

Erasmus

We Are Here!

A Reinterpretation of Acts of Citizenship and the Role of Urban Space

Thesis

MSc Governance of Migration and Diversity (Sociology)

Student: Michelle Crijns (508223)

Supervisor: dr. Rogier van Reekum

Second reader: dr. Willem Schinkel

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Abstract

This thesis studies attempts by undocumented refugees of the We Are Here collective to claim urban space through acts of citizenship. The research relies on interviews, participant observation and document analysis. It was found that We Are Here residents at Vluchtmaat primarily engage in everyday rather than disruptive acts of citizenship. Isin's theory of acts of citizenship was reinterpreted so that urban space does not only facilitate acts of citizenship but could also be seen as an act of citizenship itself. The building of Vluchtmaat thus acts as spatial enactment of citizenship but also as an accumulation of relations which are both central to being a citizen and facilitate further opportunities for enacting citizenship.

Keywords: (everyday) acts of citizenship, undocumented refugees, urban space, social relations, We Are Here

Introduction

Ever since its occupation of the garden of the Diaconie in Amsterdam in September 2012, We Are Here, a collective of rejected asylum seekers in Amsterdam, has managed to draw attention to their precarious existence in Dutch society (Wij Zijn Hier, 2018a). Founded by a handful of disillusioned refugees, We Are Here's membership is currently made up of over 140 people from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and several West African countries (Wij Zijn Hier, 2018d). While their asylum applications were rejected, most of its members cannot be sent back to their country of origin due to, for example, missing documents, an unwillingness of the home country to take them back, or the legal principle of *non-refoulement* which prohibits repatriation to a country where people would be in danger of persecution (Wij Zijn Hier, 2018e; Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951). We Are Here members are thus stuck in a limbo – not being able to go back to their home country but also having no rights to housing, health care or employment - in the Netherlands. This often hidden population of rejected asylum seekers has attempted to make their struggle visible and challenge who can and cannot be a political subject and who is allowed make claims in Dutch society (Wij Zijn Hier, 2018c).

We Are Here challenges common conceptions of citizenship as primarily formal i.e. related to rights and responsibilities such as voting. In this conception of citizenship, irregular migrants, rejected asylum seekers and other non-formal citizens are perceived as incapable of making claims and demanding rights (Nyers, 2008). However, as noted by Nyers, “one does not have to be a formal citizen in order to be heard and seen in a political sense. Those who are denied the status of citizen can break into the ‘consensual’ system, interrupt this order, and assert themselves as a visible and speaking being” (2008, p. 165). We Are Here does exactly this; its members make demands and claims, constituting themselves as citizens even if they are not perceived as such by the authorities and the ‘formal’ population of citizens. As

implied by the language typically used by the mainstream media in reporting on the collective, they are expected to be quiet, to accept their situation without complaints. Its members are typically portrayed as ‘illegals’ who make claims and demand recognition and rights where there are none (Claus, 2018; Engelbart, 2018; Schram, 2016). It is exactly We Are Here’s challenge and refusal to act according to such expectations that make the collective both highly controversial but perhaps also successful in their demands. By making themselves visible through squatting, demonstrations and simply existing where they are not allowed to, We Are Here is able to constitute themselves as citizens even if they lack the formal recognition. The *acts* through which they do so may be referred to as *acts of citizenship* or “those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (claimants of rights and responsibilities) through creating new sites and scales of struggle” (Isin, 2008, p. 39). While research has often focused on the *actors* that challenge conceptions of citizenship, this research will study the *acts* themselves. Since the We Are Here collective’s existence and controversy is primarily concerned with their occupation of urban spaces to which they supposedly have no claim, particular emphasis will be placed on how they claim such urban spaces through their *acts of citizenship*.

Research question

We Are Here continues to defy societal expectations and challenges common conceptions of citizenship. Whereas previous research on We Are Here primarily focused on the creation and development of We Are Here as an activist collective or protest movement (Amayo-Castro, 2014; Dadusc, 2017; Van Veen, 2014), the importance of citizenship in We Are Here’s demands and claims-making has not received the same attention. Research on collectives such as We Are Here typically study the actors or the movement itself but the acts

through which they constitute themselves as political actors and citizens may be just as important to gain an understanding of their ability to create a space for themselves where there seemingly is none. Thus, this research will attempt to answer the following research question: How does We Are Here claim urban space through *acts of citizenship*?

Theoretical framework

This research will draw on the growing body of work of Critical Citizenship Studies (CCS), in particular its central notion of *acts of citizenship*. CCS emerged as a field of inquiry in the 1990s, offering an alternative to traditional conceptions of citizenship. In particular, this body of research is concerned with “reimagining political life from the margins, particularly in relation to those inhabiting mobile and precarious lives” (Ataç et al., 2016), thereby lending itself perfectly to a study on rejected asylum seekers and their claims to citizenship. In order to grasp the complexity of *acts of citizenship*, several concepts require clarification.

In CCS, a distinction is commonly made between *formal citizenship* and *substantive citizenship*, in which the latter forms a “condition of possibility” of the former (Isin, 2008, p. 17). *Formal citizenship* refers to the common understanding of citizenship as associated with legal status, membership and formal entitlements in a polity. *Formal citizenship* is thus inherently exclusionary, distinguishing between members and non-members, insiders and outsiders, legal and illegal status. However, *substantive citizenship* or, the lived experiences and practices of making citizens, may be just as important. Substantive citizenship is less concerned with formal legal status, instead focussing on the political struggles and claims of citizenship, regardless of whether one legally possesses such a status. *Acts of citizenship* are then “those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (claimants of rights and responsibilities) through creating new sites and scales

of struggle” (Isin, 2008, p. 39). *Acts of citizenship* are thus concerned with those acts through which subjects constitute themselves as citizens, regardless of whether they have *formal citizenship*. Through *acts of citizenship*, subjects make claims or counter-claims about “rights, responsibilities, identity, recognition and redistribution” (Isin & Nielsen, 2008, p. 8).

In the traditional differentiation between the public and the private sphere, citizenship is typically seen as belonging solely to the public sphere. Since the 1970s, critics, principally feminist theorists, have criticized this rigid distinction. According to such feminist critiques, the public and private are inextricably linked (Okin, 1992). Acts of citizenship and ‘being political’ may take the form of protests, demonstrations or occupations, but may just as well refer to other acts of claims making based on notions of citizenship such as small disruptions of everyday life or even the specific rhetoric used to make claims of citizenship. Moreover, there appears to be a constant intersection and interaction between the acts in public and private so that one may no longer speak of two distinct spheres.

