american ethnologist
JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

KATERINA ROZAKOU
Independent Scholar, Athens, Greece

The biopolitics of hospitality in Greece:

Humanitarianism and the management of refugees

ABSTRACT
Drawing on my research in refugee settings in Greece, I relate the biopolitics of humanitarianism with the Greek notion of "hospitality" and established cultural schemata of social relations. The dominant discourse on hospitality is reproduced in the humanitarian setting of a camp where asylum seekers are produced as worthy guests, placed in the middle ground between mere biological life and full social existence. Volunteers working with refugees on the street, by contrast, attempt to challenge biopolitical power through the reversal of hospitality, through which the refugee is symbolically reconstituted as a host (though a disputable one) and a political subject. [*hospitality, biopolitics, refugee management, Greece, humanitarianism, NGOs*]

In December 2007, Prokopis Pavlopoulos, (then) minister of the interior and public order of the right-wing government of Greece, gave a speech on the island of Samos at the country's frontier with Turkey:

> [This is] a project that makes us proud of the level of *filoksenia* (hospitality) that our country offers to illegal immigrants who stay here until their return to their country of origin. This high level of hospitality is indicative of the equivalent level of guarantees we ensure for the protection of Human Rights as well as for the total respect for the value and dignity of *Anthropos* (the human being). After all, *our tradition and culture command us to do so.* [emphasis added]

The minister was referring to the inauguration of the new *protipo kendro ipodhohis ke filoksenias lathrometanaston* (model reception and hospitality center for illegal immigrants), as he described it in his speech. In fact, it was a detention center for undocumented immigrants. In the minister's speech, filoksenia (hospitality) appears as a national virtue, as a disinterested act of concern and a generous offer to illegal immigrants, who are uninvited guests in Greek territory. His speech references stereotypically constructed self-values at the level of the nation-state. According to the minister, filoksenia is part of the Greek state's obligation with regard to international legislation on human rights. It is a duty to Anthropos (the human being). Moreover, it is an *Elliniki paradhosi* (Greek tradition) and a fundamental element of *Ellinikos politismos* (Greek culture). This rhetoric responds to numerous accusations regarding the poor reception provided by the Greek state to asylum seekers and the terrible conditions in the country's overpopulated and inadequate detention centers. The minister's claim that filoksenia is a "traditional Greek value" is directed toward an international audience and is an attempt to refute these related accusations. It seems paradoxical that he even employs the idiom of hospitality in this case, the inauguration of what is clearly a detention center and not an open reception center. But is it really a paradox?

AMERICAN ETHNOLOGIST, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. 562–577, ISSN 0094-0496, online ISSN 1548-1425.
DOI: 10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01381.x

Because of its location, Greece has become one of the main thresholds to Europe for people from the Middle East and is a country that receives a disproportionate number of asylum applications, even though most newcomers remain undocumented. EU policies strongly shape the asylum and immigration landscape, as, according to EU legislation, particularly the Dublin Convention (1997) and Dublin II Regulation (2003), the responsibility for examining the asylum claim of a "third national" falls to the first EU state of entry. In national and European public discourses, Greece is often criticized for its inadequate asylum practices, either as an insufficient guardian of EU borders or as an inadequate host for newcomers. Hence, immigration and asylum have once again brought to the fore the country's geographical as well as historically symbolic location at the margins of Europe (Herzfeld 1987a).[1] For many years, the Greek state has been conducting an informal policy that could be defined as "a politics of invisibility" toward asylum seekers and refugees.[2] This policy is reflected in the lowest asylum recognition rates in the European Union,[3] a poor reception infrastructure, and obstacles, delays, and violations recorded during the asylum process.[4] Greece's growing reputation as an "unwelcoming" environment for asylum seekers has been pointed out in a number of scholarly studies (Black 1994; Sitaropoulos 2000; Skordas and Sitaropoulos 2004), reports by NGOs (Amnesty International 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2007; Human Rights Watch 2008; ProAsyl 2007; Takis et al. 2005; UNHCR 2002, 2003, 2006b), and international and national public discourses (Al Saleh 2007; Bouganis 2007; *Economist* 2009; Keza 2009; Troller 2009). Much of the criticism is grounded on the notion of "hospitality" and its idealization. Traditional Greek filoksenia has allegedly given way to xenophobia, and the warm and generous welcoming of the stranger has been replaced by unwelcoming policies and indifference (see, e.g., Lazaridis and Koumandraki 2001:298; Panayiotopoulou 1997:358).

Contrary to normative or prescriptive accounts, I am not arguing that there is "a lack of hospitality" in Greece and, consequently, that "we need to bring hospitality back." Reified and idealized definitions of hospitality reaffirm state sovereignty and echo an uncritical appeal to hospitality as an ethical imperative. Instead of perceiving hospitality as a "value," I reflect on the asymmetrical aspects of hospitality as a power relation. I therefore critically expand observations in older Greek ethnographies on hospitality and the production and management of alterity to refugee management schemata. In particular, I explore the biopolitical connotations of the production of the asylum seeker–refugee as a guest. Inspired by the apparent paradox in the minister's speech defining detention centers as "hospitality centers" and by my fieldwork on voluntary work with refugees, I present a rereading of hospitality through the notion of "biopolitics." Drawing on theoretical discussions of biopower, I decode the vocabulary of filoksenia and trace its relevance to biopolitics, conceptualizations of space, ownership, and relations of power. Hence, I investigate how hospitality is transcribed and reenacted in the practices of humanitarians who aid asylum seekers–refugees. My work aims to contribute to the existing ethnographies of humanitarianism on the ground, through a detailed study of humanitarian actors' experience. Thus, I make only passing reference to the refugee experience.

This article is based on research I conducted between 2002 and 2004 and on return visits to the field. The settings for my research were a reception center, or camp, for asylum seekers administered by the Greek branch of an international humanitarian organization and an area in the center of Athens where many refugees found their own living spaces and where a politicized group of volunteers operated to assist them. The organizations under study have dissimilar ideologies of refugee management, are grounded in different historical and social contexts, and thus offer an opportunity to explore different humanitarian practices and approaches. Comparison of the two reflects the tension between the humanitarian and the political production of the asylum seeker–refugee in contemporary refugee management. Throughout the article, I adopt emic definitions of the terms *asylum seeker* and *refugee* and the differentiations volunteers themselves made. More than legal categories, the "asylum seeker" and the "refugee" are entangled in the biopolitical projects of humanitarianism I explore.

Early in my fieldwork, I was struck by the conflicting discourses I heard in the camp and among the street volunteers. The dominant official state discourse on hospitality was reproduced in the reception center, where refugee management schemata cast asylum seekers as "worthy guests." The worthy guest—worthy both as the guest who complied with the rules of hospitality and also as an apolitical being in need, albeit, at the same time, a potential danger—is a product of humanitarian discourses that depoliticize asylum seekers. The camp was a site in which the biopolitics of hospitality produced life in terms of "humanity." Conceptualizing asylum seekers as guests put them in a space between biological existence and full political and social life. Neither merely "bare life" nor a full political being, the refugee was produced as the receiver of humanitarian generosity, as having limited agency.

