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Introduction: Hope over Time: crisis, immobility and future-making

Nauja Kleist and Stef Jansen

Abstract. This introduction discusses the hope boom in anthropological studies, suggesting that it reflects two converging developments: a sense of increasing unpredictability and crisis, and a sense of lack of political and ideological direction in this situation. We further identify two overall trends in the anthropological literature gathered under the rubric of hope: an emphasis on hopefulness against all odds and one on specific formations of hope and temporal reasoning.

Keywords. Crisis, future, hope, (im)mobility, temporality, uncertainty

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Since the turn of the Millennium there has been a veritable explosion of writings on hope in the social sciences and the humanities. In the process, questions of temporality, anticipation and the place of the future in the present have occupied a central place. Much work focuses on such questions in epistemological terms (for example, Appadurai 2013; Browne 2005; Miyazaki 2004, 2006; Thompson and Žižek 2013) or as windows on epochal shifts and a late capitalist *Zeitgeist* (for example, Berlant 2011; Guyer 2007; Zournazi 2002). Others provide empirical studies of the production and negotiation of specific formations of hope and anticipation in particular settings and under specific socio-historical conditions, with much emphasis on situations of uncertainty. Here we find studies of hope in political and economic crisis, during or after protracted conflict, in times of rising inequality and stratified globalization, and so on (for example, Cooper and Pratten 2015a; Hage 2003; Jansen 2013, 2015; Jansen and Löfving 2009; Johnson-Hanks 2005; Kleist and Thorsen forthcoming; Mar 2005; Narotzky and Besnier 2014b; Vigh 2009b).

In this Special Issue, we aim to bring these two perspectives together in a critical exploration of hope as engagement with the future in contexts characterized by crisis, conflict and its effects, uncertainty and immobility. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, El Salvador, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, four articles examine social settings in the wake of catastrophe, whether of the human-made kind or not, with *de facto* circumscriptions of physical mobility and severe limits on how livelihoods can be secured. The authors carefully analyse how different notions and modes of hope and future-making are produced, negotiated and evolve in such settings. Challenging a current tendency in anthropology and beyond to speak unquestioningly positively of hope and indeterminacy as vibrant, if ill-defined, sources of potential for the future, the Special Issue presents critical analyses of the actual work of hope as it occurs in concrete social settings and (geo)political moments. In particular, we seek to trace the social life of particular hopes over time. Thus linking studies of temporality with those of conflict and crisis, the Special Issue aims to contribute to the burgeoning anthropological literature on hope through a revalorisation of hope as an ethnographic category in critical analysis rather than a normative banner in manifestos of optimism.

In this introduction, we situate the theme of the Special Issue through a discussion of the re-emerging of interest in hope in this period of time, suggesting that attention to the framing of (perceived) societal and historical changes is useful in when exploring how very different events and phenomena are articulated as characterized by growing uncertainty. We then turn to how anthropologists have addressed hope and uncertainty in this constellation, identifying two overall trends: one that locates hopefulness against all odds and one that studies specific formations of hope and temporal reasoning.

Why Hope, Why Now? A sense of crisis and of lack of direction

Hope is not a new topic. In Greek mythology, Pandora, the first human woman created by the gods, opened a jar of human evils which dispersed all over the world, except for hope which stayed inside the jar. Hope is central in Christianity, as expressed in Paul's emphasis on faith, hope and love and in Aquinas' identification of hope as one of the theological virtues (Dalferth and Block 2016). Hope has been the object of artistic, philosophical and religious explorations and reflections through the centuries. Thinking about the upsurge of writings on hope today thus calls for attention to why now, why again. Is the renewed interest in hope a reflection of a world that is more hopeful or more hopeless than it used to be? While we do not think it is useful or possible to measure if there is more or less hope or hopelessness today than, say, twenty years ago, we do propose that the proliferation of writings on hope reflects overall societal changes and, especially, the ways in which these are framed in the public and political debates. In the following we suggest two overall dimensions of why hope has recently gained such resonance in academic debates: a widespread sense of crisis and a heightened sense of lack of political and ideological direction in this situation. These two dimensions do not constitute unified and unequivocal phenomena but rather interrelated and converging tendencies, as we elaborate below.

In focusing on a *sense* of crisis – or, more precisely perhaps, on *senses* of crises – we wish to highlight how societal changes are framed in public debate. Frame analysis was originally developed by Goffman (1974) to refer to the principles of organization which allows us to identify and make sense of events as specific types of phenomena, for instance a theatre performance or an academic lecture. We use the term frames here in a broader way to refer to "ideas that fashion a shared understanding [...] by rendering events and conditions meaningful and enable a common framework of interpretation and representation" (Sökefeld 2006, 269-270). While frames do not determine conditions of appearance or of understanding, they guide it. In the process, events, phenomena and subjects become recognizable (or unrecognizable) *as something* or *as a consequence of something* – for instance of uncertainty or unpredictability, rather than of, say, political decisions or modes of production. Frames are thus productive, shaping interpretations of reality, and they are politically saturated, as noted by Butler in her work on the frames of war (2009, 1). Like the notion of "epoch", frames help make sense of "fluid presents and uncertain futures" (Knight and Stewart 2016, 5), channelling the ways in which we come to understand certain phenomena and events as meaningful.

Employing this perspective, a range of different phenomena and events can be perceived as producing and being characterized by uncertainty in recent years: The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and on the Pentagon, the growth of terrorist movements like Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and ISIS, as well as the effects of the war on terrorism: military interventions, widespread securitization and intensified surveillance. Violent natural disasters like earthquakes hitting El Salvador in 2001 and Haiti in 2010, the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, Hurricane Katrina, and the flooding of New Orleans in 2005. Possible pandemics like Ebola creating close to global panic. The 2007 US recession which developed into the 2008-2009 global financial crisis with harsh repercussions for national and local economies, including economic cut-backs, unemployment and evictions, affecting millions of people. Most recently, the so-called global refugee crisis where especially (but not only) European

politicians have claimed that the arrival of 1.3 million asylum seekers in 2015 is a threat to the future of the EU, often characterizing the refugee situation as an uncontrollable (national) disaster.