As noted by Mezzadra (2004), migrants continually “decompose citizenship” and challenge the boundaries and closed, fixed constitution of citizenship through their political struggle and actions. *Acts of citizenship* can be performed by any individual or collective, including, or especially, those considered on the margins of society, and allow them to become *activist citizens*, or “claimants of rights and responsibilities” (Isin, 2008, p. 39). Rigo (2011) built on the idea of *acts of citizenship* to develop *acts of illegal citizenship*, which specifically refers to acts performed by unauthorized or illegalized denizens. This concept thus lends itself for a study on rejected asylum seekers who, while not enjoying formal citizenship status, do make claims on the basis of a perceived sense of citizenship, of being part of the polity. An example is offered by the Sans-Papiers, a collective of irregular migrants in France, who contest their marginalized and irregular position in society through claims making and notions of belonging and citizenship (McNevin, 2006).

Acts of citizenship take place at numerous sites and scales but for this particular study, the focus will be on the city. The increasingly unequal distribution of wealth and power has left its mark on cities, where constant surveillance of urban space is the norm and private property rights appear to trump all other rights. In response, urban social movements have sought to reclaim their ‘right to the city’ by challenging the status quo and, instead, offering alternative urban realities and conceptions of urban identity, citizenship and belonging (Harvey, 2012). The ‘right to the city’ is closely intertwined with property and urban space; those who own property (supposedly) hold the right to the city. In their resistance to such unequal urban realities, urban social movements thus seek to reclaim such spaces (Harvey, 2012). *The acts of citizenship* performed in urban spaces could thus be seen as attempts to reclaim the right to the city or as the exact manifestations of such processes of reclaiming.

According to Isin and Nielsen, “acts of citizenship with cosmopolitan intent are situated within the irony of a necessary indifference towards otherness in urban culture” (2008, p. 9). In order to influence and shift existing practices, such acts require considerable creativity, an interruption of the everyday order of the city, a break from established patterns and practices. In order to study ‘acts’ as distinct objects of investigation, it is necessary to study the spaces and activities that perform *acts of citizenship*. Urban space is of particular importance for the focus of this research, the We Are Here collective, which was conceived by occupying and claiming a public garden in the city of Amsterdam (Wij Zijn Hier, 2018a) and which continues to claim urban space through, for example, the squatting of buildings across the city. By merely claiming urban spaces, both real and virtual, and upsetting their norms and expectations, subjects are already performing *acts of citizenship* and making a claim for their right to the city. Both squatting and protest movements are clear examples of such use of urban space to claim rights and responsibilities.

As creative disruptions of the everyday, *acts of citizenship* may be seen as

performances. Through their enactment, performance and reproduction, such acts convey a particular image to an audience. In the urban space, *acts of citizenship* create a distinction between those performing and those observing. Studying how such performances are imagined, executed and received may explain when and how subjects are successful in claiming urban spaces.

Research design

This qualitative research took the form of a *case study*, in which a small group of individuals in a particular situation, in this case the We Are Here collective, is studied. We Are Here was chosen due to its relevance, as an undocumented refugee collective, to the theory of acts of citizenship. We Are Here's members lack formal citizenship but are well known for making public demands and claims. Studying the acts through which they make such demands and transform what it means to be a citizen in Dutch society requires in-depth, detailed observation and analysis, which is why this research is of a qualitative nature. It should be noted that qualitative research, and specifically a case study design, does not attempt to be representative of a larger population (Bryman, 2016). After conducting interviews at two We Are Here locations, I decided to focus my research on one location rather than the whole collective. The uniqueness of the living arrangement at Vluchtmaat, where the Smaragdgroep and the Hoogoordwomen live together with formal Dutch citizens, convinced me to explore their particular enactments of citizenship more in depth. The results of this study thus pertain solely to the groups living at Vluchtmaat and should not be generalized to We Are Here as a collective or to similar undocumented populations elsewhere. Since urban space is of particular importance to the existence and political struggle of We Are Here, such spaces and their use by members in furthering their struggle were observed, taking into account notions of urban space and the right to the city (Harvey, 2012).

Methods of data collection

During the months of April and May, I conducted interviews and participant observation in Amsterdam and The Hague. Interviews and participant observation took place at two We Are Here locations in Amsterdam: Vluchtmaat, where the Smaragdgroep and the Hoogoordwomen reside, and with the Diemengroep which had just moved to a new location in the Bijlmer. In addition, I observed a protest march in The Hague in support of the prosecution of Omar al-Bashir, the former Sudanese president, by the ICC. While We Are Here did not organize this march, several members of the Diemengroep participated and had invited me to join. In addition, I analysed relevant ‘documents’ such as the We Are Here website as well as the Vluchtmaat and Noodzaak websites, Facebook posts, and posters at We Are Here locations (see Appendix B for a data collection overview).

Interviews. I conducted five in depth interviews with six people, all between 22 and 98 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning I made use of a list of questions and general topics I wanted to address while simultaneously allowing for significant deviation if the interview called for it or if the conversation naturally drifted in slightly different directions than previously anticipated. Interviewees were selected using a purposive sampling technique in combination with snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which interviewees are selected based on their specific characteristics and the objective of the research (Bryman, 2016). Snowball sampling refers to a non-probability sampling method in which interviewees are selected based on the contacts of previous interviewees. Snowball sampling is particularly useful when studying ‘hidden’ populations, who might be more difficult to contact (Bryman, 2016). I first contacted the contact persons listed on the We Are Here contact page (Wij Zijn Hier, 2018b) and conducted interviews with three of them after which I asked them for more interviewees.

All interviews were recorded with the interviewee's consent except for one interview, which was conducted over email since the interviewee was no longer able to meet me due to personal circumstances. I did, however, meet this interviewee during my first visit to the Vluchtmaat location during which I received a tour around the space, observed their living arrangements and engaged in an informal conversation with the interviewee in which many of the issues later addressed during formal interviews were already touched upon. All recordings were transcribed and, together with additional notes I made during the interviews, coded and analysed.