Among the street volunteers, however, I noticed the reversal of hospitality. During their visits to refugees, volunteers cast them as hosts and interpreted their own offerings to them as the reciprocated gifts of guests. This was a conscious political act: As hosts—though "disputable" ones—refugees were attributed the power and agency that they are typically denied in institutional aid contexts. Even the selection of the term *refugee* instead of the bureaucratic label *asylum seeker* that is adopted in the setting of the camp was a political choice made by volunteers to challenge established political hierarchies. However, in practice,

volunteers on the street exercised biopolitical power over their hosts through their attempts to "educate" and "advise" them. The camp and the street are thus more than physical spaces; they also synopsize models of refugee management and overcome dualistic simplifications and binary oppositions. They speak volumes about alternative political modes of dealing with the stranger and the biopolitical implications of such projects. The placement of the refugees–asylum seekers in the setting of filoksenia, as indicated by the figures I employ of the "worthy guest" and the "disputable host," links the workings of biopolitical power with established cultural schemata of sociality and social relations.

Biopolitics and humanitarianism

The concept of "biopower" or "biopolitics" was introduced by Michel Foucault (1978, 2003) to describe a new technology of power that emerged in 18th- and 19th-century Europe for the management of populations. Population becomes a political issue, and birth rates, public hygiene, and the regulation of sexuality turn into state affairs and subjects of study by experts. Biopower is a "regulatory technology of life" distinct from the "disciplinary technology of the body" (which developed earlier but is still operating) and, rather than representing the sovereign's power to take life, is characterized by an emerging care for life itself (Foucault 2003:249). Through a set of techniques that emerge at the time, power takes control over life, fostering, regulating, modulating, and managing it. Giorgio Agamben (1998) elaborates an idea of biopolitics, one that brings to the fore the workings of sovereign power in the philosophical production of life. Contrary to Foucault, Agamben considers biopolitics to be the fundamental technology of sovereignty rather than a historically specific technology of power. Following the ancient Greek distinction between *zöe* (life common to all creatures, human and animal alike; transcribed by Agamben as "bare life") and *bios* (social existence), he conceptualizes biopolitics as the power to discriminate between socially included and excluded forms of life. The notion of "bare life" is grounded on the suspension of law by sovereign power and the production of a "state of exception" in which subjects are deprived of political and social existence and thus become exposed to death by the sovereign. In fact, this state of exception, on which the realm of "bare life" is grounded, forms the foundation of sovereign power (Agamben 1998:6). Nowadays, it is the refugee and the asylum seeker who primarily instantiate "bare life," life that is excluded from juridical law and stands outside the *polis* (Agamben 1994). Refugee management projects speak volumes about the biopolitical conceptualization and treatment of refugees–asylum seekers in contemporary societies, about the political and ontological production of difference and asylum.

The growing anthropological literature on the humanitarian sector (Barnett and Weiss 2008; Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Feldman and Ticktin 2010; Redfield and Bornstein 2011) formulates a critique of the political facets of humanitarian projects and introduces a comparative and historical perspective. Ethnographic insights contribute to the discussion of biopolitics, but at the same time they go beyond abstract theoretical claims and the perils of generalizations. They contextualize humanitarianism and bring to the fore different cosmologies and configurations of humanitarian action. More than a critique of specific practices, they highlight the inherent "aporia of humanitarian governmentality" (Fassin 2010) that humanitarian agents experience (i.e., that humanitarianism is founded on the inequality and hierarchical ordering of human lives) as well as the complexity, dilemmas, and actuality of humanitarian practices for both providers and recipients of aid (Feldman 2007). Ethnographies often employ categories that conceptualize specific aspects of contemporary biopolitics in refugee management: the "moral economy" of Europe reflected in the biopolitics of asylum (Fassin 2005), the intertwining of humanitarianism with biopolitics (Pandolfi 2003; Redfield 2005; Ticktin 2006), and the creation of "biopolitical subjects" through refugee health projects (Ong 1995).

Agamben's theorization is employed in ethnographies that see the separation of humanitarianism from politics proclaimed by aid organizations as producing human life in terms of "bare life" (Redfield 2008; Ticktin 2006). Miriam Ticktin demonstrates how, following a shift in the politics of immigration and the illness clause in France, asylum seekers began employing illness as a means to acquire legal documents. The politics of compassion that humanitarianism exemplifies fosters the protection of suffering bodies and biological life. Humanitarianism thus produces "a limited version of what it means to be human," a "minimalist humanity" (Ticktin 2006:34). Similarly, Peter Redfield (2008) shows how, by stressing the provision of "basic needs," humanitarian actors such as Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), in fact, emphasize the maintenance of physical existence and therefore the preservation of "bare life," constituting a form of "minimalist biopolitics."

At the same time, studies on the ground produce valuable insights into the workings of biopolitics, often exploring the limitations of the Agambenian perspective and challenging the view of aid as a producer of "bare life" by documenting the actual work of humanitarians. Stephen Robins (2009) demonstrates that by fostering refugee leadership and issues such as citizenship and human dignity, South African activists produce novel forms of political agency and subjectivity that go beyond the disempowering production of aid recipients in terms of "bare life." Ilana Feldman's ethnography (2007) of Quaker practice in Gaza after World War II illustrates the complexity and contradictions of humanitarian work. Quakers in Gaza

conceptualized their work as "ethical labor" rather than as political. However, this labor did not render refugees as "mute victims" but, rather, as "political, rather than ethical, actors" (Feldman 2007:700).

One of the pitfalls of the biopolitical theoretical framework is that it can obscure the complexity of actual practices and the diversity of aid. Contextualizing such practices not only highlights variations but also connects schemata of biopolitical management with broader cosmologies and cultural patterns. Apart from exploring the workings of biopolitical power on the ground, ethnographies need to turn to the cultural notions with which biopolitical schemata are related and the ways in which such notions are transformed under contemporary circumstances. The "biopolitics of hospitality" enables exploration of the expansion of hospitality in the production of new alterities and new political subjectivities. Because biopolitical power is not a universal, agentless, impersonal, homogenous, and culturally neutral power exercised outside and beyond subjects, the study of specific forms of biopower and the workings of different agents in refugee management schemata is essential to avoid generalizations and the totalizing views for which relevant literature has been criticized. In this article, I emphasize the relational aspect of humanitarian aid. Hospitality highlights the politics of humanitarianism from a new angle and provides an alternative lens for exploring the cultural production of sociality between volunteers and asylum seekers–refugees, particularly in a setting in which filoksenia has such a central symbolic weight. Moreover, it links the level of everyday human interaction and the historical and cultural management of alterity with broader technologies of power and the contemporary biopolitical management of asylum seekers–refugees.

Hospitality reexamined

"Filoksenia," literally *filia* (love) of the *ksenos* (stranger, pl. *kseni*),[5] is central to the Greek cultural and social imaginary for dealing with alterity and is at the core of how the Greek state represents itself. Often presented as a national virtue, filoksenia is rhetorically connected to the origins of Hellenism and to the discursive construction of the contemporary Greek nation-state as the direct descendant of ancient Greece. Several decades ago, in one of the first ethnographic monographs on Greece, Ernestine Friedl (1962:106) noted that the people of Vasilika, a village in Boetia, referred to the figure of Ksenios Zefs (the god Zeus, the protector of strangers and suppliants) when they spoke about the hospitality offered to strangers. The villagers considered hospitality an ethnic characteristic and one related to the historical continuity of Greece from classical antiquity through the Byzantine era to present times. The image of Ksenios Zefs still infuses the stereotypical representation of national attitudes toward strangers, and, lately, the idiom of hospitality has been employed to describe relations with new strangers, the immigrants and refugees who have been arriving in the country in waves since the 1990s. Within the pattern of filoksenia, the guest falls into various hierarchical categories, from the European or Western tourist to the impoverished immigrant and the refugee seeking sanctuary.