Admittedly, these phenomena are extremely different in scale and nature. In experiential ways, the degree to which, and the ways in which, they affect different people's lives are divergent and ultimately incommensurable. What they hold in common is that they have been widely televised, circulated and debated, and that they may have, among other things, added to a widespread sense of crisis and unpredictability, to a sense of not knowing where the world is or *could be* going. Images of crises and (actual or potential) catastrophes and threats constitute a highly mobile phenomenon through their circulation in media and social networks and may thus engender anxiety on larger scales. Since the source of such anxiety is often attributed to "outside" factors, one possible effect is the creation of transnational communities based on fear (and even hatred) of particular groups – be they immigrants, Muslims or Westerners. This may again produce and reinforce a sense of uncertainty. The production of anxiety through circulating images of crisis and uncertainty might thus be a self-fuelling process.

Much of the rhetoric about the events mentioned above, and about their destabilizing effects, can be criticized for being grounded in unreflective Western perspectives, ignoring that a sense of protracted uncertainty and precarious life conditions have long been widespread in big parts of the world (Johnson-Hanks 2005; Narotzky and Besnier 2014a; Sassen 2014; Vigh 2008). Rather than a sign of crisis as a "divergence from temporally 'normal life'" (Bryant 2016, 20), a sense of uncertainty may then be an unexceptional, even common experience in many contexts. Nevertheless terrorism- and conflict-related events, particularly "9/11", have been identified by homeland security apparatuses as reflecting a fundamentally changed world, justifying increased security and military expenditure, intervention and surveillance (Joseph 2013; O'Malley 2010). And even if violence, natural disasters, pandemics, economic crisis and conflicts are not exactly new phenomena, contemporary globalization with its (stratified) intensification of the speed, mobility and (potential) connectedness of communication, finance and people across the globe may add to a sense of uncontrollable dynamics where distant events have unforeseen local consequences. We can thus detect an increased awareness of, and sensitivity to living with risks (Adam and Groves 2007; Bauman 1998; Beck 1992). It is for this reason that we would argue that, rather than truly novel processes, what is at play is a *framing* of the present as characterized by intensified uncertainty and unpredictability.

Uncertainty, of course, is not necessarily met with despair. A century and a half ago, Marx and Engels evoked a strong sense of uncertainty in the *Communist Manifesto*, famously stating that, with the development of modern industrial society, "all that is solid melts into air" (quoted in Adam and Groves 2007, 12). For Marx and Engels this was a reason for hope: they predicted that the rapid change and extreme uncertainty would eventually drive men (sic) to face the real conditions of their lives "with sober senses" (ibid.). In contrast, today, instead of such clarity on the direction of political action, the overall perception of crisis contains a heightened sense of a lack of political-ideological direction. It is not only that we do not know where we are going and where we could be going, but we are also in the dark about where we *should* be going. Here we suggest that shattered hopes of a peaceful post-Cold War world constitute one of the backdrops of the contemporary sense of crisis. We witness the emergence of perplexity, of a concern that the currently available political alternatives are inadequate in the face of the upsurge of "new" types of conflict, violence, domination and inequality. Contrary to the euphoric expectations of a new era of peace, democracy and prosperity, the end of the Cold War did not signify "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government", as Fukuyama (1989) declared in his famous essay. Rather one of its effects was the dissolution of the democracy versus totalitarianism distinction that had stabilized notions of political friends and foes through most of the twentieth century (Mouffe 2005). The upsurge of particularist political movements and the wars in the former Yugoslavia, in Somalia, in Rwanda, and many other places, often framed largely in ethno-nationalist terms, further

blurred notions of states or regimes as clearly identifiable enemies and marked the 1990s as "a decade of superviolence" (Appadurai 2006, 1). They also exposed the inadequacy of the responses from the so-called international community to these conflicts, often consisting of ad-hoc or (what were meant to be) short-term humanitarian interventions. After that, should anybody have held their breath for a peaceful start of the new Millennium, such hopes were quickly shattered by the attacks on 11 September 2001 and the ensuing war on terrorism. Though (Islamic) terrorists did serve as a new and (at least partly) unifying enemy, identified primarily by the US government, military interventions clearly have not eradicated terrorism. Yet securitization, militarization and intensified surveillance still dominate the political repositories of response to (what are seen as) security crises. The dominance of these "solutions" has led to scholarly critique of the lack of political alternatives (for example, Butler 2009; Hage 2003; Lorber 2002; Mouffe 2005), sometimes explicitly linked to "a decline in interest in hope" (Zournazi 2002, 14) or even "the end of hope" (Mouffe in Zournazi 2002, 123-124).

It was striking, therefore, that a sense of hope seemed to return to politics in the later part of the 2000s and in the beginning of the 2010s, in political slogans and as horizons of political alternatives. Obama's 2008 presidential campaign and victory explicitly revolved around hope for change, as in the famous campaign posters, the "Yes, we can" slogan, and not least in the fact that he became the first black president of the US. The upsurge in protest movements following the financial crisis, such as the "pots and pans revolution" in Iceland in 2009, the so-called Arab Spring unfolding from the end of 2010¹, and Occupy Wall Street in 2011, can be seen as another sign that a desire for political change and a sense of direction re-emerged in some ways. In austerity-crippled Greece, a 2015 campaign with slogans like "Hope is on its way"² and "Hope begins today"³ brought the radical left-wing Syriza party to power. To a degree, a certain utopian spirit ran through these different political movements, seeking to establish "a qualitatively different organization of society and a new way of being" (Webb 2007, 79). Such promises of rapid and radical change are notoriously disappointable and many of them have been rather short-lived, giving way to new waves of disillusion. Still, the importance of the trope of hope in contemporary political movements, including and grassroots initiatives, evinced in the widespread embrace of the term, can be seen as reflecting a thirst for change as much as projections of a better future.

