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# Manufacturing Displacement. Externalization and Postcoloniality in European Migration Control

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In 2018, the European Council suggested "regional disembarkation platforms" as an innovative externalization of displacement management in the Mediterranean. Yet, the logic of naval interception, deportation and disembarkation zones parallels not only Western proposals since the 1980s, but also colonial practices during the transatlantic slave trade. An overview of European externalization politics between 2006 and 2018 examines the dynamics, ambiguity and dehistoricization of humanitarianized border control. The article then argues that such ahistoricity is linked to epistemologies which reproduce colonial matrices of power. Like asylum politics today, slavery was a crucial structuring issue in nineteenth century international politics and by unearthing a deep history of European manufactured displacements, the article examines cases of racialized, suppressionist and externalized border controls from the nineteenth century Atlantic-Caribbean Basins. It concludes that contingent parallels exist between past and present regimes of captured, rescued and re-displaced people, and the associated transfers of humanitarian blame and responsibility.

Keywords: EU externalization; postcoloniality; captive markets; transatlantic slave trade; abolitionist suppression

**Introduction**

On 28 June, 2018, the EU Council ministers congratulated each other with an innovative proposal to put a halt to the life-threatening European-bound boat migration in the Mediterranean. Framed as preventing the tragic loss of life, and condemning human smugglers, they issued a press release proposing that the EU should construct "regional disembarkation platforms" allowing for the containment of migrants outside European territory (European Council Conclusion, 28 June 2018). Thus, the press release stated an ambition to break "the business model of the smugglers" through a vast border control system where "controlled centres" in Europe and "regional disembarkation platforms" in North Africa, would prevent the "tragic loss of life" of thousands of people from West and Central Africa, the Middle East and Asia, transported on smuggler boats. The 2018 proposal combines the concepts of extra-territorial disembarkation, rescue at sea, and naval intervention and deportation, linked via a system of collaborating partner states. However, even though narrated through a script of human rights, it was still rejected by North African states amidst accusations that it amounted to neo-colonial governance of their territories (cf. Rankin and Wintour, 21 June, 2018), a destiny common for large-scale European externalization visions.

Externalization can be defined as processes and practices whereby actors complement policies to control migration across their territorial boundaries, with initiatives manifesting such control extra-territorially and through other public or private agencies than their own (cf. Lemberg-Pedersen, 2017; Moreno-Lax, 2017). The practices of externalization are thus based on assumptions about interiority and exteriority, and share the characteristic of delocalizing, off-shoring and outsourcing sovereign power in the pursuit of certain interests (cf. Bialasiewicz, 2012; Hyndman and Mountz, 2008). The focus of this article is to discuss the reoccurrence of

externalization practices by comparing the EU externalization politics between 2006 and 2018 with dynamics of the transatlantic slave trade.

Critiques that European border control is neo-colonial have been common for years, and sometimes also the actors involved seem to confirm, more or less deliberately, the continuation of colonial logics. Thus, in 2014, the soon-to-be Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anders Samuelsen, described a (non-realized) vision of extra-territorial asylum camps, by saying: "we will make a little piece of Denmark in Jordan, Lebanon or Israel." (Gjertsen and Kaae, October 8, 2014, author's translation). And in 2015, the Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi's caused an uproar among slavery and migration scholars when he likened EU naval operations to the nineteenth century humanitarian suppression of slave trade by saying that human smugglers were "the slave traders of the twenty-first century" (Renzi, April 22, 2015).

But such implicit, off-hand references to colonialism offer little in way of explanation. This paper therefore asks whether and how current European externalization politics have been influenced by colonization's restructuring of space, time, knowledge, and being across the world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). More specifically, it examines the ways in which externalization can be seen as a continuation of the organizing logics of the "colonial matrix of power", which through attempts to assume control over economy, authority, gender and sexuality, and the production of subjectivities and knowledge, reproduce relations of subalternity (Quijano, 2000). What Franz Fanon referred to as the "European Game" - slave trade, imperialism and colonialism - followed a wider entangled Eurocentric power structure, through which colonial agents utterly transformed existing social orders across different geographic contexts (cf. Mignolo 2007). Comparing the social hierarchies, materialities and spatial imaginaries of the transatlantic slave trade, its abolitionist suppression, and current

European visions of externalized migration control, this article examines their imbrication within colonial matrices of power.

But some question the continuity of coloniality of power, understanding postcolonialism as signifying a temporal period, where colonial relations no longer apply. In the context of externalization, a political-strategic use of this stance came when Muammar Gaddafi, after signing the 2008 Italian-Libyan Friendship Treaty, said that a "page had been turned" on the brutal colonial relations between the two countries (Dogget, June 10, 2009). Gaddafi's claim was paradoxical, however, since the Friendship Treaty in fact expanded the European influence over Libyan migration control, and upscaled the brutal containment of migrants in the country, reflecting the "spatial and institutional stretching" of European border priorities onto non-European territories (cf. Casas-Cortes et.al., 2015, 905). Against such a perspective, this article instead understands "postcoloniality" to mean the complex and ongoing impacts of colonial encounters and their power matrices for both colonized and colonizing societies (Gandhi, 1998; Stoler and Cooper, 1997).

This includes observing how, from colonial past to current European externalization politics, local partners are far from passive socialisees of external dictates, but instead re-appropriate, reverse and counter-narrate the diffusion of norms, rules and practices (Cassarino 2018: 405, 408). Asking about the constitutive effect of colonial encounters (cf. James 1963) on European displacement practices and epistemologies therefore de-centres dominant assumptions about the transfers of politics from a European interior to its exterior. Certainly, as with asylum politics today, the politics of transatlantic slavery was a crucial issue in European and international high politics. The Caribbean therefore has a long history as centre stage for European geopolitics and displacement practices like interdiction of boat migrants, administrative

disembarkation, and extraterritorial detention.[1] This makes it an apt entry point for asking about postcolonial dimensions in European displacement and border control.

To answer how colonial matrices of power continue to exercise influence over current European border politics, three colonial displacement politics, which parallel current externalization visions and practices, are examined: Racialized border controls in the Caribbean after the 1791 Haitian revolution; suppressionist border control in the Caribbean and Africa during the 19th century, and British and American externalization of recaptured African slaves in the 18th and 19th century. This materialist rehistoricization of current border politics is a novel approach to postcolonial analysis. It unearths a deep European history of stretching borders and migration control, and moves inquiries away from discussing these in ahistorical terms of urgency, emergency and security. Observing how colonial elements and practices reoccur in present institutions, infrastructures and markets of Western displacement politics, allows a deeper understanding of the dynamics, problems and potential trajectory of current externalization politics.

The article starts out with some methodological reflections, before offering a postcolonial critique of Western studies and politics on forced migration. Hereafter follows a discussion of key EU externalization politics, that identifies reoccurring logics and tensions with humanitarianized control from the 1980s and to 2018. Seeing these logics as the commodification of capture, rescue and re-displacement, the article establishes a postcolonial nexus point to the transatlantic slave trade policy complex. It then moves on to analysing three colonial cases of displacement politics from the 18th and 19th century colonialism, before arriving at its conclusion.