The stereotypical production of hospitality as a "value" has been associated with the first ethnographies of Greece, which idealized practices of generosity toward the stranger. Later critical revisions depict how anthropology, and Anglo-Saxon anthropology, in particular, has played a crucial role in the construction of the "hospitality stereotype" in the cases of Greece (Herzfeld 1980, 1987b) and Portugal (Pina-Cabral 1989). Influenced by the work of Marcel Mauss (1990), later approaches to hospitality have turned to the relational character of exchange.[6] Hospitality, seen in the form of a gift, includes the stranger in the social world of the host, though it is a temporary and conditional inclusion in which the host holds the monopoly on agency.

In Greece, the politics of hospitality are historically related to the ways in which the nation-state has been constituted and to the processes of cultural homogenization that define difference as a danger (Papataxiarchis 2006). Thus, considered as a substantial element of the national Greek character, filoksenia, in fact, reflects introversion and ethnocentrism in a context where cultural difference is perceived as a threat to ethnocultural similarity (Papataxiarchis 2006:4). It sets the boundaries between outsiders and insiders, and it is a practice of sovereignty and control over the stranger. It is a one-way offer and also a means of dealing with alterity. It is an act of interest and, at the same time, one of power. Hospitable practices symbolically place the host in a hierarchically superior position and the guest in moral debt and an inferior position (Herzfeld 1992). In fact, filoksenia not only introduces the stranger into a symbolic schema of political asymmetry but also aims to control the possible danger that he or she represents (Herzfeld 1987b). Guests are temporarily placed in the moral universe of the hosts; they are obliged to comply with the rules and accepted forms of behavior, whereas the privilege of agency is attributed solely to the hosts. Thus, *hospitalité* and *hostilité,* as Jacques Derrida (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000:57) points out, or filoksenia and *ksenofovia* (xenophobia), as Herzfeld (1992) stresses in the case of Greece, are in fact two sides of the same coin, of the control and management of strangers and the danger they embody.

The anthropological exploration of the code of hospitality has been renewed in recent years with ethnographies that explore the transcription of hospitality in new spaces and on new phenomena.[7] Elsewhere, for instance, I take up this code in describing the activities of a group of volunteers who attempt to provide support to refugees from Asia (see Rozakou 2006). I examine the transition from nonmaterial to material offers in the volunteers' practices and the ways

in which the code of hospitality describes the sociality between the two. This focus highlights the limitations and the power dynamics that emerge at the microlevel of the volunteers' interactions with refugees. Even though their programmatic goal is to establish relations of equality with the refugees, in the end they form relations of giving, patronage, and protection with them. What is striking is the actual reversal of hierarchies that occurs when volunteers realize that, on occasions, their "gifts" may not satisfy the recipients or can even be rejected (Rozakou 2006).

"Hospitality" has become a dominant notion in asylum and immigration. Not only is it often used in official discourses but it is also prevalent in social analysis, as indicated by the established use of terms such as *host country* and *reception*. In her book *Post-Colonial Hospitality*, Mireille Rosello (2001) examines the "subversive" or "dissident" forms that hospitality has taken through immigration and asylum policies in France. At the same time, she observes how the notion is employed rather uncritically in the context of both pro- and anti-immigrant discourses. The French state has established new legal frameworks that aim to regulate and control hospitality and has prosecuted French citizens for hosting illegal immigrants, in an attempt to impose official laws on the level of everyday life. Meanwhile, public discourses challenge official state policies. For example, the *collège des médiateurs* (committee of mediators), a group of intellectuals that publicly criticized the French state's "inhospitable" practices in the 1990s, issued a plea for the ethical redefinition of hospitality. The group referred to the French "myth of hospitality" and called for its remission (Rosello 2001:23–48). Hospitality thus emerges as an ideal, an object of regulatory policies as well as both a national and a private affair. The French activists' appeal calls to mind Derrida's "law of hospitality" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000:25), which refers to an "absolute" and "unconditional hospitality." Derrida's law contrasts with the "pact of hospitality," in which hospitality is conceptualized as a contract that specifies the rules and duties of the guest. That conceptualization today prevails in immigration and asylum policies. The aporia of hospitality lies in the contradiction between the two (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000:25).

"The vision of the immigrant as guest is a metaphor that has forgotten that it is a metaphor" (Rosello 2001:3). As the French case demonstrates, this metaphor is not a Greek particularity. In many cases, an essentialist perception predominates and hospitality emerges both as the privilege of the sovereign state and, at the same time, as a "natural" moral imperative toward the stranger. The metaphor of the immigrant, the refugee, or the asylum seeker as a guest is related to the workings of the sovereign state and is part of the "national order of things" that Liisa Malkki (1995) has pointed out. Many times, state discourses employ metaphors of family and kinship and produce an image of the nation-state as a domestic space, as a home, in which the authority is the man (Herzfeld 1997:74–88). Such metaphors include multiple dualisms and distinctions between us and them, indigenous people and aliens, citizens and noncitizens.

The centrality of hospitality in immigration and asylum can be associated with the ways specific nation-states have historically been constructed. As mentioned above, in Greece, the principle of sameness formed the basis of the modern Greek nation-state and still fuels everyday sociality. The association of hospitality with sameness has also been made by anthropologists exploring attitudes toward immigrants–refugees in other parts of Europe, such as Norway (Gullestad 2002) and Denmark (Hervik 2004).[8] Hospitality is invoked by different agents and in different settings—in the official EU and European state rhetoric on immigration and asylum, public discourses, and scholarly work as well as in everyday interactions between natives and foreigners—but often with very different content and objectives. When the Greek right-wing minister refers to hospitality generously offered by the state to illegal immigrants, he draws on long-standing nationalist discourse and the production of the modern Greek state as the descendant of ancient Greece, but, at the same time, his speech is situated in the way Greece has historically placed itself in Europe. By contrast, the relationship of France to immigrants is historically built on "the tension between its republican ideas of universal equality and the bitter legacy of French colonialism" (Ticktin 2010:188). When French intellectuals accuse the state of inhospitable policies, they refer to the production of the French state and the historical importance of human rights that derive from the French Revolution (Rosello 2001). Nevertheless, although hospitality as an ideal has been related to particular national characteristics—as a French value in the discourses of French intellectuals or as an inherent national tradition in the case of Greece—at the same time, it seems to constitute a European ethical imperative. It is in the image of the asylum seeker that the moral duty of European "civilization" to provide hospitality acquires the ultimate personification. And it is in the metaphor of "closed doors" and in the refusal to provide sanctuary that this ethical imperative is seriously called into question.

Asylum seekers as guests: The camp

It is Tuesday morning and I have been awake since six o'clock. Today is my first shift as a volunteer in the reception center for asylum seekers. I commute to the center with other volunteers and some of its employees in the minibus belonging to the facility's administering organization. As we approach the enclosed compound after a long drive, I notice a flag with the emblem of the organization and a sign posted on the fence, identifying the place as an

asylum-seeker reception center. At the front gate, two cameras monitor entrance and exit. At night the center is guarded. Large military tents are placed at the perimeter of the compound. The laundry room, storehouse, and classroom (where public events also take place) are separate spaces that are locked and unlocked by the staff.

As we cross the compound, people are coming out of the tents. Women are heading to the common kitchen, men are going to the bathroom or just walking around, and a few children are playing with a ball. People salute us: "Kalimera! Kalimera!" [Good morning! Good morning!] and we respond, "Kalimera!" Volunteers and members of the staff stop to greet some of the residents as we head to the "social and nursery services" building, a small prefabricated structure where the office of the social workers, the nurse's office, and a common waiting room are located. The center's teachers set off to receive their students, and the social workers and the nurse settle down in their offices to work. The volunteers check the day's schedule to plan their activities: distributing food, ordering provisions, supervising the laundry room, and accompanying residents to the local health center.

