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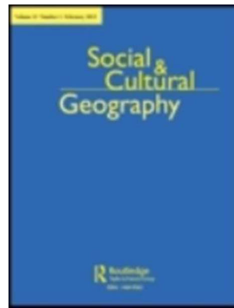

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Securityscapes and asylum: in/secure bodies doing and being

Journal:	*Social and Cultural Geography*
Manuscript ID:	Draft
Manuscript Type:	Original Paper
Keywords:	securityscapes, asylum, security, bodies, taskscape, harare north

Abstract:	This paper seeks to articulate and challenge a series of nexuses that have developed around (in)security and the flows of human beings between the global South and the global North. Over the last decade, many writers have noted what has been labelled the securitization of asylum and immigration in the UK and in Europe, as well as the US and Australia, in which a range of political actors link migration and security discursively. At the same time, many other writers have observed a security-development nexus, in which international development aid has become securitized (i.e. re-focused on security allies and on post-conflict reconstruction); in which underdevelopment is re-fashioned as insecurity. The figure of the asylum seeker bridges and transgresses both of these arenas of securitization, pushing towards a heightened awareness of a global 'securityscape' that crosses both disciplinary and spatial boundaries. Drawing on key theoretical contributions around the concept of the 'scape', as well as a range of studies of securitisation as the merging of professional fields and as various forms of subaltern or resistant securitisation, the securityscape is elaborated in relation to modes of seeing, doing and being, with the latter illustrated through a critical reading of Brian Chikwava's recent novel about a Zimbabwean asylum seeker in London, 'Harare North'.

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Securityscapes and asylum: in/secure bodies doing and being

Introduction: Two nexuses

Since the turn of the 21st century, many writers (Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2006; Waever, 1995) have noted what has been labelled the securitization of asylum and immigration in the UK and in Europe, as well as the US and Australia. Most pervasively, a range of political actors link asylum and security rhetorically. This need not be a firm or thorough connection. Indeed the word nexus is used to emphasize imprecision and indeterminability: "*a nexus can be understood as a network of connections between disparate ideas, processes or objects; alluding to a nexus implies an infinite number of possible linkages and relations*" (Stern and Ojendal, 2010, p. 11, emphasis in original).

In the UK, as was particularly noticeable in debates around identity cards, the security-asylum nexus takes the form of adding asylum seekers and other migrants into a disparate list of security concerns, without necessarily making explicit how each of the items is a particular threat or is necessarily linked to the others in the list (Huysmans and Buonfino, 2005). Many have noted that, in the tabloid press, this rhetorical link between asylum seekers and criminality happens in careless phrases such as 'bogus asylum seeker' or 'illegal asylum seeker' (or in the implicit contrast to 'genuine asylum seeker') . It also happens through selectivity, with front-page exposure of any criminal acts by asylum seekers (Noxolo, 2009a), particularly in relation to terrorism, even (as in the ricin case[1]) where accusations turn out to be unfounded.

[1] In 2003 Scotland Yard issued a statement that a dangerous toxin, ricin, had been found in a London flat where a number of asylum seekers lived and was potentially linked to a terrorist plot, but the allegation was

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The other nexus that has been noted is between security and development. As with security-migration, this is not always an explicit or clear linkage between the two, but is often a shifting and inchoate set of juxtapositions and shared framings (Duffield, 2010; Stern and Ojendal, 2010). Amongst these diverse entanglements it is possible to identify three broad strands. Again, commentators have most often noted a range of discursive moves, in that underdevelopment or poverty become re-fashioned repeatedly, in development reports and media statements, as insecurity , for example with states that are not fully integrated into the global system represented as dangerous areas in which terrorists are generated (Abrahamsen, 2004; Barnett, 2005; Tujan, Gaughran and Mollett, 2004). Development interventions therefore become justified not only in terms of eliminating poverty and inequality, but in terms of the dangers of global interconnectedness in a highly unequal world.

This paper begins from the starting point that the asylum seeker crosses the boundaries between these two nexuses, fleeing insecurity often in development arenas, and becoming constructed as a security threat in countries where s/he seeks asylum. Yet these two nexuses are rarely summoned together, drawing on two separate bodies of literature (critical security and geopolitics) which rarely communicate one with another, even when they are both talking about asylum seekers (Amoore, 2006; Aradau, 2004). The concept of the securityscape is a way of beginning to insist more on the spatial and temporal connections between the different arenas of securitization that the figure of the asylum seeker brings together and transgresses. As such it calls for dialogue between critical geopolitics (Duffield, 2007; Gregory, 2011; Hettne, 2010), and the securitization of immigration literature (Abrahamsen, 2004; Ibrahim, 2005; Noxolo and Huysmans, 2009), which can be

later proved to be false Oborne, P., 2006. *The Use and Abuse of Terror: The construction of a false narrative on the domestic terror threat*. Centre for Policy Studies, London.

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placed within critical security studies. Drawing on broadly Foucauldian discursive approaches, both of these literatures view security not as an objective or static outcome of governmental or professional assessment of threatening conditions, nor indeed is it confined to the juridical negotiation between government and civil society, on the boundaries between security and liberty. Beyond the 'speech acts' of politicians (Waever, 1995), securitization is negotiated through the everyday interactions of a wide range of actors, including community groups (Hughes, 2009), media and NGOs (Noxolo, 2009c, d), and security personnel (Bigo, 2002). Securitization is a social, cultural and political process in which a range of actors contribute to the shifting and fuzziness of the borderline between security and insecurity (Huysmans, 2000).