**Method and delimitation**

I apply an inclusive and synthesizing methodology (Suri 2012) that combines field visits and purposive literature reviews (cf. Petticrew and Roberts, 2006). This is complemented by searches in digital media, policy databases and colonial archives, as well as conceptual work. The fieldwork took place over five months distributed across 2017- 2019 with visits to sites central for the colonial slave trade through the West African, Caribbean and American Basins. These sites included Portugal (Lagos and Lisbon), West Africa (Ashanti Kingdom, Accra and Cape Coast in Ghana), the Caribbean (St. Croix), and the US (New York, Charleston and Key West). I structured the relation between the desk and on-site methodologies as a repeating research cycle (cf. Hennink, Hutter and Bailer, 2010), in order to continuously update the conceptual framework according to new knowledge gained from the field, databases and archives. The purpose of this was to harness a combined critical potential and to unsettle standard epistemologies about displacement.

Refugee and forced migration studies, critical border studies, and studies of slavery and colonialism all offer crucial insights here. Yet, there is great need for the two former disciplines to engage more with colonial arcs of border practices (f.i. Walters, 2015, 10-11). This is also reflected in the lack of cross-disciplinary engagement between the above disciplines, and the ensuing absence of comparative studies between already-existing and current cases of displacement. This risks bypassing potential parallels, policy lessons and theoretical advances (Hansen, 1996, 8). An interdisciplinary approach, and selection of current and colonial case material help direct our gaze to the postcolonial blind spots in studies of displacement.

This article fashions out one possible postcolonial inquiry by identifying reoccurring elements or practices in current and colonial displacement politics. Such a

comparison accords with the ambition of genealogical inquiries for historical problematization of the present by disrupting pretensions of intact linear lines through history. However, it also differs from genealogy by basing its conceptualization on comparative case studies rather than grand scale tracing of (dis)continuities. The difference concerns the notion of continuity, that is, making sense of the relations between past, present and future (Kleist Forthcoming). As Birthe Kundrus (2005, 31-33) has remarked, such relations are difficult to establish, and postcolonial analyses of continuity are often ambitious, but also ambiguous if they assume relations between temporal eras of a decisive character. Such an ambition is therefore also beyond the scope of this inquiry, which is instead based on a more partial understanding of continuity, implying neither causality nor finality, but instead open-ended processes. Here, continuity understood as the solidification and stabilization of particular elements or practices (Schwietring, 2005, 57) can lead to their reoccurrence over time. These occurrences can then be compared.

However, while the postcolonial encounters behind European displacement politics may thus be understood as such open-ended and ongoing processes, this still leaves unclear the exact relation of continuity between its reoccurring elements or practices. Here, the difference between *reoccurrence* and *recurrence* is instructive: While the latter denotes something that keeps on happening over and over again, the former denotes only when something has happened before. In other words: recurrence implies a relation of necessary reproduction, whereas reoccurrence implies one that is only contingently so. While the two may overlap, proceeding from such a contingent understanding of continuity, leads to the question of *how* reoccurring elements or practices in European displacement politics have remained stable and solid over time. Here, one idea is to pay attention to how larger inter-imperial networks of thought and

practice on issues like displacement evolved across the globe through the transfer, translation and adaptation between colonial powers, since "architects of colonial rule often turned to rival powers as allies, foils, mirrors, models and exceptions" (Kramer, 2002, 1316).

The idea of transfers has problems of its own, such as retaining a notion of stable identity through such translations, or how to weigh the many pasts transfers that coalesce into every moment. But its focus on contingency does seem to allow postcolonial analysis to revolve around reoccurring elements and practices of displacement. Thus, while sceptical of claims of narrow causal continuity and linear transfers, Kundrus (2005, 42) finds that colonial-imperial border politics in particular may involve a set of "rituals, behaviors, and conceptual frameworks" implemented several times in the form of situational contingent parallels across different contexts. In order to avoid vague or generalized concepts of colonial and current contexts, I examine the details, diversity and antagonisms of transfers unfolding on both temporal sides of the postcolonial comparison. This results in two further delimitations: Colonial matrices of power in displacement politics is examined predominantly through Anglo-American colonial case material, but this material should not be seen as representative of all other colonial displacement politics or literatures (see f.i. Bennet, 2000). Moreover, while crucial issues like slave rebellions, revolutions and non-European resistance are dealt with, comprehensive analyses of colonized, enslaved or maroon struggles is not undertaken.

The following section engages in a critical and historicized deconstruction of research and politics on refugees and forced migration.


**Postcoloniality and the Repoliticization of European Displacement Governance**

The figures of the "refugee," the "economic migrant" and the "illegal migrant" have dominated European externalization visions for decades.[2] Such labelling has the effect of constructing policy-derived figures as individualized agents. These are inserted in a depoliticized vacuum, from which European political agency and economy is abstracted, except for limited potential for intervention in the form of either combat or rescue (cf. European Council Conclusions, 28 June 2018, 1, 2). But when externalized interventions remain fixed only on victims to be rescued here-and-now, the dynamics of politico-temporal transformations capable of explaining displacement, its perpetuation and the actors involved, are moved out of sight. Accordingly, sociologists of forced migration have argued against homogenic understandings of "displacement" and for analyses, which recognize the ambiguity, contextual diversity and contingent historical developments of the concept (Stepputat and Nyberg Sørensen, 2014; Lubkemann, 2008).

Several points of critique within forced migration studies itself aligns with a critical acknowledgement of colonial matrices of power. First, Stephen Castles (2003, 5) says that forced migration is not the result of "a string of unconnected emergencies but rather an integral part of North-South relationships". He argues that displacement politics must therefore be analyzed as part of national and global socioeconomic transformations. Oliver Bakewell (2008) has similarly argued for the importance of distinguishing between conceptual categories based on analysis and policy: What appears to be "policy irrelevant research," he says, is actually crucial for transcending the stereotypical and disaggregating policy-labels for migrants. Such epistemologies are shaped by political-strategic and economic interests of states, organizations and

industrial actors (see also Zetter, 1991, 44). This critique, then, constitutes a call for repoliticizing our thinking about displacement.

Second, the intimate relation between refugee and forced migration studies and contemporary political agendas has also been criticized for leading to a disciplinary "aversion to history" (Marfleet, 2007, 136-8), and the "active forgetting" of certain continuities in European migration politics – alongside the privileging of others (Kushner, 2006). The result is a tendency in refugee and forced migration studies to privilege a perspective derived from those post-World War II-conditions from which the modern refugee regime emerged.