Importantly, such surges and wanings of the register of hope should also be cast against the diminishing resonance of modernist metanarratives of progress that provided models for political intervention and social change for much of the twentieth century. Many governments expounded ideologies according to which people were supposed to know where they were going and where they should be going: the path into the future was set out in fairly regimented ways. During most of the second half of the twentieth century in particular, different varieties of such modernist metanarratives across the globe shared a basic state-led developmentalist approach – with different degrees of capitalism, socialism, nationalism, and other "-isms" thrown into the mix. Likewise, many oppositional movements coalesced around ideologies that articulated alternatives around the same modernist motifs. This, of course, is not to say that we can detect some underlying evolutionary logic in social configurations across the globe, but rather that a developmentalist metanarrative achieved a certain degree of hegemony in many different places. It set the terms of debate and provided a dominant framework within which to argue for or against certain political options. At least since the 1970s, however, the persuasive power of such metanarratives has diminished. Amongst the many reasons for this we find increased awareness of the catastrophic potentials of political projects legitimised in that manner and of their cynical deployment as justification for deeply oppressive and exclusive policies. Moreover, we now have a decades-long tradition of sustained critical engagement with the premises of developmentalist ideologies of progress from a variety of sometimes opposed angles (ecological, feminist, postcolonial, neoliberal, Islamist, etc.). For better or for worse, then, modernist metanarratives cannot be said to sit on the pedestal where they were once enthroned. Yet, importantly, even alongside an awareness of their dark side, such ideologies have also shaped the

temporal reasoning and the political imagination of many people across the globe with dreams of progress and promises of "improvement" (Li 2007). In that sense, modernist metanarratives are far from irrelevant today – if nothing else, they have afterlives, whether as lingering hopes or as disillusion after disappointment, that constitute major factors in the shaping of the present and of people's temporal reasoning in that present (Ferguson 1999; Greenberg 2014; Rofel 1999; Scott 2004).

Locating Hopefulness

The diagnosis of "generalised uncertainty" and the "lack of a sense of direction" in the current global moment has its counterpart in scholarship in the social sciences and humanities. If the world is currently marked by such a malaise, many authors detect a crisis of hope itself, including in the potentially emancipatory role that scholarship may play. For many, key questions then become: where should we turn to find hope in the world, and what may the role of scholarship be in facilitating its reinvigoration? We thus find that much recent work on hope is written from the (often unacknowledged) perspective that hope – understood as the positive affect of hopefulness – is desirable. According to that reasoning, in the current situation scholars should be attentive to pockets of hope that do exist in the world, or to hope of which the contours can be drawn by looking beyond the current conditions. Also, there is an (often implicit) expectation that they should write in ways that affirm hope thus detected. Such uncoverings of hope are often written against disillusion and malaise; against fatalistic convictions that there are no alternatives to the current order; against pessimistic diagnoses of the present political moment as preventing any meaningful emancipatory intervention.

In anthropology, this has included a reinvigoration of explicitly politically engaged studies, partly in line with previous work on "resistance", which celebrated the "weapons of the weak" that people mobilise in the face of (usually state-led, modernist) oppression (Scott 1985). While much of this work does not use the vocabulary of hope, a concern with uncovering hopefulness in the face of pessimistic diagnoses of hopelessness permeates it. The focus here is often on people whose lives unfold in extreme duress, and authors then document how they resist against all odds (for discussion see Greenhouse 2005; Guttman 1993; Ortner 1995). Ultimately, the exact objects of people's hopes, or the ways in which they hope, are not at the heart of these authors' interests. Instead, hope is detected in the very fact that people do not succumb to oppression and that their lives and dreams are not as determined by "structural" factors as certain other conceptual frameworks might lead us to think. This often entails a focus on "agency", whether defined as such or not. And "agency" is then implicitly conceptualised as *non-conformist* behaviour or thought, that is, as resistance.

Over the last decade or so, such a concern with resistance as the locus of hope has fed into a large body of work on activism. Mostly led by scholars who position themselves as activists too, here we find a particular interest in *specific forms* of activism (for example, the Zapatistas, Occupy, and a variety of decentralised, networked, anarchist-inspired initiatives). In line with what we argued above, authors purposively focus on these groups because they consider them to provide hopeful glimpses of radical political alternatives (for example, Boni 2015; Razsa 2015). Often these are implicitly or explicitly posited against what is seen as a tired "traditional left" that sinks ever deeper into obsolescence (Maeckelbergh 2009). A major contribution of such ethnographies is their uncovering of political imaginaries, both actual and potential, that lie outside the purview of any "conventional" understandings of representative politics. Often inspired by the work of Hardt and Negri (2005), studies in this vein tend to be less interested in collective visions of revolutionary change and more in the ethical processes of self-making of activists themselves (see, for example, Razsa and Kurnik 2012; Ringel 2012). Tracing the subjectivities-in-the-making of particular activists, their "ethics of revolutionary practice" (Graeber 2008), such work seeks to detect and rekindle hope for the world, that is, for a better world understood in particular ways.

This increased focus on ethics is also noticeable in much less politically outspoken subfields of anthropology. For example, we find a burgeoning interest in issues of "ethics" in the discipline, in which the analytical lens has been turned onto the way in which subjects fashion themselves from a variety of perspectives, for example with an emphasis on questions of freedom (Laidlaw 2014) or on questions of "the good" (Venkatesan et al. 2015). Direct linkages between a focus on ethics and understandings of hope are made in Moore's "theory of the ethical imagination" (2011) and Zigon's phenomenological approach to morality (2007). Dwelling predominantly on questions of subjectivity and on people's capacities for "self-making", methodologically and epistemologically, this turn to ethics entails at least an initial focus on individual experience and reflection. Again, we suggest, a core impetus of such literature is to uncover the liberating potential or actual power of the subject. Although much more subdued than in the above studies of political activism, here too we can detect a desire to rekindle hope for the world.