Sofia,[9] an active 50-year-old volunteer, is sitting next to me in the reception area. Since she lives close to the center, she often visits the place in the afternoon or on weekends "in order to check if everything is all right or if they [the residents] need something." She has undertaken to inform me how the camp works. Meanwhile, people are constantly coming in and out of the office, observing the newcomer (me) and saluting Sofia. Sofia greets them and asks how they and their families are. She then adds that she will soon pass by their tent. When they leave, she briefly informs me about each person: "He is in tent 14 ... his wife is sick"; "She has just had a baby."

She then asks me to follow her on the day's tasks. Today is laundry day. Sofia, who keeps the keys to the laundry room, unlocks the door. Shortly after, women holding bags of clothes arrive and stand on the doorstep. While guiding them, Sofia explains to me that we have to be cautious and keep an eye out, since "they do not know [how to use the machines]" and "they tend to use so much detergent that they destroy them." She describes her astonishment at once having found the laundry room full of foam, a sight she still recalls with laughter. Sofia advises the women, who stand in a line before us, to put more clothes in the machine, to fill it up. In this way, she is teaching them to use less water and electricity, as she expresses it to me, "na kanoun ikonomia" [to be thrifty]. After supervising the laundry, we walk around the center.

Sofia enters the tents and greets the people we meet. She knows most of them by their first names and questions each one individually on different matters: how the family's children are doing at school or if a woman's husband finally managed to find work. "Let's go! I want to show you our newborn!" she then says enthusiastically. We enter one of the tents, and Sofia greets a woman who is standing over a cradle. Sofia constantly moves her hands up and down to communicate and speaks to the woman in Greek, although the woman obviously does not understand her. She asks the woman if the baby is better, if its fever has gone down. She then lifts the baby and holds her in her arms. She caresses the baby and speaks to her in a low voice. She then turns to the baby's mother, who is standing next to us, watching. Sofia advises the woman not to forget her baby's medicine and she then shows me the baby's diaper. She notes that, because "they do not know," we have to "show to the mothers," to "teach them," that they should not swaddle their babies. She adds that this woman has no idea of how to treat her baby properly. "Imagine, she already has two children ... I wonder how she managed to bring them up."

The above scene took place in a "reception and temporary accommodation center for asylum seekers," as it was officially called, a compound situated 40 kilometers from the center of Athens. Volunteers and employees referred to it as "kendro" (the center) and more often as the "camp" (using the English term). The center was funded by the administering organization, by the Hellenic Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, and by the European Refugee Fund. It could accommodate 120 people, and during its operation it housed hundreds of asylum seekers from a number of countries (Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia). The staff consisted of two social workers, a nurse, a guard, an interpreter (himself a recognized refugee from Iran), two teachers, and 12 volunteers. In addition to this center, the organization ran (and continues to run) the only state accommodation center (with a capacity of 300 residents) and other smaller shelters for asylum seekers in the country. The same policies and methods of management are adopted in all these centers, and practices adhere to the rules of the organization and official state regulations.

The organization, established in 1877 by royal decree, is a branch of one of the largest international aid organizations in the world and reports directly to the international organization's headquarters. With 600 employees and 3,000 registered volunteers, the Greek division is today the country's most powerful nonstate actor, operating in a variety of locations and forms: reception centers, hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions. The vast majority of its volunteers are middle-aged women of middle-class background. Historically, the organization has had a strong collaboration with the Greek state, becoming its credible partner. It has traditionally played a central role in refugee management through the administration of reception centers, which are subsidized by the European Union and the Greek state. Moreover, it is a highly bureaucratic association, whose activities are organized according to a set of specific principles and under the supervision of professional social workers. As far as refugee management is concerned, the

organization has adopted and reflects state and EU policies. The center's internal rules thus referred to Presidential Decree No. 366/2002: "The center aims to provide temporary hospitality and appropriate services to foreigners that resort to the Greek territory and submit an asylum request."[10]

The organization operating the camp was self-defined as humanitarian, and the recipient of aid was constructed in strictly humanitarian terms, detached from any political connotations and in keeping with the philosophy and politics of the international parent organization. Humanitarianism declares its differentiation from the field of the political. The principles of neutrality and impartiality that infuse the apolitical character of humanitarian action are central to the production of the asylum seeker in reference to Anthropos. Beneficiaries are populations and subjects defined as needy; this category is said to be unmarked by any ethnic or other personal, cultural, and social characteristics. However, despite its claim to stand outside politics, the organization operating the camp acted politically, not only because it received funding and was a partner of the state in refugee management schemata but also because humanitarian practices themselves are inevitably political and include biopolitical practices of governance (Ticktin 2006).

Scholars have drawn on the setting of "the camp" to illuminate the biopolitical dimension of humanitarian practices. As Malkki (1995) has depicted, since the Second World War, the camp has emerged as the dominant model of refugee management. The camp, as a "technology of 'care and control' ... a technology of power entailing the management of space and movement—for peoples out of space" (Malkki 1992:34), is more than a structure or a physical space; it constitutes a set of methods, of "discursive and material sites of power" (Hyndman 2000:87). It is thus both a site of humanitarian assistance and a place where asylum seekers and refugees are monitored, supervised, and subjected to biopolitical power by state and nonstate actors. The camp encompasses the perception of asylum seekers as "vulnerable people" in a state of (humanitarian) crisis. It constructs the refugee as a human rather than as a citizen, a body rather than a political being (Redfield 2005:341). As "matter out of place" (Douglas 1984), the refugee calls both for management and for aid (Pandolfi 2003:371). Biopower is thus not limited to the power to make or let die, as in Agamben's "thanatopolitics," but it is also "a power to let live" (Rabinow and Rose 2006:9) or the power to help live.

Encampment practices like the ones Malkki describes are not representative of Greek immigration and asylum policies and practices. The situation in Greece is quite different, not only in terms of the numbers and capacities of these facilities but also in terms of the refugee management schemata employed and the prevailing policy of invisibility. Thus, most of the people who, in legal terms, are "undocumented immigrants" or "sans papiers" or "asylum seekers" do not stay in reception centers. At the same time, a closer look at the camp challenges the Agambenian viewpoint and the production of the asylum seeker as "bare life." It highlights the cultural, political, and social production of humanitarian assistance through the ways humanitarian workers conceptualize asylum seekers as well as themselves and their own practices.

"Worthy guests"

Admission to the camp was mediated through various mechanisms of control and several state and nonstate actors. Asylum seekers had to find their way through intricate bureaucratic webs and deal with numerous agents that registered and characterized them as *etoundes asilo* (asylum seekers). They had gone to the police station, their claim for asylum had been recorded, and they had then sought assistance from NGOs that referred them to still other NGOs. Each time their story, personal data, and demographic characteristics were recorded and cross-checked. They were then given a legal document: a *prosorini adhia paramonis* (temporary residence permit) or *karta etoundos asilo* (asylum seeker card), a *roz karta* (pink card) as it is most often named, given the color of the document. Like other major nongovernmental and international organizations, the reception center's administering organization is actively involved in procedures of classification and emphasizes the bureaucratic definition of the asylum seeker. Such official discourses on the refugee and the asylum seeker follow an etic definition (Voutira 2003a), one formed by international agreement (the Geneva Convention) and by state and nonstate organizations. In the context of the center, the asylum seeker was a bureaucratic category, a subcategory of the refugee (Zetter 1991, 2007). In training seminars, camp volunteers are informed about the legal status of "refugees" and the Geneva Convention definition, as well as about subcategories such as "asylum seekers" and "undocumented immigrants." They learn to make distinctions between these categories and adopt the language of official discourses. During my fieldwork, I was often told, in reference to certain individuals, "dhen ine prosfiyes" [they are not refugees] because they have not been attributed refugee status.

