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(Im)moral Borders in Practice

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ABSTRACT

This Forum aims to push existing debates in critical border and migration studies over the featuring of morals, ethics and rights in everyday practices relating to the governance of the mobility of non-citizen populations. Its contributors steer away from the actual evaluation or advocacy of the good/just/ethical, focusing instead on the sociological examination of morals and ethics in practice, i.e. how actors understand morally and ethically the border and migration policies they implement or resist. A proliferating interest in the discursive and non-discursive materialisation of moral and ethical elements in asylum and migration policies has examined the intertwinement of care and control logics underlying the management of refugee camps, borders and borderzones, and hotspots alongside the deployment of search-and-rescue operations. Nevertheless, recent research has shown the need to unpack narratives and actions displaying values and symbols that are not necessarily encompassed within this intertwinement of compassion and repression. We argue that there is a need to pay more attention to the diversity, plurality and the operation of morality, ethics and rights in settings and geographies, and of including a diversity of actors both across and beyond EUrope.

Introduction to the Forum: Morals and Ethics at the Border

Nora El Qadim and Beste İşleyen

The central objective of this Geopolitics Forum is to push existing debates on the importance of morals, ethics and rights in European migration and border governance through a better grounding of our analyses within everyday practices. A focus on practices in the study of morals, ethics and rights speaks to the increasing calls for decentring security research in Europe (Bilgin 2010). The urgency of decentred approaches has been emphasised by scholars working on the European Union (EU) (Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis 2013), especially more in the field of migration and border

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management in particular (Cassarino 2018; El Qadim 2014, 2017; İşleyen 2018a). One way to decentre, we argue, is to study morals, ethics and rights beyond their manifestations in policies and discourses, but instead in practice. Decentring perspectives benefit from centring practices in the analysis, and need to "engage with the actual participants and actors, to analyse not simply their words but also their understandings of the meaning of those discourses" and daily actions in specific local contexts (Côté-Boucher, Infantino and Salter 2014, 197).

We argue for bringing the "ethical turn" of anthropology (Fassin 2014) into the research agenda of decentring the study of borders and migration regimes; or, alternatively, to bring the decentring agenda to the study of moral anthropology. Following James Laidlaw's call for "an anthropology of ethics" (Laidlaw 2002), Didier Fassin defined "moral anthropology" as not only the study of morality, i.e. the "local configurations of norms, values, and emotions," but as going beyond that: examines "how moral questionares posed and addressed or, symmetrically, how nonmoral questions are rephrased as moral", explores "the moral categories via which we apprehend the world" and examines "the moral signification of action and the moral labour of agents" (Fassin 2012b, 4). Definitions of the terms 'moral', 'morality' and 'ethics' are debated, in connection with the philosophical affinities of different approaches (Faubion 2012; Karsenti 2012). We could summarize by distinguishing morals, the realm of general principles dividing "good and bad" or "right and wrong", a bounded system of rules to which agents can refer; from ethics, a normative compass present at the individual level without, in principle, depending on cultural norms (Fassin 2012b, 8).[1] Moral anthropology has brought into light the moral dynamics at play in borders and migration policies, especially through its focus on humanitarianism. This focus on humanitarianism and its Western underpinnings, however, could benefit from decentring the perspective.[2]

In paying close attention to the workings of morals, ethics and borders in practice, we seek to advance the existing scholarship in three ways. First, an engagement with everyday practices is a way to offer a remedy to the uniform and homogenous understanding of the operation of morals, ethics and rights across Europe. The concept of humanitarianism has been central to the study of morals in general and moral elements in the European governance of migration and refugees in particular (Fassin 2012a; Mavelli 2017; Pallister-Wilkins 2015; Walters 2011). The prevailing argument in this scholarship is the intertwinement of care and control logics underlying the management of refugee camps, borders and borderzones, and hotspots alongside the deployment of search-and-rescue operations (Cuttita 2018; Jones et al. 2017). Genealogically, humanitarian reason is said to be rooted in Christianity, especially in "the sacralization of life and the valorization of suffering" (Fassin 2012a, 248), which shows a "fascination with suffering" in the