Part of the reason for this, is the discipline's intimate relationship to that of law, leading it to reproduce the postcolonial forgetting/privileging that characterizes standard narratives of international human rights (Martinez 2012). This systematically leaves out the formative role for human rights of the events surrounding the slave trade, slave rebellions and abolitionist suppression. Thus, while the 1791 French revolution is normally depicted as central for the development of human rights, the simultaneous Haitian revolution is not, nor are the nineteenth century mixed commission courts in Sierra Leone, Cuba or Brazil, which tried 600 anti-slavery cases and freed 80.000 recaptured slaves (Martinez, 2012, pp. 99, 114). In general, then, the effects of colonial matrices of power within refugee and forced migration studies leads to standard chronologies that actively forgets the centuries-long colonial terrains in African, Caribbean and American through which the relation between displacement, border control and humanitarianism arrived at its twenty-first century form.

Such postcolonial critique can be combined with that of B.S. Chimni (1998, 351) who has argued that Western policy and research on refugees is now shaped by a post-Cold War "myth of difference" that is used to legitimize a non-entry regime

through specific representations of refugees. According to this myth, Western countries today face a virulent nationalist backlash in the form of a reaction to markedly new and different displacements compared to traditional and European ones, of which the context of the 1951 Refugee Convention is assumed to be characteristic. Following decolonization and the end of the Cold War, the displacement of refugees from the global South is thus reimagined as primarily motivated by poverty, and as taking place on a "unprecedented" and "unmanageable" scale. This myth, however, requires actively forgetting a series of displacements, both within Western contexts, but also those induced by European powers in colonial territories (cf. Mayblin, 2017).

Connected with the image of an unprecedented Southern migration, Scheel and Squire (2015) suggest identifying those "figures of migration" used to infuse displacement narratives with certain meanings in policy discourses. These figures do not correspond to significant shifts in the lived experience of displaced people, but rather to systemic shifts and interests in the ways that displacement governance is scripted. Thus, while "the refugee" has been narrated as a passive, but deserving victim, the subsequent figure of the "illegal migrant," becoming popular in the 2000s policy discourses, is seen as motivated by economic reasons rather than humanitarian ones. Much like the figure of the "human smuggler" gaining political popularity in the 2010s, it crystalizes how migrant autonomy, from the perspective of states, is depicted as agency of a dangerous, exploitative and excessive kind (Casas-Cortes et.al., 2015). Invoked through policy-salient labels, figures of migration therefore exist in larger arcs of interest-based mythologies, which trigger projections of peace and violence. And all can be marshalled to justify forms of intervention.

The political vacuum within which externalization interventions are narrated by policy-makers and other cultural producers often fails to account for the arcs of

socioeconomic transformations that generate displacement, as well as the actors and interests involved. The intimate links to the chronologies, labels and systems of power means that the dominant epistemologies of displacement politics facilitate the reoccurrence of colonial modes of governance and power. Conversely, then, deconstructing the prevailing mythologies, narratives and postcolonial omissions within these scripts holds a potential to repoliticize and contextualize European displacement politics.

To illustrate this, the following section shines further light on the paradoxes of care, control and containment found in European displacement governance, and then ties these to the evolution of European externalization politics during the last decades.

**The Evolution of European Externalization and its Paradoxes of Humanitarianism, Containment and Control**

European externalization efforts rely on collaborating partners. Some are states, like Ukraine, Russia, Bulgaria, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Turkey. Others are national or international organizations, like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). And yet others are private military or security companies, like Leonardo, Thales and Airbus (Lemberg-Pedersen, 2013, 2018). Some research into externalization has conceptualized how the external governance and physical presence on other countries' territories can emanate outwards like "ripple effects" of power and control (Lavenex and Ucarer, 2004; Vaughan-Williams, 2009). Other strands have looked at how this totalizing and repressive ambition is constantly challenged by the autonomy of migrants or non-European states (Casas-Cortes et.al., 2015; Lemberg-Pedersen 2017).

Nonetheless, even though the 2018 EU proposal, like its predecessors from the 1980s to the 2000s, is controversial and appears unrealistic (Noll 2003), a range of other initiatives and policy processes have continuously widened the concentric circles of European externalized control into Africa through joint training and exchanges of police, border guards and technical maintenance officers (cf. Casas-Cortes and Cobarrubias, 2019). Externalizing agents may also deploy many different policy devices (Zaiotti, 2016), spanning from securitized naval operations, detention, readmission agreements and deportation and export of control infrastructures (Carrera et.al. 2016; Lemberg-Pedersen 2019), but also humanitarian evacuations, asylum processing, humanitarian aid and refugee camps (Collyer and King, 2015).

Part and parcel of colonial matrices of power is the observable ambivalence in the twin appeals to security and rights, which have characterized humanitarian action since its inception in 18th century anti-slavery politics (cf. Lester and Dussart, 2014). Critical border studies have analyzed the "humanitarianization" of border politics, and how border scripts oscillating between concerns of security and human rights allow actors to justify policies by moving rapidly across spectres of aid and intervention (Walters, 2011, Pallister-Wilkins, 2015; Cuttitta, 2018). These oscillations frame migrants as both *at* risk and *a* risk, to be countered through European intervention (Aradau, 2004). In what follows, the article examines the ambivalent appeals to care/control in EU externalization politics, by tracing key events in the evolution of the EU's naval and externalized border controls between 2006-2018.

In the early 2000s, the same Western African coastlines where the transatlantic slave trade and its suppression had occurred one and a half century earlier, had become the prime sites of European border control, and the relation between Spain and Morocco was crucial. It brought about the construction of the Integrated External Surveillance

System (SIVE) in 2002, the collaboration between the Spanish Guardia Civil and the Moroccan Gendarmes in 2004 and Project Seahorse and Seahorse Network, financed via the EU's AENEAS instrument, in 2006 and 2008. These initiatives were designed to prevent boat migration through databases, satellites and land and sea operations (Casas-Cortes et.al.2015; Carrera et.al.2016).

In 2006, building on these bilateral and union-funded efforts, and expanding on the goal of "fighting illegal immigration," the first naval operation of the Frontex Agency, Hera, was launched. Around 6800 Senegalese, Mauritanian and Cape Verdean boat migrants were intercepted and their rights to non-refoulement and accessing asylum procedures on the Spanish Canary Isles were side-tracked. Carling and Hernández-Carretero (2011, 55) have pointed out that while the operation did deploy some humanitarian scripts, these constituted a "double-edged sword" for migrants, since also allowing EU governments to treat migrants as passive victims. In the next years, Frontex's naval operations expanded geographically, with Operation Poseidon in Greek/Turkish waters, and Operation Nautilus (renamed Chromos) and Operation Hermes in the Central Mediterranean.

Then, following the 2008 Italian-Libyan Friendship Treaty, the two countries implemented a push back policy, where Italians interdicted boat migrants and transferred them to a militarized Libyan system of detention, labour exploitation and abuse. The role of Libya in European border politics illustrates that for non-European actors, externalization partnerships may also be perceived as diplomatic leverage and economic gain. In 2010, for instance, Muammar Gaddafi tried to pressure European politicians to transfer billions of euro to his regime, through racialized tropes on boatmigration, as he threatened to "turn Europe black" by stopping Libyan border controls (cf. Squires, August 31, 2010). As the so-called Arab Spring led to Gaddafi's

demise and resulted in mass displacement across North Africa, operation Hermes 2011 was also launched with the ambition to "control illegal migration flows from Tunisia" (Frontex, 2011). However, the period after 2011 also led to a shift away from EU institutions' defensive stance to extraterritorial rights, and towards a "gradual introduction" of more explicit humanitarian language (Moreno-Lax, 2018, 5).