The concept of the securityscape developed in this paper seeks to combine this sense of securitisation as negotiation and process, with the thoroughly spatial concept of the 'scape'. The concept of landscape has been closely associated with modes of seeing in geography both in terms of the representation of landscape in the visual and textual arts (Barnes and Duncan, 1992; Smith, 1993), and in terms of visible features of the land (Carney and Voeks, 2003; Wylie, 2006), but this paper will argue that the border-crossing figure of the asylum seeker both necessitates and illustrates more heavily embodied aspects of a transnational securityscape, focusing less on representation, and more on practice and identity, i.e. the securityscape encompasses not only securitisation as a way of seeing, but also as a way of being and doing. In the next section, this article will draw on Arjun Appadurai's (1996) deployment of the concept of a series of transnational 'scapes', as well as on Tim Ingold's (2000) concept of the 'taskscape' to theorise securitisation as a series of practices that link with more intimate, embodied modes of being. The third and

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fourth sections will demonstrate the embodied nature of the securityscape, with the third section offering a number of examples from existing research around asylum seekers, development and insecurity, and the fourth section offering a brief illustrative reading of Brian Chikwava's (2010) novel 'Harare North'. The article will conclude with some broad implications of this insistence on an embodied securityscape in relation to the politics of identity as it surrounds asylum seekers.

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Towards the securityscape: from seeing bodies to embodied doing and being

Much recent geographical literature on insecurity has noted that the surveillance of bodies as they cross borders is changing (Amoore, 2006; Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Kofman, 2005). Many have noted that the opening of global borders for economically productive activities such as business or tourism, creating a frictionless 'space of flows' (Castells, 2000) for some, is shadowed by the simultaneous intensification of surveillance of the border crossings of those seen as security threats (Huysmans, 2006) – the panopticon of surveillance of productive free movement becomes the 'banopticon' of surveillance to restrict movement of undesirables (Bigo, 2007). Asylum seekers are among the groups whose border crossings have become increasingly subjected to surveillance, with extended periods of detention and investigation, and a range of technologies for interrogating and establishing their right to asylum. There is increasing pressure on those seeking asylum both to narrate the insecurities from which they are fleeing in credible ways (Farrier, 2012), and to present themselves as not posing a threat to the security of their countries of refuge (Fekete, 2005).

One notable aspect of this increased surveillance, not only at international borders but also at checkpoints and internal borders in securitised zones such as post-

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conflict arenas (Hyndman and De Alwis, 2004), is its intense focus on bodies: beyond the increased use of visual technologies (cameras, passports, identity cards), the introduction of increasingly sophisticated biometrics means that the focus of security is moving from external to internal corporealities (Adey, 2009), from a focus just on how bodies look, to a focus on how bodies move, act and feel. This is of course not a definitive shift. As Fluri (2010) and Mountz (2004) have noted, the visual differences between bodies (gendered and racial difference for example) are still an important part of the differential circulation of bodies in securitised spaces, even though these visual differences are always unstable and intersect in complex ways with a range of sharply salient identity markers – between enemy and ally, between us and them - in specific conflict situations (Hyndman and De Alwis, 2004). However, the deployment of increasingly sensitive biometric technologies means that aspects of affect – “microscopic particles and traces… physiological indicators, and micro-expressive gesticulations” (Adey, 2009, 275) – are measured in the body to assess present moods and intentions in order to predict and pre-empt future terrorist or other disruptive actions. Therefore not only the look, but also the micro-gestures, sensitivities and micro-changes of the bodies of asylum seekers – their “corporeal choreographies” (Puumala and Pehkonen, 2010) – figure within a securityscape that is becoming increasingly heavily embodied.

The concept of the heavily embodied securityscape fleshes out Arjun Appadurai’s (1996) famous formulation of the space of flows, in which he recognises five ‘scapes’ that are negotiated as people form identities in a globalised world. These scapes are cross-border flows of images, cultures, beliefs, technologies and money, that he terms respectively mediascape, ethnoscape, ideoscape, technoscape and financescape. Each of these flows takes place across territorial boundaries,

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challenging the primacy of settlement in the formation of identity. This article proposes to add the securityscape to these scapes, taking on board the cross-border negotiation of identity that is central to Appadurai's scapes, but also maintaining the focus on corporeality that I have argued above is becoming increasingly central to securitisation.

There is a productive tension in Appadurai's work between flow and disjuncture that is worth highlighting here. Despite criticisms accusing Appadurai of smoothing out spatialised inequalities in a premature celebration of undifferentiated flow (Ong, 1999), Appadurai is here pointing to difference and disjuncture alongside and as a consequence of mobility: this is not a world in which everyone and everything moves, nor do bodies and concepts move in the same way, by the same routes and with the same consequences (Massey, 1993). By the same token, although it is true to say that Appadurai's view of space is rather flat, with flows merely passing over space rather than actively contributing to its re-territorialisation (Heyman and Campbell, 2009; Sparke, 2005), Appadurai's scapes are not disembodied. Instead, trans-border identity and difference become defined through everyday embodied negotiation and contestation across borders, including through the security technologies and rituals that occur at borders every day (Amoore and Hall, 2010), as well as in the insecure spaces that asylum seekers regularly flee (Fluri, 2010; Hyndman and De Alwis, 2004), and in the processing and detention centres in which asylum seekers often wait (Gill, 2009; Malloch and Stanley, 2005).

