption on categories. For instance, situating itself in Securitisation Theory from security studies, the book *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe* (1993), written by Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup and Pierre Lemaitre, examines the process in which migration is perceived as a potential threat to society in the context of Europe.<sup>15</sup> Although it examines the process of constructing narratives of security in terms of migration, it nonetheless perceives migrant groups as a distinct category that can be transformed into a threat. In citizenship studies, in the book *Democracy and the Nation State: Aliens, Denizens, and Citizens in a World of International Migration* (1990), Tomas Hammar proposed the influential concept, ‘the three entrance gate’, to illustrate a new category of foreigners called ‘denizens’ who neither become citizens nor remain as temporary foreign visitors or guestworkers.<sup>16</sup> In Hammar’s theory, ‘foreigners’ (or migrants), that is ‘denizens’ or guestworkers, are understood as a category that can be effectively separated from the category of ‘citizens’. Contrary to the idea of citizenship based on nationhood, Yasemin Soysal argues in her book *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (1994), that the idea of citizenship is

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<sup>15</sup> Wæver, Ole, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup and Pierre Lemaitre. (1993) *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe* (London: Pinter).

<sup>16</sup> Hammar, Tomas. (1990) *Democracy and the Nation State: Aliens, Denizens, and Citizens in a World of International Migration* (Surrey: Gower).

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increasingly being based on 'personhood': 'individual rights, expansively redefined as human rights on a universalistic basis and legitimized at the transnational level, undercut the import of national citizenship by disrupting the territorial closure of nations'.<sup>17</sup> However Soysal places different groups of migrants into one group of 'guestworkers', which inevitably results in treating 'migrants' as a collective entity.<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, BM scholarship differs from other approaches in studying migration in the respect that it considers state to be a constructed entity, and hence, the boundary of the state as a site of investigation. It underscores the view that the state, and the boundary which sustains the entity called the state, is always 'under construction'. In order to complete its construction, the state relentlessly engages in statecraft by demarcating the inside of the state from the outside. In this view, the state is regarded not as an immortal entity which assumes its existence, but as continuously realising its own existence through various means, including governing the boundaries of that community called the state. Borrowing Bhabha's expression, the state is not just 'the pedagogical'. As I argued in the previous chapter, in Bhabha's view, the state is realised in the encounter between the pedagogical and the performative where the latter indicates that which slips from the control of the state. The state is sustained and performed in its attempt to control and govern what slips away from its capture. As always 'under construction', the

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<sup>17</sup> Soysal, Yasemin. (1994) *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p.164.

<sup>18</sup> Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship*, p.9. For further critical reading of Soysal, see McNevin, Anne. (2011) *Contesting Citizenship: Irregular Migrants and New Frontiers of the Political* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp.28-30.

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boundary of the state is a place of contestation where statecraft is (re)inscribed, enacted and resisted.

This is a distinctively different view from a cluster of research on migration which assumes the state as a given and immortal entity. Once again, reading some canonical texts in the study of migration points to this. In the article, 'Citizenship and Social Class', T.H. Marshall proposes an idea of citizenship which develops from civil rights to political and social rights.<sup>19</sup> One criticism of Marshall's understanding of citizenship is that he fails to emphasise that citizenship is claimed from the state rather than given by the state.<sup>20</sup> Failing to acknowledge that citizenship is not monopolistically bestowed by the state, Marshall exposes his own assumption that the state exists *prior to* claims for citizenship. In presenting the idea of multicultural citizenship in the book *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory and Minority Rights* (1996), Will Kymlicka argues that the protection of cultural minorities is a necessary aspect of citizenship.<sup>21</sup> His intention is to determine how a national community can be more unified by incorporating the minorities within its territory. In this regard, Kymlicka assumes that the state is the basis on which multicultural citizenship is achieved. In the book *Security: A New Framework for Security* (1998), although Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde develop a way of examining the process through which a certain issue, such as migration, becomes a threat, that is through

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<sup>19</sup> Marshall, T.H. (1963) 'Citizenship and Social Class', in *Sociology at the Crossroads: and Other Essays* (London: Heinemann), pp.76-127.

<sup>20</sup> Turner, Bryan. (1990) 'Outline of a Theory of Citizenship', *Sociology*, Vol.24, No.2, p. 193.

<sup>21</sup> Kymlicka, Will. (1996) *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory and Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

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securitisation, they argue that state sovereignty should remain as the conceptual focus, leaving state boundaries intact in their analysis.<sup>22</sup> Myron Weiner begins his influential book *The Global Migration Crisis: Challenge to State and to Human Rights*, by describing world-wide migration as a ‘crisis’ for the state; he considers the state to be the basic unit of analysis.<sup>23</sup> For Weiner, borders exclusively mean the territorial edges of a state, which need to be protected from the tide of population movement. In *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Castles and Miller (1993) examine how migration affects capitalism and the impacts this has on national unity.<sup>24</sup> They end the book with four models of how migrants can be incorporated into the state, suggesting that the state is the principal unit to which people belong.

While BM scholarship shares these two prominent standpoints, that is, questioning categories of migration and state boundaries, a closer reading of the scholarship shows that two different approaches are taken to address these two characteristics as intertwined with one another. The first approach highlights the implications of categorisation for control; while the second approach highlights the implication of categorisation for resistance. While the former is concerned with the danger and violence imposed by the state’s attempt to draw a sharp boundary, the latter is interested in showing various

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<sup>22</sup> Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde. (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers). See also Wæver, Ole. (1995) ‘Securitization and Desecuritization’, in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp.46-86.

<sup>23</sup> Weiner, Myron. (1995) *The Global Migration Crisis: Challenge to States and to Human Rights* (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers).

<sup>24</sup> Castles, Stephen and Mark J Miller. (1993) *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (Basingstoke: Macmillan).

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ways to complicate bordering practices of the state by claiming different categories. These two will be discussed in the next two sections. Needless to say, since BM scholarship is by its nature interdisciplinary, it is a futile attempt to read every single text which can be categorised as BM scholarship in the hopes of depicting an overarching picture of the scholarship. Therefore, the texts considered in the following two sections are selected because they are frequently cited as exhibiting either of these approaches mentioned above. Therefore the next sections should be read with this in mind.

### *Problematizing Categories: Categories as Control*

One approach in BM scholarship is that category-vocabularies are regarded as integral to the management of human movements across borders. In this approach, the implications for categorising people for control are discussed in relation to various bordering practices, each of which challenges the image of the boundary as a sharp line.

One example of these practices takes place in relation to security. In order to pursue security, the state expands its bordering practices beyond the territorial edges of the state into the daily lives of people. In this expanding bordering practice, people are made targets of the state, in order to be identified as safe or dangerous under the auspices of pursuing security. For this purpose, production of these categories is made instrumental to the state's security practices.<sup>25</sup> Securitisation of migration is manifested in

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<sup>25</sup>Aradau, Claudia. (2008) *Rethinking Trafficking in Women: Politics out of Security* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan); Bigo, Didier. (2002) 'Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease', *Alternative: Global, Local, Political*, Vol.27, No.1, pp.63-92; De Genova, Nicholas. (2007) 'The Production of

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meanings associated with categories such as danger and risk. For instance, Didier Bigo (2002) argues that migration is linked with loss of control over territorial boundaries of the state, which provoke a feeling of unease. According to Bigo, this uneasiness constitutes the link between security and migration:

Immigration appears as a catchword, a shibboleth, permitting the convergence on a focal point of institutional statements regarding security norms (at the internal and external level) and fears. Immigration is then important for the continuum of security threats because it determines a concentration stirring up competition and justifying the convergence of missions among the police, the army, the custom officers, and intelligence officers in their struggle against a wide range of “new threats” that could all be linked to immigrants.<sup>26</sup>

In this way, Bigo argues that the ‘immigrant’ does not simply indicate the movement of people but is tied to the discourse of security.

In the background of securitisation of migration, different kinds of databases are operational. This indicates that the bordering to secure the state takes place in people’s daily lives and through cyberspace. For example, in the USA, IDENT (Automated Biometrics Identification System) collects

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Culprits: From Deportability to Detainability in the Aftermath of “Homeland Security”, *Citizenship Studies*, Vol.11, No.5, pp.421-448; Huysmans, Jef. (2006) *The Politics of Migration: Fear, Migration, Asylum in the UK* (Oxon: Routledge).

<sup>26</sup> Bigo, ‘Security and Immigration’, p.76.

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fingerprints electronically from all foreigners including asylum seekers visiting America; SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) stores information on all foreign students studying in America, and ADIS (Arrival Departure Information System) records travellers' entry and exit information. That individual travellers are monitored through a wide range of databases suggests that their movements are controlled not only upon crossing borders but even in their daily lives.<sup>27</sup> Especially in the post 9.11 era, security and surveillance are connected to combat terrorism, which justifies monitoring the everyday life of people through collection of various kinds of personal information. Such information ranges from financial transactions and records of international travel to biological and behavioural information.