This shift was facilitated both by the 2012 ECtHR-verdict in Hirsi and others v Italy, which found the Italian/Libyan push back-agreement unlawful, but also by the tragic drowning of more than 500 people off the coast of Lampedusa in 2013. A direct result was the Italian government's military SAR operation in 2014, called Mare Nostrum. Rescuing 170.000 boat migrants, however, it quickly drew criticism from anti-immigration European governments accusing it of attracting boat migrants. Consequently, after one year, the EU refused to take over Mare Nostrum and instead launched the smaller Frontex operations Triton, and later Triton+. While the Triton operation did rescue more than 14.500 people, both operations were criticized for avoiding rescues close to Libyan territory. Moreover, Frontex persisted in labelling those rescued as "illegal crossings," and the EU Commission was clear that Frontex should be seen as a border controlling and not a SAR body (Frontex, 2014, 44-45; European Commission, 2014).

Around 2014, growing public awareness about the plight of displaced persons, and dissatisfaction with the EU's downscaling rescue ambitions led to an unprecedented growth in NGO SAR-activities on the Mediterranean. Actors like Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS), Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), SOS Mediterranee, Seawatch, Save the Children, and Proactiva Open Arms began to conduct rescue operations. In 2016, these even rescued more people than the Italian coastguard and the Italian Navy, saving

46,796, whereas the Italian institutions saved, respectively, 35,875 and 36,084 (Amnesty International, 2017).

However, the shift towards non-state rescue was quickly followed by three EU border operations in 2015-6, each of which escalated border militarization. First, Operation Sophia (2015) in the central Mediterranean was not coordinated by the civilian Frontex Agency, but the Union's military Common Security and Defence policy (European External Action Service, 2017). Second, the EU-Turkey statement in March 2016 was framed as a large-scale scheme for resettling asylum seekers from Turkey to the EU and as rescuing migrants from the Balkan route (cf. European Council, 2016). However, it also directed the Turkish coastguard to pull back, detain and deport migrants heading to Greece, and gave rise to a string of horrible detention camps in Greece. Third, between 2017 and 2023, the EU is to transfer €285 to Libyan institutions under the auspices of the contested Government of National Accord (GNA). This support is scripted around ambitions to construct a new Libyan Search and Rescue (SAR)-zone coordinated by a Tripoli-based Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) (Nielsen, November 29, 2017). However, given the Libyan coastguard's violent conduct towards boat migrants, this script then has the effect of framing torturous interdiction, pull back and detention as humanitarian "search and rescue" (cf. Moreno-Lax and Lemberg-Pedersen, 2019).

In 2017, the Italian government, backed by the EU, launched a Code of Conduct. It was ratified by some NGOs, but was perceived by others as undermining non-state rescue efforts. SAR NGOs are increasingly being harassed by Libyan naval patrols and Greek and Italian authorities have attempted to shut down rescue operations, refusing disembarkation, closing ports, quarantining NGO ships, and launching criminal investigations of NGO staffers for human smuggling (cf. Cusumano and Gombeer,

2018). Paradoxically, however, no steps have been taken by EU institutions or member states to open criminal investigations into the UN-claims that the Libyan GNA-government has deep ties to smuggling networks that capture, exploit and move migrants (Nichols, February 8, 2018).

The European desire to externalize migration control to territories outside Europe must be seen against the backdrop of longer-standing diplomatic tensions about European responsibility for those rescued at sea, and states' refusal to allow migrants to disembark on their territories. Thus, since the 2000s, several cases, from Cap Anamur (2004), MV Clementine Mærsk (2005) and Pinar E (2009), to the more recent ones of Aquarius and Diciotti (2018) have led to both standoffs and ad hoc resettlements between European countries. The expansion of externalized and militarized border controls, and attempts to obstruct non-state rescue efforts leading to asylum application in Europe, is therefore intimately connected to this longer, unresolved arc of intra-European tensions (cf. Guilfoyle, 2017).

Here, the "anti-policy" of fighting human smuggling has been perceived as an expedient policy direction for European states, more willing to face contestation from people on the move, than from fellow European governments (Perkowski and Squire, 2018). Rescue operations and the increasingly entrenched humanitarian border discourse thus feature in a complex and dynamic fabric of geographically expanding, securitized and militarized European border politics between 2006 and 2018. Cusumano (2019) refers to the gap between the EU's humanitarian talk and operational border practice as "organized hypocrisy" caused by the conflicting interests of EU institutions, anti-immigration EU governments and civil society. At the structural level, says Pallister-Wilkins (2017, 23), the humanitarian talk also facilitates a decontextualized "individualization of events" that limits the space/time of interventions, and legitimizes

both the loss of life and the prioritization of rescue here-and-now over other measures (see also Little and Vaughan-Williams 2017).

This organized hypocrisy depoliticizes EU border agency through an internally opposed double-transfer that is both aligned with the coloniality of power, and typical of the union's ascription of blame and responsibility for border tragedies: First, the undermining of NGO SAR operations in the Mediterranean lifts rescue efforts from the humanitarian realm of protection and re-categorizes it as human smuggling worthy of criminal prosecution. Secondly, the political potency of the humanitarian appeal is then transferred from the stigmatized NGO rescuers to the militarized EU border operations, or Libyan, Turkish or Moroccan actors. Both transfers are simultaneous, and combine an imperative to rescue (migrant-as-victims) with an imperative to securitize (smugglers-as-villains).

Violeta Moreno-Lax (2018) argues that the outcome is a logic of "rescue-through-interdiction/rescue-without-protection". This leads to the "laundering" of hyper-militarized border controls into humanitarian practices. By laying the blame on smugglers or malfunctioning non- or south eastern European states, the double-transfer effectively paints an image of brutality and inhumanity as something outside the space of Europe, "delocalized" from its assumed institutionalized humanitarianism (Cuttitta, 2018, 14-15). This spatiotemporal concentration of humanitarianized borders therefore has the effect of side-tracking wider debates about the socioeconomic causes, re-occurrence and protraction of displacement, and racial hierarchies in border control, in favour of assumptions about European exceptionality and humanitarianism. But as Chimni (2004, 56) has pointed out, humanitarianism thus risks being used as an "instrument of an exploitative international system, which is only periodically mobilized to address its own worst consequences."

The following section turns to colonial and slavery studies in order to observe how economic interests in the production and circulation of displacement constitutes a postcolonial nexus point through which the claim of reoccurring displacement practices in European politics can be fleshed out.