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A further implication of Appadurai's scapes for the concept of a securityscape is that the scapes interact without sharing a centre, so that security is understood as a set of ideas, images, people, technologies and finance that flows across borders, in and through bodies and embodied practices. This can be briefly illustrated in relation to

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Noxolo's (2009c) analysis of how, in the immediate aftermath of the 2005 London bombings, UK non-governmental organisations (NGOs) engaged in a scalar politics in responding to the repeated representation of asylum seekers as a security threat. Noxolo argued that UK NGOs networked with other NGOs at the national scale to make the most of scarce resources by maintaining a high profile for critiques of the asylum/security nexus, but also drew on information about relevant and rapidly changing directives and initiatives cascading down through a range of formal and informal networks with NGOs at the EU and global scales. To re-read this in terms of the securityscape involves a different set of questions about how security discourses were actively embodied (interpreted, compared, negotiated and supplemented) by NGOs, not simply in terms of cascading down hierarchies of scale, but also in terms of trans-border mobilities of personnel, images, ideas, technologies and finance. For example, in the relationships between the securityscape and the mediascape, many have noted the importance of media in the formation of security discourses in a range of locations (Ingram and Dodds, 2009; Louw, 2003; Noxolo, 2009d; Sharp, 2011), whilst others (for example Bach and Stark, 2004) have noted the importance of NGOs as globalised information brokers in an increasingly media-saturated world. What roles might changes in the global mediascape play in creating a context in which images of asylum seekers' bodies in relation to security are more likely to be discussed by NGOs at regional and global conferences, are more likely to be selected and represented in advocacy agendas, and are more likely to be deployed in meeting NGOs' operational need to use media to maintain public understanding of their own legitimacy (Howell and Lind, 2009; Lister, 2003)? Some of these questions of the politics of the securityscape will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion of this article.

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The body of the asylum seeker, then, inhabits a securityscape that is constructed through the embodied negotiation of identity and difference: the focus is therefore on this negotiating body, in terms of its securitising practices and in terms of its modes of being within in/secure spaces. Tim Ingold (2000) has famously extended the concept of landscape from that which humans survey, with its implication of human/nonhuman separation, to that within which humans 'dwell' (but see also Wylie, 2006, p. 521). Dwelling emphasises the materiality of human bodies, as they work and live within a landscape, interacting with the material objects and environments surrounding them. This is a profound and productive interaction, in which both human and non-human matter is changed. For this reason Ingold (2000, p. 198) emphasises the work that human beings do within landscape, coining the term 'taskscape' to emphasise the active relationships between people and between people and landscape. The taskscape pushes the concept of the scape to focus on embodied practice, examples of which will be explored in the next section.

At the same time a focus on the body pushes doing into being in a substantial sense – the body gives substance to existence. Tim Ingold (2007: 7) has called for a greater focus on substance or materials themselves, rather than on materiality as a philosophical construct. He argues that a focus on materiality as an abstract concept can reinforce a divide between mind and matter, in which human beings only encounter objects via culture. Instead the focus should be on bodies as matter interacting with objects as matter:

> Like all other creatures, human beings do not exist on the 'other side' of materiality but swim in an ocean of materials. Once we acknowledge our immersion, what this ocean reveals to us is not the bland homogeneity of different shades of matter but a flux in which materials of the most diverse kinds

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> – through processes of admixture and distillation, of coagulation and dispersal, and of evaporation and precipitation – undergo continual generation and transformation.

Noxolo and Preziuso (2012) take this dynamic interactivity to the quantum scale. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler (1993) and Karen Barad (2007) they argue that matter, including the body, can be thought of as itself dynamic, as *processes* of materialization rather than as fixed substance. In the context of the securityscape, this dynamism of the body as matter pushes towards an understanding of insecurity as practised in more intimate, affective arenas, between but also within bodies. So how do bodies practise insecurity?

It is of course difficult to give a conclusive answer to such a question, because bodies are diverse (Saldanha, 2006; Tolia-Kelly, 2006), but also because the way that the body speaks to us, though insistent and hard to ignore, can be indeterminate and hard to understand (Noxolo, 2009b; Pile, 2006). On the level of the skin, Sara Ahmed (2000) has for example explored the importance of touch for a feeling of security, and of pain for insecurity, whilst Ingold (2000: 204) mentions the forms of “muscular consciousness” that are developed in relationships with landscapes, an example of which might be when the body tenses up in an insecure environment. Frantz Fanon (1967: 41) - in a passage that Seshardi-Crooks (2002) links specifically with masculine bodies – describes the relationship between coloniser and colonised as filled with intense insecurity, with the colonised always primed for anti-colonial violence, so that: “That impulse to take the settler’s place implies a tonicity of muscles the whole time...” This muscular tension is itself generative of insecurity, in that some of the “collective autodestruction” (Fanon, 1967: 42) of inter-communal violence can, Fanon argues, be attributed to the desperate need for muscular

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release in the face of this sustained insecurity. Similarly a well-known trope in women's postcolonial fiction is for characters to suffer psychic disintegration in the context of the racialised frustration or curtailment of their aspirations (O'Callaghan, 1993; Rhys, 1992), and this is often accompanied by physical manifestations or effects, for example phantom pregnancy (Brodber, 1988) or miscarriage (Edgell, 1982; Noxolo, Raghuram and Madge, 2008). This apparent gendering of bodily impulses is of course not a necessary or absolute distinction, particularly at the level of muscular consciousness (Hyndman and De Alwis, 2004), though of course racialised and gendered difference can be important markers of difference in situations of insecurity (Fluri, 2011) and might themselves lead to differential bodily affects (Saldanha, 2006; Tolia-Kelly, 2006).