This copious data is compiled to monitor and control the movement of people across borders. Louise Amoore proposes the concept of the biometric border to argue that these various databases are utilised to 'categorize populations into degrees of riskiness'.<sup>28</sup> The integration of numerous databases aims to profile how risky travellers are and determine whether or not they are allowed to travel.<sup>29</sup> People are allowed to cross borders only

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Amoore, Louise. (2009). 'Algorithmic War: Everyday Geographies of the War on Terror', *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, Vol. 41, No.1, pp. 49-69; Muller, Benjamin. (2004) '(Dis)Qualified Bodies: Securitization, Citizenship and "Identity Management"', *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 279-294; Dillon, Michael and Julian Reid. (2001) 'Global Liberal Governance: Biopolitics, Security and War', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol.30, No.1, pp.41-66; Walters, William. (2011) 'Rezoning the Global: Technological Zones, Technological Work, and the (Un-)Making of Biometric Borders', in Vicki Squire (ed.), *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity* (London: Routledge), pp.51-73; Salter, Mark. (2006) 'The Global Visa Regime and the Political Technologies of the International Self', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol.31, No.2, pp.167-189.

<sup>28</sup> Amoore, Louise. (2006) 'Biometric Borders: Governing Mobilities in the War on Terror', *Political Geography*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp.339.

<sup>29</sup> As Michael Dillon argues, the seemingly innocuous and technical data collection and analysis method is racially biased. See Dillon, Michael. (2008) 'Security, Race

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when they neatly fit into specific immigration categories for which they apply and raise no suspicions. Management of mobility through categories of migration suggests that the movement of people is controlled even before people reach their countries of destination.<sup>30</sup> For instance, if one wishes to travel to the US as a 'tourist', she or he has to submit information through US VISIT, a programme which gives pre-authorisation of travel to foreigners travelling to the US without immigration visas. The US-VISIT programme is connected to the various databases mentioned earlier to crosscheck the background of travellers. Unless US VISIT authorises one's travel, one cannot even leave for the US. In this way, the state boundary is drawn not at the entry/exit point of the US territory before travellers leave their countries. People are made into a target of categorisation, with the state monitoring and controlling who can cross borders with which visa category, using 'dataveillance' whereby biological and personal information is collected, stored and connected to one another.

Controlling the movement of people via categorisation happens not only in relation to risk and danger. Categories such as refugee and 'trafficked woman' control the agency of migrants to erase their voices, too.<sup>31</sup> For

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and War', in Michael Dillon and Andrew Neal (eds.), *Foucault on Politics, Security and War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan), pp.193-194.

<sup>30</sup> Bigo, Didier. (2011) 'Freedom and Speed in Enlarged Borderzones', in Vicki Squire, *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity* (Oxon: Routledge), pp.31-50; Nyers, Peter. (2011) 'Forms of Irregular Citizenship', in Vicki Squire (ed.), *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity* (London: Routledge), pp.184-198.

<sup>31</sup> As I will argue, Nandita Sharma takes the position that women who migrate by means of trafficking are considered to be helpless victims. The adjective 'trafficked' itself underlines such an assumption that migrant women are passive subjects of trafficking. I understand that, to highlight this assumption, Sharma uses a quotation mark for the phrase, trafficked women. I follow her usage here. See Sharma, Nandita. (2003) 'Travel Agency: A Critique of Anti-Trafficking Campaigns', *Refuge*, Vol.21,



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example, Liisa Malkki (1996) examines what the category of refugee does to people. Drawing on the case of refugees from Rwanda, Malkki persuasively argues that refugees are often represented as voiceless. Being imagined as physically weak and power-less, refugees are considered incapable of speech and made into 'speechless emissaries'.<sup>32</sup> Their own account of the historical and political context of being in exile, and more importantly, their understanding of what it means to be a refugee is not taken into account by humanitarian workers. Once categorised as refugees, people are made into subservient recipients of help from the UNHCR and in this way, depoliticised and pacified.

Malkki's arguments resonate with Hannah Arendt's passage, 'right to have right'. According to Arendt, the voiceless-ness of refugees is due to the particular nature assigned to refugees: they are outside the state system. She points out that refugees are denied even the 'right to have rights....to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions'.<sup>33</sup> To lose the 'right to have rights' culminates in the loss of one's human agency to speak and act.<sup>34</sup> Without the agency to speak and act, refugees become targets to be helped by others. In contrast to refugees, citizens monopolise speech and action as the authentic political subjects because their citizenship status assures them of their belonging to the political community of the state.

Importantly, Malkki highlights that the control of agency through

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No.3, pp.53-65.

<sup>32</sup> Malkki, Liisa. (1996) 'Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization', *Cultural Anthropology* Vol.11, No.3, 377-404.

<sup>33</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Imperialism: Part Two of the Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Mariner Books, 1968), pp.176-177.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

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categories is carried out not by state agencies but the international organisations, in this case, the UNHCR. This suggests that the UNHCR takes part in the production of categories to border the realm of politics guarded around the state boundary. Despite the concerns of safety being raised by the refugees, the UNHCR insisted on the security of their countries of origin and the safety of return, which eventually proved to be wrong. Malkki's account highlights that the bordering practices of the state, in this case, to protect what Magnusson calls the realm of 'politics proper' of the state,<sup>35</sup> are 'outsourced' to other non-state organisations such as the UNHCR.<sup>36</sup> It is in this context of diffusion of bordering practices that people are categorised to be targets of control.

Being identified as helpless and speechless can also lead to criminalisation.<sup>37</sup> As Nandita Sharma shows, for both international organisations and NGOs proposing an end to human trafficking, the 'trafficked women' are often understood as people who are smuggled against their will.<sup>38</sup> Identifying 'trafficked women' as being forcefully and violently dragged into sex work overshadows an important aspect of trafficking, namely that some migrant women consider trafficking as a survival strategy, a strategy to migrate to a country where they cannot go on their own. Sharma further argues that, identifying the trafficking of women as a coercive and

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<sup>35</sup> Magnusson, Warren. (1990) The Reification of Political Community, in R.B.J. Walker and Saul H. Mendlovitz, *Contending Sovereignties: Redefining Political Community* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers), p.51.

<sup>36</sup> Anne McNevin persistently raised this 'outsourcing' aspect of bordering practices to me in reading Malkki's piece. The word 'outsource' is one of the expressions that McNevin used.

<sup>37</sup> Sharma, 'Travel Agency'. See also Aradau, *Rethinking Trafficking in Women*.

<sup>38</sup> Sharma, *Ibid*.

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violent act delegitimises the movement of people without official permission. Since trafficking is considered an illegitimate form of movement, the 'trafficked women are associated with illegality as opposed to legal migrants who cross borders through officially-accepted means. Once migrant women are identified as being 'trafficked', their presence in a country of destination becomes illegal, which justifies the forceful return of migrant women to their countries of origin.

If certain migrants can be labeled as 'trafficked,' it seems, then specific policy measures to initiate deportation measures can be mobilized with little outcry from the general population and even some (im)migrant advocates. Such legitimation strategies are perhaps most evident in regard to women who are identified as 'victims of trafficking'.<sup>39</sup>

Sharma's example highlights how the statist boundaries between illegality and legality are, once again, outsourced to actors other than the state, in this case, the NGOs and international organisations. The bordering practices are diffused as the state no longer monopolises them. Instead, who can be made legal and illegal in relation to the state is monitored and controlled by the NGOs, the international organisations and so on. Classifying people into groups and controlling their agencies thus takes place in the context of such expanding bordering practices.

Looking at categories as a site of control enables us to examine various

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.58.

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ways in which people are managed and governed through category-vocabularies in migration. Management and monitoring of the movement of people through categories is what David Lyon calls ‘social sorting’ – classifying people into groups to profile their identities.<sup>40</sup> BM scholarship examines the implications of this social sorting for control. The control includes the movement of people as well as their agencies. BM scholarship demonstrates that this social sorting takes place in a context where borders are diffused in terms of locations into cyberspace and people’s daily lives. It also points to the outsourcing of bordering practices to actors other than the state. In this way, the first approach to categories is that expanding bordering practices, which questions the simple lined image of the boundary, is maintained by using categories for control. Categorising people is cardinal to diffused boundary practices.