**Externalized markets of captivity, rescue and re-displacement**

For migrants, the upscaled European control politics have led to changing social relations and life-threatening mobility choices. They are compelled to interact with smugglers when composing their travel itineraries (Casas-Cortes et.al., 2015, 901), and it has therefore been argued that the European border initiatives drafted to suppress smuggling in fact manufactures it (Brachet, 2018). Seen in this light, the politically salient struggle between smugglers and border authorities becomes partly a mirage, and partly a self-reinforcing cycle of competition and profit. A cycle that feeds into the commodification of migrant existences.

Externalization practices produce what Ruben Andersson calls "captive markets" (2018, 414-8; see also Pallister-Wilkins, 2017). These are "bioeconomies", which commodify dimensions of lives and living into objects of economic or political exchange. Captive markets in European externalization contexts include not only European and non-European state agency, but also a range of non-state actors like humanitarian or migration management organizations, as well as informal and local actors, like migration facilitators, human smugglers and traffickers, and networks for labour extraction. Referencing the situation in Libya, Andersson explains how European border politics have fostered the predation of vulnerable existences by multiple actors, to the extent that the migrants perceive themselves as "walking cashpoints" circulated and exploited by various militias and armed groups. Their existences constitute "goods"

or "products" being preyed upon in money rackets and they are forced to pay "liberation fees" to various actors (*Ibid*, 428).

But what is meant with the notion of "capture"? Focusing on profit and predation, Andersson does not provide more details of this concept, but it constitutes an important postcolonial nexus point through which the present inquiry can nuance how colonial matrices of power infuse externalization politics. Thus, Bernardot (2012, 12) introduced the idea of "sovereign capture" as a parallel between current European border control practices, and the capture wars of the West African Dahomey Kingdom. During the 17th-18th century, the Dahomey Kingdom was a crucial actor providing European traders with enslaved persons for the transatlantic slave trade. The brutal Middle Passage on which more than 12,5 million enslaved Africans were transported, is therefore conceptualized by slavery scholars as intersecting forms of capture and "serial displacement" (Byrd, 2001; Christopher, Pybus and Rediker, 2007). Capture thus used the violent potential of sovereign power to transform lives into wealth accumulated and spread among various actors, from African kings and middlemen, over slavers, chartered colonial companies, and plantation owners.

Expanding on this postcolonial nexus point, we can detail the marketization that facilitated the serialized displacement of capture wars and slave trade further. A crucial development was how West Africa was singled out as the biggest export market for the European weapons industry (Williams, 1944, 82). From 1673 to 1704, the British Royal African Company exported 66.000 firearms to the region in exchange for gold, slaves, and ivory, and in 1700 alone, the Dutch arms industry exported 20.000 tons of gunpowder. These European exports grew, so that by 1730 around 180.000 guns were shipped to the region annually (Satiya, 2017, 29, 41). And between 1756-1815, 150.000-200.000 British guns were being shipped to Africa every year, alongside

around 150.000 from countries like the Netherlands, France and Denmark (*Ibid*, 125, 189).

The slave trade market thus revolved around direct incentives for manufacturing displacements through capture: Profits were made first from creating the conditions for displacement (by the European arms and shipping industries), then from the displacement itself (by the European slave traders and African kingdoms), and finally from transforming the enslaved populations into a productive workforce (by slave owners and the plantation industry). By 1721, persons forced into transatlantic slavery from Western Africa could be disembarked at no fewer than 14 Caribbean destinations, many of which had originally been annexed by massive shipping companies operating via royal charters and monopolies. And by 1790 the West African coast was dotted with 14 British, five Dutch, four Portuguese, four Danish and three French slaving factories (Smallwood, 2007). In the British-dominated Caribbean and Americas, the lives of the captured and enslaved were instrumentalized to produce commodities chains of sugar, rum, tobacco, coffee and cotton. Until the early 19th century, the trade was described by the involved transnational royal families, ministerial, plantation, shipping and trading elites as the "attractive African meteor" (see Williams, 1944, 37).

Moreover, as the exports perpetuated cycles of intra-African militarization, conflicts and displacements, the period after 1650 also witnessed the rise of extremely wealthy and highly militarized "slaving states" (cf. Curtin, 1975, 324), like the aforementioned Dahomey, and the Akwamu, Denkyira, Ashanti and Oyo. These kingdoms fought for monopoly over the function as middle men for the war captives delivered to the European slave interests (Law 1989). For instance, Oyo cavalry armed with European guns would go on capturing raids deep into the region's interior, afterwards marching the enslaved south for days or weeks, towards the European slave

forts dotting on the coastline, where ships awaited. Sometimes slaves were captured inland and transported down the River Volta on canoes, and from 1680 and onwards, the rival kingdom of Dahomey even expanded its influence on this capture economy by conquering the slaving ports of Porto Novo and Whydah. In 1804, an expert witness described the Dahomey slave trade to the British Committee of the African Association, saying that this commodification of mobile bodies was "carried on by a chain of merchants as it were, from the Coast indefinitely in many directions towards the interior" (quoted in Law, 1989, 46).

These overlapping chains of slave merchants in control of swathes of territory thus extended from an interior used for capture and into consolidating state structures, making it difficult to ascertain "whether the bandit gang has turned itself into a state, or the state turned to banditry." (Law, 1991, 346). Local elites engaged with this displacement economy were far from passive recipients of European policy dictates and transfers. Rather, they often used their power and position to extract the firearms and biggest profits, to threaten or condition European powers, to conduct wars against local rivals, or to build domestic networks of patronage.

The logics of these captive markets in West Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries appear to have important parallels when compared to the interactions between Europe and its North African externalization partners today. Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2018, 406) points out that also current dynamics are more complex than unidirectional policy transfers. This is because European interests and priorities relating to displacement, are transformed during the encounter with North African actors: Funds and border control equipment are ostensibly directed from Europe to surveillance and capture technologies, detention and deportation infrastructures. But this support is also being re-appropriated by local actors across Sahel-Maghreb, and used to

build domestic security, military and police apparatuses, often whilst continuing intimate links with the smuggler networks. And in some contexts, like Libya, warring factions like the GNA and the Libyan National Army (LNA), compete by utilizing international interests in a range of policy areas, including migration control.

Externalization, says Cassarino, therefore leads to "reverse diffusion" whereby North African regimes and networks use their role as middle men for European displacement politics to impose their own conditionalities on European partners. They are "active borrowers" of the norms and rules transferred to them, and re-appropriate and commandeer them, in order to capitalize from the desire of European governments to manage displacement in certain ways.

Current European externalization politics also commodifies the lives of migrants via blurred boundaries between capture and rescue. Both SAR and patrolling operations operate by making boat migrants' mobility controllable (Tazzioli, 2016), transforming their bodies into new sequences of re-displacement and forced flows (Lemberg-Pedersen, 2017). These manufactured displacements are categorized and directed according to a range of economic, political and strategic interests creating "intimate economies" in the sites of displacement (Hiemstra and Conlon, 2016), via both physical closeness and the knowledge about intimacies needed to maintain the complex micro and macro relationships of captive markets. The practices of capture/rescue also illustrate how humanitarianized interventions are situated on a "moral capitalist" landscape of "humane" displacement governance that functions via contracts for manufactured, extracted and circulated displacements (cf. Morris, 2017).