Rather than identifying further fields of anthropology (and indeed other disciplines) that contain this hopeful impetus, here we want to note that both in affirmative studies of activists and in the broader turn to ethics, we also find an attempt to steer anthropology *itself* in directions that reinforce its continued relevance as a worthwhile and politically relevant activity. And while some of this work resonates with older traditions of "critical" scholarship with "progressive" or "left" leanings, there is also a strong current of criticism of the latter. For if "critique" was often intended by its authors to pick holes in metanarratives of progress, it is now increasingly *itself* seen as beholden to them. Real hope, according to many authors writing in this vein, must be found (and affirmed) outside of the framework of "critique", which is considered to be ultimately rooted in self-defeating social constructivist hermeneutics that cannot do the politically important work necessary to radically interrogate contemporary thought and practice (see, for example, Stewart 2007). The study of phenomena considered hopeful, then, is integrated in a desire to reinvigorate the discipline of anthropology as a hope-affirming form of knowledge production.

Studying Specific Formations of Hope

In many cases, anthropological work that seeks to uncover hopefulness against all odds does not focus on what people actually hope for. Instead we find a more generic drive to establish that there *is* hope (or that there *should* be hope) because we can detect openings in any visions of foreclosure. The future, we are reminded again and again, is not given, it is always in the making and we must maintain this openness at all times in our analysis and, where relevant, in our political engagement too. With regard to studies of people's engagements with the future, much work also reminds us that, while uncertainty can be experienced as an affliction, ultimately it is also a precondition for hope (Cooper and Pratten 2015b; Johnson-Hanks 2005). For the articulation of any hopes for different futures to be possible, there must be a degree of uncertainty, an awareness of it, and a willingness to act in it. At the most basic level, then, hope as a phenomenon is characterized by simultaneous potentiality (in its broadest sense) and uncertainty of the future (Kleist forthcoming). Drawing inspiration from philosophers such as Bloch, Benjamin and Rorty, Miyazaki's sustained contribution to anthropological discussions of hope brings this point home forcefully. As discussed in more detail by Jansen in this Special Issue, Miyazaki's primary concern is with the potential of hope as a "method" of knowledge production in anthropology beyond what is perceived as the dead-end of critique. Yet he also provides insights into the role of particular hopes in the lives of Suvavou people in Fiji (Miyazaki 2004) and of financial traders in Japan (Miyazaki 2006), and into the ways their hopes develop over time. Here we find an entry into studies that go beyond reaffirming hopefulness as a moral-political or disciplinary imperative, and that take people's hopes as empirical objects of analysis.

What do different people hope for? How do they hope? How does this develop over time? As soon as we formulate questions in this manner, we realise that hope as an object of analysis is in

principle "neutral": people can cherish many different hopes and, unless we focus explicitly on like-minded people, only some of them will be in tune with any author's own political hopes (as noted also by Zigon 2009: 254). If we refrain from positing a symbiotic relationship (more hope for people is more hope for the world is more hope for anthropology), an anthropological interest in hope, we will now argue, may gain from operating under the rubric of studies of temporal reasoning and engagements with the future. This means we should qualify the question "where should we turn to find hope in the world?": this question now emerges as a spatiotemporal one, where the "where" is necessarily imbricated with the "when".

Temporal Reasoning and Future-Making

Until recently, anthropologists have paid relatively little attention to mundane engagements with the future, or, in Malkki's words, to "the future in the present" (2001, 326-327). As Appadurai has pointed out this may be a consequence of particular uses of the discipline's traditional central concept, culture, which, he says, has led to the neglect of "plans, hopes, goals, targets ..., wants, needs, expectations, calculation" (2004, 60). Such orientations to the future, Appadurai explains, have largely been left to economics and development studies. Seeking to correct this, he proposes to reconfigure our use of the culture concept to encompass engagements with the future, particularly by conceiving of socially patterned and culturally specific "capacities to aspire". Appadurai thus seeks to constitute "aspirations" as an object of anthropological analysis by "repatriating" them into the domain of culture (2004, 67), examining the future as "a cultural fact", as reflected in the title of his most recent book (2013). None of the articles in this Special Issue follows his fidelity to the culture concept, but we do find an effort akin to Appadurai's to be alert to collective horizons of expectation (Kosseleck 1985: 273) and to the ways in which people's hopes shape up in particular conditions. These conditions include what Hirsch and Stewart have defined as "historicity": "the manner in which persons operating under the constraints of social ideologies make sense of the past, while anticipating the future" (2005, 263). And while these authors focus on relativising "history" as the product of one particular (modern, Western) mode of historicity, our collection picks up another thread of their argument: their insistence that we have much to gain from approaching the "ongoing social production of accounts of pasts and futures" (ibid.) as a key object of ethnographic analysis.

How can anthropologists study "historicities", or, in our terms, their "temporal reasonings"? Reflecting a broader pattern in the discipline, productive entry points can often be found in moments of exception, in difficulties to establish routine, in crises. Much inspiration for the anthropological study of hope can therefore be drawn from writings that do not explicitly work under the rubric of hope, but that focus on how people engage with difficult, challenging, sometimes unexpected *current* experiences through particular understandings of past and future. For example, a Special Issue of this journal on austerity-governed Southern Europe in the early 2010s demonstrates how "crises turn ordinary daily routine inside out and expose the seams of temporality to view" (Knight and Stewart 2016, 3). It offers a captivating portrait of what we could call a multi-scalar effervescence of temporal reasoning, as "in crises, not only time, but history itself as an organizing structure and set of expectations, is up for grabs and can be refashioned according to new rules" (15). When people try to make sense of their predicaments they thus tend to inscribe them in (sometimes reworked) accounts of pasts and futures. In line with this, Dalsheim (2015) shows how "duration" contributes to the maintenance of particular publics over time. She argues that many "befores" may become part of an event as it is constituted over time (2015, 10) and that anthropologists can trace how people themselves negotiate consciousness of duration, both in terms of "past events folded into the present, and [of] the anticipation of future events" (11). In a related move, Bryant (2016) proposes the term "uncanny present" to describe moments in which such duration is felt to be interrupted, when assumed links between past, present

and future are shown to be radically contingent. Such moments, she says, "bring the present into consciousness" in unusual ways (2016, 20), complicating habitual forms of anticipation.

