

# “Other” by Law: Migration, Exclusion, and Naturalising Discourses of Citizenship and Rights<sup>1</sup>

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In the often heated debates around migration in present-day Europe, dehumanising discourses of othering serve to naturalise exclusion, justify discrimination and galvanise xenophobia. While rights based approaches are needed to redress these problems, this approach is itself vulnerable also discriminatory practices insofar as it fails to address the impasse created by the subordination of human rights to the rights of citizens. This article presents the operation of othering discourses in two current areas of public attention in Norway – the provision of health care to irregular migrants, and the intermittent presence of visiting beggars from Romania and other East Europeans in Norwegian cities. The way of seeing implied in the term respect – whose etymological root is to see again, to see anew in a different way – is presented as a basic requirement of any truly inclusive human rights based approach to contemporary social problems.

Keywords: Norway, health care, Roma, othering, social exclusion, HIV and AIDS, undocumented immigrants

Deciding on differences is one way of delineating identities. The brutal and bloody nature of this maintenance work is everywhere in evidence.

Henrietta Moore<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

In social psychology, ‘othering’ does not refer to the act of seeing an Other as simply different from oneself. The sociopsychological capacity to distinguish, to differentiate, between Self and Other is as fundamental as the capacity to envisage another as oneself, and oneself as another. Othering is the result of social processes of differentiation that depict others as *essentially* different; that is, processes that resist recognition of identity, similarity and sameness by depicting differences as if they were irreconcilable and unbridgeable. Othering constructs a stereotyped Other whose very beingness diverges from our own. It applies this construct to individuals we perceive as members of the Other group, and reduces

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1 This article is a revised and expanded version of a paper presented by the Per Kristian Hilden at a seminar entitled “HIV and social exclusion”, organised by the Section for Medical Anthropology and Medical History, University of Oslo, in collaboration with the Norwegian Directorate of Health, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), and the University of Oslo Seminar in Science Studies, 18 June 2010.

2 Moore, H. (1994), *A Passion for Difference: Essays in Anthropology and Gender*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

our capacity to envisage the Other as oneself and oneself as the Other. Through replacing individuals and faces with categories and groups, it sets ‘all of them’ apart from ‘all of us’.

For instance, from our present-day viewpoint, much of what was said and suggested from high places in the early days of the HIV epidemic appears hateful and shocking. Described as a degenerative moral and cultural disease, AIDS was portrayed as a simultaneous symptom and agent of hubris and decay in Western civilisation. And so too were its victims. In Norway, for example, a bishop pronounced AIDS to be God’s punishment for sinful living, and a prominent psychiatrist suggested confinement of AIDS victims in temporary camps. In Sweden, medical doctors proposed the establishment of segregated communities for infected people, that HIV victims be tattooed to mark and signal their infectious status, and, as was suggested in Norway, issued with an official AIDS passport. HIV-positive individuals who dared to speak up spoke not only of prejudice but also of an experience of being *made to appear different* in a radical sense, of being reduced in their very humanity and excluded from an existential community; of being dehumanised, of being made *less than, other than, human*.<sup>3</sup>

Countermeasures to the dehumanisation occasioned by the HIV epidemic have included a wide range of practices and strategies in different parts of the world. It is probably fair to say that openness (or ‘disclosure’ as it is referred to in the HIV/AIDS field) has been prominent among these and continues to be so. In practice, the strategy of openness has involved individual acts of public disclosure by individuals who were HIV positive, often at great personal cost. These are acts of rehumanisation. They involve attempts to replace the stigmatised *general* image of HIV victims with the names and faces of *individuals*, hoping in this way to enable personal identification – that is, to make them less different. Hence the motive, echoed by openly HIV-positive people around the world, to “give AIDS a human face”.<sup>4</sup>

Emerging from within a critical diaconal [social] praxis in Oslo, Norway, this article will discuss two images of present-day Others in this radical sense.<sup>5</sup> We do

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3 Thorsén D. “Epidemic times. A brief history of HIV/AIDS in Sweden.” In: Follér M.-L and H. Thörn, editors. *No name fever. AIDS in the age of globalization*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2005. Middelthon A.-L. “A room for reflection: self-observation and transformation in participatory HIV prevention work”. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 2005;19(4): 419–436.

4 We use the term ‘stigma’ here in the sense proposed by Ervin Goffmann, that is, as a trait that is seen to be simultaneously “profoundly discrediting” and overriding of any other identifying trait of an individual or group (and hence “spoils identity”), c.f. Goffmann, E. *Stigma: Notes On The Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1963.