Captive markets rely on infrastructures which in themselves are also profitable markets. Contracts for border control equipment aligned with the European externalization drive has resulted in export markets for Western security- and arms

companies, like Italian Leonardo, French Thales, the pan-European Airbus, British BAE Systems, and American Lockheed Martin and Boeing (Lemberg-Pedersen, 2013). Producing the technological infrastructure required for rescue/capture, like vessels, aircraft, helicopters and drones, these actors also collaborate with a few NGOs. In 2016, for instance, the SAR NGO MOAS accepted an offer from the defence and security company Schiebel Group for free drones, potentially vital in finding capsized boat migrants and monitoring state border operations. The NGO praised Schiebel as generous and the drone equipment as "state-of-the-art," exhibiting it on webpages. Controversially, it even invited the Libyan coastguard on board during drone demonstrations (Cuttitta, 2018, 644).

Another example of non-state activity on markets of externalized rescue and captivity **is** European governments' contracting of the IOM and the UNHCR in both 2011 and 2017 for limited humanitarian missions to Libyan detention camps. They assessed needs and "decongested" border regions by moving migrants from camps to camps in order to deflect their onward mobility away from Europe. Accordingly, in 2011, only 20.000 out of 430.000 persons fleeing Libya were able to apply for protection in Malta and Lampedusa (Moreno-Lax, 2018, 7; cf. IOM, April 23, 2019; IOM, 2011, 2).

This section has explored the concepts of capture markets and manufactured displacements in order to chart a potential path through which current European externalization politics can be rehistoricized. The following sections will consider three cases of similar colonial displacement practices and dynamics in the Atlantic and Caribbean. The first concerns the rise of racialized naval border controls in the wake of the 1791 Haitian revolution, and it underlines the centrality of the Caribbean Basin for externalization politics.

**Racialized Border Control and the Spectre of the Revolutionary Black Boat Migrant**

The transatlantic slave trade functioned as a major international policy nexus during several centuries. The naturalization of this trade was only possible through the maintenance of a brutal and highly racialized social order (Fanon, 1963, 63). In the Caribbean, it consisted of three general classes – enslaved Africans, free people of color, and whites (Brown, 2008). The Caribbean planter elites navigated between the desire for profit maximization and racialized fears of being demographically swamped by black slave majorities (Ferrer, 2012). But often, profit prevailed and the import of enslaved Africans accelerated as new sugar islands, like Jamaica, Barbados, Saint-Domingues, and Cuba, quickly replaced each other as the peak of profit in the westward expanding Atlantic economy.

European powers faced slave rebellions throughout their Caribbean colonizations, but by the end of the eighteenth century the revolts had become more widespread. And in 1791 came the crucial slave rebellion in French Saint-Domingue, an extremely wealthy sugar colony then known as the "Eden of the Western World." By 1804, this social transformation had created the free state of Haiti, sending deep shock waves reverberating through Caribbean sugar colonies and European metropoles alike. Here, the emerging printing press transmitted apocalyptic narratives of racialized and sexualized slave violence (cf. Johnson, 2012).

Slavery scholars view the Haitian revolution as a crucial transformation with massive implications for European discussions about modernity, geopolitics and human rights (cf. DuBois, 2004; Blackburn, 2006). Worth noting for our inquiry is also that, throughout the maritime Caribbean geography, the Saint-Domingues collapse created

decades of displacement - and of early European naval border controls. The first stage of flight from the former French sugar colony were characterized by spontaneous boat arrivals to Spanish Cuba, Santo Domingo and British Jamaica. The three colonial classes - white planters, free coloured and enslaved persons - occupied the boats. The second stage, some years later, then witnessed the naval relocations of thousands more from these first territories of arrival towards US Southern states like Louisiana, South Carolina, Philadelphia, and along the coast of the Mexican Gulf (cf. Dessens, 2015). Thus, while more than 25.000 boat migrants arrived to the US between 1791 and 1810, 10.000 of these were relocated to New Orleans just between 1809-1810, nearly doubling the population of the city (Lemmon et.al., 2006).

At the time, both the US and European colonial governments viewed the repercussions of Saint-Domingues' collapse as a displacement crisis ripe with the potential for spreading black revolution. They therefore implemented highly racialized border control measures. This was reflected by the figures dominating European media and politics, namely the (white or enslaved) "Saint-Domingue refugees" and the (free black) "French Negro". The former figure typically consisted of the French plantation elite, artisans and blacksmiths in need of assistance, alongside their human property, while the latter figure designated subversives from Haiti, perceived as contagious with revolutionary knowledge. This gave rise to the further upscaling and securitization of Western naval patrols in the Caribbean. One outcome was the so-called Negro Seaman's Acts implemented between 1822-1848 by South Carolina (1822), Georgia (1829) and North Carolina (1830), and in the geopolitically aligned Spanish Cuba (1837). These Acts specifically prevented the arrival of free black sailors by forcing ship captains to ensure that these were incarcerated during the ship's stay in port. Free

black sailors were threatened with whipping if they returned (Hamer, 1935). One estimate is that 10.000 black seamen were imprisoned because of these laws.

But these racialized border policies were concurrent with the entry of humanitarian-abolitionist visions into European and Western politics, and the next section accounts for how these also brought about newer rationales of border controls.

**The Rise of Humanitarianized and Suppressionist Border Controls**

The precursor of modern humanitarianism, the abolitionist movement, gained political prominence in Great Britain after the late 1700s, through mass petitions, the first consumer boycotts, and several congresses. The 18$^{th}$ and 19$^{th}$ century thus witnessed movements away from racialized dehumanization, and towards new philosophical and religious doctrines about human rights and equality.

At its heart, the slave economy was "probing the limits up to which it is possible to discipline the body without extinguishing the life within…scaling life down to an arithmetical equation and finding the lowest common denominator." (Smallwood, 2007, 36, 43). Humanitarian action before absolute abolition was thus situated within the confines of a political economy that dictated the instrumentalization of life-as-commodity. The enslaved Africans would only be cared for to the extent that they represented an economic investment, and early abolitionist-humanitarian arguments against the slave trade were actually based on consideration for the health of sailors, and not slaves, aboard the slaving ships. For instance, in 1830, Captain Hugh Crow (1830, 147) of the British slaving vessel Kitty described the Middle Passage as a "necessary evil," but also claimed that "Indeed I took great pains to promote the health and comfort of all on board by proper diet, regularity, exercise and cleanliness." Early pro-slavery

humanitarianism did then exist, but as arguments for the continued commodification of racialized individuals.

