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## Practicing sanctuary: the prosaic politics of City of Sanctuary in the United Kingdom

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# EVERYDAY ENACTMENTS OF SANCTUARY: THE UK *CITY OF SANCTUARY* MOVEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

Sanctuary cities have been the focus of considerable attention in the US and Canadian contexts. Both countries have long-standing traditions of sanctuary movements as well as a plethora of localised urban collectives that assert rights to sanctuary within the city (see Freeland 2010; Ridgley 2008). Notwithstanding occasional episodes of church-centred sanctuary (see Cohen 2003), the UK has seen much less interest in the development of sanctuary cities. Indeed, it is only in recent years that a coordinated movement, *City of Sanctuary*, has emerged across the UK to define a range of urban environments as key sites for the practice of sanctuary. This chapter provides an overview of *City of Sanctuary*, setting out the broad aims of the movement as well as drawing on our research into the movement's activities in the city of Sheffield.<sup>1</sup> In focusing on the Sheffield case, the chapter explores how activities, such as the facilitation of voluntary opportunities, can be understood both as reflecting and as creating possibilities for disruptive acts of sanctuary. These disruptive acts are explored through an emphasis on *everyday enactments* of sanctuary as forming sanctuary relations which are not always-already imbued with traces of domination but are rather continuously open to challenge. Our interest is in the ways that these everyday enactments are detached from, and thus potentially disrupt, the relations of privilege that are embedded in the formal articulation of the movement as promoting a cultural shift towards valuing 'hospitality'. Specifically, we draw out the tensions between everyday enactments of sanctuary and formal practices of hospitality and contribution in *City of Sanctuary*, as a means to both forefront and challenge the uneven relations that inform the UK sanctuary movement.

The chapter proceeds in four parts. First, we examine the activities of *City of Sanctuary* by providing an overview of its organisation, ideals and practices. In so doing, we draw distinctions between the formal articulation of sanctuary found in this

movement, and the broader ‘patchwork’ of everyday enactments of sanctuary manifest across Sheffield and beyond. The limitations of this formal approach form the focus of the second part of the chapter. The third part sets out how *City of Sanctuary* activities might be understood as creating opportunities for everyday enactments of sanctuary that disrupt the assignment of positions associated with relations of hospitality. Here we explore the temporality of sanctuary through considering the regulatory potentials of ‘waiting’ as an imposed practice which conditions the lives of those seeking asylum (see Conlon 2011; Schuster 2011). We then consider how informal practices of volunteering potentially question such governmental temporalities of waiting. Drawing attention to the significance of tensions within *City of Sanctuary* activities, we then turn to the work of Henri Lefebvre (1996) on the ‘right to the city’. We argue that Lefebvre helps to highlight how routines of work, travel and occupation can be of particular significance for challenging uneven relations embedded in sanctuary practices. Specifically, we show how Lefebvre’s work allows for an exploration of how everyday enactments of sanctuary might be tied to a notion of inhabiting the city as a practice that cuts across the positions and assumptions of sanctuary as a form of hospitality. Let us begin, however, by introducing *City of Sanctuary*.

#### *CITY OF SANCTUARY: MOVEMENT OR PATCHWORK?*

In 2007 Sheffield became a *City of Sanctuary* with the support of the City Council and over one hundred local organisations. While Sheffield was the first city in the UK to achieve official status as a *City of Sanctuary*, it is by no means the only place in the UK where sanctuary has been enacted. The creation of a place as a *City of Sanctuary* is based on the commitment of member organisations and groups, as well as on support from local politicians and the active participation of asylum seekers, refugees and refugee groups. As such, localised groups across a variety of cities and towns have been formed under the name of *City of Sanctuary* over recent years. The movement is a means by which actions that intervene in the field of asylum politics are facilitated, consolidated and unified. Indeed, in October 2011 a national network of local groups in seventeen towns and cities formed part of this ‘movement to build a culture of hospitality for people seeking sanctuary in the UK’ (City of Sanctuary 2011). At the time of writing Bristol, Sheffield and Swansea were the only three cities

with official status as a *City of Sanctuary* (City of Sanctuary 2011). Nevertheless, the movement is clearly more far reaching than this ‘official’ articulation would imply.