While crises are particularly interesting entry points for ethnographies of temporal reasoning, some authors have sought to detect prevailing templates of temporal reasoning over the longer term. Investigating changing modes of perceiving and dealing with the future in such a longitudinal perspective, Adam (2010) and Adam and Groves (2007) argue that embodied and contextualized futures have been replaced with notions of empty, abstract and decontextualized ones, which are open to planning. This transformation entails that "the future" has moved from "the domain of fate into a realm of action potential" (Adam 2010, 365) with an ensuing emphasis on individual agency as well as a simultaneous sense of uncertainty and of potentiality. Today, Adam states, we find ourselves a situation where future-making has shifted from an individual to a collective base, from local to global effects, and from "the human domain of action to all of nature" (2010, 371). However, this "new moral context of obligation" (ibid.) has not been yet properly addressed in how we deal with the future, as Ghassan Hage points out in his afterword to this issue. Yet Guyer's (2007) analysis of developments in Christianity and economics in the US detects a shift that privileges the far away future and the immediate present at the expense of the "near future", which is the realm of co-ordinated collective action and political intervention. Other authors have investigated what happens when frameworks of modernist progress are ever less available in practical terms but when the temporal reasoning that animates them remains a key factor in the making of people's hopes (Berlant 2011; Ferguson 1999; Jansen 2015; Muehlebach and Shoshan 2012; Rofel 1999). As Scott has argued forcefully, people can thus be "conscripts of modernity" (2004). Importantly, then, particular "regimes of anticipation" (Zeytlin 2015, 390) are conditioned not only by past events (whether part of official historical records or not), but also by past futures, including remembered hopes and fears. As Zeitlyn puts it: "Possible but excluded futures cast shadows, exert influence or otherwise interfere with the actual future" (2015, 399). An interest in affective dynamics forms a central part of such writings on temporal reasonings and an alertness to how hope *feels* is an important contribution of recent work, including the articles in this Special Issue. In a sobering manoeuvre, one of the affective patterns that is emphasised in much anthropological work on hope is a sense of being stuck and concomitant difficulties to articulate and cherish hopes. Here, Bourdieu's early study of "temporal dispositions" in colonial Algeria (1979, 2) is instructive. In this study of the "capacity to aspire" *avant-la-lettre*, Bourdieu and his collaborators paint a bleak picture of Kabyle subproletarians as condemned to fatalistic despair, whereas workers in the "modern sector" had better tools at their disposal to formulate hopes for themselves and for their households. Both, the authors argue, tended to adjust their hopes to "objective probabilities" (1979, 16). In what we could call a study of the political economy of hope, they thus draw attention to the unequal social processes that produce and distribute temporal dispositions in a particular (here: colonial) social constellation at a particular time. Such work seeks to understand what and how people can and do hope at a given point in time and space. Many recent studies have thus investigated the production and negotiation of specific formations of hope under socio-historical conditions of crisis, during or after protracted conflict, and in times of rising inequality and stratified globalization (for example, Cooper and Pratten 2015a; Grill 2012; Jansen 2015; Kleist and Thorsen forthcoming; Narotzky and Besnier 2014a; Vigh 2009a).

Governing Through Hope

A key contribution to the study of hope, inspired directly by Bourdieu's approach, has been made by Ghassan Hage. Drawing on a variety of phenomena in contemporary neoliberal-capitalist Australia, Hage detects a deeply uneven distribution of the ability to give meaning to life and to have one's worth as a human being recognised (2003, 9-18). He approaches hope as a social category, with a particular emphasis on how "social" hope is produced and distributed by the state. Social hope, in this view,

should always be studied as specific to places and groups, rather than be treated as a generic phenomenon. What Hage calls "societal hope" constitutes a particular form of social hope, namely collective visions of "meaningful life and dignified social life" within a given society (2003, 15). In capitalism societal hope works through sustaining an idea of "the ability to maintain an *experience* of the *possibility* of upward social mobility" (2003, 13, emphasis in original), no matter whether this is likely to occur or not. Such societal hope may entail what Berlant has called cruel optimism as "a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility" whose realization may be impossible to attain (2011, 2). However Hage also argues that states distribute hope unequally and that they allocate different kinds of societal hope to different groups of citizens or denizens –indeed, some groups may be recipients of only little or no societal hope. Hence, the production, distribution and differentiation of societal hope is a fundamentally political phenomenon, constituting a way of government, of "shaping the desires and aspirations of subjects through hope" (Turner 2015, 177).

Collective visions of possible futures come in different forms as do the ways of governing through them. Perhaps more than any other anthropologist, Hage has elucidated the particular significance of movement in hope (Hage 2003; Hage 2009a; Hage and Papadopoulos 2004). In contemporary Australia, he states, dominant notions of hope revolve around a sense that one is "going somewhere" in life, yet a large section of the population experiences entrapment or "stuckedness" (Hage 2009b, 97). The societal hopes of such groups may be seen as disappointed, causing frustration and a sense of crisis. On a global level, migration – or the desire to migrate – is one response to such existential immobility in an attempt to move forward in life, physically and socially. Likewise immigration politics constitute one of the ways through which states distribute societal hope to populations, including to mobile populations such as refugees. However, often they distribute messages of the *absence* of societal hope for/to (would-be) immigrants, as reflected in the consolidation of increasingly restrictive regimes of mobility around the world (Salazar and Glick Schiller 2014). As we write, the so-called European refugee crisis is a particularly striking case in point. While Germany and Sweden initially welcomed Syrian refugees, these countries (along with many other European states) soon resorted to stricter border control and declared that a large proportion of the asylum seekers in their territories will be deported. Likewise the construction of fences along the borders of the Schengen territory,⁴ the EU deal with Turkey of returning "irregular migrants", and the increasing militarization of the Mediterranean Sea can be seen as expressions of how many European politicians attempt to deter hope for refugees and migrants residing in or heading towards Europe, presumably to "protect" their citizens in terms of the economy, social cohesion, culture, etc. Such political messages and practices signal that politicians are "saving" societal hope, that they are reserving beliefs in a possible future in the specific nation-states to the nation rather than to newcomers. Migrants and refugees are not welcome in the nation-state in such scenarios, but should, if their presence is to be tolerated at all, be temporary guests who leave as soon as circumstances permit.⁵