### *Theorising Categories through Agamben*

Having identified one of the prominent approaches in BM scholarship, this section will examine what kind of theorisation of categories sustains this approach. Since the thesis is investigating the image of the boundary through what the boundary does, that is, categorisation, this line of inquiry is crucial to probe the underlying understanding of categories in BM scholarship. I argue that Agamben’s approach to categories plays an important role in shaping the approach mentioned in the previous section. For Agamben, ambiguity is constitutive to categories. Agamben argues that such ambiguity

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<sup>40</sup> Lyon, David. (2006) *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond* (Cullompton, Devon: Willan).

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is produced by sovereign power. It suspends the decision of which category of life one belongs to, the life of *zoē* or *bios*, and makes this distinction between the two ambiguous. By suspending decisions over categories, sovereign power controls when and how categories are produced. It is within this link between ambiguity and control that Agamben theorises categories.

Although Agamben does not use the word, categories, I read his work by examining social order which creates and sustains category-vocabularies.<sup>41</sup> By social order, I mean a set of rules and norms that define what we are and hence regulate how we behave. As we have seen in the previous section, and as we will see in the next section, BM scholarship tirelessly elucidates the ways in which people are governed and managed by being classified into specific groups. Depending on categories, certain behaviour is made possible. This indicates that social order is reflective of category-vocabularies.

Agamben explains social order by introducing two different categories of life, *zoē* and *bios*. Following Aristotle's understanding of life, Agamben calls the excluded form of life *zoē* and the included one *bios*. *Zoē* is the way of living in the sphere of *oikos* (home), 'the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods)'. Meanwhile *bios* belongs to the public realm and is 'a qualified life'.<sup>42</sup> Using Jean-Luc Nancy's idea of ban, Agamben points out that the relationship between these two ways of living is exclusive inclusion. Through the very exclusion from the political sphere, *zoē*—the life which is banned from the public sphere—is connected to that very realm. *Zoē*

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<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Agamben, Giorgio. (2005) *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

<sup>42</sup> Agamben, Giorgio. (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press), p.1.

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is not simply excluded from the public sphere but included in it through its exclusion. '[W]hat has been banned is delivered over to its own separateness and, at the same time, consigned to the mercy of the one who abandons it— *at once excluded and included, removed and at the same time captured*'.<sup>43</sup> In this respect, as Foucault says, a form of life is biopoliticised: the excluded form of life (zoē) is always already implicated in the sphere of bios.<sup>44</sup> There is no clear separation between zoē and bios: the line between them remains ambiguous.

Crucially, this ambiguity between two categories of life plays a pivotal role in constituting social order. Agamben argues that sovereign power resides over this ambiguity. Agamben terms this nebulous zone where sovereignty resides 'a zone of indistinction'. It is a zone where the quality of life is decided not based on law but on the sovereign's will. This suspension of law means that in a zone of indistinction sovereignty declares exception when it comes to law. Agamben uses an example of a Nazi concentration camp to describe the situation where juridical order was suspended under the state of emergency order. Agamben argues that the declaration of exception (or emergency) creates a zone of indistinction where a life is placed outside law but solely under sovereign power: 'The sovereign, having the legal power to suspend the validity of the law, legally places himself [sic] outside the law'.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p.110. Emphasis mine.

<sup>44</sup> Unlike Foucault, Agamben does not consider that biopoliticisation of life is a feature characteristic of modernity. Instead, he argues that it is under modernity that such politicisation of life is accelerated: 'The entry of zoē into the sphere of polis — the politicization of bare life as such — constitutes the decisive event in modernity and signals a radical transformation of the political-philosophical categories of classical thought'. See Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p.4.

<sup>45</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p.15.

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In a zone of indistinction, a way of living is 'bare life'. It is a way of living, a form of life, which is caught between *zoē* and *bios*, perpetually facing uncertainty concerning which realm it belongs to and thus perpetually being exposed to sovereign power which exclusively decides the quality of life.

By looking at moments when states of exception are invoked, Agamben shows that social order is constituted by the sovereign's control over a zone of indistinction. That is, social order reflects sovereign power over the ambiguity of categorising life into either *zoē* or *bios*. Agamben considers sovereignty to work through its power to decide which life is classified as a qualified form of life and which life is an unqualified one and confined to the sphere of *oikos*. 'When life becomes the supreme political value, [...] it is as if the ultimate ground of sovereign power were at stake in this decision. In modern biopolitics, *sovereign is he who decides on the value or the nonvalue of life as such*. Life [...] now itself becomes the place of a sovereign decision'.<sup>46</sup> In other words, sovereign power is manifested as the power of deciding whether life is qualified or not, the power of categorising life.

For Agamben, this manifestation of sovereign power is crystallised in suspending life and making life perpetually exposed to the possibility of being categorised. Agamben calls the space where life is suspended the state of exception. Drawing on various war-time examples of countries such as the USA, Italy, the UK and Germany, Agamben demonstrates that declaration of exception was issued by executive power of the government to legitimise the

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<sup>46</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p.142. Emphasis mine.

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state's ability to suspend law.<sup>47</sup> For example, with the examples of the concentration camps in Germany, Agamben points out that these camps were placed neither under the criminal law nor prison law, but placed under the state of exception. Therefore, people within the camps were *legitimately* left outside legal protection.

If sovereign power is founded on the ability to decide on the state of exception, the camp is the structure in which the state of exception is permanently realized.<sup>48</sup>

Since, in the state of exception, the decision of categorising forms of life is suspended, people in the camp were exposed to the very naked nature of the sovereign power.

The people who entered the camp moved about in a zone of indistinction between the outside and the inside, the exception and the rule, the licit and the illicit, in which every juridical protection had disappeared.<sup>49</sup>

Thus Agamben argues that sovereignty resides at the threshold of creation of categories. The state of exception 'represents the inclusion and capture of a space that is neither outside nor inside [...]'. Sovereign power is realised through its ability to decide such a state, or a space, of exception, and hence to

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<sup>47</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, pp.11-22.

<sup>48</sup> Agamben, Giorgio. (2000) *Means Without End: Notes on Politics*, trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minnesota: University of Minneapolis Press), p.40.

<sup>49</sup> Agamben, *Means Without End*, pp.40-41.



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suspend categorising life<sup>50</sup>

For Agamben, the state of exception is the fundamental aspect of society we are living.<sup>51</sup> Following Benjamin, Agamben argues that sovereign power to suspend categorising the form of life is not an exceptional event but a rule for social life. 'The fundamental activity of sovereign power is the production of bare life as originary political element and *as a threshold of articulation between nature and culture, zoē and bios*'.<sup>52</sup> Agamben argues that exception can be declared any time. Hence, the state of exception is now becoming one of the constitutive elements of the city.<sup>53</sup> This is a chilling reminder that, especially in the post-9.11 era, combating terrorism and pursuing national security can easily rationalise the call for exception.<sup>54</sup> In this respect, anyone's life can be bare life: everyone is, what Agamben calls, homo sacer, a Roman legal figure whose life is in a zone of indistinction.<sup>55</sup> 'The state of exception, which used to be essentially a temporary suspension of the order, becomes now a new and stable spatial arrangement inhabited by that naked life that increasingly cannot be inscribed into the order'.<sup>56</sup> That 'we are all virtually homines sacri' indicates that sovereign power over production of categories constitutes a vital aspect of everyday life.<sup>57</sup>

By arguing that sovereign power monopolises the production of

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<sup>50</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, p.35.

<sup>51</sup> Agamben, *Means Without End*, p.40.

<sup>52</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p.181. Emphasis mine.

<sup>53</sup> Agamben, *Means Without End*.

<sup>54</sup> Minca, Claudio. (2006) 'Giorgio Agamben and New Biopolitical *Nomos*', *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, Vol.88, No.4, pp.387-403. See also Minca, Claudio.(2005) 'The Return of the Camp', *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 29, pp. 405-412.

<sup>55</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p.111, p.115.

<sup>56</sup> Agamben, *Means Without End*, p.43. See also Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p.175-176.

<sup>57</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p.115.

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categories, Agamben regards control as being expressed as categories, or as categorising practices. To categorise people, in Agamben's case, the value of life, is to control what one is, the life of *zoē* or *bios*. Since sovereign power resides at the threshold of production of categories, it controls when and how people are categorised. Categorising people is, in this respect, a target of control of sovereign power. Focusing on the ways in which sovereign power produces bare life, Agamben is interested in the moment when social order is manifested by suspension of categories which identifies people who are (to be) excluded from the realm of inclusion. As I have argued above, Agamben argues that this excluded life is also included in the realm of *polis* and calls a form of life in an ambiguous zone bare life. His focus is on how sovereignty controls the threshold of categorising people into the excluded life, which perpetually puts one's life outside the realm of *polis*, into a zone of indistinction. In this way, Agamben looks at categories through control that puts people into a zone of indistinction, either *zoē* or *bios*.