So what precisely constitutes a place as a *City of Sanctuary*? There is both a more formal and a more *informal* answer that might be provided to this question. Formally, the primary aim of the movement is to ‘influence policy-makers and public attitudes throughout the country’ (City of Sanctuary 2011), yet to achieve this *City of Sanctuary* favours processes of cultural change over political lobbying or campaigning (Barnett and Bhogal 2009: 83; see also Darling 2010; Squire 2009a, 2011). In order to qualify ‘officially’ as a *City of Sanctuary*, a place has to: gain resolutions of support from local groups and organisations; involve local refugee communities in the movement; achieve the support of the City Council and produce a strategy for greater inclusion of refugees and people seeking sanctuary in the city (Barnett and Bhogal 2009: 79). Much work goes into creating a place of sanctuary before such official status is gained. For this reason an understanding of the less formal dimensions of *City of Sanctuary* is central in understanding how a place is constituted as such.

At a less formal level, the constitution of a city or town as a *City of Sanctuary* takes a variety of forms dependent on the specific location of groups involved. One of the key impulses driving the movement is the encouragement of a localised approach, through which the movement’s activities are embedded in the specificities of the particular urban context (see Darling 2010; Squire and Darling under review). Despite these local specificities, however, there are similarities in the activities of *City of Sanctuary* across the UK, such as in the organisation of cultural events like community gardening or social evenings. These are designed to foster relationships between those taking sanctuary and other people who are present in the city. In addition to such activities, there is a strong emphasis on the creation of volunteering opportunities for those who are denied the right to work or who face barriers to entering the job market. Educating local residents about the challenges facing those taking sanctuary is also frequently emphasized.

One aspect common to each activity is that they create opportunities for everyday encounters between individuals and groups present within the city. However, though

significant, the role of *City of Sanctuary* itself should not be overstated. One could perhaps say that *City of Sanctuary* is also a *product* of everyday encounters: it reflects and further develops the possibilities for such encounters rather than simply providing opportunities for them. Indeed, one could say it is a product both of those encounters that emerge from political and social activities by existing groups (such as the Northern Refugee Centre in the Sheffield case), as well as of those that emerge out of social and personal connections that are formed within a city of dispersal and resettlement (including those associated with religious groups or congregations of various denominations). To develop an understanding of the significance of *City of Sanctuary* in these terms is not simply to understand it as a movement with official qualification standards and formal aims and objectives. It is to understand *City of Sanctuary* as a patchwork formation that emerges from and feeds into less formal everyday encounters. This prompts us to consider the political significance of such encounters in terms of the possibilities they provide in challenging the uneven relations embedded in sanctuary practices. It is to the limits of the movement's formal emphasis on a 'culture of hospitality', however, that we turn to first.

#### THE LIMITS OF A 'CULTURE OF HOSPITALITY'

Everyday enactments are of particular interest as a site through which to explore *City of Sanctuary*. These enactments provide a means to consider acts of sanctuary that diverge from the formal representation of the movement as fostering a 'culture of hospitality'. The latter, we suggest, is a politically limiting approach, which is bound to rationalities of power that produce uneven relations between guest and host (Squire 2011; Squire and Bagelman forthcoming; Squire and Darling under review). Indeed, it is in the formal articulation of the movement as centred on intercultural events and the promotion of a 'culture of hospitality' that the uneven relations embedded in sanctuary practices are evident. In part this is because practices of hospitality do little to redress or contest the distinctions of position, status and privilege which inform the exclusionary politics of asylum evident in states such as the UK (see Squire 2009b). Rather, what comes to surface through valorising welcome is not only the privilege that some have in welcoming others, but also the indebtedness and gratitude assumed to be necessary on the part of those 'guests' who are 'welcomed' or hosted (see Chan 2005; Darling 2009, 2011a; Jenkins 2002). Practices of sanctuary that remain wedded

to notions of gratitude and indebtedness are problematic precisely because they maintain subordinate positions for those being ‘offered’ sanctuary.