Methodologically, recognition of the importance of intimate corporeal processes requires creative forms of research. Davies and Dwyer (2007: 259) have noted that geographers' strategies in exploring such "unspeakable geographies" have been not to change their research methods necessarily, but to change their interpretive strategies. This might take the form of, for example, using "more performative strategies for making sense of interview data" (Davies and Dwyer, 2007: 259), such as narrative analysis, and shifting the focus "away from looking at depth (in the sense of a single unified truth)…. towards detail (in the sense of a fuller and more variegated picture of the interviewee)" (Latham, 2003), as Liz Bondi (Bondi, this volume) demonstrates in her use of auto-ethnography to explore ontological insecurity. This move towards performative interpretation of form, rather than digging for factual content, opens up the possibility of engaging with literary representations in research. Though there is neither space nor intention here to give a review of literary geography (but see Noxolo and Preziuso, 2013; Saunders, 2009),

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the sub-discipline is an arena in which there is an established interpretive tradition of considering textual form and content as explicitly interacting in the production of meaning (Hones, 2008). The fourth section of this article will offer a reading of Brian Chikwava's novel 'Harare North', which creatively explores the effects of sustained insecurity on the embodiment of an asylum seeker in London. Before that however, the next section will briefly explore examples from existing research of the embodied practices that constitute the securityscape for asylum seekers.

Embodied insecurities: practice in the securityscape

Practice can take place at a number of scales. In relation to development and security, many commentators (Aning, 2007; Essex, 2008) have seen an increasing securitisation of government to government aid, where flows of development aid have been actively re-directed towards allies in the global 'war on terror'. Others (Noxolo, 2011; Sharp, Campbell and Laurie, 2010) have noted the increasing focus of aid on post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation, with security concerns said to be restricting the flexibility and freedoms required for building the democratic and advocacy capacity of civil society organisations (Howell and Lind, 2009). At the scale of the professional spaces surrounding asylum, Nick Gill (2009) explores security practices at Lunar House, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of the Home Office, one of only two places in the UK where asylum seekers can make in-country asylum applications. His work shows how specific security practices (for example the bolting down of chairs in interview rooms, and the use of protective plastic screens) are an effect of concerns about security, but also aggravate security concerns by heightening aggression and mistrust between applicants and staff. In workplaces more generally, Waite et al (this volume) note how exploitation and marginalisation of workers with insecure immigration status (for example other

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members of staff not talking to or interacting with them) heightens their everyday sense of vulnerability and isolation. Finally, in confined public spaces, such as buses and trains, where interactions with strangers tend for the most part to follow conventions of polite tolerance (Wilson, 2011), asylum seekers and refugees interviewed by Refugee Council (2007, p. 16) in the aftermath of the July 7th 2005 bombings in London, noted that the behaviour of strangers in intimate public spaces had changed:

> Birmingham participant 1: I have friends who are British… some of my best friends are born British, they are white people. But there are these English people who do not believe that any refugee or asylum seeker is not a terrorist. They see us as a terrorist.
> Birmingham participant 3: They look at you sitting next to you on the bus, and they move to the next seat.
> Others, jointly: Yes.

It is of course worth noting here that, although strangers had changed, friends had not – there is in this a recognition of the possibility of kindness and friendship in practice, as well as insecurity (Valentine, 2008).

Didier Bigo's (1996) study of policing practices demonstrates how a range of shared professional practices, facilitated through shared border management technologies, such as biometrics, have led to overlap between the roles of police officers and border management professionals across Europe. Others have also noted a parallel convergence of security and asylum/immigration legislation regulating these practices, most notably in 2001, when a range of anti-terrorism legislation was passed across Europe, many with sharp consequences for immigrants, refugees and

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3 asylum seekers (Brouwer, 2003). This convergence of security practices with
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5 immigration practices is all the more a matter for concern given governmental
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7 tendencies, for example in the UK, to push border management to become more
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9 pervasive as a practice, covering a range of professional roles. According to Bridget
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11 Anderson (2012: 1244):
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15 Government is increasingly reliant on "ordinary people" to police immigration.
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17 Public sector workers including health workers, GPs, teachers, university
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19 lecturers, social workers, youth workers, and employees of carriers (airline
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21 officials, lorry drivers, etc.) have obligations to report any evidence of infractions
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23 of control… Employer sanctions were toughened in 2004, and, in 2006, new
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25 legislation was brought in which made it a criminal offence to knowingly employ
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27 someone who does not have the correct immigration status, and this is
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29 punishable with a maximum two year sentence."
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33 Looking across the securityscape to the security-development nexus, we see similar
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35 convergences of practice, but in very different contexts. Though devastating when
36
37 they occur, terrorism and other forms of high-profile violence are still exceptional in
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39 Europe and North America, where most analyses of a security-migration nexus are
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41 located. However, in too many of the arenas on which research on development-
42
43 security analyses are focused, insecurity is a part of the everyday, and is hideously,
44
45 violently, practice-based. Recent research shows that this violence is less and less
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47 usually in the form of interstate or even civil wars - what Chris Philo memorably calls
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49 "'big-S' Security" (Philo, 2012: 2) – which, though still disturbingly present, peaked
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51 globally at the end of the 20th century. Increasingly violence takes chronic and
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53 banal, rather than short term and exceptional forms: unregulated cross-border
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55 conflicts, fall-out from organised crime, particularly illegal trades in armaments or
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drugs, and gang-related violence (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2011).