5 The authors are, respectively, advisor at the Research and Development Unit (Hilden) and Secretary General (Stålsett) of the Church City Mission in Oslo (Stiftelsen Kirkens Bymisjon Oslo), an independent foundation carrying out a wide range of social services in Oslo since 1855. See for example Lundby K. *Mellom vekkelse og velferd: Bymisjon i opp- og nedgangstider*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1980; Kullerud D. *Kirkens bymisjon 150 år*. Oslo: Aschehoug, 2005, and [www.bymisjon.no](http://www.bymisjon.no). Admittedly, committed and engaged practice and institutional embeddedness inform our analysis at various levels, both intended and unintended.

so in order to highlight what we see as a particularly disturbing modality of othering, one that is sanctioned by law, at the intersection of human rights and the rights of citizens.

We argue that, in order to counter processes of dehumanising othering such as those demonstrated in these cases, a rights-based approach is required. But importantly, since rights-based approaches are themselves not immune to implicit and explicit processes of othering and exclusion, as the examples given show, there is a need to go beyond the mere struggle for or affirmation of formal rights. An alternative way of seeing, framing, or envisaging the Other is called for. Such an alternative can be related to the value of respect.

## First image: Undocumented migrants and health

A forty-two-year-old man travelled for four hours from a rural refugee reception centre in southern Norway to attend the health clinic for undocumented immigrants in Oslo. The man is HIV positive, but the complaint that brought him to the clinic was a constant, debilitating pain in his hip. At the refugee reception centre, a doctor examined him and referred him to an orthopaedic evaluation at the Oslo University Hospital. Here, specialists diagnosed joint failure and referred him for hip replacement surgery. However, the surgical department at the hospital refused to perform the procedure, basing their decision on the fact that the man's application for asylum had been turned down. While his appeal was pending, they contended, he was not entitled to specialist health care. Meanwhile, the man was in excruciating pain for which he received only limited relief. His pain confined him to his bed and isolated him, and he described himself as being in the grips of despair and hopelessness.

The hospital that turned down the operation was also the hospital where the forty-two-year-old man received outpatient HIV treatment, free of charge and regardless of his legal status. The reason for this is not found in a clinical assessment of his situation; it is found in the legal basis of different categories of medical care, with consequences for how cost of care is covered. Under current regulations, HIV treatment falls under the Communicable Diseases Act. This act grants access to free "medical evaluation and diagnosis, treatment, care and other necessary assistance", to anybody present in the country, regardless of legal status (sections 6–1 and 6–2).<sup>6,7</sup> Were the hospital to treat his hip, however, it would not be reimbursed for the cost, hence the rejection.

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6 Aschehoug, S. "Rett til helsehjelp for papirløse migranter", in *Tidsskrift for Den norske legeforening*, 2010, 130(7): 765–766.

7 In attempts to combat human trafficking, we see a similar paradox. Under current regulations, women identified as victims of trafficking are granted so-called 'reflection status' regardless of prior immigration status and, as such, are given temporary rights to protection and assistance, including safe housing arrangements, health services, and participation in work qualification

An estimated 18,000 people live in Norway as so-called ‘unauthorised foreigners’ or ‘undocumented immigrants’.<sup>8</sup> For Europe in total, the ‘irregular foreign resident population’ was estimated by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Programme of the European Commission at between 1.9 and 3.8 million persons in 2008.<sup>9</sup> Other estimates range from 4 million to 8 million.<sup>10</sup> The figure includes persons who have evaded expulsion following a final asylum rejection, persons who have overstayed their visa period, and victims of trafficking for prostitution or work.

Health care for undocumented immigrants is a controversial issue. Norwegian regulation of access to health care for this ‘irregular’ population has been challenged from many quarters, including the Norwegian Medical Association,<sup>11</sup> the Norwegian Psychological Association, the Red Cross and the Church City Mission Oslo. Revisions to the regulations made in 2012 did little to dispel the criticism.<sup>12</sup> Many of these people – men, women, and children – therefore continue to live in hiding, suspended indefinitely in social isolation and loneliness, and with grave psychosocial and medical concerns, including untreated and debilitating somatic and psychological illness, trauma and depression,<sup>13</sup> as has been reported in Norway in the past as well as in other countries in Europe.<sup>14</sup> Some are HIV positive or suffer from other serious illness and yet risk repatriation or deportation, against medical advice, to countries where medical treatment cannot be sustained.