Humanitarian workers in the camp ascribed known and established social categories and forms of sociality to the asylum seekers. Thus, residents in the center were conceptually placed in the setting of filoksenia. *Filoksenoumeni* (guests) was the most common term volunteers used to refer to them. As guests, they were hosted not only by the administering organization but by the Greek state as well, since they resided within its territory. This hospitality was considered temporary and was specified as such in the camp's internal rules. In the camp, hospitality was conditional: It entailed a "contract"; "rules"; and the control, supervision, and education of the guest. The social worker

in charge informed the guests, on their arrival, about the articles of the internal rules. Asylum seekers had to agree to and sign a document indicating that they would comply with the rules. This "contract" granted several privileges: provision of medical, legal, and social services as well as material supplies (clothes and food). In return for these privileges, asylum seekers were to "respect" and keep the place clean, contribute to the operation of the center, keep all material provided to them in "good condition," and cause no damage. They were also to avoid water and electricity *spatali* (wastage). Guests were allowed to stay for a maximum period of six months and were free to move in and out of the camp, which, however, as noted above, was guarded and monitored by two cameras. The distribution of material goods and services constituted humanitarian workers as the ultimate donors as well as hosts. The power dynamics that emerge from this complex system of patronage and giving (Harrell-Bond et al. 1992:208) persist even in the context of contemporary critical revisions of humanitarian practices and discourses of "empowerment." Thus, even though volunteers underwent intensive training to make them aware of the hierarchical implications of one-way offers and of the need to recognize the agency of asylum seekers, the hierarchical model of filoksenia still prevailed.

Maria was a 40-year-old camp volunteer and came from a middle-class family. Her father owned a small textile factory, and her mother was a housewife. After working for years as an English-language tutor and secretary, she retired early because she suffered from a severe chronic disease. She was divorced and lived by herself, with her cat and two dogs, close to the center, like Sophia. Maria often mentioned the shortcomings volunteers faced when she started working at the center, two years earlier. She showed me the storeroom and explained that the social services offices used to be housed there, a space that was cold and humid. The whole camp was a mess. Thanks to the volunteers' help, mediation, and work, the center was organized and equipped, and provisions arrived through donations from the local community. Every morning, when they arrived at the camp, Maria and the other volunteers changed into shabby clothes (the same clothes they wore when they did household chores in their houses) and set to work: instilling order, cleaning up, and supervising the use of machinery. They always seemed busy: When there were no more chores to do, they would rearrange the storeroom, dust the shelves, organize food cans according to expiration date, and wipe the floor. Maria stressed the constant effort volunteers made to *nikokirepsoun* and *simazepsoun* (tidy and put order to) the center. Both expressions refer to a dominant cultural discourse on gender, in which women are charged with creating and preserving an ordered domesticity as well as with the overall management of a household's material and immaterial resources. It was, thus, as women in charge of their own domestic space that these women were able and eager to train women asylum seekers in how to properly take care of the center, their tents, their families, and themselves. That the vast majority of volunteers, not only in the camp but also in the rest of the administering organization, were women was no coincidence. In fact, voluntary work was intertwined with the ways in which these women conceptualized themselves as women, mothers, and daughters, and with the ways they placed themselves in the world and in relation to other people. Volunteers were thus *nikokires* (women, masters of an ordered domesticity) in the camp just as they were nikokires in their own houses.[11] As nikokires, they were in charge of order and also represented a model of accumulation and saving. As masters of camp domesticity, then, volunteers were hosts, and asylum seekers were guests who not only had to obey the hosts' rules but also be transformed to proper guests.[12]

But who was a "worthy guest"? In other words, who was eligible for hosting? Apart from being a privileged locus for the construction of the category of the refugee (Malkki 1995) or the asylum seeker as the recipient of humanitarian aid, the camp was a structure in which internal taxonomies were shaped. *Monoghoneikes ikoyenies* (single-parent families), *polimelis ikoyenies me anilika tekna* (large families with minors), *asinodheftes yinekes* (unaccompanied women), and *ilikiomeni* (elders) formed *evalotes katighories* (vulnerable categories) whose members were entitled to accommodation. Even though "worthy guests" fell into historically and culturally defined subcategories of gender (unaccompanied women), age (elders and minors), and other social characteristics (single-parent and large families), according to the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality, the asylum seeker appeared to be devoid of culture, history, and social characteristics. Humanitarian workers came across asylum seekers from different parts of the world: families from Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iraq; men from Iraq; and even a man from Serbia who had been living in the camp for several years. During the time of my fieldwork and following the U.S. invasion in Afghanistan, the majority of the residents were of Afghan origin. Most of them had already been at the center for more than a year, despite the six-month time frame defined by regulation. These people had followed similar routes to the camp: From the countryside of Afghanistan they had traveled to Pakistan or directly to Iran and then to Turkey. On a small boat, they had crossed the Aegean Sea and ended up on European soil: a Greek island in the northeast Aegean, such as Samos, Chios, or Lesvos. Their departure from the center signified the continuation of their journey to another EU country. Volunteers often tried to "speak" with their guests through signs and brief phrases in English; they asked them about the problems they faced, particularly when they looked sad and overwhelmed; they inquired about the children's progress at the local school. However, the language barrier was impossible to overcome. In addition, their primary role as the

supervisors of the center reinforced mutual suspicion between the two sides.

Volunteers defined themselves as "to mati tou kinonikou litourghou" [the eye of the social worker]. The hierarchical connotations of this expression are evident and indicate the disciplinary as well as caring character of the relationship with camp residents. Volunteers cooperated with their "supervisors"—social workers—to ensure proper functioning of the facility. They thus reported directly to the social workers and informed them of any issues that emerged. Apart from delivering the material goods provided to the residents by the organization, they administered the space and the residents' living conditions. In the center, asylum seekers were recipients of aid and objects of control and management, both examined and controlled, classified and subjected to biopolitical power. The asylum seeker had to undergo several medical examinations to earn the privilege of filoksenia. The discourse formed in the context of the internal rules constituted the body of the asylum seeker as one that needed to be certified as "healthy," as a body that posed potential danger to the other guests and to hosts, as a body suspected of harboring infectious diseases.

Hospitality defines and draws social boundaries and produces alterity. In that sense, the biopolitics of hospitality produce the asylum seeker as a "worthy guest"; a needy and dangerous figure at the same time; a human being beyond any other identities; an apolitical being relying on the humanitarian intentions of his or her host. Casting asylum seekers as guests has potent hierarchical and disempowering consequences. However, rather than being produced in terms of "bare life," asylum seekers become provisional members of their host's household. They are thus placed in a space between mere biological life and full political existence. Neither mere bodies nor fully active agents, they reside in a zone between the outside and the inside, exclusion and inclusion. As undocumented aliens, or even as holders of temporary residence permits awaiting the final verdict of the Greek state on their claim for asylum, they are trapped in a condition of "frozen transience" (Bauman 2002:114–115). Waiting for the—in all likelihood, negative—Greek state response to their asylum request, asylum seekers are immobilized in the constant temporariness of the guest.