Two major impacts of this everyday insecurity relate to practice. First, there is an increasing convergence of military and humanitarian/development roles in insecure locations. Military personnel are increasingly involved in the administration of humanitarian and development aid alongside humanitarian organisations (Fowler, 2008). In situations where NGOs are themselves at risk from violence or being targeted for terrorist attacks, they have been forced to manage their own security needs, including hiring security personnel (Fast, 2010). Second, there is an increasing adaptation of development practice and expectations to a reality of violence as unexceptional, so that development must continue in the face of insecurity. For example, following a range of terrible outcomes in the 1990s, including international inaction during the genocide in Rwanda, neutrality has become less of a central tenet for some humanitarian organisations, with a 'new humanitarianism' arguing that attempts at neutrality can prolong or deepen conflicts and be an excuse for inaction by the international community (Fox, 2001). Development organisations are increasingly identifying and working alongside a range of stakeholders in situations of chronic insecurity (sometimes including combatants) in attempts to reduce poverty and increase everyday security within the boundaries of immediate possibility, rather than waiting for the ideal of peace (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Korf, 2005; Menkhaus, 2004). Although these moves are of course debated (Duffield, 2001a), with some arguing for example that the emphasis on security can militate against the establishment of civil society organisations who can advocate for government accountability (Howell and Lind, 2009), others have argued that there is a real imperative to securitise development practice: "The most

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3 important reason why the development community should engage with security
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5 issues is that they are far too important to be left to security specialists alone”
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7 (Luckham, 2009: 2).
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10 There are three important points to make about this practical contrast between
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12 security-asylum and security-development contexts, in relation to asylum seekers
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14 and the securityscape. The first may seem obvious, but is worth highlighting: it is
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16 greater insecurity in the places that people are fleeing that leads to greater numbers
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18 of asylum seekers, not lax asylum regimes. Further, the vast majority of asylum
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20 seekers flee to neighbouring countries: the lowest-income countries bear a
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22 disproportionate amount of the global burden from chronic insecurity (United Nations
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24 High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012). Second, it is in the context of chronic
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26 insecurity that aid donors are focusing on security, i.e. where insecurity comes to be
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28 seen as chronic but localised in particular regions of the world, militarised forms of
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30 intervention to contain and securitise whole populations may seem more effective
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32 than individualised asylum claims (Duffield, 2001b). Taken together, these first two
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34 points demonstrate that an appreciation of the variations across the global
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36 securityscape may assist in perceiving how security-development and security-
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38 immigration nexuses can be mutually reinforcing in paradoxically both necessitating
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40 and undermining the global asylum system.
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43 The third point, as Chris Philo (2012: 2) points out, is that small-s security is
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45 profoundly interlinked with big-S Security concerns, and this is true both in places
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47 where violence is an exceptional occurrence and when it is banal, as many feminist
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49 security researchers have made clear (Fluri, 2010; Hudson, 2005). The shifts in
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51 global trends from war to ‘enduring disorder’ (Goodhand, 2003) make it imperative to
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53 focus on insecurity in relation to everyday practice across the securityscape, both in
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terms of the multiple forms of violence *practised* across the planet, and in terms of the *practical* effects of insecurity at a range of scales, not only on the globe and the nation, but also on the community, the household and the body (Orjuela, 2010; Sylvester, 2011). The remainder of the paper will focus on the material substance of the embodied experiences of asylum seekers as they are explored in a novel 'Harare North'.

Embodied insecurities: asylum seeker corporealities in the securityscape

A brief reading of Brian Chikwava's (2010) novel 'Harare North' will explore some issues surrounding substantial bodily experiences of insecurity. The novel is narrated by an unnamed young man from Zimbabwe, who enters the UK as an asylum seeker, claiming that he has been persecuted by the Zimbabwean government for being in the youth movement of the opposition party. However this is untrue: he has in fact been a 'Green Bomber', one of the "boys of the jackal breed" who carried out violence against suspected "enemies of the state" (Chikwava, 2010: 8). In some ways then, this is a classically unreliable narrator – he lies to others and may well be lying to himself. However, this narrator needs to be seen in the context of the complex politics of asylum narratives (Farrier, 2012), where the narration of insecurity is often literally vital, but where there is often "narrative inequality" (Blommaert, 2001), i.e. where credibility can be dependent on the exposition of complex insecurities in the requisite cultural and bureaucratic modes of address. The novel offers a forum for more complex story-telling, in which the messiness of emotions, of sensibilities, and of motivations can be explored (see Lewis, Rodgers and Woolcock, 2008, who make a similar point about novels as accounts of development experience). Even though the narrator was a perpetrator of violence in Zimbabwe, and continues to be manipulative and violent now that he is in London,

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and Chikwava gives a clear exposition of this, the novel can also be read as an extended meditation on the ways in which this young man is also a victim of his insecurity as an asylum seeker in London, as well as a victim of the violence of Zimbabwean politics. As Kizito Muchemwa (2011: 404) puts it, in one of the few academic readings of the novel that have yet been published: “He carries with him the ideological baggage of a party that has deformed him… [heir to a liberation generation] ‘born of violence’.” This ambiguity around violence – the blurring of the perpetrator/victim distinction, the discursive and practical forms that deforming violence can take – continues throughout the novel, and is, I will argue, played out in part through the narrator’s views and experiences of the body.