While some We Are Here members are vocal and visible through their social media presence or active and recurrent involvement in highly visible acts such as demonstrations, I intended to interview a wider range of subjects, including those who may not be as visible but who still perform *acts of citizenship* in their daily life. I expected snowball sampling to help reach such individuals but I ran into more difficulty than expected and was met with a lack of communication and delayed response ultimately resulting in fewer interviews than previously envisioned. Nevertheless, all interviews provided considerable information and recurrent themes so that the quality of the interviews made up for the quantity and the analysis was ultimately not significantly affected.

Participant observation. During the month of April, I observed *acts of citizenship* performed by We Are Here members as well as how such acts use and claim the urban spaces in which they are performed. While interviews provided me with information pertaining to the motivation, development and execution of *acts of citizenship*, studying the acts in a natural setting, while they are occurring, allowed me to better understand the acts from my perspective as a researcher. As an outsider, observing such acts yields new insights that those performing the acts may not be aware of or may consider too 'everyday' to even mention in an interview. In order to immerse myself in the research setting and to improve my

understanding and interpretation of We Are Here's *acts of citizenship*, I had initially envisioned a consistent and intensive presence during the period of data collection. However, there was a clear lack of events and activities to attend and/or participate in. This could also be the result of a general unwillingness to invite researchers since one informant did note that they had had many students visit them for research projects, after which they were never seen again, something which clearly irritated the informant. In addition, I had envisioned myself acting within the role of participating observer (Bryman, 2016). However, when I attended a protest march on the 26th of April in support of the ICC's intended prosecution of former Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir, I quickly realized this was an impossible role to fulfil. It was clear to everyone involved that I was an outsider since all participants were Sudanese and were chanting in Arabic, leaving me to observe the march from the side-lines. Regardless of such limitations, I was able to gain new insights from the data that I was able to collect.

Since this research is particularly concerned with the urban spaces that We Are Here occupies, I also paid particular attention to the spaces themselves and how members acted within such spaces. I visited the Vluchtmaat location prior to conducting interviews to meet my main contact person and get a sense of the space and living arrangements. I made extensive notes concerning the physical features of the building and the people and interactions I observed.

Documentary analysis. Finally, I analysed relevant materials such as the We Are Here, Vluchtmaat and Noodzaak websites, Facebook posts and posters at the We Are Here locations. Such additional data helped to gain a better understanding of the *acts* performed by We Are Here but they may also be understood as acts themselves. While such materials archive past acts, they are also the 'interfaced' settings through which the performance of *acts of citizenship* is sustained. The interface is, according to Langlois et al., "not only about content and discourse, but about representing and translating political actions that are

mediated by informational practices” (2009, p. 423). *Acts of citizenship* are represented and legitimized in (online) materials and sources and thus provide a necessary site of analysis. Understanding such materials as ‘interfaces’ rather than documents helped to gain a better understanding of *acts of citizenship* and the means through which they are mediated and projected (Langlois et al., 2009). A selection of relevant documents was coded and analysed.

Triangulation. By using multiple research methods, I was able to check the adequacy of the findings of one method by crosschecking them with those of other methods. Data triangulation refers to the process of using more than one research method in order to improve the adequacy of the research findings (Bryman, 2016). Since this research specifically focuses on urban space and the *acts of citizenship* performed to claim such spaces, it was not sufficient to merely rely on one method of data collection. The acts and spaces needed to be observed but it was also necessary to understand the reasoning behind the acts as well as their execution and impact.

Ethics and privacy considerations

Conducting qualitative research that involves vulnerable informants such as undocumented refugees requires that certain ethical principles and privacy considerations such as anonymity and informed consent be upheld. In order to protect informants’ identities, I separated their personal details from the rest of the data and replaced the details by a code. All data was stored in the Erasmus University Document Vault and deleted from all other devices and platforms within 24 hours after the interview or observation. Informed consent forms were provided at the beginning of each interview. Since it was impossible to receive informed consent from everyone observed during participant observation, especially during the protest in The Hague, I requested the informed consent of my contact person prior to observation (see Appendix A for the complete ethics and privacy checklist).

Results

Acts of citizenship are commonly understood as “those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (claimants of rights and responsibilities) through creating new sites and scales of struggle” (Isin, 2008, p. 39). While this conceptualization leaves room for interpretation as to what kind of act may be considered an act of citizenship, most examples and studies of acts of citizenship tend to focus on large, disruptive occurrences of being political such as demonstrations or protests (Swerts, 2017). Going into this research with the aforementioned theoretical knowledge coupled with background information of We Are Here’s history and previous public actions, I thus expected to primarily analyse such disruptive acts. What I did not expect was to study seemingly mundane routines, which were not directly political but instead offered alternative, everyday forms of enacting citizenship. The reality of Vluchtmaat ultimately forced me to alter my expectations and think differently about citizenship and the means through which actors can become political and make claims.

Critics have argued that a conceptualization of acts of citizenship as defined by Isin (2008) fails to take into account “acts of everyday resistance (Darling, 2014, p. 88). According to Thrift (1999), “citizenship is enacted in places as sites of situated transitory practices, which take shape “only in their passing”” (p. 310). Implicit in this critique of the common understanding of citizenship as a mere set of rights and obligations is the primacy of the everyday. As the sum of all our ethical relations to others, everyday life and its seemingly mundane, taken-for-granted routines are central to a more comprehensive understanding of citizenship (Dickinson et al., 2008), not least because they have “the potential to socially appropriate and culturally recompose public space” (Rodriguez, 1996, p. 27).

Acts do not require an episodic and disruptive interruption of the established order in order to be acts of citizenship (Darling, 2014; Swerts, 2017). The incremental, spatial, everyday politics of activism are just, if not more, important as they are not dependent on sporadic instances of disruption but instead offer consistent and continuous ways of becoming political and challenging the status quo (Darling, 2014). Studying everyday acts of citizenship thus requires a sort of “radical incrementalism,” a focus on “multiple small revolutions that at unanticipated and unexpected moments galvanize into deeper ruptures that accelerate tectonic shifts of the underlying logics of domination and what is considered possible” (Pieterse, 2008, p. 6). It is through the accumulation of such incremental acts that citizenship emerges (Dickinson et al., 2008). The undocumented residents of Vluchtmaat, while less inclined to organize or participate in large protests or other disruptive acts than the other We Are Here groups, do engage in everyday politics of undocumented activism, whether in the form of attending a local church, working, or merely existing within the Vluchtmaat space.