While (attempted) mobility is one – contested – response to existential immobility and "stuckedness", another is to wait out the crisis, to stay and stick it out rather than to leave (Hage 2009b). This tendency can be linked to the growing emphasis on resilience⁶ in situations of crisis (Eggerman and Panter-Brick 2010; Joseph 2013; O'Malley 2010; Rogers 2013) and, for that matter, to the growth of positive psychology literature (for example, Goldstein and Brooks 2004). Resilience as a concept has travelled from the literature on adaptability of ecological systems to an overall emphasis on how individuals and societies "adapt to externally imposed change" (Joseph 2013, 39). It is often employed by governments and organisations to refer to a positive quality that allows people to "adapt to changing conditions through learning, planning or reorganization" in situations of crisis or adversity (World Resources Institute 2008: 27, quoted in Joseph 2013, 39). Indeed the motto of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is "Empowered Lives, Resilient Nations".

In contrast to the emphasis on immediate agency and changing "the system" in activist movements, resilience is more linked to enduring and perhaps even embracing situations of

uncertainty, to a valuation of "individual responsibility, adaptability and preparedness" (Joseph 2013, 40). It fits well with neoliberal modes of governance and their emphasis on market forces, citizen-customers and privatization (cf. Greenhouse 2010). Indeed, as Hage (2009b) has pointed out with reference to neoliberal Australia, dealing well with crisis has become a central feature of good citizenship, giving rise to a new form of governmentality. Again, this could be approached as a means of governing through the distribution of societal hope. The provision and vision of societal hope is reconfigured, however, when compared to, say, a "classic" welfare state model with its paths for people to follow from cradle to grave. Rather, neoliberal and resilience-oriented approaches emphasize *individual* responsibility for realizing the good life (or just for coping) in spite of challenges, whether envisioned in terms of consumption or self-development.

The emphasis on resilience is rarely linked directly to hope. Nevertheless we find that there are two overlapping aspects which make it worthwhile to consider resilience in relation to the contemporary interest in hope. First, both concern conditions of uncertainty and identify some kind of potentiality in this uncertainty, however differently expressed or approached. We may say that in neoliberal governmentality practices, resilience is invoked as a necessary means to be able to "realize" and get a share of societal hope, at least for some groups of citizens. Second, and relatedly, both resilience and hope imply temporal reasoning. As Eggerman and Panter-Brick suggest in their study of mental health in Afghanistan, resilience "rest on a sense of hope: the belief that adversity can be overcome" and that coherence between "past, present and future experiences" can be (re-)established (2010, 81). This implies that resilience may also revolve around a desire for continuity or the re-establishment of past values or life conditions, for permanence rather than change (cf. Ringel 2014). We should therefore not assume that there is one particular mode of temporal reasoning and future-making in situations of "being stuck". Rather, as the four articles in this Special Issue demonstrate, these phenomena emerge in multiple and context-specific ways.

The Articles

Bookmarked by this introduction and an afterword by Ghassan Hage, this Special Issue of *History and Anthropology* contains four case studies informed by the questions raised in the abovementioned literature. In line with the pattern identified above, we focus on situations in which a predictable sequence of past-present-future cannot be taken for granted. While others have addressed experiences of economic crisis and austerity, for example, we focus on temporal reasoning and future-making in situations of protracted displacement, humanitarian disaster or post-conflict recovery in social configurations that are subject to degrees of humanitarian government and/or foreign supervision. Based on longitudinal ethnographic engagements, the authors are alert to patterns beyond the immediate effects of war, forced displacement or natural disaster, tracing the prevalence of precarious *presents*. The contributions demonstrate how such presents may entail a sense of stagnation and lack of societal or political progress when anticipations for a better – or just livable – future are continuously disappointed; yet they may also point to how hopeful spaces and futures are created and evolve. The analyses of social settings of *protracted* crisis, of which there are all too many in the world, allows this Special Issue to crystallise some dimensions of the abovementioned perceived crisis of hope in relation to existential and physical (im)mobility and waiting, while also magnifying questions that are pertinent much beyond them but perhaps less visible elsewhere and at other times.

In the first article **Cathrine Brun** approaches questions of temporal reasoning from the perspective of humanitarian practice in situations of protracted displacement. Building on the writings of Fassin (2012) she shows how "humanitarian reason" relies on the spatiotemporal decontextualization of refugees, exiling the future from humanitarianism. This is usually justified with reference to the specific requirements of life-saving in emergencies. Yet as Brun reminds us, most humanitarian operations last much longer than anticipated and this leads to a gap not only between set

frameworks and concrete needs of beneficiaries, but also between those frameworks and the desires and practices of those who assist them. Drawing on her previous work in different geographical settings, Brun zooms in on the understandings and practices with regard to the future amongst humanitarian professionals who work with Syrian refugees in Jordan. Most of these refugees have been there for several years and reside in rented accommodation in urban settings. Their livelihoods often rely at least partly on precarious, informal labour. Yet Brun's contribution contains a corrective on mechanical understandings of a prevalent sense of "being stuck" amongst people in protracted displacement. Dissatisfied with this formulation, she acknowledges that both displaced people and humanitarian workers may indeed feel stuck, yet she also carefully identifies different forms of movement that do form part of their lives.