A culture of hospitality is particularly problematic where it is bound to the valorisation of individual contribution, since this carries over embedded privileges into governmental practice by limiting the scope of welcome to those deemed morally or socially ‘worthy’. A celebration of the potential or actual contributions made by asylum seekers and refugees is central to some of *City of Sanctuary*’s campaign materials (see Darling 2010). This serves as a means to present those seeking sanctuary as ‘good’ and ‘worthy’ citizens, as figures ‘deserving’ of sanctuary (see also Sales 2002). Yet valorising the contributions of those seeking asylum or taking refuge in the city once again positions asylum seekers and refugees as dutifully repaying a debt imbued through the ‘offer’ of sanctuary, as well as subordinated in his or her need for this ‘offer’ of sanctuary in the first place. The formal language and practice of *City of Sanctuary* therefore extends a pastoral logic (see Lippert 2005a: 89-140, 1998), and can be understood as being mobilised in terms that both depoliticise and regulate the presence of asylum seekers and refugees (see Squire and Bagelman forthcoming).

Whilst the formal message of this form of sanctuary politics is potentially limiting it is notable that within Sheffield such a message was also questioned. For example, in interviews at the time of the movement’s initial work, city councillors David and Julie expressed concern at the approach of *City of Sanctuary*;

I just have this fear that they’re [*City of Sanctuary*] talking to the converted...and they haven’t broadened their horizons. Because, I genuinely don’t believe that in general terms they talk to Joe Public in the street, they’re the people they should be talking to...they’re talking to a quite closed audience and they’re not going to be challenged as much there

(David interview 2007).

David's concern that the methods of *City of Sanctuary* are too often focused upon garnering support among groups and individuals who would be expected to support values of sanctuary and hospitality, are furthered by Julie, who states that;

I think they'll have to step up a gear, as they won't really grab that many people's attention just working in that local, but of course its not so challenging here, there is no backlash

(Julie interview 2006).

The difficulty highlighted here for *City of Sanctuary* is that in speaking only to those who may already support their aims there is a lack of dialogue, debate and criticism. Indeed, a concern expressed by a number of politicians in the city involved how the movement would respond to extending their message to more diverse groups.

If as David suggests, the majority of individuals and groups reached by *City of Sanctuary* are those who would be expected to support such an initiative, such as refugee organisations, Universities and local churches, then the argument regarding cultural change is weakened. However, the way the movement is formally articulated fits dominant agendas in these accounts, not only in terms of the articulation of *City of Sanctuary* as a movement for hospitality but also in its articulation as a 'mainstream' movement. *City of Sanctuary* seeks to promote opportunities for interaction between those seeking sanctuary and other Sheffield residents. It aims in particular to celebrate the contributions of refugees to the city, and to allow those seeking sanctuary to be supported as far as possible *within* the constraints of the UK's dispersal policies. As such, the kinds of cultural activities promoted fit well the image of Sheffield as a cosmopolitan and inclusive city. This image is promoted through The Sheffield City Strategy 2010-2020 (Sheffield First Partnership 2011), which highlights an 'inclusive' and 'vibrant' city in which 'people feel welcomed, valued and can fully participate'. The lack of negative response that Julie notes might thus be read as a consequence of the relatively conservative nature of *City of Sanctuary*, also reflected in the explicit refusal to engage in more traditional 'political' activities such as lobbying and protest.<sup>2</sup>

In its emphasis on fostering a culture of hospitality and practices of welcome and contribution, the *City of Sanctuary* movement is thus relatively easily subsumed under a dominant discourse of the ‘tolerant’ nation. This does not only offer an explanation for the lack of backlash noted in Sheffield, but also highlights the limits of *City of Sanctuary* as a movement. In its formal articulation, the movement would seem to do little to effectively challenge or resist the exclusionary nature of asylum discourse and practice in the UK (Squire 2009b). Indeed, in uncritically maintaining the position of the city as a site of dispersal politics (see Darling 2011b), *City of Sanctuary* might be understood as actively propagating such exclusions by allowing supporting organisations, practices and councillors to be part of a ‘sanctuary city’ without politicising its status. Yet even accepting these limitations, we perceive tensions in the way sanctuary is enacted that warrant further attention. Our primary interest is not in assessing the *City of Sanctuary* movement, but in exploring how tensions in its ‘patchwork’ formation are indicative of the disruptive potential of everyday enactments of sanctuary. In the next section we discuss these everyday enactments of sanctuary.