Dale W. Tomich (2004) talks of a shift from "first" to "second slavery" in the early-mid 19th century, whereby new slaving routes and destinations emerged. This happened alongside developments like the Haitian revolution, the sugar and coffee plantations on Cuba, Brazil, and the south-westward expanding US cotton-frontier underpinned by the brutal domestic US slave trade, which re-displaced around one million slaves from the Northern states (cf. Baptist, 2016).

Second slavery was also simultaneous with a change in the balancing of humanitarian ideas and their influence on the institution of slavery. Thus, in 1787 came the US Constitutional Convention's ban on the slave trade, which was realized twenty years later, around the same time as the British abolition of the trade in 1807. Gradually, legally sanctioned slaving policies would also change toward amelioration, that is, the integration of humanitarian principles into the governance and commodification of trade and ownership of enslaved people (cf. Lester and Dussart, 2014).

Both the slave trade and the arms export became objects of the same humanitarian critique. However, even though British anti-slavery efforts constituted a crucial milestone in the struggles against slavery and for human rights, in other ways the movement would also facilitate externalized regimes of imperial displacement markets. In its complexity, the abolitionist movement therefore "foregrounds the entanglement of 'rights' with colonially informed rationales of differential humanity" (Mayblin, 2017, 52).

The British abolitionists were successful in pushing their agenda in the House of Commons, which after abolition in 1807, also established the West African Squadron: This launched what we can call the suppressionist border control of the slave trade. This

extraterritorial naval control regime was accompanied by diplomatic treaties, and a lukewarm participation by French, Portuguese, Dutch and American vessels. The British policy yielded fierce diplomatic inter-imperial tensions about the right to intercept slaving vessels sailing under other flags, through the discussions of *Right of Search* and *Equipment Clauses*. As regards the Right of Search-treaties, Portugal and Spain were first to sign in 1817, and Netherlands joined in 1818, after years of pressure. Then followed Sweden in 1824, France between 1831 and 1833, and Denmark and the Hanse Towns from 1833 to 1839. In 1841 came the Quintuple Treaty with Austria, Prussia and Russia, and finally, in 1862, followed the US (cf. DuBois, 1896; Van Der Linden, 2010). Besides sovereign discretion, these tensions between European states, and also Brazil, Cuba and the US in particular, were also connected to the reluctance to assume responsibility for people recaptured from slaving vessels. Both of these sets of discussions served as a constant, and crucial legal-diplomatic backdrop to the evolution of suppressionist border controls, and lasted most of the nineteenth century.

The prime adversaries to the British policy were successive US governments, the executive branches of which were dominated by Southern slave-trading interests, such as planters, slavers, and shipping and insurance companies, until the South seceded and launched the American Civil War (cf. Karp, 2016). Through the decades, the suppressionist border control nevertheless developed in fits and starts, and with it also the debates surrounding humanitarianism and abolition (cf. Bender, 1992). After the British abolition of slave ownership in 1833, more and newer vessels were dedicated to the suppressionist border control, which grew to include also the Squadrons of the Good Hope and the East Indies (Lloyd, 1949). Alongside this geographic expansion, the series of diplomatic treatises also brought more countries in line – officially at least – with abolitionism.

Then, in the 1840s, the Palmerstonian diplomacy was succeeded by a more militarist approach, including naval bombardment and troop attacks on slave factories on the Western African coastline. This fused abolition with militarization and colonial annexations of Ashanti land on the Gold Coast, and attacks on ports like Mombasa (1845), Kilwa (1845), to the palm Oil rivers close to Lagos (1861). And as the east African coasts, and Zanzibar (1873) and Egypt (1877), became targets, so did the dhow-based Arab slave trade in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean (Hopper, 2015).

All told, some 181.000 "slave trade refugees" (Adderley, 1999, 67) were recaptured, mostly by the British Navy, but also by the Americans and the newly formed Haitian Navy. Great Britain also experimented with the relocation and resettlement of freed slaves to other colonial territories and granted stay to around 40.000 recaptured Africans, with Bahamas and Trinidad receiving the most.

But both Great Britain and the US also experimented with the large-scale externalization and disembarkation of unwanted slave trade refugees to Africa, and this is the focus of the next section.

**Atlantic Externalization and Colonial Markets of Recaptivity**

The different politics of Western states on slavery translated into diverging, but sometimes overlapping figures and practices of displacement. All made use of humanitarian scripts, but these oscillated between notions of commodification, liberation and re-displacement. In the words of Fett (2010, 89-90): "The lexicon of the slave trade carried forward […] as authorities wove their way erratically back and forth between slave-trade terminology ('cargo', 'captives', and 'barracoons') and the language of slave-trade suppression ('liberated Africans', 'receptacles' and "depots')".

More eager to suppress the slave trade, Haiti had already in the 1810s begun its suppressionist border controls, with vessels like *Abolition de la Traide* and *Philanthrope*. It was part of a "free soil" policy that granted freed slaves legal protection and citizenship in the country (Ferrer, 2012). By contrast, during the early stages of suppression, the individual US states had been developing their own responses to interdicted and freed slaves. But in 1819, after heavy lobbyism from the American Colonization Society (ACS), the effort was federalized, and a statute authorized the president to make regulations "for the safe keeping, support, and removal beyond the limits of the United States, of all such negroes, mulattoes, or persons of colour, as may be so delivered and brought within their jurisdiction". Adding an external component that fused abolitionist and pro-colonial agendas, the statute further mandated the appointment of "a proper person or persons, residing upon the coast of Africa," to receive the disembarked slaves (Act of March 3 1819, SEC 2).

While the US Africa Squadron had received minuscule support since its start in 1819, American dreams of annexing Cuba, in line with the 1823 Monroe Doctrine about hemispheric naval dominance (cf. Karp, 2011), meant that the USS Mohawk, USS Wyandotte and USS Crusader were deployed to patrol and intercept slaving vessels along the Cuban coasts in 1858-1860.

The naval suppression efforts meant the freeing of enslaved persons, but this humanitarian stance of Western states thus co-existed with militaristic geopolitics and stark racial hierarchies as governments resisted granting slave trade refugees access to their soil. Consequently, a series of extra-territorial administrative camps were set up across the Atlantic Basin, in places like Fort Augusta, Jamaica, Ruperts Valley, St. Helena, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Key West, Florida and Fort Sumter, South Carolina.

Here, states disembarked recaptured slaves in order to appease the racialized fears on their own territories.

On the island of Fort Sumter, South Carolina, as well as in Key West, Florida, the slave trade refugees were housed, fed and hospitalized at a distance from the local population for months until they could be deported to Africa (Fett, 2017). Their re-displacement, in the form of deportation back across the Atlantic, was a fatal ordeal for many. A similar British experiment had been one of the first steps towards this Atlantic externalization policy, as they had exported freed, but destitute African veterans from the American Independence War, from the streets of London to the new colony of Sierra Leone, which had been purchased by philanthropists and merchants in 1787. Imploding with disease, poverty and re-enslavement, however, the British Crown assumed ownership of the colony in 1808, only to turn it into a massive disembarkation zone for slave trade refugees intercepted during the suppressionist border controls. Over 50.000 recaptured people would be placed there by the British Navy. From the US, around 12.000 people would be removed to Liberia until the twentieth century. Of those that survived this deportation, most knew nothing of these territories, and evolved into a stigmatized societal class. For many others, those locations would not be their final destination, as they escaped, contracted into slavery in other African regions, entered Caribbean apprenticeships, or were deployed in the military.