In BM scholarship, this Agamben type of understanding of categories can be seen in a cluster of research which examines implications of categories for control. This type of work focuses on instances where category-vocabularies are utilised to identify people under labels which are associated with the realm of exclusion such as refugee, asylum seeker and illegal immigrant. These highlight the moments when people are put outside the domain of *polis*, into the realm of politically unqualified life. In this line of work, some look at the ways in which people are made into *homines sacri* in

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relation to security practices of the state.<sup>58</sup> Others look at contemporary examples of the excluded life, such as people in immigration detention centres.<sup>59</sup> They use category-vocabularies to look at life on the excluded side of the boundary and investigate how control over categories which exclude people from the domain of politically qualified life affects the way we live. It is important to acknowledge that the works of BM scholarship cited above do not necessarily make explicit remarks on Agamben's work; some of them might even oppose some aspects of Agamben's arguments. However, as I will show later, in order to reflect possibilities and limitations of BM scholarship, it is equally important to examine the theoretical trend which characterises the approach where categories are problematised as targets of control. In this regard, I argued that reading Agamben guides us to expatiate on what theorisations about categories underline one of the prominent approaches to categories taken in the scholarship.

### *Challenging Categories*

BM scholarship not only problematises categories through which people are controlled, but also examines how categories can be challenged. This is

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<sup>58</sup> Bigo, Didier. (2007) 'Detention of Foreigner, States of Exception, and the Social Practices of Control of the Banopticon', in Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr (eds.), *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), pp.3-34; Vaughan-Williams, Nick. (2009) *Border Politics: The Limits of Sovereign Power* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press); Minca, 'Giorgio Agamben and New Biopolitical *Nomos*'.

<sup>59</sup> Edkins, Jenny and Véronique Pin-Fat. (2005) 'Through the Wire: Relations of Power and Relations of Violence', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol.34, No.1, pp.1-25; Rajaram, Prem Kumar, and Grundy-Warr (2004) 'The Irregular Migrant as Homo Sacer: Migration and Detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand' *International Migration*, Vol.42, No. 1, pp.33-64; Perera, Suvendrini. (2002) 'A Line in the Sea: The Tampa, Boat Stories and the Border', *Cultural Studies Review*, Vol.8, No.1, pp.11-27.

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the second approach which is prominent in BM scholarship. While the first approach problematises categories as embodiment of control, the second approach challenges categories as offering possibilities of resistance to such control.

I argue that two different kinds of resistance have attracted scholarly attention.<sup>60</sup> Firstly, some researchers look at instances where people demand to be part of specific categories.<sup>61</sup> One of the typical examples can be seen in the Sudanese refugee protest which took place in Cairo between September and December 2005. In this case, about 3000 Sudanese refugees staged a sit-in demonstration at the Mustapha Mahmoud Square in front of the UNHCR office. The protest was held against the backdrop of widespread frustration among Sudanese refugees in Egypt. Some refugee protesters were frustrated with the UNHCR's slow Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process, while others were dissatisfied with the outcomes of their refugee applications. Due to the lack of status as 'refugees', many Sudanese refugees were caught in a legal limbo for protracted periods and had been living precariously. They were excluded from some of the basic entitlements to sustain their livelihoods, including the right to work, access to education,

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<sup>60</sup> These two kinds of protests occasionally overlap. For example, in the Kurd refugee protest I described at the beginning of this chapter, the refugee protesters insisted that they were 'refugees' (the first type of resistance). At the same time, during the protests, they also argued that they were 'not animals but humans', and demanded that the Japanese government should not treat them like 'animals'. See Shindo, 'Struggle for Citizenship'.

<sup>61</sup> Moulin, Carolina and Peter Nyers. (2007) '“We Live in a Country of UNCHR” Refugee Protest and Global Political Society', *International Political Sociology*, Vo.1, No.4, pp.356-372; Nyers, Peter. (2006) 'Taking Rights, Mediating Wrongs: Disagreements over the Political Agency of Non Status Refugees', in Jef Huysmans, Andrew Dobson and Raia Prokhovnik (eds.), *The Politics of Protection: Sites of Insecurity and Political Agency* (London: Routledge), pp.48-67; Shindo, 'Struggle for Citizenship'.

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securing housing and reliance on public assistance.<sup>62</sup> The protesters, therefore, demanded that the UNHCR should take care of the refugee protesters.

Crucially, as Carolina Moulin and Peter Nyers argue, the primary difference between the UNHCR and the Sudanese refugee protesters was whether these refugee protesters could be identified as ‘refugees’ or not.<sup>63</sup> While the Sudanese protesters identified themselves as refugees and demanded the UNHCR to provide assistance, the UNHCR refused to call the protesters refugees and instead described them as ‘economic migrants’, ‘Sudanese demonstrators’ or ‘Sudanese demonstrating nationals’.<sup>64</sup> If the UNHCR was to categorise the protesters as ‘refugees’, this meant that the UNHCR would have admitted its responsibility to aid these ‘refugee’ protesters. In other words, at the heart of the protest lay the different understanding of who the Sudanese protesters were. In essence, the Sudanese protesters and the UNHCR were in disagreement over the category of refugee. While the Sudanese refugee protesters insisted that they belonged to the category of refugee, the UNHCR persistently rejected that.

The second type of protest involves people introducing different categories to challenge the existing ones. These include newly invented categories such as *sans-papiers* and irregular migrant as well as existing

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<sup>62</sup> Salih, Assad Khalid. (2006) ‘Sudanese Demonstration in Cairo: Different Stands and Different Opinions’, <http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/reports/Documents/Assad.pdf> [Accessed 1 July 2007].

<sup>63</sup> Moulin and Nyers, ‘We Live in a Country of UNCHR’ Refugee Protest and Global Political Society’.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.363-364.

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categories such as human and resident.<sup>65</sup> The Sans-Papiers movement in France is representative of this kind of resistance. In March 1996, about 300 migrants occupied the Church of Saint-Ambroise in Paris, calling for regularisation of their stay. The request for regularisation was made in a context in which many immigrants in France lost their regular status and *became 'illegal'* as a result of a series of changes in immigration laws.<sup>66</sup> As others have argued, the significance of the Sans-Papiers movement lies in the changing perception of illegality associated with the category of 'illegal' immigrants.<sup>67</sup> The lack of legal status rendered the Sans-Papiers 'illegal'. The novelty of the protest was that the protesters consider themselves not to be 'illegal' immigrants but to be the Sans-Papiers, literally meaning 'without papers'. Madjiguène Cissé, one of the active members of the Sans-Papiers movement, explains the reason for identifying themselves as sans-papiers as follows:

At the beginning of our struggle, they [others] tried to label us as people who are underground. But they

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<sup>65</sup> The category of sans-papiers (lower cases) is generally used to indicate people without papers. As I discuss in this chapter, the name, sans-papiers, was originally invented by migrants without legal status in France. They call themselves the Sans-Papiers (upper cases).

<sup>66</sup> Inaba, Nanako. (2002) 'Atarashii Hinkonsou to Shakai Undou' [The Emergence of New Poor Class and Social Movements], in Takashi Miyajima and Takamichi Kajita (eds.), *Mainoriti to Shakai Kouzou [Minority and Social Structure]* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press), pp.149-176.

<sup>67</sup> Cissé, Madjiguène (1997) 'The Sans-Papiers—A Woman Draws the First Lessons: The New Movement of Asylum Seekers and Immigrants without Papers in France', trans. Selma James, Nina Lopez-Jones, Helen West (London: Crossroads Books), <<http://www.bok.net/pajol/madjiguene2.en.html>> [Accessed 1 July 2007]; McNevin, Anne. (2006) 'Political Belonging in a Neoliberal Era: The Struggle of the Sans-Papiers', *Citizenship Studies*, Vol.10, No.2, pp.135-151; McNevin Anne. (2011) *Contesting Citizenship: New Frontiers of the Political* (New York: Columbia University Press).

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couldn't: the authorities of this country have known us for a long time. Now we feel that we have taken a step forward: even the media no longer talks about people who are underground, *but of Sans-Papiers*. The fact that we've been seen on TV, that we've been interviewed in the press, I think that has helped people to understand that we've been here for years, that we haven't killed anyone, *that we are simply demanding the piece of paper which is our right, so that we can live decent lives*.<sup>68</sup>

The Sans-Papiers movement specifically aims to question the category of 'illegal' immigrants and the illegitimacy attached to this category. As McNevin says, '[...] the term 'illegal immigrant' (or *clandestin*), denoting illegitimacy by definition, is replaced by the term Sans-Papiers, an identity suggesting an equal right of presence, hamstrung only by bureaucratic and procedural formality'.<sup>69</sup> By creating a new category i.e. Sans-Papiers, the protesters were adamant that they should be recognised as legitimate members of French society. Through the new category of Sans-Papiers, the migrants made themselves visible in order to question the clandestine image attached to them: 'We have made ourselves visible to say that we are here, to say that we are not in hiding [...]'.<sup>70</sup>

Not only introducing new category-vocabularies but also using existing categories such as human can also offer a way to resist the management of people on the move. Ranging from hunger strike, lip-sewing and sit-in

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<sup>68</sup> Cissé, 'The Sans-Papiers – A Woman Draws the First Lessons'. Emphasis mine.