## EVERYDAY ENACTMENTS OF SANCTUARY

As we have noted, in contrast to sanctuary incidents such as those examined by Randy Lippert (2005a, 2005b) in the Canadian context, *City of Sanctuary* Sheffield does not actively engage in the material or physical provision of accommodation or protection. Rather, such work is undertaken by a range of other local organisations. It might thus be tempting to suggest that *City of Sanctuary* represents little more than a collective of organisations and individuals who promote values of hospitality but who do not effectively *practice* sanctuary. However, this would be to overlook the varied ways in which the activities of *City of Sanctuary* both emerge from and create possibilities for everyday enactments of sanctuary in a more diffuse sense. There are three points that we want to summarise here as a means to set out our understanding of *City of Sanctuary* as a patchwork of everyday enactments that potentially invoke more disruptive acts of sanctuary. We do not focus on the specificity of these disruptive acts here, since they are introduced elsewhere (Squire 2011, Squire and Bagelman

forthcoming, Squire and Darling under review), but rather we draw out some of their points of significance in highlighting everyday enactments of sanctuary.

### Rightful presence

The first point relates to how everyday enactments of sanctuary entail disruptive claims to justice or presence. That is, they involve enactments of ‘rightful presence’, whereby those taking sanctuary assume or enact claims that disrupt the uneven relations between guest and host (Squire and Darling under review). We suggest that this occurs through a ‘making present’ of interconnected histories and geographies, thus invoking a form of relational justice (see Dikeç 2001). The activities of *City of Sanctuary* are not primarily significant for the development of a movement promoting rightful presence or for the emergence of a campaign for justice on behalf of those seeking refuge. Rather, these activities are significant for the disruptive ‘acts’ through which those taking sanctuary make claims to a ‘right to have rights’ (see Isin 2008). Thus, activities such as museum exhibitions, blogging workshops and speakers’ events are important in so far as they emerge from, and provide conditions for, enactments of sanctuary that challenge or trouble uneven relations of guest and host. In other words, we want to highlight the ways that claiming or assuming presence as rightful disrupts broader historical and geographical patterns of privilege. This might be understood as an informal dimension of *City of Sanctuary* that exceeds its official remit. As such it disrupts the formal practice of sanctuary as a form of hospitable engagement and shows the political potential within the informal activity of *City of Sanctuary*.

### Networks and encounters

The second point we want to highlight relates to the significance of the network-building dimension of the movement, which is important to the engagements that *City of Sanctuary* fosters among organisations, individuals and community groups. Whilst this form of network-building is limited in its reach, it nonetheless provides for encounters between those taking sanctuary and other groups that may be more ‘established’ within the city. We are not suggesting here that such encounters are necessarily ‘positive’ (see Closs Stephens and Squire forthcoming), although in this

case they are of significance since they potentially challenge processes of isolation associated with dispersal (Squire 2009b).<sup>3</sup> Indeed, for some, such encounters are seen as a distinctly positive dimension of *City of Sanctuary*, as Ilya, an asylum seeker, describes;

It's brilliant work, it's like to bring together locals and foreigners and to say look we're human beings and we can live together without offending each other and we have a lot to share and we can work together...[the council's decision to join] is a recognition of the fact that these people are a part of Sheffield

(Ilya interview 2007).

Ilya's positive account of the work of *City of Sanctuary* in Sheffield contrasts with that of David and Julie in that the movement's very existence is articulated as providing a sense of hope through the discursive articulation of practices of solidarity which involve a shared investment in the city. While we make no normative claims about the nature of the relations fostered through the network-building dimension of the movement, we do want to suggest the encounters that emerge through such connections may create opportunities for relations that disrupt the privileges associated with hospitable sanctuary practices.

Taking, not waiting to receive, sanctuary

The final point here relates to the significance of *City of Sanctuary* activities as a means by which sanctuary can be creatively enacted or 'taken', rather than merely passively received (see Squire and Bagelman forthcoming). This requires a little more discussion than the previous points, since temporality is a relatively neglected dimension in the analysis of sanctuary (Bagelman under review; but see Lippert 2005a: 143-5, 154, 171). In analysing the 'time politics' of asylum in the UK, Saulo Cwerner (2004: 73) argues that the 'diverse temporalities' of everyday life are subsumed within a focus on the speed of the asylum process, such that the 'temporal complexity' of asylum as a process is overridden by a desire for asylum adjudication processes to work 'faster'. Here different rhythms of movement, mobility, recuperation and counselling fade from importance in the light of a dominant framing

of speed as the key tempo of asylum processing. However, whilst a dominant rhythm of asylum is this process of speeding up, this is in part matched by a very different temporality for those awaiting decisions. For those seeking sanctuary, the ‘speeding up’ of asylum is interwoven with the apparent ‘slowing down’ of daily life (Cwerner 2004).