Vluchtmaat: a unique living space

While the undocumented members of We Are Here share similar concerns as a result of their undocumented status in Dutch society, their daily life and struggles vary based on their group membership and the location(s) in which they reside. We Are Here’s members are split into five groups, of which Vluchtmaat houses two: the Smaragdgroep and the Hoogoordwomen. While most We Are Here groups are unable to find a long-term home, Vluchtmaat residents have been fortunate to find a somewhat stable and secure place of residence with the help of non-profit organization Noodzaak (‘Necessity’). Noodzaak was established in January 2016 with the goal of supporting precarious groups in society through contractual agreements with owners of vacant buildings such as Vluchtmaat. In order to cover the cost of living for all residents, the building also houses formal Dutch citizens, who pay a

monthly rent of €250,- and €40,- for utilities. As a result, the 43 undocumented residents of Vluchtmaat have been able to live in a safe and secure home for more than three years without having to rely on sporadic donations from supporters. Without the daily worry of housing hanging over their heads, Vluchtmaat's undocumented residents have been able to focus their efforts on their own future, whether that is through employment, activism or other activities. As acknowledged by Noodzaak:

What these people need is a more stable situation, a home base, a simple safe roof over their heads where they don't have to worry whether it will still be there tomorrow and where they are welcome at any time and can find some peace and quiet. A stable roof and home is a necessary condition to work on one's future (Noodzaak, 2019).

It is exactly this envisioned situation that has led to the unique living arrangement and opportunities available to the Smaragdgroep and the Hoogoordwomen. Due to their unique situation in comparison with the other We Are Here groups and their ability to devote more time and resources to endeavours other than housing, I also expected to find unique expressions of their (sense of) citizenship. In order to discuss such acts successfully, I have decided to focus my research on Vluchtmaat and its residents as opposed to the entire We Are Here collective. It should be noted that, while Vluchtmaat's residents do not or barely participate in disruptive acts of citizenship, such acts did create the conditions necessary for Vluchtmaat to become a reality. Without the visibility and recognition provided through acts such as demonstrations and the collective nature of We Are Here, the issues facing undocumented people in the Netherlands would probably still be unknown to the wider public and the residents at Vluchtmaat would not benefit from the recognition and connections that they now enjoy.

Everyday acts of citizenship

While acts of citizenship are often perceived as disruptive and sporadic instances of being political (Darling, 2014), the undocumented residents of Vluchtmaat did not appear to engage in such acts regularly. As noted by one resident: “they will tell me ‘[name] today there is a demonstration’ but I’m not going, I don’t know, maybe I’m tired” (Informant 5, personal communication, 15 May 2019). A sense of fatigue and scepticism about the positive impact of such disruptions were a recurrent theme in the interviews. A second informant actively and consistently participated in protests and demonstrations in the past but became disillusioned and unconvinced of the supposed benefits of such actions (Informant 2, personal communication, 24 April 2019). The residents’ lack of interest in disruptive acts should not take away from their role in the creation of both We Are Here as a movement and of Vluchtmaat. The community, network, visibility and recognition that all We Are Here groups, including those living at Vluchtmaat, now enjoy may be seen as a direct result of prior disruptive acts.

While the undocumented residents at Vluchtmaat do not or no longer engage in many disruptive acts of citizenship, they are able to carve a space for themselves in society, develop relationships with individuals and their immediate community and “foster alternative locales in which some sense of being a citizen is made possible” (Painter & Philo, 1995, p. 115). According to Painter and Philo (1995),

If citizenship is to mean anything in an everyday sense it should mean the ability of individuals to occupy public spaces in a manner that does not compromise their self-identity, let alone obstruct, threaten or even harm them more materially. If people cannot be present in public spaces (streets, squares, parks, cinemas, churches, town halls) without

feeling uncomfortable, victimized and basically 'out of place', then it must be questionable whether or not these people can be regarded as citizens at all; or, at least, whether they will regard themselves as full citizens of their host community able to exist on an equal footing with other people who seem perfectly 'at home' when moving about in public spaces (p. 115).

Informants did indeed discuss their presence in urban (public) spaces such as the local church, places of employment as well as Vluchtmaat itself where they receive politicians, supporters and others. The relationships fostered in and through such places help them carve a space for themselves in society and create a sense of community and citizenship even if the residents are not formally recognized as belonging to the citizenry.

Church

As noted by one informant, the church was an important place of belonging. For her, the local church was how she first heard about We Are Here and how she was able to escape her previous, more precarious, existence. The church thus provided an escape and acted as a bridge to the safety and security offered by Vluchtmaat. The church is both a place of interaction and belonging as well as a place to receive help, whether that is emotional or more practical such as help in finding a job. *“Every Sunday I meet people there. Sometimes they’re gonna help me, they’re gonna telephone people who can, who need help, you know, like house cleaning”* (Informant 5, personal communication, 15 May 2019).

Churches and other religious spaces have always played a significant role in the history of We Are Here. Conceived in the garden of the Diaconie in Amsterdam, We Are Here members have always been able to find a (short-term) safe haven in religious buildings throughout the city (Informant 2, personal communication, 24 April 2019). While religious

buildings offer basic necessities such as a place to sleep and the occasional meal, they are able to provide undocumented refugees with much more. The church is a place where undocumented people can simply be, a space where they do not need to worry about their status and lack of formal recognition. Their ability to move and act freely in a public space such as a church shows a level of comfort and belonging which Painter and Philo (1995) place at the centre of citizenship. Through such spaces, a sense of citizenship is made possible and we can interpret their behaviour in such spaces as enactments of citizenship. By engaging with formal citizens, attending services and participating in events organized by religious institutions such as the church, We Are Here members, knowingly or unknowingly, challenge expectations of how the undocumented should behave. The relationships between the undocumented and other church members are crucial in this regard and create possibilities for the undocumented to act as citizens in their daily interactions and activities. While such small acts may not seem political or impactful by themselves, they combine to create greater disruptions and challenge what is possible for a population, which finds itself at the margins of society.