<sup>69</sup> McNevin, 'Political Belonging in a Neoliberal Era', p.143.

<sup>70</sup> Cissé, 'The Sans-Papiers – A Woman Draws the First Lessons'.

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demonstration to campaigns such as No One Is Illegal and Humane Borders, categories such as human and resident are widely used to replace other categories including illegal immigrants and refugees which are deemed demeaning and negative. For example, in 2003, Abas Amini, a Kurdish Iranian asylum seeker and a political poet, staged a lip-sewing protest to argue that he should have been given refuge in the UK. ‘Shouldn’t *a human being* have a square foot of earth to live on to live in peace?’<sup>71</sup> The category of human was used to emphasise his point that any human beings were entitled to live peacefully, and that is why he had the right to remain in the UK instead of being sent back to Iran where his life would be placed in danger. Mehmet Al Assad, an asylum seeker and detainee in an immigration centre in Australia, also uses the category of human to highlight cardinal rights stripped from people, like himself, who are categorised as asylum seekers. He conducted a lip-sewing protest and wrote a poem to explain his frustration. One part of his poem titled ‘Asylum’ reads as follows:

Through the Wire/ One last time / Please observe / I am  
sewing my lips together / that which you are denying us /  
we should never have / had to ask for.<sup>72</sup>

As Rajaram astutely argues, Al Assad’s poem expresses the effect of

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<sup>71</sup> BBC ‘Asylum Protesters Sews Up Eyes’ 27 May 2003, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/2939156.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/2939156.stm)> [Accessed 11 September 2012]. See also Rygiel, Kim (2010) *Globalizing Citizenship* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press), p.199. Emphasis mine.

<sup>72</sup> Al Assad, Mehmet, (2002) ‘Asylum’, *Borderlands: e-journal*, Vol.1, No.1, <[http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol1no1\\_2002/alassad\\_asylum.html](http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol1no1_2002/alassad_asylum.html)> [Accessed 1 July 2007].



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Australian asylum policies on 'humans'. The poem shows that because of policies which justify detention of asylum seekers, people are denied rights as humans, such as the right to speak.

It [Al Assad's poem] is an act of protest itself but is also the chronicler of protest, asking for observance and awareness of the *human* consequences of Australian policy towards refugees. Al Assad's poem describes the despair of asylum, of sewing feet and heart, and invites, politely and formally, observance and awareness.<sup>73</sup>

These protests exemplify the instances where people assert that they are 'humans' before they are 'asylum seekers' and 'refugees' and, above all, they belong to the former category instead of the latter categories which would justify silencing and incarceration in detention centres.

The category of human is used not only to replace categories such as asylum seeker but also the category of citizen. The organisation, Humane Borders, is a case in point. Humane Borders, primarily composed of people living near the US-Mexico border, sets up water tanks across borders to prevent migrants from dying of dehydration during the perilous border-crossing journey.<sup>74</sup> By using Derrida's notion of unconditional hospitality, Doty argues that Humane Borders treats migrants not as a risk to national security but as humans.<sup>75</sup> Providing migrants with water is

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<sup>73</sup> Rajaram, Prem Kumar. (2004) 'Disruptive writing and a critique of territoriality', *Review of International Studies*, Vol.30, No.2, p.227. Emphasis mine.

<sup>74</sup> See the website of Humane Borders <<http://www.humaneborders.net/>>.

<sup>75</sup> Doty, Roxanne Lynn. (2006) 'Fronteras Compasivas and the Ethics of Unconditional Hospitality', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol.35, No.1, p.65. Doty

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regarded as an expression of hospitality to fellow humans rather than help offered to ‘illegal’ immigrants. I would add that treating migrants as fellow humans also means that members of Humane Borders identify themselves not as (US) citizens but as humans. The activities of Humane Borders are made possible based on this sharing of the same category of human. This challenges the division between citizens and foreigners, which can easily justify the view that foreigners pose security threats to America. In this way, the case of Humane Borders shows that the category of human replaces other categories such as ‘illegal’ immigrant and citizen. Other examples similar to Humane Borders include City of Sanctuary, No One Is Illegal, No Borders campaigns and Strangers to Citizens campaign. In these campaigns, new labels such as ‘human’ are used to substitute the existing categories which attach otherness to migrants.<sup>76</sup> People attending these campaigns also identify themselves as foreigners despite their citizenship status to reject the separation of migrants/foreigners from citizens.<sup>77</sup> In this way, new categories such as human and community member are used to question the existing categories such as asylum seeker and ‘illegal’ immigrant.

Categories of migration are conceived as a key arena in which people

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also examines citizens’ participation in border enforcement efforts such as the Minutemen. Their activities can be the opposite of Humane Borders. See Doty, Roxanne Lynn. (2009) *The Law Into Their Own Hands: Immigration and the Politics of Exceptionalism* (Arizona: Arizona University Press).

<sup>76</sup> Lowery, Michelle and Peter Nyers (2003) ‘Roundtable Report “No One is Illegal”: The Fight for Refugee and Migrant Rights in Canada’, *Refuge*, Vol.21, No.3, p.67. See also Darling, Jonathan. (2010) ‘A City of Sanctuary: The Relational Re-Imagining of Sheffield’s Asylum Politics’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol.35, No.1, pp.125-140.

<sup>77</sup> Anderson, Bridget, Nandita Sharma and Cynthia Wright. (2012) “‘We are all foreigners’: No Borders as a Practical Political Project”, in Peter Nyers and Kim Rygiel. (eds.), *Citizenship, Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement* (Oxon: Routledge), pp.73-91.

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articulate resistance to the control of the state over the movement of people. Since category-vocabularies are manifestations of such control, people refuse to accept categories given to them and propose other categories. In this regard, the work referred above understands category-vocabularies in relation to the complexity of bordering practices. Concrete resistance over categories demonstrates that it is no longer the state which monopolises the boundary-drawing practices to decide which names are given to whom. By claiming which groups are to be included, people challenge the state monopoly over drawing the boundaries between illegal and legal for instance, and claim that they decide who they are. The image of state boundaries, therefore, is no longer a line at the territorial edge of the state, but diffusing through the expansion of actors who can decide on categories.

### *Theorising Categories through Rancière*

What kind of theorisation of categories underlines the approach where categories are regarded as tools of resistance? I argue that the approach mentioned in the previous section can be explained by the ways in which Rancière understands categories through disruption. Rancière argues that social order, which is represented by any given categories, can be changeable by calling the moment of challenging categories as politics waged against a police logic which distributes categories. Categorising people, in this respect, entails possibilities of resistance and challenge. This understanding of categories is reflective of how BM scholarship challenges categories.

Although, like Agamben, Rancière does not explicitly use the word,

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categories, I read his work as discussing categories which are produced and maintained by social order. For Rancière, social order is governed by two different realms. One realm is the sphere of visibility; the other is that of invisibility and voicelessness. For Rancière, the order which governs the distinction between these realms, that is, the order which decides distribution of the sensible, is police logic. The essence of police logic 'lies in a certain way of dividing up the sensible'.<sup>78</sup> Police logic determines who has a voice and who does not, whose voice is heard and whose voice is made sheer noise. Rancière argues that the social order defined by police logic is consensus. Consensus 'defines hierarchical distributions where everyone's speech is determined in terms of their proper place and their activity in terms of its proper function, without remainder'.<sup>79</sup> Police logic legitimises the boundary which separates who has a speaking part and who does not. In this regard, police logic can be understood as what Foucault calls discipline and order. It is through this logic that one's body and behaviour are governed.<sup>80</sup>

Importantly, Rancière argues that disruption is integral to the social order sustained by police logic. This disruption is brought about by what he calls egalitarian logic. Egalitarian logic assumes that 'all human beings are equal as speaking beings'.<sup>81</sup> This assumption of equality markedly differs

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<sup>78</sup> Rancière, Jacques (2010), *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics* (London: Continuum), p.36.

<sup>79</sup> Corcoran, Steven. (2010), 'Editor's Introduction' in Rancière, *Dissensus*, p.2.

<sup>80</sup> Rancière, Jacques (2005) *Disagreement. Politics and Philosophy* (in Japanese), trans. Shoichi Matsuba, Hidetomi Omori and Shiego Fujie (Tokyo: Inscript), p.233; Foucault, Michel. (1991) 'Governmentality', in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press), pp.53-72.