The everyday temporal rhythms of the asylum process are summarised by Andrew who, reflecting on his experiences of the asylum system, stated that;

In the beginning, it was really depressing, I can't really go anywhere...you're just sitting there in a house waiting for the Home Office decision which you didn't know when, who and when they're gonna write. I mean, every time I was receiving any sort of papers, official papers, they were all of [a] negative kind. ...you just, get refusals all the time...they're just getting rid of the case, but...it's actually your life at stake when you read those papers...So after waiting for a couple of years, it became really hard to understand...it's a constant uncertainty, every single day you don't know what's gonna happen

(Andrew interview 2010).

In the UK, restrictions applied to the lives of those seeking asylum are often manifest in terms that prevent participation in certain forms of urban life. Asylum seekers often have little or no means to travel, for example, and the denial of a right to work means that this central routine of everyday life is denied in favour of a largely undifferentiated temporality of waiting. Waiting, as articulated by Andrew, presents an uncertain and isolating experience, one which can feed into processes whereby asylum seekers are related to as passive recipients of hospitality, rather than political agents. Such imposed passivity also suggests a process of supplication through which the uncertainty of waiting is attached to a performed position of earnestly ‘seeking’ or ‘requesting’ sanctuary. The imposition of waiting upon those seeking sanctuary, and the management of their everyday lives through restrictions on work and travel is indicative of how the regulation of temporality can become a means of state control (see Shapiro 2000; Edensor 2006). Indeed, Deidre Conlon (2011) has suggested that the temporal dimensions of authority imposed through awaiting asylum decisions constitute a means of regulating the politics of (im)mobility, with the logic of waiting

having become one of the ‘weapons in the battle to deter’ those seeking asylum (Schuster 2011: 411).

So, to what extent might the very logic and practice of enforced waiting provide opportunities for more disruptive enactments of sanctuary? Alison Mountz (2011) suggests that within the processes of temporal containment or marginalisation associated with waiting there exist opportunities for resistance. In particular, she argues that waiting may invite activism and produce spaces of political possibility through which the contradictions in, and failures of, struggles to govern (im)mobility are brought to wider attention. How far do the activities of *City of Sanctuary* disrupt such practices of state deterrence? It does not appear to us as though there are sustained or collectively organised tactics of resistance at play in the formal practices of *City of Sanctuary*, which may have serious implications for the movement’s wider political effects. However, a consideration of how *City of Sanctuary* activities involve disruptive ‘takings’ of sanctuary through everyday enactments may nevertheless be fruitful. Specifically these activities develop insights into the possibilities for more sustained collective struggles around processes of temporal management along with the uneven relations that these both reflect and re-produce. It is our suggestion therefore that a consideration of the tensions between the formal articulation of sanctuary and informal everyday enactments of sanctuary is critical in understanding the potential and limitations of the sanctuary ‘patchwork’ of which *City of Sanctuary* activities form a part.

The role that volunteering plays in this process is particularly telling, because it allows us to draw attention to the potentialities of everyday enactments of ‘taking’ sanctuary, as well as the limitations of such enactments where they are not consolidated through more sustained collectively-organised forms of resistance. *City of Sanctuary* thus established links with local businesses, charities and community groups in order to coordinate and facilitate volunteering among asylum seekers. For example, opportunities were created in a community gardening organisation, in a central Sheffield café and with a local refugee NGO for individuals to spend time working alongside other Sheffield residents. In reflecting on such opportunities, Catherine suggests that;

...the process was a very long one because it was a long waiting period. For me it was 5 years of waiting with no answer, with nothing to rely on...it was a bit difficult and a bit shocking. But during that time I just did volunteering work and that kept me going and it made me forget about the waiting time

(Catherine interview 2010).

Here, Catherine's volunteer work allowed her to 'forget' the process of waiting rather than entirely escape it. Similarly, Rodrigo highlights how the connections made through volunteering were crucial in dealing with the frustrations of the asylum system. When asked about what frustrations he had encountered, he noted that;

I've been here for the last one year and among others was the waiting period, seems to be quite long and quite stressful, and you find yourself living in the [...] uncertainty. You do not know the outcome of the decisions, so it's quite stressful. But on the other hand, I felt I should keep busy by getting engaged and doing volunteering with various organisation[s], and by so doing, I find its lovely meeting new friends, different cultures, ways of coping up, you know, that is how I thought things should be, and that's how I kept myself busy

(Rodrigo interview 2010).