Illustrating the longer arc of externalized markets of (re)captivity, this Middle Passage-in-reverse was described as a money racket by minority black voices in the US, like James Pennington. And many did stand to profit from this alleged liberation effort: US legislation authorized prize courts to pay naval crews for every slave they freed. Once the recaptured slaves were sent back across the Atlantic, the US Treasury were to pay twenty-five dollars to the ACS for "each and every negro, mulatto, or person of

colour" disembarked into the care of the Society in West Africa (Act of March 3 1819, SEC 3). The British Navy had championed a similar prize system designed to incentivize the recapture of enslaved people, but also causing widespread corruption (cf. Burroughs, 2010). Both the ACS, naval crews, the US federal government, the British Navy, and governors, planters and merchants in Liberia and Sierra Leone thus extracted profit from this humanitarianized re-displacement system.

The geographic expansion of suppressionist border controls also had several unintended consequences (Van Der Linden, 2010), debated fiercely among contemporary politicians and within the Navy. A first concerned how the naval suppression created a massive competition between slavers and navies, leading to less sea-worthy and more dangerous embarkation practices as slavers sought to minimize the losses of interception, by cramming large numbers of enslaved people on steam-boats (Lloyd, 1949, 7; see also Heller 2015, 182-191). A second was intertwined within the transition from first to second slavery, and concerned how the suppressionist border controls facilitated new, irregular routes to Brazil, Cuba and the US South, outside the reach of the Western African Squadron (Marques, 2016). Third, and connected to this, the intra-African and -US slave trades increased massively during and after the suppressionist controls, without eliciting the same counteraction.

As illustrated by the British and American geographic expansion of naval interventions, the second half of the nineteenth century also witnessed a revival of Western imperialism, in which humanitarian suppressionism and religious zeal became imbricated. This is also brought out by the 1885 Congo Conference in Berlin explicit in its combination of anti-slavery and re-colonization ambitions. Thus, the Conference's *Principle of Effective Occupation* meant that in order to legitimize further colonization of Africa, states had to establish effective occupation over territories. The militaristic

and geographical expansion of suppression efforts from the 1840s onwards had therefore placed the British empire in a favourable position to take a leading role in the shift in European colonial ambitions from the Caribbean to Africa, also known as the Scramble for Africa (Van Der Linden, 2010, 293).

Thus, the abolitionist campaigning led to the condemnation of both the transatlantic slave trade and the arms export to West Africa, and it still stands as a cornerstone for universal human rights. But the dynamic and uneasy relationship between slavery, capture, rescue and predation generated paradoxes and critique of the humanitarian movement. This was partly for its role in depoliticizing the contexts of displacement, but also for the effects of its alignment with geopolitics of racialization and imperialism.

**Conclusion**

Like asylum politics today, slavery politics was one of the structuring issues in nineteenth century Western displacement politics and practices. The EU's 2018 proposal on regional disembarkation platforms, as well as the evolution of European externalization practices between 2006 and 2018, link together naval interception with humanitarianization and extraterritorial disembarkation. This constitutes a contingent parallel to several Western practices during the slave trade. The preceding inquiry has argued that studies of borders, forced migration, slavery and colonial studies can be productively combined to address postcolonial matrices of power in current displacement politics. It yields a comparative approach that examines postcolonial continuity by identifying reoccurring assumptions, elements and practices in European displacement and externalization politics.

The pressing need to address postcolonial continuity arose out of the dominant ahistoricity and depoliticization characterizing European displacement politics and epistemologies, which are premised on the active forgetting of some histories, and the privileging of myths of difference. The result is that the complexities of displacement crises are often narrated through a gallery of individualized and policy-salient figures of migration, abstracted from political arcs, interchangeable agencies, complex transfers and contexts.

The article described the evolution and complex policy transfers of EU naval border controls and externalization to North Africa between 2006 and 2018, illustrating the paradoxical reliance on care and control through the case of Libya. Conceptualizing such externalization practices as the manufacturing of displacement taking place within larger markets of captivity was argued to constitute a productive postcolonial nexus point between current European displacement policies, and those developed during the transatlantic slave trade.

The postcolonial lens on these dynamics, was operationalized through three colonial cases of displacement politics, selected due to their specific dynamics and logics of displacement, humanitarianism and border control. These were the racialized Spanish and American naval border control in response to the Haitian revolution; British and American suppressionist border controls targeting slave traders, and, finally, British and American recapture and externalization of enslaved Africans to Sierra Leone and Liberia. For while slave trade suppression has rightly come to be seen as a cornerstone in the development of human rights, its complex evolution also precipitated a competition between traders and navies harmful for the enslaved. Geopolitically, it was also used to facilitate the "legitimate trade," whose exploitative and extractive relations also facilitated the Scramble for Africa.

Besides contributing to the study of borders, humanitarianism and forced migration, each of the cases exhibited the blurred boundaries between capture, rescue and predation, as well as depoliticized double transfers of blame and responsibility. They also unfolded against backdrops of Western diplomatic tensions, which also characterize European externalization politics today. This illustrate the contingent parallels, paradoxes and unintended consequences arising out of the displacement governance of European empires and states, past and present. It shows how humanitarianized displacement politics are often ambivalent, re-appropriated, and harmful in its neglect of crucial contexts and implications. Then and now, the result is a schewed vision of displacement and its management aligned with colonial matrices of power. The vision is based on assumptions of European and Western exceptionality, itself exempt from the social and political-economic contexts it reinforces, is implemented in, and originates from.

This means that crucial challenges facing current externalization politics risk going unrecognized. These include the false promise of safety in practices of regional disembarkation; how economic, political and strategic incentives can turn contracts for rescue and control into markets of (re)captivity; how EU externalization visions, while predominantly pursued in formally decolonized contexts, seem built on reoccurring colonial imaginations of space and mobility; and the risk that the EU externalization politics and visions, now expanding both in geographic scope and operational scale may facilitate the reoccurrence of overtly imperial and neo-colonial ambitions.

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[1] Many islands of the Caribbean have remained colonial border-regions since the 15th century, since several islands are still categorized as "overseas territories" of EU member states, or "unincorporated territory" of the United States.

[2] Between the 1980s and mid-2000s, five very similar – and similarly controversial – externalization proposals were put forth by the British, Danish, Dutch, and German governments and by the European Commission. All revolved around the idea of externalized centres in Eastern Europe and North Africa with functions similar if not identical to the 2018 disembarkation proposal (Moreno-Lax and Lemberg-Pedersen 2019; see also Noll 2003).