Places of employment

While the undocumented residents at Vluchtmaat are not legally allowed to work, many of them do engage in some form of employment. Whereas the informant in the previous quote was able to work as a housekeeper through her connections at her local church (Informant 5, personal communication, 15 May 2019), another informant found an even more stable form of employment at Rederij Lampedusa (Informant 2, personal communication, 24 April 2019). This small canal cruise company offers tours on the migration history of Amsterdam and employs both refugees and formal Dutch citizens. Other residents worked as translators, volunteered at a local restaurant for elderly people, took photographs for

interested parties or cooked at a living room restaurant owned by a supporter who is active within GroenLinks and Here to Support, a group which seeks to create collaborations between organizations and undocumented refugees through educational, cultural and artistic projects (Informant 1, personal communication, 16 April 2019 and 12 May 2019, and informant 4, personal communication, 1 May 2019).

Many residents appeared to have found spaces outside of Vluchtmaat in which they felt comfortable and where they could interact with others, regardless of their status. The ability to form relationships with others and to be present in public spaces lies at the core of what it means to be a citizen. Their ability to do so is indicative of a sense of citizenship they themselves but also the people around them appear to have. Similar to the church or other religious spaces, such places of employment create opportunities for undocumented refugees to carve a space for themselves in society and challenge both expectations and formal institutions, which legally forbid them from engaging in such acts. While such public spaces create opportunities, they also materialize as spaces where the undocumented risk being victimized and harmed:

I don't work all the time but when I work, you know, I have no right to ask the real payment cause I'm not legal here. And it gives me exploitation. I feel exploited because I don't get the money I deserve [...] And I know some North African people who employ people, they sometimes don't give you your money. You can't go to law enforcement because it is handing yourself into the police (Informant 4, personal communication, 1 May 2019).

As noted by Painter and Philo (1995), if people cannot move through public spaces safely, it should be questioned whether they can actually be seen as citizens or, at least, whether they

can ever see themselves as belonging to the citizenry. While it may not appear to be possible to enact oneself as a citizen in such spaces where one feels victimized or ‘out of place’, it should be noted that acts of citizenship do not require one to *be* a citizen but simply to *act like* one. While the informant in the example was indeed not treated as a citizen and may not have felt like a citizen in that moment, he does argue that he should be treated better, that he did not get what he ‘deserved.’ This sense of deservedness and his choice to ultimately leave this job and find an alternative place of employment is indicative of a sense of citizenship, of seeing oneself or wishing to see oneself “on an equal footing with other people who seem perfectly ‘at home’ when moving about in public spaces” (Painter & Philo, 1995, p. 115).

Political engagement

Even though the undocumented residents at Vluchtmaat are not formally recognized as political actors or subjects, they are politically active. While, as previously noted, any act, no matter how small, could be considered ‘political,’ I refer here to direct engagement with political actors such as politicians and members of political parties. Vluchtmaat has previously hosted meetings between We Are Here and parties such as GroenLinks and D66, which allow the undocumented residents to voice their concerns and needs to political representatives. The willingness of some political actors to listen to such concerns even though they do not formally represent any of the We Are Here members in the political sphere could be seen as recognition of members’ position as political subjects and citizens, even if they are not officially recognized as such. In addition, some supporters of We Are Here, who provide necessities such as food or clothes, are members of such political parties and thus regularly engage with members of We Are Here, particularly those living at Vluchtmaat. While they do not fulfil these functions within their official role as member of GroenLinks or D66, they do provide the undocumented residents with the opportunity to regularly engage

with politically active formal citizens. Some of the undocumented residents are also personally active within the political sphere, such as one informant who regularly engages with GroenLinks: “I used to work with them during the campaigns and everything. Even they invited me tonight for a beer at Plantage Kerklaan, there is a party tonight” (Informant 4, personal communication, 1 May 2019). Such relationships between We Are Here members and political actors allow the undocumented to directly make claims about “rights, responsibilities, identity, recognition and redistribution” (Isin & Nielsen, 2008, p. 8). Through both formal and informal meetings with political actors, We Are Here members have been able to argue for their rights. One of the informants attended a meeting at the municipality with several other We Are Here members where they challenged existing policies:

We ask the question ‘why are you speaking about the shelter only, the shelter, only the shelter is not life. If you have a shelter, you need food. You need medical insurance’ [...] Now they started thinking about it. Now they want to make a kind of city pass, Amsterdam city pass, which would allow refugees to work (Informant 4, personal communication, 1 May 2019).

By criticizing existing policies and making demands and claims, We Are Here members are acting in accordance with the traditional relationship between citizen and state, thus acting like citizens. While the quote communicates a critique, a lack of something (“shelter is not life”), it simultaneously positions the shelter as something which generates other necessities (“If you have a shelter, you need food. You need medical insurance”). Shelter is the primary concern of We Are Here but, as conveyed by the informant, once this need is taken care of, others will be demanded and/or claimed until formal recognition and formal citizenship appears within the range of possibilities.

While it is impossible to determine to what extent We Are Here's input affected changes in existing policies, their ability to even publicly voice such concerns and be heard suggests a sense of recognition and inclusion that those at the margins of society usually lack. Moreover, the ability to even develop and maintain personal relationships with local actors, political or otherwise, lies at the heart of what it means to be a citizen. For the undocumented residents of Vluchtmaat, to enact citizenship thus means to move comfortably within public spaces such as the church, their place of employment or the municipality, to enjoy meaningful relationships with others, political or otherwise, and to be considered by those others as being part of something; the group, the community, the citizenry.

The ability to occupy public spaces and foster such relationships is strongly related to the collective identity and visibility provided by Vluchtmaat. As a grassroots collective space, Vluchtmaat plays a pivotal role in accessing opportunities such as employment and political engagement. In addition, a relatively permanent residence such as Vluchtmaat allows for connections and relations to develop, both with those within the space and with actors from outside, which in turn create more opportunities and more ways of being political. This then also clearly distinguishes Vluchtmaat from other We Are Here spaces, which are not only more temporary, thereby unable to function as a place where relations can truly develop, accumulate and intersect, but also lack the recognition, communal spirit and structural support from formal citizens from which Vluchtmaat's residents benefit. While Vluchtmaat creates the opportunities in which its undocumented residents can enact themselves as citizens, the building itself could also be considered an act of citizenship. By creating and maintaining a highly visible building, residents are immediately able to stake their claim and offer a clear visual message: we are here!