For Rodrigo, as well as for Catherine, volunteering offers a means of coping with the logic of waiting built into the asylum system, rather than an escape or a more sustained challenge to the uneven relations that constitute sanctuary as such.

Nevertheless, volunteering also appears to feature in more disruptive terms, as a means to not only meet other people and share concerns and knowledge, but also to tap into a different rhythm of city life. Sanctuary, in this regard, might be understood as being taken in ways that potentially subvert the relations of privilege associated with the logic of waiting and governmental practices of deterrence. Here the slowed down rhythm of life associated with the isolating effect of dispersal was brought into contact with many rhythms that mark everyday life for Sheffield's inhabitants – those of a regular commute to work, the contours of a working day, and the encounters offered through volunteering. It is in this sense that volunteering might be understood as a significant dimension of the 'minor' politics that are embedded in everyday

enactments of sanctuary (see Squire 2011). We do not mean to suggest here that such enactments feature as a radical overturn either of the logic of waiting embedded in the asylum system or of the uneven relations of guest and host that ultimately render some as volunteers and others as paid workers. However, we do suggest that there remain disruptive dimensions to these enactments of sanctuary in the form of processes of taking a position within the city, which effectively challenge the uneven relations embedded in the formal articulation of *City of Sanctuary* as a movement of hospitality. To explore such possibilities, we turn to literature on the ‘right to the city’ (Lefebvre 1996).

## THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

Lefebvre’s (1996) notion of the ‘right to the city’ might provide one way to explore the potential of everyday enactments of sanctuary in relation to the activity of volunteering, introduced above. The notion of a right to the city implies ‘the participation of the urban citizen in the political life, management, and administration of the city’ (Dikeç 2001: 1790). As such it suggests a conception of citizenship not based upon civic duty or belonging, but which is open to all and is claimed through the ‘act’ of participation itself (Lefebvre 1996; Purcell 2006). Lefebvre’s ‘right to the city’ thus names a renewed focus on the production, appropriation and use of urban space by those who inhabit it, which is ‘earned by living out the routines of everyday life in the space of the city’ (Purcell 2002: 102). For Lefebvre (1996) the city is a compositional arrangement of varied rhythms, temporalities, routines and relations which form both the space of the city and the everyday texture of urban existence. It is to this compositional imaginary of urban space that a right to the city is orientated as a means to valorise participation within the city as it is constantly reproduced in daily life.

Returning to the example of volunteering as discussed by Catherine and Rodrigo, we can see some resonances with this idea. In engaging with the city through participating in the routines of everyday life, those taking sanctuary become part of the compositional enactment of urban life – a compositional enactment that entails multiple routines, rhythms and forms of occupation. For Catherine and Rodrigo the

'keeping busy' of volunteering is in the first instance an embodiment of routine and repetition through which some frustrations and closures of imposed waiting are addressed on a daily basis. Yet, it is not simply routine, but also the breaking of the routines, that is important. The 'time politics' of asylum and its routines of waiting (Cwerner 2004) is here challenged through the enactment of a right to be part of the city via an engagement with its routines. Everyday enactments such as these bear an account of the urban inhabitant which is not reliant upon distinctions of status or belonging, and thus potentially disrupts the categories of host and guest. The inhabitant is one who takes part in the everyday enactment of the city through its routines, practices and rhythms and at the same time is constituted politically, in part, through such an engagement with the city. Indeed, as Purcell (2002: 102, original emphasis) argues 'the right to the city empowers urban *inhabitants*' and is 'defined by everyday experience in lived space' (Purcell 2002: 106).