Refugees as hosts: The street

A group of volunteers passes through an area close to the center of Athens, carefully scrutinizing the houses, paying particular attention to old, wrecked buildings that seem abandoned. Washed clothes hanging on lines, containers of water, and a broken chain and padlock on the door are signs that the buildings are not empty. They are, in fact, inhabited by refugees, mainly from Asia. The group knocks on doors and tries to approach the refugees that stay in the squats. Volunteers introduce themselves and explain to the surprised and doubtful refugees that they come to offer assistance: "We are a small group of people ... we come in good faith ... we pass by this neighborhood once a week ... we try to help refugees ... our power is very limited." Then, with the help of an interpreter, the group poses a few questions to the refugees. "Ask them where they come from. How many people stay in the building? How long have they been in Greece?" These unexpected and uninvited visitors accompanied by a Syrian Kurd interpreter probably seem peculiar to the people who stay in the buildings. The newcomers ask the people staying in the house if they need anything. Food, milk for the children, clothes, or blankets? The people reply that they do not need anything and thank them for their interest. Before leaving, the strangers tell them that they will be back at the same time next week.

On their return visits, the volunteers offer clothes, blankets, and food and always ask the refugees if there is anything they can do for them, if they have specific needs, and if they face health problems or trouble with the authorities. Gradually, they shape relations of protection and giving with the refugees; they provide them with material goods, money, information (about other NGOs and state services), mediation (for a residence permit), and services (escorts to hospitals). They try to persuade the owners of the houses not to evict refugees who have taken up shelter in the buildings, to permit them to stay there. Through their actions, the volunteers aim not only to assist these people but also to develop relations with them.

After a few weeks, the volunteers start receiving invitations to visit from the refugees they meet. Accepting one such invitation, they take their shoes off and leave them at the doorstep before entering the house. They then follow their hosts and enter the only open room of the house, which is also the main space where all domestic life takes place. During the day, this is a site of sociality where refugees receive visitors, and, at night, several layers of old blankets are laid on the floor and the room becomes a place to sleep. The building is old and derelict. Cold air comes through the shuttered window, and the atmosphere is suffocating because of the kerosene stove. The volunteers sit on the floor in a circle, facing the refugees. The woman of the house is constantly on the go. She brings a jug and a glass and offers water to each of the volunteers. They realize that they will have to share the same glass, one after the other. They also know that there is no running water or electricity and that the house lacks what they consider even elementary sanitation. However, they do not want to insult their hosts, and they all drink the water they are offered. Each time the glass empties, the woman refills it and offers it to the next person.

The volunteers in the above scene are self-defined *ethelondes tou dhromou* (volunteers on the street) and members of an association that supports refugees. The

association is a small-scale, local, and purely voluntary organization that was established in the 1990s by leftists, environmentalists, and pacifists. It is representative of the institutionalization and transformation of social movements into NGOs that took place during the 1990s in Greece.[13] Membership is open and fluid and characterized by social diversity. Apart from occasional EU subsidies, the group is opposed to private or public funding. In contrast to the organization that operates the camp, which claims to stay aloof from politics in favor of humanitarianism, volunteers on the street conceived their action in political terms, and their mandate was based on the concept of *allilegii* (solidarity) with people who live at the margins of Greek society and, above all, with "noncitizens deprived of rights." They tried to distance themselves from and at the same time challenge the techniques and discourses of sovereign state power and the broader international order of law.

Sotiris, a 30-year-old volunteer, had grown up in a small rural town and had come to Athens to study sociology. He had just gotten his university degree, and he was in search of a scholarship to continue his studies abroad. In the meantime, he worked occasionally and got by with difficulty. During his school years, the educational reform initiated by the then right-wing government had generated several months of school occupations, student demonstrations, and marches. Sotiris had actively joined the protests and participated in university politics, though he was never officially a member of any formal political group. He defined himself as a leftist and still took part in protests after graduation. In February and March 2003, during my fieldwork, Sotiris and many other volunteers from the group participated in the large demonstrations in Athens against the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Sotiris would never define his "work in the street" as "humanitarian"; for him, it was clearly political, both as the tangible expression of solidarity with noncitizens devoid of rights and symbolically, as an attempt to transgress established hierarchies. He considered his participation in demonstrations and his volunteer work to stem from the same core of political action. And the setting of both activities was the same: the *dhromos* (street).

Contrary to the reception center, the dhromos was symbolically and practically an open space that was not under the jurisdiction of any nonstate or state organization. There was no institutional presence, no reception center or organizational office there. Volunteers initiated contact with strangers on the street in opposition to the situation in the camp, where it was the refugees who requested accommodation and aid from and entered an institutionalized humanitarian framework, thus subjecting themselves to the mechanisms of biopolitical humanitarianism. The street was constituted as an open space that did not belong to anyone. In fact, according to the volunteers, it belonged to the refugees. Whereas the reception center was placed in the outskirts of the city, the street was located practically in the center of Athens. On the street, refugees were mobile and in contact with their compatriots and other networks, whereas residents in the center were to a large extent immobilized and isolated. Moreover, the cultural constitution of dhromos is highly political in Greece. For the left-wing volunteers, the street has traditionally been a place of collective protest toward the state. It is a locus of public claims, demonstrations and debates between the citizens and the state, and often-violent conflicts between the police and demonstrators.

These volunteers placed their conscious ideological choice in opposition to "camp practices." They noted that structures such as reception centers entailed techniques of surveillance since even the most "open" reception centers were guarded and life was organized under the supervision of the administering staff. They often said, "Dhen imaste batsi" [We are not the cops], contrasting themselves to social workers, who personified methods of control and discipline. From the volunteers' point of view, visits in the street symbolized the attempt to contact refugees in "their place." They engaged with them in relations of reciprocity and sociality that reversed dominant discourses that painted refugees as guests in the country and that emphasized their passivity. Unlike the camp, relations on the street recognized the agency of the refugees and denied their subjection and passivity.

"Disputable hosts"

Contrary to the organization administering the camp, volunteers in the street rejected the bureaucratic definition of the asylum seeker. Rather, they used an emic definition of the refugee. They named the people they met *prosfighes* (refugees, sing. *prosfighas*), regardless of their legal status. These people came mostly from the Middle East—Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan—but also other places in the world, for instance, Africa. Their national and ethnic background and their legal status were of no importance to volunteers. This undifferentiated production of the prosfighas was very different from the humanitarian production of the asylum seeker in the camp.

Casting the recipient of aid as prosfighas brings to the fore the historical experience of *prosfiyia* (refugeeness) in Greece. Prosfiyia is strongly associated with the experience of refugees of Greek origin from Asia Minor who arrived in the country in 1922 and a year later with the population exchange between Greece and Turkey after the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). After temporarily being housed in public buildings, stadiums, warehouses, and tents, Asia Minor refugees were moved to *prosfiyika* (refugee quarters), settlements of small houses with the basic necessities that were built in both urban and rural areas. Their reception by the local population was characterized by hostility and rejection, and they were referred to by pejorative

terms such as *tourkospori* (of Turkish seed), *yiaourtovaptismeni* (baptized in yogurt), or *anatolites* (orientals) and were treated as strangers (Hirschon 1989, 2003). Thus, although refugeeness is historically associated with ethnocultural similarity and although the integration of Asia Minor refugees into Greek society may now be considered successful (Voutira 2003b), the term *prosfighas* (refugee) still holds some pejorative and negative connotations. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Greek society became accustomed to receiving Kurdish political refugees, members of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) who had fled Turkey. The Kurds' generally positive reception by the local population was in many cases related to their signification as socialist political fighters (by left-wing Greek political parties and groups) but also reflected the tense Greek–Turkish relations at the time. Especially after the 1990s, the flows of immigrants and refugees arriving in the country increased significantly and so did new variations and conceptualizations of prosfighas. Immigration and asylum became a key political problem and the object of management by state and nonstate agents. As the case of the camp demonstrated, the bureaucratic and humanitarian production of the refugee initiated new significations and internal differentiations.