Vluchtmaat as act of citizenship

While the importance of (urban) space to the performance of acts of citizenship is integrated within Isin's theory, spaces are considered exactly that: places where or through which acts of citizenship are made possible. Even though this conception is, to a certain extent, applicable to *We Are Here*, *Vluchtmaat* does not merely function as a space where acts of citizenship are performed or as a space through which such acts are made possible. Instead, I propose to interpret the building itself, with all its facets, both physical and symbolic, as an act of citizenship. Acts of citizenship are acts through which subjects constitute themselves as citizens (Isin, 2008). By creating, maintaining and existing within *Vluchtmaat*, a highly visible building, its undocumented residents have created a new 'site of struggle' through which citizenship can be enacted. As argued by Isin (2008), "for acts of citizenship to be acts at all they must call the law into question and, sometimes, break it" (p. 39). While the occupants no longer squat the building after making a deal with the property owner, they did acquire it through squatting, an unlawful practice. Moreover, their illegal and yet highly visible presence as undocumented people in society challenges or could almost be said to 'mock' the law.

As a building, *Vluchtmaat* acts as a symbol that "communicates something intangible (an idea, a value, a feeling)" (Monnet, 2011). As noted by Monnet (2011), "a place can be considered as "symbolic" whenever it means something to a group of individuals, in such a way that it contributes to giving an identity to the group" (p. 1). *Vluchtmaat* is clearly of value to its residents and provides them with an identity: as members of *We Are Here*, as the *Smaragdgroep* or *Hoogoordwomen*, as undocumented refugees, but also as residents of *Vluchtmaat*, as part of their community in the building, as residents of Amsterdam and, perhaps, as Dutch citizens. *Vluchtmaat* is their home, a 'safe space,' but it also symbolises their struggle and their defiance of the system and its expectations. While all buildings could

be said to carry some symbolic meaning, something other than their physical, material form, Vluchtmaat was actively and deliberately created by its undocumented residents and could be seen as a spatial enactment of citizenship. The building functions as a protest sign, a way of signalling that its residents are here, they are not leaving, and they will continue to defy the rules and expectations that confront them.

Acts of citizenship interrupt a certain order. By interrupting that order, subjects proclaim themselves to be visible and speaking beings (Nyers, 2008). While such interruptions are usually symbolic or temporal, Vluchtmaat offers an example of a spatial interruption. The building, located in a grey industrial area of Amsterdam, stands out, and does so deliberately. Its residents have made it so that a passer-by cannot miss their existence. Brightly coloured among the grey, and covered with posters and placards, the building interrupts its surroundings and signals its presence to others. By doing so, its residents are making visual claims of belonging, of being part of the citizenry, whether others want to recognize them or not. As noted by Nyers (2008), “to publicly self-identify as non-status is to engage in a political act, or better – an act of political subjectification” (p. 162-3). As a visual rather than vocal self-identification of their status, Vluchtmaat, as a building, could also be considered a political act, an act of citizenship.



Vluchtmaat at the Joan Muyskenweg 32 in Amsterdam

By claiming an urban building such as Vluchtmaat, We Are Here members of the Smaragdgroep and the Hoogoordwomen have been able to position themselves as political

actors, as citizens, as part of society. The building offers them a collective identity, a ‘safe space’ but also a place of recognition, a place where other We Are Here members can congregate, where supporters can visit them, and where politicians can hear them out and listen to their claims and concerns. While its undocumented residents may not enjoy formal citizenship, they have created a place where they are “capable of acting *like* citizens, and meriting treatment *as* citizens” (Isin, 2008, p. 192). Through a signed agreement with the property owner, the residents of Vluchtmaat have been able to live at their location for over three years, offering a sense of stability unknown to other We Are Here groups who are forced to change location every few weeks or, if lucky, months. The safety and stability of Vluchtmaat offer not just a home but a sense of belonging that is missing from most undocumented peoples’ lives. While the property owner was initially more than reluctant to allow the squatters to stay, the non-profit organization Noodzaak managed to change his mind, resulting in a formal contract that has allowed the Smaragdgroep and the Hoogoordwomen to stay for over three years so far.

The third day he sent some bodyguard with dogs and everything. It was terrible situation and the police came and they calmed him and he was willing to speak to us. And when he come and speak to us, it’s not the way he imagined that we are behaving because he thinks that’s black people from Africa, just animals, invading our country and whatever. And anyway, it was a civilized meeting and he was very happy about it. ‘Oh these people are good guys and can you sign me anti-squat so you can stay.’ We agreed on that. Now we are anti-squat here (Informant 2, personal communication, 24 April 2019).

While the property owner clearly benefits from this arrangement through the rent paid by the Dutch residents and the protection anti-squatters offer from illegal squatting and vandalism,

Vluchtmaat residents' ability to enter into a contractual agreement with the property owner is clearly indicative of their ability to "assert themselves as visible and speaking beings" (Nyers, 2008, p. 165). Even if a relationship is based on power differences and exploitation, the fact that a relationship is even possible between undocumented people and a property owner signifies a level of recognition by the property owner and allows the undocumented to act as citizens.

However, their ability to initiate and maintain good relations with him throughout the years is partly owed to their Dutch counterparts in Vluchtmaat. The creation and maintenance of Vluchtmaat is grounded in principles of hospitality and humanitarianism. As noted on its website, working at Vluchtmaat is a "conscious choice to give a group of refugees the security of a residence" (Vluchtmaat, 2019). The Dutch residents occupy a separate wing of the building and are financially responsible for the rent and utilities for the entire building. The co-habitation arrangement is, however, not solely financial. The Dutch residents support the refugees when necessary and aid them in their meetings with the property owner or authorities but they also provide other forms of support, interaction and a sense of community.

They [the Dutch residents of Vluchtmaat] like it more than we like this place. They come to us when there is a party, they dance with us, eat, drink with us and it is like, you know, this is the first place in the Netherlands where illegal refugees and the Dutch people live in harmony. So, this is a good experiment for the government and the society (Informant 4, personal communication, 1 May 2019).