Christian tradition (Lester and Dussart 2014, 9). Furthermore, Fassin associates humanitarianism with specific events in the history of Europe and North Africa, such as the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833, or the establishment of the Red Cross in 1863 and Médecins Sans Frontières in 1971, which were all milestones in the expansion of humanitarian government. More recently, humanitarianism has been termed a "liberal diagnostic" embedded in the growth of capitalism and the liberal state in the Western world (Reid-Henry 2014). As a liberal diagnostic, humanitarianism is more than just saving distant strangers as it is interested in "saving in ever more productive ways", so as to create a liberal order and maintain it through its deployment in other geographies and onto populations living in these geographies (Reid-Henry 2014, 420). Following Reid-Henry, Pallister-Wilkins has argued for a rethinking of the EU's 'hotspot' regime as a liberal diagnostic, which not only protects mobile individuals through the provision of care, but also saves and reproduces "European liberalism" through humanitarianism (Pallister-Wilkins 2018, 9).

While presenting a compelling argument, these analyses tend to present us with a uniform view of Western humanitarianism as the paradoxical articulation of compassion and control. We argue that more attention needs to be paid to the diversity and plurality of discourses and actions of humanitarianism in Europe. What other concepts might be useful to move beyond a standardized understanding of European/Western humanitarianism? One way is to revisit concepts and assumptions from various disciplines not to look for definite answers but to complicate all-encompassing accounts concerning how morals, ethics and rights feature in European border and migration practices.

The theme of hospitality, for example, has mostly been explored, in connection to migration, through the lens of ethics and philosophy (Boudou 2017; Derrida and Dufourmantelle 1997). Studies integrating the concept in anthropology (Agier 2016, 41–42), political geography (Pallister-Wilkins 2015) or in IR (Bulley 2017; Mavelli 2017) have been more recent. The exploration of hospitality in localised settings leads us to diversify our understandings of humanitarianism. Research on Greek asylum, migration and border policies and practices has participated in the deconstruction of the 'myth' of Western/European humanitarianism in terms of historical development, reflection and practice. Rozakou (2012) unpacks the concept of *filoxenia* (hospitality) as a key 'metaphor' used by the Greek state and people in their addressing of refugees. Rozakou situates *filoxenia* within the Greek identity- and nation-building construction process, whereby the metaphor is "presented as a national virtue" (2012, 565) attached to the Hellenic culture and ancient Greece. Questioning the "uncritical appeal to hospitality as an ethical imperative" (2012, 563), Rozakou indicates the workings of *filoxenia* as "biopolitical humanitarianism" (2012, 571). *Filoxenia* not only

puts the asylum seeker into an asymmetric relationship with the Greek state as the provider of both care and control, but also undermines the political agency of the asylum seeker stuck "between biological life and complete political existence" (2012, 573) which obscures how *filoxenia* operates – in paradoxical ways – together with practices and mechanisms that subject asylum seekers and migrants to exploitation and precarity in the labour market. Studying the diversity of moral references and practices in Europe participates in a decentring project: by countering analyses that present EUrope as a unified, uniform and rational actor, it allows for the unpacking of the contradictions and tensions that characterize policy making (Sabaratnam 2011). Simmoneau piece in this forum is a further attempt at cautioning us against a vision of humanitarianism as something uniform and all-encompassing across Europe. Through the example of two advocacy campaigns in France and Belgium that defend migrants' rights, Simmoneau looks at the kind of framing that shapes each of the two campaigns. His findings challenge the idea of a cohesive humanitarian movement: the contribution indicates both similarities and differences in framings between the two advocacy groups. Simmoneau contribution shows the diversity of concepts that can co-exist within similar humanitarian practices.