<sup>81</sup> Rancière, Jacques (1999) *Disagreement. Politics and Philosophy* (Minnesota: University of Minneapolis Press), p.30.

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from police logic because the latter does not acknowledge equality among speaking beings and instead attempts to stabilise distribution of the sensible.

While police logic distributes the sensory parts to decide who can speak and who cannot, egalitarian logic challenges this distribution by assuming that all human beings are equal as speaking beings.<sup>82</sup> In this way, egalitarian logic disrupts the allocation of senses legitimised by police logic. Taking equality as the starting point, the manifestation of equality, demonstration of egalitarian logic, disrupts the social order maintained by police logic.

When the logic of equality is set against police logic, social order is disrupted, which brings about the moment of what Rancière calls, politics. For Rancière, politics *takes place* when the allocation of voices is challenged by the assumption that everyone has a voice. It embodies the moment when egalitarian logic brings the concept of equality into police logic to ‘reconfigure the space where parties, parts, or lack of parts have been defined’.<sup>83</sup> Introducing the concept of equality is to disagree with police logic over the distribution of senses. That is, egalitarian logic denies the existence of the taken-for-granted distinction between the realm of visibility and that of invisibility to expose the arbitrary-ness of such distribution.

Disagreement [...] must set up against two camps: those who think there is an understanding within understanding, that is, that all speaking beings are equal as speaking beings, and those who do not think

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<sup>82</sup> Rancière, *Disagreement*, p.30

<sup>83</sup> Rancière, *Disagreement*, p.30.

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so.<sup>84</sup>

In other words, it is only when politics takes place that social order composed of two realms of senses is made perceptible. Rancière argues that while consensus is the status of the social order legitimised by police logic, dissensus is the status in which police logic is challenged by egalitarian logic. In situations of consensus, the distinction between visibility and invisibility is imperceptible because the allocation of voices is taken for granted as a normal condition of social order. Meanwhile, dissensus ‘disputes what is given, about the frame within which we see something as given’.<sup>85</sup> Since dissensus challenges the distribution of the sensible and questions what is considered normal, it is through dissensus that what sustains social order is made observable. It is only when politics takes place that the foundation of social order, that is, the distinction between visibility and invisibility, is called into question and exposed. The basis of social order is made known through politics, through ‘the demonstration (*manifestation*) of a gap in the sensible itself’.<sup>86</sup>

In this way, for Rancière, social order inherently entails the disagreement between two logics, that is, disruption of police logic within itself. Such disruption, or what he calls politics, reveals that social order is based upon two different realms, between visibility and invisibility, which is brought about by the assumption (of egalitarian logic) that there *should not*

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<sup>84</sup> Rancière, *Disagreement*, p.49.

<sup>85</sup> Rancière, Jacques. (2004) ‘Who Is the Subject of the Rights of Man?’, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol.103, No.2/3, p.304.

<sup>86</sup> Rancière, *Dissensus*, p.38. Emphasis original.

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*be* a distinction over senses (because everyone should be equal). Since social order is founded upon the arbitrary distribution of senses, it inherently entails the possibility that this arbitrariness is exposed through politics. In this respect, for Rancière, disruption constitutes social order. Disruption is always lurking behind the status of consensus, in the social order.

In comparison to Agamben, Rancière's thesis sheds more light on how ambiguity of categories can be addressed positively. Rancière's thesis on politics focuses on the moment when previously invisible people challenge the arbitrariness of social order and become visible based on egalitarian logic. Through this disruption of social order, categories maintained by social order can be changed and/or re-claimed. Rancière argues that Agamben's thesis merely traps us in 'a sort of ontological destiny' where 'any kind of claim to rights or any struggle enacting rights is thus trapped from the very outset in the mere polarity of bare life and state of exception'.<sup>87</sup> From this standpoint, Rancière's concern can be explained as, in Agamben's terminology, how bare life gets out from the excluded status of invisibility and how it claims a part in the realm of inclusion, in the realm of visibility.

This Rancière type of understanding of categories can be seen in the group of works which takes the second approach to categories in BM scholarship. This kind of work looks at how people disrupt social order by demanding that different categories be given to them. Such disruption is brought about by *sans-papiers*,<sup>88</sup> refugees,<sup>89</sup> those who are kept in detention

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<sup>87</sup> Rancière, 'Who Is the Subject of the Rights of Man?', p.301.

<sup>88</sup> Cissé, 'The Sans-Papiers—A Woman Draws the First Lessons'; McNevin, 'Political Belonging in a Neoliberal Era'; McNevin, *Contesting Citizenship*; Lowery, Michelle and Peter Nyers (2003) 'Roundtable Report "No One is Illegal"'; Nyers, 'Taking Rights,

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centres,<sup>90</sup> and people with citizenship status.<sup>91</sup> They examine the agency of people, or autonomy of people,<sup>92</sup> who are rendered powerless and invisible through specific categories, and how they challenge these categories.

### *Strength and Weakness of BM scholarship*

Rancière and Agamben are frequently described as offering opposite views on migrant subjectivity.<sup>93</sup> Agamben's thesis tends to be understood as depicting migrants as powerless under the spell of sovereign power. This

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Mediating Wrongs'; Nyers, Peter. (2010) 'Dueling Designs: The Politics of Rescuing Dual Citizens', *Citizenship Studies*, Vol.14, No.1; Bigo, 'Freedom and Speed in Enlarged Borderzones'.

<sup>89</sup> Moulin and Nyers, "We Live in a Country of UNCHR" Refugee Protest and Global Political Society'; Shindo, 'Struggle for Citizenship'.

<sup>90</sup> Rygiel, *Globalizing Citizenship*; Nyers, Peter. (2008) 'In Solitary, In Solidarity: Detainees, Hostages, and Contesting the Anti-Policy of Detention', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol.11, No.2, pp.333-349.

<sup>91</sup> Doty, 'Fronteras Compasivas and the Ethics of Unconditional Hospitality'; De Genova, Nicholas. (2011). 'Alien Powers: Deportable Labour and the Spectacle of Security', in Vicki Squire (ed.) *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity* (London: Routledge), pp.91-116.

<sup>92</sup> Many call this group of work as autonomy of migration. See Mezzadra, Sandro. (2004) "The Right to Escape." Trans. Taina Rajanti. *Ephemeris*, Vol.4, No.3, pp.267-275; Mezzadra, Sandro, and Brett Neilson. (2003) "Né qui, né altrove— Migration, Detention, Desertion: A Dialogue." *borderlands e-journal*, Vol.2, No.1.<[http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol2no1\\_2003/mezzadra\\_neilson.html](http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol2no1_2003/mezzadra_neilson.html)> [Accessed 10 July 2010]; Mitropoulos, Angela. (2006) 'Autonomy, Recognition, Movement', *The Commoner*, Vol.11, pp.5-14; Nyers, Peter. (2008) 'No One Is Illegal Between City and Nation', in Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielson (eds.), *Acts of Citizenship* (London: Zed Books), pp.160-181; Papadopoulos, Dimitris, and Vassilis Tsianos. 'The Autonomy of Migration'; Rodríguez, Néstor. (1996) 'The Battle for the Border: Notes on Autonomous Migration, Transnational Communities, and the State', *Social Justice* Vol.23, No.3, pp.21-37; Rygiel, *Globalizing Citizenship*; Walters, William. (2008) 'Acts of Demonstration: Mapping the Territory of (Non)-Citizenship', in Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielson (eds.), *Acts of Citizenship*, (London: Zed Books), pp.182-206.

<sup>93</sup> Rancière, 'Who Is the Subject of the Rights of Man?'; Rygiel, *Globalizing Citizenship*; Rygiel, Kim. (2011) 'Bordering Solidarities: Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement and Camps at Calais' *Citizenship Studies* Vol. 15, No.1, pp.1-19; Walters, William. (2002) 'Deportation, Expulsion and the International Polices of Aliens', *Citizenship Studies* Vol.6, No.3, pp.265-292; Walters, 'Acts of Demonstration'; McNevin, *Contesting Citizenship*; Isin, Engin F., and Kim Rygiel. (2007) 'Abject Spaces: Frontiers, Zones, Camps', in Elizabeth Dauphinee and Christina Masters (eds.), *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror: Living, Dying, Surviving*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), pp.181-203; Papadopoulos et al, *Escape Routes*.