The solidarity between residents and the constant interaction with formal Dutch citizens allows the refugees to feel part of a community. A community which is, unlike the ones in which the other We Are Here groups find themselves, not solely made up of other

undocumented people and does not find itself isolated from society. Through Vluchtmaat, residents have been able to foster relationships, not only with their fellow residents, churchgoers, colleagues and politicians as mentioned before but also with individual supporters who deliver necessities such as food and clothing, and aid organizations such as Dokters van de Wereld. Vluchtmaat functions as a facilitator of relationships, as a place where relationships and connections accumulate and where the undocumented are recognized as being part of a community.

An accumulation of social relations

Significant in all the aforementioned enactments of citizenship is the importance of relations with others, especially formal citizens. In order to understand this recurring theme better, I employ here an understanding of politics based on social relations, in which the ability of the undocumented to foster relations with others and become part of a community is a necessary step for the enactment of citizenship (Rygiel, 2011). As noted by Rygiel (2011), “citizenship is fundamentally about the relations of governing ourselves and others” (p. 7). Through such social relations, subjects are able to imagine an alternative (political) community, one that may not be recognized by formal institutions such as the state but are therefore not any less significant. Vluchtmaat residents’ social relations with others such as employers and colleagues, supporters, fellow residents, and political actors help them to “constitute themselves as capable of acting like citizens, and meriting treatment as citizens” (Walters, 2008, p. 192). Through their social relations with others, the undocumented are able to assert their right to citizenship and position themselves as political subjects. Even when their relations are exploitative or characterized by power imbalances due to the undocumented people’s lack of formal rights (e.g. relations with the property owner or with exploitative

employers), their ability to engage with and be recognized by others is indicative of their ability to act as citizens and be seen as citizens or, at least, be forced to be seen as such.

In all the undocumented residents' enactments of citizenship, Vluchtmaat stands out as a social and political place where such social relations develop, accumulate and intersect. As a deliberately visible building, Vluchtmaat allows for an exchange of social relations between its residents, the local community and Dutch society. In reiterating the importance of social relations to citizenship, Vluchtmaat could thus be seen as a site of crystallization through which new forms of citizenship are constructed, negotiated, reimagined and, importantly, acted upon.

Conclusion and discussion

This research attempted to answer the following research question: How does We Are Here claim urban space through *acts of citizenship*? However, the findings suggest that the framing of the research question does not entirely encapsulate the reality of the situation. The wording of the research question suggests that We Are Here members claim urban space *through* or *by means of* their enactments of citizenship. This use of language rested on my assumption that We Are Here members participate in disruptive acts of citizenship such as demonstrations, which not only help them claim urban space such as 'the street' during their enactment but also create the visibility and support necessary to claim spaces such as places of residence throughout the city. While this may apply to some We Are Here groups, who still fit within my, arguably narrow, view of what We Are Here entails, the Smaragdgroep and the Hoogoordwomen at Vluchtmaat clearly diverge from this reality as a result of the stability and security offered by Vluchtmaat.

Rather than engaging in acts of citizenship *in order to* claim spaces such as Vluchtmaat, the findings propose an alternative understanding in which the space *facilitates* acts of

citizenship. The incremental, everyday acts of citizenship engaged in by Vluchtmaat's residents are inextricably linked with the space of Vluchtmaat and instead of merely helping them claim the space, which could still be seen in the legitimization that their behaviour gives to their residence at Vluchtmaat, they are also made possible by the existence of the building. Vluchtmaat is thus a building where citizenship is enacted, which facilitates its enactment elsewhere and which acts as a node where the relationships between the undocumented residents and other actors intersect, accumulate and create the opportunities necessary for enacting citizenship. I therefore argue for a reinterpretation of Isin's theory of acts of citizenship, in which urban space, in this case the building of Vluchtmaat, is understood not only as a space where acts of citizenship can take place, a 'site' through which "forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political" are transformed (Isin, 2008, p. 39), but also as an act of citizenship itself. While previous research has noted the importance of space to the enactment of citizenship, whether as something which is "socially appropriate[d] and culturally recompose[d]" through acts of citizenship (Rodriguez, 1996, p. 27) or which provides a new 'site of struggle' through which 'being political' is redefined and transformed (Isin, 2008), it does not fully grasp the potential of space as an act.

While a building is not an act in and of itself, the active and deliberate creation, maintenance and existence of and within Vluchtmaat by those who may not enjoy formal citizenship but nevertheless act like citizens and demand treatment as citizens lead me to conclude that the building here functions as a spatial enactment of citizenship. While its undocumented residents are not formally recognized as citizens and do not have rights to housing, they have claimed an urban space for themselves, a space or building which interrupts not just the spatial order of its surroundings but also the expectations and assumptions of what it means to be a citizen. In its physical and symbolic form, Vluchtmaat

acts as a public self-identification of non-status, a performance, a way of signalling that its undocumented residents are here, demanding rights and making claims, all the while creating new possibilities of what it means to be a citizen. According to Nyers (2008), “to publicly self-identify as “non-status” is to engage in a political act, or better – an act of political subjectification [...] In a deeply paradoxical way, to self-identify as a non-status person is to engage in an act of citizenship” (p. 162-3). Following this line of reasoning, Vluchtmaat, as a public self-identification of non-status, could thus be seen as an act of citizenship.

The creation and maintenance of Vluchtmaat allows its residents to “constitute themselves – with or without the help of others – as capable of acting *like* citizens, and meriting treatment *as* citizens” (Walters, 2008, p. 192). In order to act as citizens, they thus need to be recognized as citizens by others or at least be treated as such. However, relationships with others are not only pivotal to their recognition as citizens but are also a fundamental aspect of what it means to be a citizen. Through their social relations with other actors, the undocumented residents at Vluchtmaat are able to act as citizens and position themselves as political subjects. Vluchtmaat acts as an accumulation of relationships, relationships through which the undocumented are able to act as citizens but which also facilitate further opportunities of enacting citizenship for example through political engagement or employment. Vluchtmaat is thus both an act of citizenship and a facilitator of acts.

As a place where new forms of citizenship are imagined and acted upon, Vluchtmaat is able to offer an alternative reality and understanding of urban identity, citizenship and community. In doing so, Vluchtmaat challenges the status quo and reclaims its residents’ ‘right to the city’ (Harvey, 2012). While society as a whole may not recognize them as citizens, it is nevertheless forced to respond and engage with those who claim a ‘right to the city’ through their occupation of a physical and symbolic urban space and their enactments of

citizenship. Through the creation and maintenance of Vluchtmaat, the undocumented residents have truly managed to “foster [an] alternative locale[] in which some sense of being a citizen is made possible” (Painter & Philo, 1995, p. 115).