Nonetheless, sweeping and victim-blaming allegations have plagued public discourse on the predicament of these individuals. The establishment of the voluntary clinic mentioned in above case provoked an outcry from political quarters, including the ruling Labour Party (*Arbeiderpartiet*), which stated that to offer such services was “unwanted” and likely to promote illegal immigration. The

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schemes. A ‘reflectant’ is also eligible for a temporary work permit. The reflexion period is set at 6 months, but since the needs of victims of trafficking frequently outlast the six-month limit, many such women change their status to asylum seekers, where rights differ, as do the appropriate level of economic responsibility.

- 8 Zhang L.-C. Developing methods for determining the number of unauthorised foreigners in Norway. Oslo: Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2008.
- 9 Triandafyllidou A., editor. *Irregular migration in Europe: Myths and realities*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010.
- 10 Ottesen S. H. Papirløse migranter. En undersøkelse av situasjonen for mennesker uten lovlig opphold i Norge, og humanitære tiltak for denne gruppen in andre europeiske land. Oslo: Stiftelsen Kirkens Bymisjon Oslo, 2008.
- 11 Den Norske Lægeforening. Likeverdig helsetjeneste? Om helsetjenester til ikke-vestlige innvandrere. Statusrapport fra Legeforeningen. Oslo: Den Norske Lægeforening, 2008.
- 12 <http://www.lovdatab.no/cgi-wift/ldles?doc=/sf/sf/sf-20111216-1255.html>
- 13 Øien C. and S. Sønsterudbråten. No way in, no way out? A study of living conditions of irregular migrants in Norway. *Fafo-report*. Oslo: Fafo, 2011; Kjellberg J, Rugeldal C. *Illegal: papirløs i Norge*. Oslo: Spartacus, 2011.
- 14 Ottesen op. cit.; Chauvin P., I Parizot and N. Simonnot. Tilgången til vård för papperslöse i 11 europeiska länder. Rapport om 2008 års undersökning Läkare i världens kartläggning av tillgången til vård i Europa: Observatoire Européen, Médecins du Monde, 2009.

party chair of the Conservative Party (*Høyre*) suggested that police should enter the clinic to arrest and deport its patients; Per Sandberg from the right-wing Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*), who has consistently and indiscriminately referred to undocumented migrants as “criminals”, suggested that any public funding for the clinic’s two sponsor organisations, the Red Cross and the Church City Mission Oslo, should be suspended.

Such, one may say, was the general discursive climate which humanitarian engagement faced until the highly publicised arrest and eventual deportation of Maria Amelie in 2011 gave new momentum to a broader protest. At the age of fifteen, Maria Amelie (aka Madima Salamova) fled with her parents from her native North Ossetia in 2000. When their asylum applications were rejected in Finland they travelled on to Norway under false names, where once again their applications for asylum were turned down. Claiming to fear for their lives, the family evaded deportation by going into hiding in Norway. After living in the country for eight years, during which Maria Amelie – despite her immigration status – was able to complete a university degree and have her story published in a book that was widely read, Maria Amelie was arrested by the police as she was leaving a lecture hall at the Nansen Academy, where she had given a speech, in January 2011. Amid public outcry, Maria Amelie was deported to Russia soon after.

Marie Amelie was able to return to Norway three months later with an approved work permit made possible by the highly publicised offer of a job as a journalist in a national periodical. Arguably, however, the wave of protest stirred by those events did not significantly alleviate the situation for irregular migrants in Norway. The debate furthermore failed, we believe, to successfully address the means by which irregular migrants are ‘othered’ in public discourse, as our next case will illustrate.

## Second image: “Foreign beggars”

At regular intervals, particularly in springtime, Norwegian media run series of reports on what is widely referred to as the problem of “foreign beggars” in Oslo and other cities. VG, the biggest Norwegian tabloid, is one of several newspapers that has linked beggars to what is presented as an organised burglary wave perpetrated by Eastern European criminals. Commenting on the presence of beggars from Rumania in the summer of 2009, VG reported: *“They are multi-criminal. They move quickly [...], from the northern part of the country to the southernmost cities. They sit on the street dressed as beggars. They scan neighbourhoods for suitable burglary objects. They strike while you sleep. They spy over your shoulder for your pin code. They steal, yes, if need be, they’ll even knock you down to get your*