A second way in which a decentred approach adds to the existing scholarship relates to the exploration of discursive battles, power struggles and resistances against and through morals in localised border settings. Indeed, there is a relative absence of non-Western settings in the study of morals, ethics and rights, in large part due to "methodological Western-Centrism", which tends to label states as liberal and illiberal states with inherently different and incomparable characteristics, including when looking at migration policies (Garcés-Mascareñas 2018). The literature on the externalization of EU migration and border policies has developed over the years, though mostly still concerned with the elaboration and implementation of *EUropean* policies and practices. The concept and extent of externalization have been debated (Cassarino 2010; El Qadim 2010; Paoletti 2010), as well as the double moral standards that seem to govern European policies towards its neighbours (Wolff 2008).

However, there is also a nascent field of research on alternative narratives put forward, and actions undertaken, by state- and non-state actors in contexts and government assemblages beyond EUrope and/or the West. As we have noted above, hospitality has been a central concept in the conceptualisation and empirical study of migration and asylum policies and practices regarding, for example, Greek state's and citizens' attitudes towards refugees along with the discursive battles over prevailing understandings of hospitality (e.g. Rozakou 2012). A decentred approach is helpful in showing the diversity and historically contingent forms and operation of the politics of hospitality beyond its manifestations in EUrope/West. Karakaya-Polat's

study (2018) examines Turkey's discourse on Syrian refugees around the notion of "misafir (guest)". As the author argues, the term guest allows for bypassing legal obligations to grant refugee status to displaced Syrians by framing their stay as being temporary and made possible by Turkish hospitality presented an act of grace rather than granting of political rights. While Turkey's guest labelling displays similar logics of care and control as observed in humanitarian governance of refugees in Europe, it is distinct in that it borrows from religious and historical narratives to "reconstruct a national identity along more Islamic lines" to be juxtaposed against a Western "Other" (Karakaya-Polat 2018, 505). Western humanitarianism is seen to be rooted in the Christian tradition, reflecting "a European culture of welcoming" as observed in the Greek asylum system (Cabot 2017, 143). The Turkish hospitality discourse instead constitutes the *humanitarian Self* not through identification with Europe but rather by means of differentiation. On the one hand, the Turkish state invokes analogies and historical references that glorify the Islamic and Ottoman past, the latter by reference to the expulsion of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and their settlement in the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. In other words, the Self is posited as the defender of victims of European persecution back in history. On the other hand, this hospitality discourse is employed to construct a moral and historical responsibility in the present day for Turkey vis-à-vis those countries of the Middle East which were once part of the Ottoman Empire. Drawing parallels between the loss of territories and lives during First World War on the one hand, and contemporary conflicts and wars in the Middle East, Turkey's hospitality discourse displays "historical and spatial continuity", where "Turkey is imagined more as a country with historical and religious links to the Middle East and less as a European country" (Karakaya-Polat 2018, 507). In addition, another alternative vision of humanitarianism features in the Turkish policing of human mobility: Beste İşleyen (2018b) identifies the role of "honour" as inherent to the Turkish border officers' conception of the border in their everyday governance of irregular migration towards the EU. The notion of "honour" carries both paternalistic and militarized meanings, which attests to the need for extending research on morals to new geographies.

Elsewhere, postcolonial scholarship has shown that the shifting of research focus to non-Western actors allows for a better understanding of asymmetric relationships between the EU and third countries, especially of the agency of the latter through various "dynamics of avoidance and resistance" (El Qadim 2014, 245). In these dynamics, border and migration actors often invoke moral sentiments to resist the demands, knowledge production, policies and practices by the EU. To give an example, Nora El Qadim (2018) identifies conceptions of dignity as an essential part of the Moroccan position in negotiations on migration with the EU. In Western contexts, ambiguous

understandings of dignity feature a strong connection to a tradition of "humanism" and human rights (Squire 2017, 515, 526); however, postcolonial usages of dignity might be understood differently (El Bernoussi 2015). In the Moroccan context, dignity is not defined in reference to the universalist language of human rights, but rather its understanding is rooted in local and transnational political references tying it to anticolonial struggles as well as to post-colonial contestations of authoritarian governments. This then serves as a moral basis for arguments in favour of a better right to mobility for Moroccans (El Qadim 2018).