The novel begins with a prologue (pp. 1-3), in which we see the landscape of London through which the narrator is walking (Brixton tube station, Lambeth Town Hall) deliberately juxtaposed with Zimbabwe as portrayed in The Evening Standard at the newspaper vendors and in the narrator’s thoughts. So the asylum seeker’s landscape involves a constant switching of attention across this split scape. The narrator too is immediately shown to be split. He begins by projecting an image of himself, and that image is full of embodied violence. In the first paragraph of the novel (p. 1), he tells us that he has been exploiting his friend Shingi (a fellow asylum-seeker that he knew when they were both children) to get food and has callously discarded him once he became less useful: “... like many immigrant on *whose face fate had drive one large peg and hang tall stories*, Shingi had not only become poor breadwinner but he had now turn into big headache for me. When it became clear that our friendship is now big danger to my plan, me I find no reason to continue it, so I finish it off straight and square”. The violence of the imagery of the coat peg

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driven into the face is given force by the humorous reversal, that the narrator's head is now the one feeling the pain.

Coming out of Brixton tube station, the narrator sees a newspaper with an image of Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe and a story about Zimbabwe having a shortage of toilet paper. He recalls with detached amusement: "That make me imagine how after many times of bum wiping with the ruthless and patriotic Herald newspaper, *everyone's troubled buttock holes get vex and now turn into likkle red knots*. But except for this small complaint from them dark and hairy buttocks, me I don't see what the whole noise is all about." The redness of the knotted buttocks is reinforced by the reference to the traffic lights being "red like ketchup" (with its link to fake blood), and the real anger felt by people who are forced to use newspaper instead of toilet roll is ironically offset by the comedic stereotype of dark, hairy buttocks. Achille Mbembe (2001) affirms the importance of obscene imagery, particularly of the buttocks, as an established way of undermining political opponents in some African contexts, and here the humour of the buttocks allows the narrator to dismiss any opposition to "His Excellency" Robert Mugabe.

As the narrator walks on he has to push past a group of mothers standing with their pushchairs on the pavement, and they give him "*loud looks*". Their eyes embody the tension of suppressed conflict with more established Londoners.

Yet on the very next page (p.2), each of these tough stances – about Shingi, about Zimbabwe, about Londoners – is undermined. Shingi is in fact dying, and the narrator is worried "what kind of mouth Shingi is going to starting throwing around if he ever recover... But there is nothing I can do". The narrator describes himself as "illegal" and he is reliant on passing off Shingi's identity as his own, because Shingi

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3 has had his asylum application approved: the narrator has Shingi's passport,
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5 National Insurance Number and his mobile phone. So instead of callously exploiting
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7 Shingi, he is in fact dependent on him, and afraid of the damage he can cause. His
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9 friend's mouth is now a powerful weapon that Shingi can throw around, rather than
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11 his face being subject to the violence of circumstance.
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15 The narrator does not want to tell Shingi's mother in Zimbabwe that her son is dying,
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17 because "I see no point in making she cry", so he sends her cheerful letters and
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19 packets of money. He is beginning to feel trapped by her increasing financial
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21 demands but: "you know what it is like when you is trying to keep old hen happy" (p.
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23 3). So instead of maintaining a detached amusement about the worsening financial
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25 situation in Zimbabwe, his money is bound up in remittance relationships with his
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27 friend's family, and in turn those relationships rely on the image of an old mother
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29 either crying or happy. The narrator's emotions surrounding Zimbabwe move from
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31 dismissal of anger through the imagery of buttocks, to responsibility and attachment
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33 through the happy or crying face.
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38 The narrator also reflects on the homeless Londoners who are at present in his
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40 house, Dave and Jenny, and thinks how the look in their eyes is just like that of an
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42 asylum-seeker, like himself: "They is the first poor white folk that I ever get to know...
43
44 they also have them asylum-seeker eyes; them eyes with the shine that come about
45
46 only because of a reptile kind of life, that life surviving big mutilation in the big city
47
48 and living inside them holes". So instead of mutual antagonism with Londoners, the
49
50 narrator recognises a deep affinity between himself and them, embodied in their
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52 eyes, in that their shared insecurity within the city is hurting them all. In fact the title
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54 of the novel, 'Harare North' is a rearrangement of the globe landscape to bring
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56 London into close contact with Zimbabwe: London is Harare North, and
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Johannesburg is Harare South, because of the large numbers of Zimbabwean migrants in each city (Mbiba, 2012).

This tension between the narrator posing as a hard man who practises violence, and yet also experiencing ongoing insecurity continues to be inscribed on the body throughout the rest of the novel. When he remembers his time in the Green Bombers, for example, he offers vivid accounts of the kinds of 'forgiveness' meted out to those his commander Comrade Mhiripiri considers 'traitors': "For traitors punishment is the best forgiveness, that's what he say." (p. 19). Muchemwa (2011: 395) places this oxymoronic use of forgiveness to mean punishment in the context of the pervasive violence both of Zimbabwean colonial experience and of its liberation politics, when society becomes discursively polarised between 'liberators' and traitors. When the boys corner an opposition party supporter, the narrator recalls that "the traitor… have been farm labour supervisor all his life and now have barrel stomach that is so taut any blunt old instrument can punch through it easy if that become necessary" (p. 19), and the boys get so drunk on power (and possibly also on alcohol, though this is less clear) that by the morning they tell the police "We give him one heap of forgiveness and can't remember nothing at all about what happen because he get us so drunk" (p. 20). Yet when he faces the threat of prison the narrator flees Zimbabwe because he remembers a previous experience of prison where he too was vulnerable to penetration: "I have been there before and it is full of them people that carry likkle horrors such as them sharpened bicycle spokes and they want you to donate your buttocks so they can give you Aids; if you refuse then bicycle spoke go through your stomach like it is made of toilet paper" (p. 21).