*wallet*”.<sup>15</sup> When the weekly newspaper *Morgenbladet*’s reporter Simen Sætre examined the sources used in VG’s coverage, he found the evidence for these sweeping generalisations to be shaky at best: almost 90% of it came from sources within the police force, often with one specific police officer from a local police station in the affluent western borough of Majorstuen as the only cited source (*ibid.*). Importantly for our present purpose, and in what VG itself called dubbed “broad coverage”, the newspaper had not interviewed one single beggar. Instead, what VG offered was a distinctly *faceless* characterisation of “the criminal, Rumanian beggars”, “invasion of beggars”, “crime explosion”, and so forth. This facelessness was further underscored by the use of anonymous paparazzi-style photographs, taken from a distance and without permission. In other words, in place of the *specific* face of a fellow being, readers were offered a *general* image of an ill-defined yet clearly *different* (and ill-intentioned) *other*, one we would do wise to regard with suspicion and distrust.

The depiction of Eastern European migrants feeds on an assumption of illegitimate and ill-intentioned presence. The reporting on Eastern European migrants has in general distinguished poorly between Roma, Rumanians and other Eastern Europeans. Instead the claim that we are seeing a massive influx of criminal travellers has drawn on the imagery familiar from the outrageous history of discrimination against the European Roma population, a population which, according to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe, remains among the most vulnerable on the continent. It is no wonder, then, that the impression seems to prevail that these people too, like the undocumented immigrant, have no right to be here. Hence, their poverty is discounted, and their needs pitted against the needs of “our own poor” and deemed unworthy of our attention. When the Danish Conservative Party suggested in 2009 that Eastern European beggars should be “stopped at the borders”, Norwegian politicians, bloggers and others immediately supported the suggestion. In fact, the head of police in a major Norwegian city had already launched the idea a year earlier. This was suggested in spite of the fact that the Schengen Agreement of course guarantees free movement of citizens of the Schengen Area. In other words, Roma and other Rumanian citizens travel as legitimately as do Norwegians, regardless of purpose.

Moreover, we should point out that while begging is criminalised in some European countries, this is not the case in Norway. But a change here seems to be drawing closer. Police in several municipalities in Norway have called for police regulations to be changed in order to combat what one head of police called “organised begging”. He went on to state that what he wanted was not to ban begging but to require “people who wish to beg” to be granted a licence to do so by the local police authorities. “Our aim is not to eliminate the real beggars,” the police chief stated, “What we want is to eliminate those that are clearly being

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15 Sætre S. “De aller verste”. *Morgenbladet*, 31 July 2009.

exploited by other cynical people”.<sup>16</sup> Yet again it is alleged that a criminal organisation is behind foreign beggars in Norway. Even more striking, however, is the disturbing implication that, *if it were so*, the appropriate response would not to be *assist* but to *ban* the victims.

A similar logic surfaced in the debate surrounding begging in the spring of 2012, following the main opposition Conservative Party’s decision to support a ban on begging. In arguing the case, party advocates in favour of the proposition cited ill-defined police sources as saying the foreign beggars were “linked to” a series of criminal activities. Again, the argument was made that the target of the measures was organised crime, not its victims, and again, the allegation was dispelled as a myth, this time by established researchers in the field in a report investigating the allegations of criminal activity by or behind beggars in Oslo.<sup>17</sup> In launching the report, which was published by the independent research institute NOVA, one of the authors explicitly stated that the myth was a fabrication perpetrated to legitimise harsher measures against what some consider a public nuisance, i.e. the presence of Roma beggars.<sup>18</sup> The ban on begging, which if accepted will effectively attack one of very few sources of income for a haunted Roma population, is even argued with references to the need to protect the dignity of the Roma population. Finally, note former head of Oslo City Council Michael Tetzschner’s choice of words when he voiced contentment with his party’s decision to back the proposition: “This is a clear signal that *ordinary people* may now reclaim our city streets and squares”.<sup>19</sup>

## ‘Other’ by law

Globalisation and international migration are no doubt complex issues. We have offered these brief images in order to make three interrelated points. First, contrary to some influential perspectives on globalisation, the world has not become “translocal”, the traditional categories of place and territory have not lost their relevance.<sup>20</sup> The flow of capital, goods, and services and some specific categories of people may characteristically transcend the traditional geographies of states and boundaries in the late modern world. But what the majority of people who are forced or compelled to cross borders, oceans and deserts in search of protec-

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16 NTB. “Politimester ut mot organisert tiggning”. VG 2010 19. januar 2010.