According to the volunteers on the street, recipients of their action were kseni, non-Greek citizens, people who were symbolically placed on the fringes of the Greek nation-state. This was a conscious political decision: *Prosfighas* stood as a metonymy of socially excluded people, aliens, and noncitizens. It was a politically charged term. In fact, one of the association's objectives was to speak to the state on behalf of people considered to be voiceless. Volunteers approached people who might hold "temporary residence permits," and were thus officially "asylum seekers," as well as people without any legal documents.

Not only would volunteers reach out to the stranger without imposing any juridical or formal requirements but they also employed a creative reversal of the code of filoksenia, constructing refugees as hosts of the street during their Sunday interactions in the squats. Their (material and immaterial) offers were discursively placed in the idiom of filoksenia, with the refugees perceived as the hosts receiving the volunteers as guests. The reversal of hospitality in the street challenged official and dominant state discourses; it questioned and criticized the workings of biopolitical power. However, although they struggled to constitute themselves as guests, the volunteers first came to the refugees' doorsteps as uninvited visitors and also with the implicit status of the host. During their visits, they constantly asked questions: Were the refugees in need of something? What kind of problems did they face? How was their life in their countries of origin? Both the questions posed and the act of knocking on a stranger's door in the first place seem to challenge the ownership of space, a fundamental principle of filoksenia. Repetitive visits and offers, especially when they were not solicited by the refugees, may also be considered acts of violence and irruption.

The expression "hosts of the street" itself entails a major contradiction. How can there be an *ikodhespotis* (*dhespotis* of *ikos,* i.e., master of a home) if a *spiti* (home) does not exist? *Spiti* means both "house" and "home"; in fact, the way it is employed here, *spiti,* as "home," is a powerful cultural category that refers to an ordered domesticity. How are deviations from the conventional modes of filoksenia interpreted? How can proper filoksenia be performed if the material culture so essential to it is absent? According to the volunteers, refugees symbolically "lived in the street"; the buildings they resided in were not spiti. Not only were the buildings "abandoned" by their proper owners but they also lacked any kind of order that would constitute them as spiti: There was no water or electricity, no furniture, no stability in the structure of the domestic unit, as people constantly moved about, came and went. Volunteers urged the refugees to clean the space, paint the old buildings, and gradually move into rental apartments in the same area. In this way, they actually called the refugees' authority into question. Whenever their suggestions were ignored, they expressed their disappointment. Through the symbolic and material transformation of the street into spiti, volunteers developed practices of biopolitical power.

Volunteers tried to transform refugees into proper hosts who would comply with the culturally defined rules and conventions of hospitality. Their efforts reveal the contradictions and shortcomings in their own conscious political attempts to transgress and challenge the established schemata of dealing with Otherness. Although they politically endorsed and expressed acceptance of difference and challenged the state idiom of hospitality and biopolitical practices, they gradually attempted to transform the refugees' nomadic way of life into a manner of living that appeared "natural" and "universal." They became involved in power relations and in practices of management and control of life in the street by offering refugees *simvoules* (advice). Such advice was aimed at matters of everyday life: child care, the management and organization of the domestic space, legal and medical matters. However, their attempts to "educate" the refugees through "advice" and their endeavors to convert the street into a home according to culturally informed models, actually constituted attempts to regulate and control life.

Melina was in her forties and occasionally worked as a French-language tutor or assisted her husband in the family business, a textile shop he had inherited from his father. They had two children and lived in a middle-class suburb of Athens. Although she described herself as far from the traditional model of nikokira and as an "unconventional mum" who paid less attention to her children's accomplishments at school and more to other aspects of their lives, such as social and artistic activities (dance, music, and

painting), she noted that she nevertheless found herself occupied with more "conventional" and "motherly" tasks like cooking and housekeeping. Melina came from a politicized left-wing family of doctors, lawyers, and artists, and during her youth she was active in leftist political groups. She no longer participated in political groups or parties, preferring instead to work in less formal groups of activists, such as the volunteers I describe here. As one of the most active volunteers, she gathered food and clothing from acquaintances and stored them in her house for distribution to refugees. During the week, she would make numerous phone calls and coordinate volunteers who accompanied refugees to hospitals, or she would herself go with refugees who needed to access public services. Meetings of the volunteer group often took place in Melina's house, which was constantly full of people: friends, family members, volunteers, and her children's friends. Though she saw herself as a deeply antiauthoritarian person and far from a nikokira, she often reflected on how her relations with the refugees on the street had, in fact, become hierarchical, and she was conscious that her practices were directed toward the transformation of their everyday life and space into an ordered domesticity.

Many volunteers shared Melina's reflexive concerns and frequently wondered about the outcome of their practices and about the politics of their relations with the refugees. Such preoccupations emerged in their meetings, at which the hierarchical implications of their actions were put under scrutiny. Had they, despite their initial goals, become the patrons of the refugees? Did their efforts constitute authoritarian action? Were they imposing a culturally defined domesticity on the way refugees lived? Did they, in fact, question the political model of filoksenia (its reversal) that they advocated and, thus, contest the agency of the refugees? The dilemmas of their action constantly fueled concerns. These contradictions indicate that even on the microlevel of everyday human interaction, entrenched understandings of citizenship and state ownership still dominated, and hospitality emerged as the privilege of the citizen performed on the noncitizen, the refugee.

Conclusions

How is biopolitics, delineated as a dark facet of sovereign power, related to hospitality, generally perceived as a practice of generosity toward the stranger? And how can structures of biopolitical humanitarianism, such as the camp, be defined—in the rhetoric of the Greek state and by administering organizations—as loci of hospitality? As I have demonstrated here, in Foucault's conceptualization of biopower, this connection is not paradoxical at all, since care lies at the core of the biopolitical management of life. Hospitable practices of generosity that are grounded on the principle of disinterest are thus not incompatible with biopolitics.[14]

My theoretical contribution here is the intertwining of a cultural notion with biopolitical power and a critical reexamination of the transformation of hospitality in contemporary refugee management. Through an ethnographically informed approach, I have explored the workings of biopolitical power on the ground and the power relations and reversals of power that occur. Biopolitical power is often symbolically challenged by people who employ the very notions that underlie sovereign power and by those who reverse them. I have traced the routes of the filoksenia concept—since it is such a powerful and central cultural value—in the self-representation of the Greek nation-state, in the practices of nonstate actors, and, also, in everyday attitudes toward asylum seekers and refugees, and I have followed its ontological path in the political production of the asylum seeker as a guest and in the reversal of this norm. Biopolitical power is not an impersonal and agentless substance but is carried out by state and (as in the cases examined here) nonstate agents.