The narrator's fear of AIDS infects his relationship with Shingi, and his belief that he has it (having misunderstood the test results that said he was HIV negative) haunts

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the novel, an insecurity that fuelled his violence in the Green Bombers (he refers to himself here in the second person): “Life is not fair, you even tell that traitor in Goromonzi when you give him your touch because you was knowing that tomorrow you is going to be dead… By the end he can only tell you apart from everyone because of your touch; the skill and the laughter… Life is not fair, me I know” (p. 212).

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The body is not always framed with violence, but is heavy with a range of attachments and detachments that emphasise security and insecurity. The narrator’s attraction to another of the people with whom he shares a house, Tsitsi, a young Zimbabwean mother from a rural area, is framed through his vulnerability to her body as it moves around the house. Often his focus on her body is framed through her breastfeeding, in which the narrator seems to find a vicarious comfort: “She tiny skeleton fold neat as she sit on the bed, crossing she legs and holding the baby close to she bosom. With one hand she pull she blouse up. She don’t wear bra; she left breast jump out and hang like talisman… I stand leaning against the wall watching” (p. 32). The narrator is at his most vulnerable in relation to Tsitsi and the baby: there are several tender moments between them, and the narrator ultimately gives money to Tsitsi for the baby’s care when it is sick, and violently removes her abusive lover, Aleck (p. 132). Again however, this relationship is ambivalent: the narrator uses Tsitsi to manipulate Shingi, inciting him to seduce her in inappropriate ways, while at the same time he is drawing her to himself through his money and attention (pp. 156-8); his reaction to Tsitsi’s abusive lover is not just about the abuse (p. 130), but is also to do with his resentment of paying Aleck rent for the squat they are living in.

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The narrator despises Aleck because of the work he did in Zimbabwe and in the UK, and this draws attention to the status attached to particular kinds of labour in the asylum seeker 'taskscape': Aleck sold fruit and vegetables at a bus terminus in Zimbabwe (p. 94) and is a BBC (British Buttock Cleaner or carer) in London (p. 117). For the narrator this heavily embodied work, lifting, carrying, wiping, all of which Aleck tries to keep secret, leads to an immediate loss of status for Aleck in his eyes. However BBC work is constantly held out as the only real possibility of work in London, and is in reality a common area of work for Zimbabwean migrants (McGregor, 2007): the young men each try several other forms of work, most involving hard physical graft "shifting mud with shovels and sweat" (p. 49) but they always lose them or are despised or exploited because of their insecure immigration status. Embodied ways of finding a secure social and economic status within the asylum seeker taskscape are hard to find.

Ultimately we see the slow disintegration of the narrator's sense of bodily integrity. After Shingi becomes a drug addict and begins to take food from bins in alleyways, he is assaulted by a homeless person competing for the same food, and is taken to hospital in a coma (pp. 185-6). The narrator immediately begins to speak intermittently about himself in the second person (p. 188), and when he looks down into a puddle, he sees Shingi looking back (p. 229). The narrator loses the ability to eat and sleep, and begins to experience anxious sensations: "My chest is full of wriggling things now and get tight like my suitcase" (p. 204). His suitcase, in which he has been collecting money from the start of the novel, slowly empties as he sends money to Shingi's relatives in Zimbabwe, until finally, alone and homeless, he forgets to lock it and finds it is empty. From the violent and manipulative man he has portrayed himself as in the first sentence of the novel, by the last sentence he has

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lost his capacity to take any form of embodied action, least of all violence: "You tell the right foot to go in one direction and he is being traitor shoe-doctor and tell left foot to go in another direction. You stand there in them mental backstreets and one big battle rage even if you have no more ginger for it" (p. 230).

This novel therefore enables an appreciation of how security and insecurity are profoundly linked with embodiment. The asylum seeker here inhabits a transnational securityscape, the linked landscape of Zimbabwe and London, across which there are continuous and discontinuous forms of insecurity. The asylum seeker embodies these insecurities through mobility, but also in his everyday relationships with and in both places, so that ultimately, when the weight of insecurity becomes too much to bear, this is experienced by the asylum seeker not only economically, socially and psychologically, but also corporeally.

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Conclusion

This paper has brought together two nexuses – security-development and security-asylum – in order to suggest that the figure of the asylum seeker cuts across the two: the paper therefore proposes the concept of the securityscape. In exploring this concept, the paper has shown that securitisation needs to be understood not just in terms of ways of seeing, i.e. representation, but also in terms of practice and substance, i.e. doing and being. Practice is explored at a range of scales and across the securityscape, whilst substance is explored through a brief critical reading of 'Harare North'.

There are two implications of this emphasis on corporeal substance. The first is that security becomes an issue for cultural geographers, as much as for political geographers. Political geographers have recognised the global spatial *reach* of

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insecurity for some time, the geopolitical and transnational range of conflict and insecurity (Bialasiewicz, Campbell, Elden, Graham et al., 2007; Ingram and Dodds, 2009). There is a need for more studies in cultural geography of the material *depth* of insecurity, its embodied and substantial relations and effects (Farrier, 2012; Puumala and Pehkonen, 2010).

The second implication is for the everyday politics of in/security. When security is understood as seeing, doing and being, securitisation becomes a diffuse activity, not confined to formal political and policy arenas: “instead of a site of normality which the professional politics of security seek to protect and work from the outside, daily life turns into sites of agency where people work and rework security policies in light of the complex demands and experiences they need to deal with” (Huysmans, 2009, p. 205).