17 Engebretsen A.I. *Tiggerbander og kriminelle bakmenn eller fattige EU-borgere? Myter og realiteter om utenlandske tiggere*. NOVA Notat. 2/2012 Oslo: Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring – NOVA, 2012.

18 Herseth S. K. “–De er ikke tiggerbander eller kriminelle”. *Dagbladet* 2012 24. mai 2012.

19 Herseth, op. cit. Emphasis added.

20 Beck U. and J. Rutherford. “Zombie categories: interview with Ulrich Beck”. In: Beck-Gernsheim E. and U Beck, editors. *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. London: Sage, 2001.

tion or livelihoods find is a (judicial) topography of walls and barriers. Whether these walls open for passage or remain impenetrable remains a question of citizenship; that is, of legal affiliation with a particular territory (mostly inherited, given by virtue of – in a certain sense *arbitrary* – location of birth).<sup>21</sup>

Second, the images illustrate the deceptively effective ways in which even explicit conventions such as laws of citizenship rights create naturalised Others; Others of whom less can be expected and to whom less is due, it appears, *by categorical necessity*. In the exhibition *The Dream of Europe*, photographer Rune Eraker provides a chilling illustration of the simultaneous subtlety and brutality of such othering.<sup>22</sup> Comparing how young people’s dreams, ambitions and desires are appreciated in contemporary culture, Eraker describes the dreams of young Europeans and the encouragement they receive, not only to have dreams about their future, but also to pursue them. Juxtaposed with these dreams of Europeans, Eraker’s images present the dreams *about* Europe held by young African men and boys, waiting at the perimeters of a ferry terminal in Tanger, Morocco. Here, they spend days and nights scanning the boarding vehicles for an opportunity to hide on the rear axle of a cargo truck crossing the Strait of Gibraltar. In European immigration discourse, these young people are dreamers in a very different sense. Their dreams are discounted as the unrealistic dreams of “fortune seekers”. Their intentions are by this very term made illegitimate, as if people everywhere, at any point in history, have not sought for themselves and those close to them, to prosper and to escape from suffering and misfortune. The dreamers at the Moroccan ferry terminal in Eraker’s project were under no illusions. They knew what to expect should they make it across the strait. Many of them had been to Europe before and been deported, not from passive, abundant enjoyment of wealth or welfare services, but from access to intermittent, poorly paid, unprotected and often exploitative black-market jobs. Their ‘dream’ was to be able to access that again.

Third, these examples point to a much broader challenge, where migration, immigration policy and access to medical treatment are only cases in point. The challenge concerns in what sense human rights and the human worth and dignity reflected in them may be said to be universal.<sup>23</sup> Simen Sætre argued that public discourse about “the criminal Rumanian beggars” has become a discourse of “categorical suspicion”.<sup>24</sup> It is no exaggeration to say that the same holds true for public discourse of so-called ‘unauthorised migrants’ in general. When eligibility for humanitarian consideration is filtered through the legal lens of citizenship, it not only strips the “unauthorised immigrants” of formal rights. It also creates other and, we propose, dehumanised categories for them to inhabit. Once estab-

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21 Bauman Z. *Globalization: the human consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998.

22 <http://humanrightshouse.org/Articles/9927.html>

23 Stålsett S.J. “Er en annen verden mulig? Eskjatalogiske refleksjoner i lys av papirløses situasjon”. *Kirke & Kultur* 2010;2010(1): 64–76.

24 Sætre, *op. cit.*



lished as an illegitimate/unauthorised presence, the notion is also evoked that they live illegitimate/unauthorised lives, with illegitimate/unauthorised desires, dreams, dignity and worth. Their lives are suspect, their needs are suspect, even their *kind* is suspect. They become, indeed, Other.

The Italian political philosopher Giorgio Agamben makes the paradoxical status and destiny of undocumented migrants in Europe today a central case in his radical critique of Western, liberal, apparently rights-based societies.<sup>25,26</sup> The undocumented migrants are *de facto* outlawed by the application of the law. They are treated as exceptions to the rule of law; exceptions which nevertheless constitute and confirm that same rule of law. In Agamben's reading, these refugees are included in the system by being excluded from it. They are the ones on 'the other side' of the law and of the human community. They are treated as exceptional; they are the exception that proves the rule.