Our argument here is that looking at the variety of moral underpinnings of policies and practices *on all sides of borders* will be helpful in furthering the analysis of migration and border across sites. This can also be useful is the study of the uneasy relationship between state and non-state actors in humanitarian action, which has focused on politicization/depoliticization by Western actors (Cuttitta 2018; Jones et al. 2017). Karadağ's forum piece expands this field by bringing into focus the discursive battles by state actors on both sides of the EU border and showing how humanitarianism is tied to the notion of 'professionalism': drawing on interviews and participant observation in Greece and in Turkey, Karadağ shows how Greek and Turkish border officials seek to establish moral hierarchies not only vis-à-vis one another but also in relation to non-state organizations by reference to professionalism. In doing so, her contribution also shows how looking at the government of migration in the Aegean on both shores can enrich our understanding of the moral government of migration and borders.

Finally, a third form of decentring that our forum engages with relates to the ethics of research and engagement. In spite of social scientists often being well aware of the limitations of their analysis given their own position, they do not always make these limitations visible. How could one work on issues pertaining to morals without questioning their own ethics or the reasons why they might focus on one value, or some actors, instead of others? Although many researchers working on migration and borders raise ethical questions in informal discussions, it is less common to see these interrogations in writing. Anthropology provides an interesting space for reflexivity and for the examination of the co-construction of categories by the researcher and its object. However, it is not so common in the field of migration and border studies to see this reflexivity exposed in great detail, including when researchers present the moral underpinnings of policies they often disapprove of, or of humanitarian activities that are themselves often ambiguous, as analyses of humanitarian reason have shown. Nevertheless, as researchers, we are also part of an economy of migration and borders, if only by getting funding or pursuing a career through the study of that object. In other words, we are all, as Ruben Andersson's interviewee in Senegal puts it, "migrant-eaters" (Andersson 2014, 33–35). As all researchers preoccupied with "vulnerable

populations," finding the right balance between scientific interest and other interests, as well as emotions, can be difficult. Although these difficulties might be more limited when studying policies and state-agents (rather than migrants and people on the move), emotional and moral engagements are high on such topics. How then do we participate, as researchers and citizens, in the construction of the moral systems or moral economies that we describe and analyse?

There is no easy answer to this question. However, it can prompt us to increase efforts in our study of the moral dimension of migration or border policies and practices. One response can be the development of more clearly activist research: although many researchers in this field are actively involved in different forms of activism, this is not often discussed and problematized in their writings (Garelli and Tazzioli 2013; Stierl 2018). Another form of response can be to constantly question and reconsider our focus and methods. Leonie Ansems de Vries and Signe Sofie Hansen's piece in this forum is an important undertaking in this direction, through an inquiry into the ethics of academic research based on the authors' study on Calais and Dunkirk. Starting from ethical questions about doing research in spaces of violence, this contribution is an in-depth self-reflection about researchers' subject position, the impact of participatory (visual) methods on migrants who are subjected to the violence of border practices on a daily basis, and the politics of knowledge production.

The contributions of this forum only explore some of the possible avenues for decentring research on morals and ethics in practice at the border. In the last piece of this forum, Debbie Lisle shares her insights on the pursuit of this research agenda, but we would like to make a few suggestions here. One interesting way to pursue this agenda would be to conduct this exploration of morals in practice in a variety of non-Western settings, in order to expand our understandings of what is at play, morally, at the border. This could also be done by exploring the ways in which non-Western philosophical and religious traditions might influence different understandings of borders, migration and mobility. We could also add that a more direct engagement with postcolonialism and race would be important to incorporate into this study of morals and ethics at the border in order to examine how these dimensions of international relations might impact migration and border policies. Indeed, although part of the literature takes race into account as a variable of policies (and of their implementation), race has been, as in many other works using the analytics of biopolitics and government to examine migration policies, only a "flickering presence" (Moffette and Walters 2018). Analyses of the co-construction of racial categories and migration policies and practices could shed a different light on the analysis of their moral underpinnings or justifications of border control. Another fruitful avenue would be to engage with migrants' moral qualms, in addition to examining