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gives one the impression that there is 'no way out from the logic of sovereignty'.<sup>94</sup> Meanwhile, Rancière's thesis is understood as offering the view that migrants have power to claim their own voice.<sup>95</sup> From the perspective of categories, I read Agamben and Rancière not as opposing one another but as sharing the same view on social order: for both of them, ambiguity constitutes social order. For Agamben, the ambiguity is expressed as suspension over categories by sovereign power which monopolistically decides when and how to categorise forms of life. For Rancière, the ambiguity is shown as disruption where social order can be, at any moment, exposed by the moments of politics. To maintain social order is realised not by certainty over categories which decide the subjects. Instead, the subject emerges through uncertainty over categories, over social order which determines what one is and how one should behave. Therefore, I understand the difference between Agamben and Rancière as a matter of emphasis. While Agamben reads uncertainty of categories through control, Rancière reads it through

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<sup>94</sup> Connolly, William E. (2004) 'The Complexity of Sovereignty', in Jenny Edkins, Véronique Pin-Fat, and Michael J. Shapiro (eds.), *Sovereign Lives: Power in Global Politics* (New York: Routledge), pp.23-40. For criticism of Agamben's thesis, see also Butler, Judith. (2004) *Prekarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso). Whether or not Agamben's work merely shows an impasse, as Connolly argues, is a contested issue, although this is not directly relevant to my thesis. I think Agamben does suggest a way to challenge sovereign power. For instance, in his work titled *Coming Community*, Agamben (1993) casts a more encouraging understanding of 'outside' which opens up possibilities for another form of life, what he calls 'whatever being', which is not consumed by the logic of sovereignty based on closed boundaries of community. Even when Agamben discusses the state of exception, his intention does not seem to dwell upon the fatality of no way out from sovereignty. Agamben, Giorgio. (1993) *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press). See also Agamben, *Means Without Ends*, p.139.

<sup>95</sup> Mezzadra, Sandro. (2011) 'The Gaze of Autonomy. Capitalism, Migration, and Social Struggles', in Vicki Squire (ed.), *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity* (London: Routledge), pp.121-142; Moulin and Nyers, Moulin and Nyers, "We Live in a Country of UNCHR" Refugee Protest and Global Political Society'; Rygiel, *Globalizing Citizenship*.

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disruption to control. This different emphasis should not obfuscate the common ground shared by both that uncertainty constitutes social order.

I argue that the ambiguity over categories theorised by both Agamben and Rancière is the strength of BM scholarship. So far BM scholarship has investigated what sorts of subjects are produced from this uncertainty of social order. It does so by proposing various ideas such as ‘acts of citizenship’,<sup>96</sup> ‘biopolitical border’,<sup>97</sup> ‘governmentality of unease’,<sup>98</sup> ‘generalized biopolitical border’,<sup>99</sup> and ‘neurotic citizen’.<sup>100</sup> For instance, the idea of ‘acts of citizenship’ cultivates an understanding that citizenship is not about rights and practices but about political subjectivity.<sup>101</sup> This idea offers a way to examine the moment when one becomes political regardless of one’s legal status, that is, the moment when a new subject is articulated in refusal to accept the categories that produce illegal and speechless subjects. The ‘biopolitical border’ shows that subjects emerge through border controls over the human body. The way in which one lives is entangled in spatial management of territorial borders.<sup>102</sup> The idea of ‘governmentality of unease’ sheds light on the psychological mechanisms which shape one’s reaction to mobility control.<sup>103</sup> This also highlights the emergence of subjects that are

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<sup>96</sup> Isin, Engin F. and Greg M. Nielson (eds.) (2008) *Acts of Citizenship* (London: Zed Books).

<sup>97</sup> Amoore, ‘Biometric Borders’.

<sup>98</sup> Bigo, ‘Security and Immigration’.

<sup>99</sup> Vaughan-Williams, Nick. (2009) ‘The Generalised Biopolitical Border? Re-conceptualising the Limits of Sovereign Power’, *Review of International Studies*, Vol.35, No.4, pp.729-749.

<sup>100</sup> Isin, Engin F. (2004) ‘The Neurotic Citizen’, *Citizenship Studies*, Vol.8, No.3, pp.217-235.

<sup>101</sup> Nyers, Peter. (2007) ‘Why Citizenship Studies?’, *Citizenship Studies*, Vol.11, No.1, pp.1-4.

<sup>102</sup> Amoore, ‘Algorithmic War’.

<sup>103</sup> Bigo, ‘Security and Immigration’.

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constantly exposed to uncertainty over which categories they will be given.

I argue that, while the strength of BM scholarship is to look into how subjects are formed out of uncertainty over categories, the weakness of BM scholarship is that it tends to regard categories as simply being avoided. As I have discussed above, BM scholarship can roughly fall into two groups in terms of their approach to categories. The first group problematises categories because politics of categories, that is, the ways in which categories are used, implies control. As bordering practices expand, categories are implicated in the expanding bordering practices by being used as ways to control the subjects. The second group offers a response to the first group by showing that categories can be challenged. In this group, politics of categories implies resistance. It shows that the state no longer monopolises the question of the subjects and hence the control can be resisted. Either way, category-vocabularies are regarded as a manifestation of social order to determine what one is and how one should act. Therefore, in these two approaches, category-vocabularies are best avoided if possible.

However, it is this second approach which hints at the need of more robust interrogation of category-vocabularies in BM scholarship. As I showed, the second approach, which challenges category-vocabularies, is filled with examples where one category is replaced by another. For instance, the category of illegal immigrant is replaced with those of refugee, *Sans-Papiers*, or people without papers; categories of asylum seeker and citizen are replaced with that of human. One after another, categories are replaced with other categories in order to resist social order which governs and controls the

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movement of people and their agencies. The continuous invention of category-vocabularies which I described in the previous chapter, such as the category of IDPs, POC, the irregular, resonate with the persistent appearance of category-vocabularies mentioned, though not investigated, by BM scholarship. This is a contradiction which the extant works do not address although they, somewhat inadvertently, suggest this contradiction. If categories are to be avoided or challenged because of their implications for control, why are these very categories used to resist social order? Simply put, what does it mean that we need the language of the state (category-vocabularies) to challenge the control that this same language imposes upon us? The extant research does not address these questions and it is here that I find weakness in the scholarship as well as the area of research which has to be pursued more robustly in the scholarship.

The question of the tenacity of category-vocabularies has serious implications for the concept of boundary. As BM scholarship shows, the diffusion of bordering practices challenges the simple image of the boundary as a line. The bordering takes place in cyberspace and when people make travel arrangements at home through their own computers, for instance. Even before they make travel arrangements, the past records of their history of movements are collected, ready to be used to decide whether people may travel or not. Bordering practices are also conducted not simply by the state or immigration officials but are outsourced to different actors including NGOs and international organisations. In these regards, the boundary is no longer a line at the territorial edge of the state, but scattered in terms of performance,

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places and perception.<sup>104</sup>

BM scholarship shows that what these diffused bordering practices do is manifested on politics of categories. Category-vocabularies are used to sustain social order so that names given to individuals define what one can be in relation to the state. For instance, once categorised as illegal immigrants, this category of illegal immigrant regulates the movement and behaviour of people identified by this label. Once categorised as refugees, the category of refugee controls the agency of people identified as refugees. The two approaches of BM scholarship discussed above demonstrate that categories are used as a device to control and regulate what one is and how one behaves. Under circumstances where bordering no longer suggests drawing a line, categories are used as a device to preserve social order.

It is in this situation where bordering no longer means drawing a line that the contradiction of categories, or the tenacity of category-vocabularies, arises. Category-vocabularies are used for control, but the very same vocabularies are also used to resist such control. If category-vocabularies are used for control, how can we explain that we need the very same vocabularies to resist such control? Does it mean that the politics of categories might have a different implication other than just for control and hence for resistance to such control? Since this contradiction of category-vocabularies arises precisely out of the context where bordering practices are diffused and scattered, how can we then understand this contradiction in relation to the

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<sup>104</sup> Johnson, Corey, and Reece Jones, Anssi Paasi, Louise Amoore, Alison Mountz, Mark Salter and Chris Rumford (2011) 'Interventions on Rethinking "the Border" in Border Studies', *Political Geography*, No.30, pp.61-69.

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image of the boundary which is no longer able to be sustained as a line? If the tenacity of category-vocabularies is what the diffused bordering practices also do aside from controlling subjectivity, surely we need to pay more careful attention to this tenacity?

Following this line of thinking, the remaining part of the thesis will put the tenacity of categories at the centre of attention. By using migrant activism in Japan as an example, it examines closely the instances where categories are tenaciously used. How do the participants in migrant activism rely on category-vocabularies? How is such reliance addressed in their activities? These two questions shape the next three chapters of the thesis.

### *Implications of Using Japanese Examples in BM Scholarship*

The example of migrant activism in Japan is selected based on the preliminary observations I made on the ways in which category-vocabularies were used by the people taking part in activism. Remember my preliminary observations about migrant worker activism in Japan, which I discussed in chapter 1. The participants in activism constantly refer to categories of citizen and foreigner to make demands and realise the purpose of their meetings and demonstrations. Based on this observation, I consider the Japanese example to be apposite to the investigation of the tenacity of category-vocabularies.