The possibility of treating someone else, and oneself, as exceptions, as outside the rule of the law by the application of it, is the prerogative of those who hold power. This power to (lawfully) dissolve the rule of law is the definition of sovereignty. In a strange manner, then, the sovereign and the undocumented migrant, as an example of what Agamben calls '*homo sacer*', are in similar positions, as exceptional. However, they are at the opposite ends of power.

Thus their situation reveals a fundamental breach in the rights-based system, according to Agamben. From the rise of the Third Reich to the establishment of Guantánamo Bay, present-day global society has become one in which the implementation of a variety of 'states of exception' has become customary. And the normalcy of this exceptional situation seems to be generally accepted. More than that, it is deemed necessary. And the perceived necessity of it is, paradoxically, linked to the upholding of rights: the system of rights is contingent on some being excluded from the benefits of that system.

Actually, this has been the case since the birth of the notion of rights in the French Revolution. It is crucial to understand, according to Agamben, that what was proposed then was citizens' rights, not universal human rights. This is still the case, Agamben claims: "in the contemporary system [...] the so-called inviolable and indisputable human rights are [...] stripped of any kind of protection as soon as it is no longer possible to understand them as rights of citizens of a state".<sup>27</sup>

In the globalised context of extreme social inequality, then, it appears that the *protection* of the rights of citizens not only coexists comfortably with a neglect of the human rights of the Others; it presupposes that neglect. If this is so, then it raises the question of whether this is the most fundamental and large-scale dehumanising modality of social exclusion of our time.

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25 Agamben G. *Homo sacer. Sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998.

26 Agamben G. *State of exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

27 Agamben G. *Means without Ends: Notes on Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

## Countermeasures? Respect as a means of rehumanisation

“Deciding on differences is one way of delineating identities”, writes Henrietta Moore, and continues: “The brutal and bloody nature of this maintenance work is everywhere in evidence.”<sup>28</sup> We live in a context where rights-based approaches are championed in field after field. It is therefore necessary to underscore Agamben’s main point, which others have also increasingly begun to point out, namely that rights-based approaches are not immune to divisive mechanisms of othering and exclusion. We certainly still need a rights-based approach to exclusion and social injustice, but one that is an aid to communitarian and humanitarian principles, not a prerequisite for such principles and values.

Agamben’s analysis is radical and not very optimistic. He does envisage a possible change to something better in what he vaguely describes as the “coming community”. For the people we have described in this article, however, the issue is pressing. What can be done in the meantime at a more practical level to counter and resist dehumanising processes of othering?

The etymological meaning of ‘respect’ is, interestingly, “to look at once more, thoroughly”, or “to see anew, in a different way”.<sup>29</sup> Earlier, we defined ‘othering’ as the result of social processes of differentiation that depict others as *essentially* different, through the replacement of faces with categories. Othering constructs a stereotyped Other whose very beingness diverges from our own. It applies this construct to individuals we perceive as members of the Other group, and reduces our capacity to envisage the Other as oneself and oneself as the Other.

There is, in other words, a particular a way of seeing at work here. One way to begin to counter processes of othering is therefore to reject and replace such ways of seeing the Other. The Other can be seen as different, unique, and yet of the same kind as me/us. Such ‘seeing anew’ – respect – is hence essential in any social or diaconal work aimed at empowering ‘Others’ to free themselves from the categories in which they have been placed.<sup>30</sup> It implies “accepting in others what one does not understand about them”.<sup>31</sup>

The dynamic of Self and Other works both ways in this case: by breaking loose from the externally enforced category of otherness (which often becomes internalised by those who experience stigma), the Other can engage in a new relationship with herself, see herself anew (self-respect). In and through experiencing this,

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28 Moore, *op. cit.*

29 From *re-* (“back; again”) + *spiciō* (“observe, look at”). Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary: “*Rē-spiciō*: (...) *Pregn.*, to look at with solicitude, i.e. to have a care for, regard, be mindful of, consider, respect, etc.”  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0059:entry=respicio>

30 Stålsett, *op. cit.*

31 Sennett R. *Respect: The formation of character in a world of inequality.* London: Allen Lane, 2003.

'I can be freed from my often unconsciously frozen view of the Other as Other and see him or her anew, as similar to me, a fellow human being.

This process, we believe, is a precondition for and constitutive to any renewal, improvement or extension of the system of rights, so that it can also, for the first time, include the hitherto excluded.

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