Much analysis of securitisation focuses on the roles of governments and other powerful actors in manipulating and creating security discourses in order to maintain political legitimacy: in this logic the asylum seeker, or even the migrant, is an intrinsic threat to the myth of the homogeneous nation (Bigo, 2002; Nyers, 2003). In this context, securitisation of migration is nothing new, but is a continuation of historical attempts to limit and abject the immigrant or asylum seeker as threat to the national community (Flynn, 2005; Geddes, 2005), so that, in the case of the UK, discourses of radicalisation and extremism in Muslim communities blur into concerns over violence following the Blackburn riots (Noxolo, 2009d; Spalek, 2007), whilst post-9/11 concerns over terrorism blur into the pre-9/11 furore over asylum seekers entering the UK illegally from the Sangatte refugee camp (Schuster, 2003).

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Similarly, securitisation of development is often understood as a logic of western power (Duffield, 2007), so that there is a focus on the instrumental functions of security discourses for justifying intervention (Reid-Henry, 2011). Within this logic, threat and mistrust can attach to non-dominant or diasporic routes for contributing to development (Mercer, Page and Evans, 2009; Raghuram, 2009), including red-flagging of financial transfers (Atia, 2007). However an awareness of the differentiated and uneven nature of the securityscape will remind us that western-centred security discourses (for example around the so-called 'war on terror' post-9/11) are neither necessarily universally relevant (Nadarajah, 2009), nor uncontested (Sharp, 2011).

Understanding the securityscape as part of an embodied politics of difference focuses attention on the ways in which images and accounts of asylum seeker bodies are deployed. So for example advocacy and asylum seeker groups deploy and extend securitising discourses to include asylum seekers as *victims* of insecurity, not only in terms of emphasising the persecution they are fleeing internationally, but also in terms of sharing a fear of terrorist bombs, for example as people feeling as vulnerable as everyone else using the public transport system in the immediate aftermath of the bombing of the London underground on 7th July 2005 (Noxolo, 2009c; Refugee Council, 2007). As one asylum seeker was quoted as saying:

> Nothing different between us, like British people or refugee people or asylum seeker, or ethnic minority who live in this country. There's nothing different between them to, we scared of terrorists as well. We ran away from the terrorists, from the, you know. That's what we all think, nothing different. If

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> anything happened in this country, it's happening to us as well, we are worried about it, we are afraid about it (Refugee Council, 2007, p. 13).

Similarly, development NGOs and United Nations reports (Duffield, 2010, p. 55) have attempted to broaden notions of security to include poverty and human rights demands. Deploying the concept of 'human security', these groups point to gross global inequalities as a form of international aggression through inaction, which threatens the lives of the world's most vulnerable people: "government and international institutional inaction is associated with mass avoidable deaths of infants from malnutrition and malaria…" (Roberts, 2008, p. 9).

One of the effects of this diffusion of securitising agency however, is that security becomes a diffuse and inchoate sense of unease, with shifting and often unspecified threats (Bigo, 2002). Partly for this reason, and because the securityscape interacts with a range of other transnational 'scapes' in the everyday politics of difference (see above), the securitising effects of the deployment of images of asylum seeker bodies can be hard to predict or control. A range of commentators (Bigo, 2002; Leander, 2006) have argued that the securitising agency of security professionals is fundamentally practice-based, operating through technologies of surveillance and the active management of mobility. It therefore becomes very difficult for NGOs to intervene through traditional political advocacy, because they become drawn into these same technologies, sharing forums to debate the link between asylum seekers and terrorism for example, and producing knowledges about risk management (see Aradau, 2004) that are quickly redeployed in the practice of managing security: "Even when NGOs intervene, they can do so only by turning professional, by producing this kind of knowledge" (Bigo, 2002: 83).

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Similarly, Aradau's (2004) analysis of the discursive inter-meshing of humanitarian and security concerns in relation to trafficked women shows how the contestation of images around a politics of pity and a politics of security engages with a politics of gendered identity, in which discourses surrounding trafficked women deploy "innocenting strategies" (Aradau, 2004, p. 263), such as displaying the marks on their bodies from physical abuse, or displaying instances of exceptional physical beauty or religiosity. These victim images oscillate however with wider portrayals of the women as willing prostitutes, in that they often consented to be illegal immigrants, and the effect is often that the women are contained and returned through a range of pervasive risk management technologies.

Peter Nyers (2003) points to the possibility of going beyond these alternative securitisations, and thinking about alternatives *to* securitisation. He offers a case study of asylum seekers in Canada resisting deportation and seeking sanctuary in disused buildings, and argues that these groups, through their politicised actions, have developed forms of 'abject cosmopolitanism', resisting national boundaries, and arguing for political subjectivity across borders. This is not just a desecuritisation (Waever, 1995), resituating asylum seekers within the securityscape, but is a form of practical cosmopolitanism, because the asylum seekers actively "denationalise the state" (Nyers, 2003, p. 1090), by clearly demonstrating that non-citizens can have political voice and agency. It seeks to relocate asylum seekers outside the securityscape and in alternative arenas of cosmopolitan practice.

So what are the alternatives to securitisation that can be practised and embodied in a more substantial struggle for meaning? (Tolia-Kelly, 2012). And how do these practical alternatives relate to the banal violence, both institutional and personal, that asylum seekers face across the securityscape? The answers to these questions are

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not easy to find but, like the body, they are pressing and insistent in their demands (Noxolo, 2009b; Pile, 2006).

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