Before moving on to the next chapter, the thesis will make a brief reflection on the implications of discussing the Japanese example in relation to BM scholarship. I argue that using Japanese examples within the framework offered by BM scholarship has two implications. Firstly, it

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enriches the examples available in BM scholarship. Secondly, it also expands the orientation of the research which currently shapes Japanese migration scholarship.

As the present chapter showed, BM scholarship primarily draws on examples from the USA, the UK, France, Australia and Canada. Meanwhile, countries outside this geographical radar, such as Japan, are given less attention, with only a handful of exceptions.<sup>105</sup> For this reason, to examine the case from a place other than the often-cited countries will expand the scope of the scholarship which predominantly focuses on specific geographical locations in the West.

Furthermore, as Kajita astutely points out, based on the image of Japan as a homogeneous country, examples of Japanese immigration are often considered to be peculiar ones compared to other cases in Europe and North America which are believed to be less homogeneous places than Japan.<sup>106</sup> He argues that the image of Japan as a homogeneous country has exacerbated the view that the Japanese cases have little to do with migration in Europe and North America. However, many studies on immigration in Japan challenge the myth that Japan is a homogeneous country and that migrants

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<sup>105</sup> These exceptions include: Moulin, Carolina. (2012) 'Ungrateful Subjects? Refugee Protests and the Logic of Gratitude', in Peter Nyers and Kim Rygiel (eds.), *Citizenship, Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement* (New York: Routledge), pp.54-72; Moulin and Nyers, "We live in a country of UNHCR" Refugee Protests and Global Political Society'; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr, 'The Irregular Migrants as Homo Sacer'; Shindo, 'Struggle for Citizenship'.

<sup>106</sup> Takamichi, Kajita. (1994) *Gaikokujin Roudousha to Nihon* [Foreign Workers and Japan] (Tokyo: NHK Publishers), pp.30-31. See also Takamichi, Kajita and Toshiki Iyotani (eds.) (1992) *Gaikokujin Roudousha Ron* [Theories of Foreign Workers] (Tokyo: Koubundou), pp.4-5.

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in Japan have little impact on Japanese society.<sup>107</sup> The Japanese immigration policies have been also developed in relation to these 'Western' countries.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, Kajita advocates the need to situate the migrant situations in Japan in broader contexts. This does not mean to ignore the unique aspects of Japanese immigration but rather to actively reflect on the meaning of such uniqueness in relation to examples outside Japan. Using migrant activism in Japan in the framework offered by BM scholarship will enrich the scholarship on Japanese immigration.

Examining migrant activism in Japan in relation to BM scholarship also expands the research agenda of the extant research on Japanese immigration. Research into migration in Japan is heavily tailored by a policy analysis in the areas of work, education and voting rights. The studies examine the policies in these areas to determine better measures to integrate migrants into Japanese society.<sup>109</sup> They argue that Japanese immigration policies, which are characterised as front-door, back-door and side-door policies, are created as a result of retaining the homogeneous image of Japan while accepting that migrant workers are an indispensable part of the Japanese economy.<sup>110</sup> My research is different from this group of research in the respect that it situates the Japanese examples within BM scholarship, and by doing so, develops an analysis that places the politics of categories as the chief

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<sup>107</sup> For the list of scholarship on Japanese immigration which provides examples of migrants in Japan, see the selected bibliography on Japanese immigration on pp.343-344.

<sup>108</sup> Kajita, *Gaikokujin Roudousha to Nihon*.

<sup>109</sup> See the selected bibliography on immigration in Japan.

<sup>110</sup> Kajita greatly advanced this type of reading to argue that the visa categories such as trainees, spouses and students are abused to hide the unofficial introduction of foreign labourers to Japan. See Kajita, *Gaikokujin Roudousha to Nihon*, pp.32-53.



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area of investigation in examining immigration in Japan. I believe that this approach can expand the focus of merely seeking for better integration policies by analysing how people engage in activities related to migration.<sup>111</sup>

### *Chapter Conclusions*

The task of the present chapter was to investigate the politics of categories in depth in order to strengthen the approach that the thesis is proposing. For this purpose, it first reviewed a group of literature, which I am calling BM scholarship, that implicitly or explicitly examines the politics of categories. The review of BM scholarship was conducted on two levels. Firstly, I clarified the difference between BM scholarship and other research on migration. Secondly, I investigated BM scholarship itself to identify two different approaches to the politics of categories. I argued that BM scholarship differs from other works on migration by questioning the assumption that categories in migration are given. It also takes the view that the state is constantly ‘under construction’ and hence the state boundaries cannot be taken a priori.

These findings on BM scholarship are further elaborated in the examination of BM scholarship itself. I identified two different approaches to categories prominent in the scholarship. The first group of works is concerned with the implications of politics of categories for control. By highlighting the

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<sup>111</sup> Aside from the specific policy focus, the scholarship on Japanese immigration also tends to focus on one particular ethnic group or particular organisations in their analysis. For these literature, see the selected bibliography. The exception to this includes: Suzuki, Eriko. (2009) *Nihon de Hataraku Hiseiki Taizaisha* [Irregular Migrants Working in Japan] (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten); Shipper, Apichai. (2008) *Fighting for Foreigners: Immigration and its Impact on Japanese Democracy* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press).

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danger of category-vocabularies, it problematises categories. The second group of work is concerned with the implications of politics of categories for resistance. By showing various ways to resist control imposed by category-vocabularies, it challenges categories.

I pointed out that each approach derived from particular ways of theorising categories. In order to demonstrate this point, I discussed these approaches in relation to Agamben and Rancière, both of whom are often cited in BM scholarship. The first approach generally falls into an Agamben type of understanding of categories which addresses sovereign power to suspend the creation of categories. I argued that what is crucial for Agamben's thesis is production of ambiguity when it comes to categories. For Agamben, categories are fundamentally about determining the value of life: whether one is qualified to live or not. By suspending which category one belongs to, sovereign power resides at the threshold of producing categories and, in this way, makes people perpetually susceptible to the whim of sovereignty. Sovereign power indicates the control it exercises over people through categories.

The second approach roughly falls into a Rancière type of understanding of categories. I argued that, for Rancière, disruption is constitutive of categories. He argues that social order (what one is and how one behaves) is characterised by the tension between police logic and egalitarian logic: the former legitimises social order while the latter brings about disruption to social order. By arguing so, Rancière situates categories in the realm of resistance. Since politics can take place at any moment to disrupt categories

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produced by social order, categories are always rendered susceptible to the possibilities of change.

Reading BM scholarship together with Agamben and Rancière, I argued that the strength of BM scholarship is reflective of the commonality between Agamben and Rancière. I argued that, despite different emphasis on categories, both thinkers theorise categories in relation to ambiguity by thinking that ambiguity constitutes social order. For Agamben, this ambiguity is expressed as sovereign power to suspend categorising, whereas for Rancière, it is expressed as changeability of categories as a result of politics. BM scholarship investigates how subjects are formed out of this ambiguity.

I argued that the weakness of BM scholarship is its somewhat limited understanding of categories and the contradictions that they exhibit. Although BM scholarship regards categories as being avoided because of their implications for control, it uses examples where category-vocabularies are indeed used to challenge such control. If categories are employed to control the movement of people and agency of the people and therefore are to be avoided, as BM scholarship is saying, what does it mean that these very categories are used to resist such control? This persistent reliance on categories derives from the contexts where bordering practices no longer sustain the image of the boundary as a line. What then is the implication of contradiction of category-vocabularies to the boundary? BM scholarship, in its current form, does not address these questions.

How can we understand the tenacity of category-vocabularies in relation

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to the image of the boundary which is no longer able to be sustained as a line? If the tenacity of category-vocabularies is what the diffused bordering practices do (aside from controlling subjectivity), do we not need to pay more careful attention to this tenacity? Animated by these questions, the remaining thesis put this tenacity of category-vocabularies at the centre of investigation to further interrogate the image of the boundary. Drawing on examples of migrant activism in Japan, the next three chapters will closely investigate the ways in which the participants in activism rely on category-vocabularies in articulating their demands and organising their activities. By closely focusing on instances where categories are used or even desired, the thesis intends to pay, as Walker says, 'far greater attention to what goes on at the boundaries'.<sup>112</sup> By doing so, it might be possible to find out different implications of category-vocabularies other than for control and resistance. The final section of the chapter justified using the example of Japan in relation to BM scholarship by showing that this can contribute both to BM scholarship in general and to scholarship on immigration in Japan.

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<sup>112</sup> Walker, *After the Globe, Before the World*, p.3.