To address those taking sanctuary as urban inhabitants potentially facilitates an understanding of everyday enactments of sanctuary in terms that reject embedded assumptions about the grateful guest. Rather than guests or celebrated conditional presences, Catherine and Rodrigo might be understood as inhabitants whose daily routines are integral to the texture of urban life in Sheffield. Their involvement in volunteering in this regard disrupts the temporal logic of waiting, which disqualifies asylum seekers and refugees from enacting urban inhabitancy. As such, an alternative reading of voluntary work might be developed here which challenges the idea that it is an activity that reinforces embedded privileges. Lefebvre's (1996) focus upon the political and productive salience of urban inhabitancy is helpful here because it potentially fosters an appreciation of the shifting and dynamic nature of everyday enactments of sanctuary, in terms that favour neither mobility *nor* settlement as norms or ideals. Thus, it neither discriminates against those who inhabit the city for fleeting periods, nor fixes routines in ways that overlook either the dynamic nature of urban life or the relations of sanctuary examined here. Nevertheless, the voluntary nature of the work placements organised by *City of Sanctuary* remains problematic in so far as it remains bound to uneven relations and articulated as part of a contributory process, hence patterns of privilege are less overturned here as they are challenged in partial and ambiguous terms. Our conclusion is by no means conclusive in this regard, since

we detect both possibilities and limitations in the everyday enactments that make up the informal patchwork of sanctuary within which *City of Sanctuary* is bound.

## CONCLUSION

In this engagement with *City of Sanctuary*, we have not offered an appraisal of the movement's practices or of its re-conceptualisation of sanctuary within the city. Rather, we have considered the 'patchwork' of which *City of Sanctuary* is a part, specifically as a means to think about the limits and opportunities of everyday enactments of sanctuary in Sheffield in challenging established 'host-guest' relations. The sanctuary practices that we have examined in many respects draw upon and further entrench established relations of privilege, along with the uneven relations implied by the formal articulation of *City of Sanctuary* as a 'hospitable' movement. Yet such relations can also be partially challenged or resisted in everyday enactments of sanctuary, such as in the voluntary work of Catherine and Rodrigo discussed here. We have suggested that to understand those taking sanctuary as 'urban inhabitants' is one way of exploring activities such as volunteering in terms of more disruptive enactments of sanctuary. Though ambiguous and often temporary rather than sustained over time, our highlighting of such everyday enactments implies that sanctuary relations are not necessarily always-already imbued with traces of privilege or domination, but are rather constituted as such in terms that are continuously open to challenge. To expose these 'breaks' or openings is both to challenge the articulation of *City of Sanctuary* as 'apolitical' and to highlight the importance of critically confronting the rationalities of power within which those enacting sanctuary are caught. The activities of *City of Sanctuary* can be understood in this regard both as offering opportunities for, as well as posing limitations on, the enactment of sanctuary in terms that offer a more sustained challenge to the uneven relations within which the 'time politics' of asylum are embedded. While the resistances and challenges that we have pointed to here are limited and partial, they nonetheless remain disruptive. As such, they are significant in so far as they pose ways of thinking about how the uneven relations embedded within contemporary practices of sanctuary might undergo a more sustained challenge. On our reading, it is the informal dimensions of *City of Sanctuary* that are of most interest, since they do not necessarily comply with

the formal articulation of hospitality, but can rather be viewed from alternative perspectives that reject the assumptions and exclusions such an approach implies.

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<sup>1</sup> The chapter is based upon research undertaken by both authors on the Sheffield *City of Sanctuary* movement. Darling's research took place between October 2006 and August 2007 and involved a series of interviews with asylum seekers and refugees in Sheffield, together with local councillors, politicians and key figures within *City of Sanctuary* (see Darling 2010). Squire's research formed part of a wider study of asylum social movements and campaigns in the UK, entitled *Mobile Solidarities* (see Squire 2011). This research involved interviews with ten *City of Sanctuary* organisers and participants in the Spring and Summer of 2009 and June 2010, together with documentary analysis of material written by *City of Sanctuary* (see Squire 2009a, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> In this respect *City of Sanctuary* might be viewed as more conservative than some, but by no means all, sanctuary movements in the US and Canadian contexts. Here sanctuary incidents have been coupled with public protests, anti-deportation actions and wider modes of disruptive campaigning which, formally at least, fall outside the remit of *City of Sanctuary* (see Coutin 1993; Lippert 2005b).

<sup>3</sup> Dispersal here refers to the practice of relocating asylum seekers around an 'asylum estate' of accommodation throughout the UK so as to avoid an 'over-burdening' of provision on London and the South East of England. This practice, in place since 1999, has been argued to have significant destabilising effects on those seeking asylum via enforced mobility and insecurity, it is also argued to act as a means of regulatory deterrence linked to welfare restrictions and conditionality as accommodation is offered with no choice over the location provided to those seeking asylum (see Gill 2009; Darling 2011b; Squire 2009b).