This research offers a reinterpretation of Isin’s theory of acts of citizenship, in which urban space is not only a facilitator of acts of citizenship but also an act of citizenship itself. More research is necessary to further develop this interpretation of acts of citizenship and to test it in other settings and movements. In addition, the importance of social relations should be further explored, both its relevance to the concept of citizenship and its role in acts of citizenship. While this research was faced with limitations such as a lack of access and time constraints, it is nevertheless able to offer a valuable contribution to the existing literature on citizenship and shed light on the means through which undocumented refugees constitute themselves as political subjects, disrupt the established order and reinterpret what it means to be a citizen.

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Appendix A



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: We Are Here! A Reinterpretation of Acts of Citizenship and the Role of Urban Space

Name, email of student: Michelle Crijns, michellecrijns@gmail.com

Name, email of supervisor: Rogier van Reekum, vanreekum@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: 9 January 2019 – 16 June 2019

Is the research study conducted within DPAS YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: TYPE OF RESEARCH STUDY

Please indicate the type of research study by circling the appropriate answer:

1. Research involving human participants. YES - NO
 If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - NO
Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO).
2. Field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. YES - NO
3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). YES - NO

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

(Complete this section only if your study involves human participants)

Where will you collect your data?

Interviews and participant observation were conducted at Vluchtmaat (Joan Muyskenweg 32A, 1114 AN Amsterdam), the temporary location of the Diemengroep (Bijlmerdreef 1141A, 1103 TT Amsterdam), and throughout The Hague during an ICC protest march (only observation, no interview). Document analysis was conducted at the same locations (signs, posters) and at home (websites etc.).

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

I interviewed six people (5 interviews) and observed an indefinable amount of people (at the We Are Here locations probably around 20-30 people each, at the protest probably over 70, most of which were not part of We Are Here).

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

We Are Here's membership changes constantly but is typically around 140. Vluchtmaat houses 43 We Are Here members.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES - NO

Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------|
| 5. | Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? | YES - NO |
| 6. | Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? | YES - NO |
| 7. | Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? | YES - NO |
| 8. | Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? | YES - NO |
| 9. | Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? | YES - NO |
| 10. | Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? | YES - NO |

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

Since I studied a social movement, a political struggle, a collective fighting for their right to the city, participants' political and philosophical views necessarily came up during the interviews. In order to study the acts through which they claim citizenship and the way in which they use and claim urban space, a discussion on beliefs concerning citizenship, identity, rights and obligations, and inequality was unavoidable and, ultimately, necessary to conduct this research and answer the research question.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

All interviewees received an informed consent form and received information regarding the goal of the research and the safeguards in place to protect their data. Interviewees had to provide consent for the audio recording of the interview. While it was not possible to receive informed consent from all individuals observed during participant observation, I requested informed consent from a representative, which was the person that had granted me access to the site of observation. Moreover, my role as a researcher was conveyed so that even those who did not explicitly give their consent were aware of my role and the purpose of my presence. Data was encrypted and stored in the Erasmus University Document Vault. Personal data was separated from the rest of the data and deleted after being replaced by a code.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

There were (as far as I am aware) no unintended circumstances during data collection which caused harm or had negative consequences for the participants. The interviews and observations at the two We Are Here locations did not offer any cause for concern and during the protest march in The Hague, I did not interfere with the protest itself or the volunteers and police present.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Part IV: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

Data was stored in the Erasmus University Document Vault. Interview audio recordings were transferred and deleted from my mobile phone within 24 hours. Recordings were transferred using direct transfer (connecting the device to computer) as opposed to non-secure methods such as email. Field notes and audio recordings were transcribed and stored on my laptop. All data was encrypted.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I was and still am solely responsible for the management, storage and backup of the data.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Research data was automatically backed-up once every 24 hours.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

Personal details were separated from the rest of the data after which they were replaced by a code.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Michelle Crijns

Name (EUR) supervisor: Rogier van Reekum

Date: 16 June 2019

Date:

Informed Consent

Research title

We Are Here! A Reinterpretation of Acts of Citizenship and the Role of Urban Space

Researcher

Michelle Crijns

MSc Governance of Migration and Diversity

Erasmus University Rotterdam

+31615895943

michellecrijns@gmail.com

Supervisor

Dr. Rogier van Reekum

Assistant Professor at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS)

Erasmus University Rotterdam

+31104082518

vanreekum@essb.eur.nl

I have been given information about *We Are Here! A Reinterpretation of Acts of Citizenship and the Role of Urban Space* and discussed the research project with Michelle Crijns who is conducting this research as part of her MSc in Governance of Migration and Diversity at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.

Do you agree with the processing of your personal data, which may include your political opinions and philosophical beliefs, for the purpose of this research?

Yes No

Do you agree with the audio recording of this interview?

Yes No

By signing this consent form, I agree to take part in this study.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix B

Code	Group	Location	Date	Duration
Document analysis	-	Online, Vluchtmaat, Bijlmermeer	11/04/2019 - 30/05/2019	*
Participant observation 1	Smaragdgroep and Hoogoordwomen	Vluchtmaat	16/04/2019	00:45:00**
Interview 1	Smaragdgroep	Vluchtmaat	16/04/2019 and 12/05/2019	***
Interview 2	Smaragdgroep	Vluchtmaat	24/04/2019	01:37:37
Participant observation 2	Diemengroep (also non-We Are Here participants)	The Hague (ICC protest)	26/04/2019	03:00:00**
Participant observation 3	Diemengroep	Bijlmermeer	30/04/2019	00:30:00**
Interview 3	Diemengroep (2 informants)	Bijlmermeer	30/04/2019	00:41:15
Interview 4	Smaragdgroep	Vluchtmaat	01/05/2019	00:54:15
Interview 5	Hoogoordwomen	Vluchtmaat	15/05/2019	00:22:36

* I did not record the time I spent on document analysis since this data was collected over the course of multiple weeks and whenever necessary.

** Estimates as I did not record the duration of my observations.

*** Our first meeting (16/04/2019) was meant as an introduction into the Vluchtmaat community and I thus did not record our conversation. The informant was unable to meet me for their official interview due to personal circumstances and instead answered my questions via email (on 12/05/2019).