In a refreshing analytical and political move, Brun develops a thoughtful discussion of ethics in contexts of humanitarian intervention. Yet, unlike much current work, her turn to ethics is not primarily guided by an interest in technologies of the self or in conceptions of the good. Instead, developing an instructive dialogue between de Beauvoir's (1988 [1952]) work on immanence and transcendence and Arendt's (1958) conceptualisation of biological life (labour) and biographical life (work), she draws on feminist work on temporality and an ethics of care. In this way she reveals the limits of prevalent understandings of temporality in the canon of the humanitarian system: the mission to save biological lives does not entail a concept of a future. As exemplified by the Vulnerability Assessment Framework for Syrian Refugees in Jordan, such interventions produce and rely on knowledge that puts biographical lives on hold. So people do indeed feel stuck. Yet Brun documents how, as a result of sustained engagement with beneficiaries, humanitarian workers may develop sensitivities that do not remain within the bounds of "humanitarian reason" and may become practically involved in projects of *shared* futures. She thus detects already-existing alternative forms of ethics that exceed the boundaries of the humanitarian system. These alternatives, Brun shows on the example of shelter projects for Syrian refugees in Jordan, contain refusals of the absolute distinction between biological and biographical life that characterizes "humanitarian reason". While limited by the circumstances, engagements with beneficiaries as embodied subjects with both biologies and biographies, she argues, contain a kernel of a possible integration of a concept of the future in humanitarian work.

The importance of attending to situated biographies in order to understand people's engagements with the future is also flagged in **Ilana Feldman's** work amongst Palestinian refugees on the West Bank. Almost seventy years after initial displacement in 1948, life in exile, statelessness and precarity has now become a sustained experience for entire generations of Palestinians. Moments of collective, political hope, Feldman explains, have occurred, but have all ended in defeat, resulting in a widespread sense of affective malaise. In this context, rather than focusing on current political pathways to the future or on planning, she addresses this malaise head on in an analysis of what she terms "modes and moods of encounter with the future" as they emerge at a time of acute impasse, of a seemingly foreclosed future. Inspired by anthropological engagements with affect theory, Feldman uncovers hope by paying attention to "ordinary affects" (Stewart 2007) and to experimental attempts to "live otherwise" (Povinelli 2012). She carefully contextualises this in the sociohistorical configurations that not only condition the content and reach of hopes, but also *how* people can confront the future.

To flesh this out, Feldman introduces us to two different settings – one refugee camp in Lebanon and one in the West Bank – to trace two instances of encounters with the future. In Lebanon, she traces what she calls "reactions" to the "event" of the then-impending bid for UN recognition of Palestine as a state, and shows how such reactions revealed tensions according to the temporality and geography of people's take on the future. Palestinian refugees assessed the bid in terms of its implications for both the far-off future (a Palestinian state) and improved lives in Lebanon in the nearer-term future, with the latter often taking precedence. On the West Bank, Feldman turns to another mode of encounter with the future: "experimentation". Here she analyses a set of booklets produced as part of a deliberative, targeted, collaborative project to think outside the box and to reinvigorate

possibilities for both life in the camps and for broader Palestinian political imaginaries. In tracing these hopeful encounters of reaction and experimentation, Feldman explains that they are not necessarily, or not even mainly, different choices about how to encounter the future, but that they index the different conditions that frame modes and moods of engagement situated with regard to multiple temporalities and geographies of the future. Importantly, both with regard to reaction and to experimentation, she remains cautious in terms of their potential for mobilising hope. Her ethnographic insights and sensitivity also lead her to attend to people who did *not* engage on these terms. These "refusals", she says, were themselves affectively and politically significant, and some of them were far from passive. They thus embody another mode and mood of encounter: rather than detecting moments of hopeful potential, they refrain from investment in what may turn out one more example of "cruel optimism" (Berlant 2011).

Affect and space are also central concerns in the article by **Alicia Sliwinski** on hope and utopia as value-making processes. Drawing from long-term fieldwork in a Salvadoran municipality hit by two earthquakes in 2001, Sliwinski considers how hope circulates in post-disaster humanitarian locales, leading to the production of particular spaces (Lefebvre 1991) meant to offer a "good life" (or at least a "better life") to marginal populations left homeless. Examining two adjacent spaces – a housing reconstruction project and a hospice for the elderly – she explains the manner in which hope informs post-disaster reconstruction endeavours with different temporal outcomes depending on actors' engagements with humanitarian promises and their hopes for better futures. Sliwinski argues that hope should not only be understood as a forward-looking stance, the Blochian "not-yet", but also as a value-making process anchored in concrete practices. Turning to recent works in the field of utopian studies that adopt a materialist view on utopia as an imperfect contingent process (Cooper 2014; Levitas 2013), she further demonstrates that value-making is a crucial dimension in utopian studies as well, suggesting the notion of "everyday utopias" as a useful analytical concept.

Sliwinski puts this analytical framework to work in her longitudinal study of a post-disaster reconstruction site in El Salvador where she follows the development of a housing reconstruction project and a hospice over a 13-year period, between 2001 and 2014. This longitudinal perspective enables an insightful analysis of the material and affective production of space and how it reflects people's hopes for better futures, their underlying values and, not least, different trajectories of hopeful envisioning. Funded by the German Red Cross, the housing project was regarded as a part of a new "model urbanization" in 2001, aiming to provide private homes to fifty poor families left homeless by the earthquakes. Initially the construction and inauguration of the site created a sense of expectancy and hope for a better future for the inhabitants. Yet, in 2014, the site was characterized by precariousness, unemployment and crime, reflecting how humanitarian endeavours alone cannot solve structural problems. In contrast, the hospice, a pet project created and sustained by one of the sisters running it, was flourishing. Distinguishing between teleological utopias and everyday utopia space, Sliwinski argues that anthropological scholarship on value and ordinary ethics can be a productive framework to study the pathways between hope, utopianism and space.