I have examined the biopolitics of hospitality through two ethnographic cases that enclose paradigmatic and opposing discourses of hospitality and their relation to biopolitical power: the humanitarian and the political production of the asylum seeker–refugee as guest and as host, respectively. In the first case, the camp reflects the official state paradigm of refugee management in which the asylum seeker is cast as a guest, at the same time in need of care and protection and a potential danger. Recalling Malkki's (1996) criticism of humanitarian representations of the refugee as an innocent and powerless victim, the asylum seeker, as a "worthy guest" in the setting of the camp, reflects the biopolitical task of the production of subjectivities and management and control mechanisms in the name of humanitarianism. The production of the asylum seeker as a guest is a profound assertion of that individual's depoliticization and disempowerment. As guests, asylum seekers are produced as passive recipients of a biopolitical humanitarian project in the name of hospitality, wherein the beneficiary is an object of control, education, and care. Devoid of power, the asylum seeker becomes a social being placed in the ground between biological life and complete political existence. In the camp, the asylum seeker is bound to retain his or her temporary and liminal status—neither fully inside nor totally outside the community but, rather, in the vague space that hospitality draws in between, holder of a temporary residence permit and reliant on the good will of the host to grant or deny asylum and protection.

The second case, of the street, appears quite different, since volunteers consciously attempt to challenge the workings of biopolitical power. Through a very traditional practice—home visits to the poor[15]—they perform a political act. Refugees in the street are thus not perceived as needy people but as actors. They are reconstituted as political subjects, not in abstract terms but as hosts, active

agents. As hosts, they are attributed the power and agency that they typically lack in other aid contexts. This reversal of hospitality leads to the reversal of established hierarchies between the citizen and the noncitizen, the indigenous and the stranger. However, the apparently contrary practices of the camp and the street are quite similar in the ways relationships with refugees are built. Hierarchies and power still linger over encounters in the street, and entrenched understandings of sovereignty, belonging, and Otherness as well as space are inevitably brought to the fore. The refugee as a host is disputed, and his or her ability to perform proper hospitality is questioned. Both the figures of the "worthy guest" and of the "disputable host" are grounded on the same cultural and social setting of relationships. They refer to established modes of sociality with the stranger, as they reflect the pattern of filoksenia. Moreover, they draw on culturally informed models of domesticity and order, to which universal and natural features are attributed. Asylum seekers in the camp and refugees in the street are considered the objects of a learning process related to well-established concepts of domesticity, order, and the management of everyday life. This way they may be transformed into "proper guests" and "proper hosts." Nevertheless, the primary intention of the volunteers to assist refugees should not be overlooked in either case and neither should their intense experience of the paradoxes and inconsistencies of their practices. They strive to help the people they meet in the camp and in the street and improve their living conditions in ways that seem to be universal and natural but are, in fact, profoundly cultural.

Although hospitality is often considered to signify the acknowledgment and inclusion of the recipient in the social world of the host (though it is a conditional and hierarchical inclusion), one must stand ready to critique the power aspects of the relationship and the contemporary political production of the asylum seeker–refugee as guest. The current situation of asylum and immigration in Greece thus does not reflect a "crisis of hospitality" but, rather, the expansion of the code of hospitality and the reaffirmation of state sovereignty through the ultimate control and the ontological production of the ksenos.

Notes

Acknowledgments. The research on which this article is based would not have been possible without the contribution of several volunteers, refugees, and members of the staffs of the organizations under study. I am grateful to them for accepting me in their lives and sharing their thoughts and experiences with me. I also want to thank Angelique Haugerud and anonymous *AE* reviewers for their meticulous reading and attentive suggestions. Giorgos Frigkas, Aggeliki Athanasopoulou, Evthymios Papataxiarchis, Elisabeth Anne Davis, Alexandra Bakalaki, Athena Athanasiou, Alexandra Patrikiou, and Alexis Rappas read drafts of this article and made helpful comments. An early version was written and presented in the hospitable setting of the Program in Hellenic Studies at Princeton University, where I was a Mary Seeger O'Boyle postdoctoral fellow for the academic year 2009–10.

1. The recent financial crisis in Greece has also highlighted the country's marginal place in Europe. In 2010, the escalation of the debt crisis led the country to appeal for assistance from the IMF and European mechanisms of financial aid. Since then, the "inadequacy" of the country within the common European Economic and Monetary Union and its symbolic marginality to broader European cultural and sociopolitical space have featured in the discourses of EU political leaders and in European media.

2. This "politics of invisibility" strongly recalls the "social production of indifference" in Western bureaucracy delineated by Michael Herzfeld (1992) in tracing the collective representations of bureaucratic evil.

3. Asylum applications in Greece have risen significantly in the last decade. In 2005 alone, approximately nine thousand new applications for asylum were recorded. Recognition rates, however, have averaged less than 1 percent over the past seven years. At the same time, a limited number of reception centers serve asylum seekers in the country. In 2006, the total capacity of such centers was estimated to be nine hundred residents (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] 2006a). The situation has not changed much since then. Most reception centers and shelters are administered by nonstate organizations and their operation primarily depends on temporary subsidies from the European Union and the Greek state. As a result, many shut down after two or three years because of economic constraints.

4. Criticism of the Greek policy culminated in the 2008 decision of the Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board to suspend all transfers of asylum seekers to Greece under the Dublin II Regulation.

5. The idea of the ksenos can be applied to multiple levels. The notion includes those who do not belong to the narrow circle of the domestic space as well as the people of another village, city, or country. Hospitality is performed at these different levels of strangeness.

6. A number of ethnographies have explored the cultural code of filoksenia and its centrality in dealing with the stranger in Greece. Hospitable practices to strangers have been associated with local antagonisms and prestige, which are central to a person's social standing and self-image (Campbell 1964; Dubisch 1986; du Boulay 1991). Ethnographic studies have turned to the microlevel of human interaction and have shown how hospitality grounds the relation between host and guest on cultural assumptions that contain "a formal framework of forms and actions" (Kenna 1995:141) for both parties, wherein rejecting the offer can be extremely exhausting. Visits are embedded in a whole material universe and in ritualized conventions (Cowan 1990; Herzfeld 1987b; Hirschon 1989; Papataxiarchis 1991). They echo the material and moral competence of the host to exercise generosity and the ability of the guest to comply with the conventions of this relation.

7. Andrew Shryock (2004) examines hospitality in the marketplace in Jordan; Matei Candea and Giovanni Da Col (in press) consider hospitality in a range of contexts.

8. Gullestad 2002 and Hervik 2004 emphasize the racialization of difference as it is reflected, respectively, in the Norwegian and Danish metaphors of hospitality.

9. All names of the people and the organizations used in this article are pseudonyms.

10. Quotations from Greek sources have been translated by the author.

11. Several ethnographies of Greece, particularly ones engaging with issues of gender, have delved into the cultural significance of *nikokira* (mistress of the house) and *nikokirio* (household). See, for

example, du Boulay 1986, Dubisch 1986, Hirschon 1989, Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991, Papataxiarchis 1993, Salamone and Stanton 1986.

12. More than plain forms of social control, the volunteers' practices in the camp are facets of transformative biopower. Their educational and caring elements are central in the biopolitical practices of nonstate actors at the tangible level of everyday life and human interactions.

13. For a detailed account of this transformation and the cultural basis of sociality behind these emerging social formations, see Rozakou 2008.

14. By contrast, the Agambenian viewpoint, particularly as it has been explored in the critique of humanitarian aid, links the caring practices of humanitarianism with the sovereign production of life and its reduction to "bare life." The case studies I explore in this article bring to the fore the limitations of this problematic. The guest–host metaphor and the inclusion of the asylum seeker–refugee in the social universe of the host—though conditionally—go beyond the refugee's production in terms of bare life.

15. Home visits to the poor recall charitable ladies and the disciplinary character of charity in 19th-century Greece (Korasidou 1995) and similar visits to the poor by charity organizations in contemporary Greece (Bakalaki 2008). Nevertheless, the visits street workers make have quite different political and symbolical connotations.

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Katerina Rozakou
41 Galinou St.
Athens 11741
Greece

krozakou@yahoo.com