The discussion of conceptual frameworks for studies of hope is also taken up by **Stef Jansen**. Reflecting on his ethnographic research in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jansen explores how we can study hope in ways that best capitalize on the specific strengths of ethnographic research. To do so, he first tries to achieve some terminological clarity. Making an analytical distinction between intransitive understandings of hope (hopefulness) and transitive understandings (hopes for/that), Jansen distills from existing studies a tentative analytically operational notion of hope for anthropology as a positively charged, disappointable future-oriented disposition or affect. Building on this conceptual work, he then constructs a conversation between two different approaches to hope within the recent body of anthropological writings on the topic. The first one consists of "replications" of hope that seek to valorize indeterminacy as a principle. Here hope is mobilised for epistemological renewal. The second approach consists of studies of the political economy of hope that seek to understand how the work,

sense and intensity of hope shape up in particular spatiotemporal conditions, indeed, how they are partly determined.

Jansen starts with a vignette about the buzz of hope that pervaded Sarajevo during the Football World Cup in June 2014. To understand this affective effervescence, its rapid fizzling out, and the hangover that followed, he argues, it is not sufficient to simply focus on the internal workings of this hope itself, and on that particular moment. Hopes have histories, they grow and shrink in relation to other hopes, and often they have expiry dates. To make anthropological sense of such moments of hope, Jansen argues, we must acknowledge these relational histories. To elucidate the conditions in which the 2014 buzz of hope occurred and evaporated, he thus weaves his theoretical explorations of indeterminacy and determination through his ethnographic insights from Bosnia and Herzegovina over the last fifteen years. In particular he turns to his research on people's evocations of "normal lives" in an apartment complex in Sarajevo, where he encountered a shared concern amongst inhabitants that they were living lives in a "Meantime", a spatiotemporal configuration that was marked as post-war, post-socialist and presumably on the Road to Europe, all under the auspices of foreign supervision that continuously judges them to be inadequate and "behind". In a particular instance of what Ferguson calls "abjection" (1999), articulating post-war reconstruction with broader experiences in the wake of modernist Yugoslav socialist developmentalism, people conveyed a sense of life after hope. Jansen traces the temporal reasonings that shape such lives marked by an inchoate sense of collective entrapment in the Meantime alongside exposure to continuous (equally inchoate) exhortations to move forward on the Road to Europe. Returning to the question that frames his article, he argues that, ultimately, in comparison to replications of hope, an approach conceiving of hope as a relational phenomenon in historical time, and analysing it as such is better attuned to the specific potentials and sensitivities of ethnography.

Finally **Ghassan Hage** concludes the Special Issue with a short afterword where he reflects upon the uptake of his writings on hope. Hage urges us to (re)turn to a Marxist analysis of inequality today, moving the focus from the unequal distributions of hope to the "processes of extraction and exploitation on which the inequality is grounded". Likewise he calls for developing a politics of co-hoping in a situation of ecological crisis. Here is food for thought for future analyses of hope.

Taken together the authors inscribe their work in a broader body of studies of settings of humanitarian intervention, post-war reconstruction and refugee camps that have documented the institutional production of specific forms of temporal reasoning, ranging from extreme presentism to a sense of infinite waiting while the near future seems to be put "on hold". Such peculiar combinations of uncertainty, anticipation and aspirations, they demonstrate, generate specific degrees, forms and intensities of hope, whereby it makes little sense to use "hope" as a blanket feel-good word in the way that it often seems to appear in the contemporary moment. In doing so, the authors make two contributions: First they study hope as a central dimension of contemporary mechanisms of government, whereby visions of possible lives, and thus of possible futures, are produced and distributed differentially within social configurations. Second, and to different degrees, they provide ethnographic accounts that maintain an eye on what Bloch (1986) calls the "not-yet", on the forward-dawning of the future as it is anticipated in unexpected corners of the present.

A sophisticated anthropology of hope, we argue, requires alertness to both. Uncertainty and precariousness, namely, can be read by the social actors in them and by analysts as both disorienting and as full of potential. And while some of the contributions gathered here do detect hope against all odds, they share an initial primary concern with hopes as objects of analysis that must be studied in the context in which they live and die. All four articles demonstrate the importance of attending to the affective dimensions of the work of hope, yet, sensitive to the sharp contradictions they encounter, the studies collected here refrain from treatises on the ontology of hope *tout court*, on "its" inner workings or even its "morality", presenting instead critical investigations of the work of different hopes in the contemporary world. They ask: Which forms of temporal reasonings can we identify amongst people in

situations of protracted crisis? How do they engage with futures in social configurations where the future is a fraught notion, or perhaps: an even more fraught notion than usually? How are hopes incorporated into projects of government? What are the visions and repositories of hope and meaningful futures in situations of outspoken uncertainty and physical or social immobility? Crucially, and here lays a key intended contribution of this Special Issue, they ask: how are they generated, distributed, negotiated, sustained and/or transformed—in other words, how do hopes themselves develop over time?

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End notes

¹ See a Special Issue of *Ethnos* (Mittermaier 2015) for a collection of fascinating analyses of constructions of martyrdom and meaningful deaths in Egypt during the uprisings.

² <http://www.analyzegreece.gr/topics/elections-250102015/item/62-2015-campaign-slogans-and-images-strig-greece-5>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/28/greek-people-wrote-history-how-syriza-rose-to-power>.

⁴ The Hungarian and, to a lesser extent, Slovenian governments built fences to keep people in Serbia and Croatia respectively, hence to keep them *out* of the Schengen area, whereas the Macedonian government built one to keep them in Greece, and thus (probably inadvertently) *in* the Schengen area.

⁵ We should of course emphasize that this is not the only response to the refugee situation in Europe as many activists groups are welcoming refugees. However, in overall political terms, the focus on curbing the number of migrants and refugees coming to Europe is striking.

⁶ A striking example of the academic interest in resilience is the establishment of the international and interdisciplinary journal *Resilience* which aims to be a 'platform for dialogue about the processes, spaces, policies, practices and subjectivities through which resilience is seen to operate'

<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=resi20#.Vxs9hPmLS70> .