the moral underpinnings of policies and humanitarianism. Indeed, while most of the literature focuses on the moral aspects of state policies, or the moral qualms of NGOs and people involved in humanitarian work with migrants, this indirectly renders migrants themselves invisible as moral subjects. However, the migratory process provides multiple opportunities for moral hesitations, as shown for example by the case of Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco who seek to balance collaboration with others with the realization of their own objectives (Bachelet 2019). These are only some of the possibilities for the necessary development of a research agenda on moral and ethics at the border. It is by 'amplifying marginalized voices', as put by Ansems de Vries and Hansen in this forum, that future research could push empirical and conceptual boundaries towards a more inclusive politics of knowledge production.

Counter-framing Migration Control beyond Security and Hospitality. The Case of Campaigns Defending Migrants' Rights in France and in Belgium

Damien Simonneau

When thinking about scenarios to take migration out of the security logic and grammar, promoting universal hospitality towards migrants or freedom of movement across borders (Aradau and Huysmans 2009; Pécoud and De Guchteneire 2007) is generally attributed to the multiple defenders of migrants' rights. NGOs and citizens' groups engaged in the cause of migration can thus be portrayed as actors of de-securitization who aim at changing the threat narrative associated with migration today. However, how do these actors actually position themselves regarding these values of hospitality and freedom of movement? How do they articulate these values with their daily legal assistance and/or humanitarian practices, most of the time implying participation in control procedures? More importantly, how do they defend these values in the face of increased border control and the growing number of judicial proceedings against activists and citizens helping people on the move?

In this context, NGOs are questioning their assistance to the state in border security and migration control. A critical literature argues that they contribute to "the disciplining" of the mobility of migrants by reproducing some control practices of the tate (Geiger and Pécoud 2015). This situation challenges their traditional objectives to promote a humanitarian (Fassin 2012a) and/or rights-based understanding of migration (Israël 2009; Kawar 2015). Scholars in critical security studies assert that dissenters to security policy cannot confront up-front security measures without the risks of being marginalized and criminalized. They have to work with state actors and sometimes incorporate the logic of control so as to obtain information and

to be able to criticize state policies (McDonald 2015). NGOs are condemned to only shape and arrange security policies they are actually a part of (Fischer 2017; Monforte 2014). Thus, NGOs are most of the time trapped in a moral and strategic dilemma between attesting or contesting migration control (Pette 2014).

That is particularly the case of organizations involved in two campaigns in France (the "Etats généraux de la migration") and in Belgium ("Pour une justice migratoire") since 2017. These campaigns gather NGOs, activists, citizens, and migrants' groups to elaborate and to promote alternative migration policies as a means to de-securitize migration. They specifically focus on the advocacy dimension of their action, meaning the advancement of political causes in the human rights domain (Siméant and Taponier 2014). When I examine, using a textual analysis, the framing of the campaigns, they are not so much about "security" or "hospitality" as a homogeneous and all-encompassing narrative, but rather about the protection of asylum rights and the urgency of welcoming people on the move, and the involvement of civil society in doing so. However, although the two concomitant advocacy campaigns evolve in a similar context of control and securitization of migration, they frame migration quite differently: one stresses the welcoming and rights of people on the move, the other calls attention to development and inequality issues. This, I argue, generates difficulties to challenge the dominant security narrative and to elaborate a coherent, alternative, moral narrative in their respective political systems as well as at the European level. As I will suggest, these difficulties stem from politicizing the expertise developed by the dominant NGOs involved in these campaigns. Thus, these campaigns of contestation produce a complex and debated narrative.

In Belgium, the federal government pushes for anti-migrant measures (detention of children, harassment of migrants in a park in the centre of Brussels, cooperation with Sudanese authorities, threats to authorize the police to visit home of citizens hosting migrants etc.). The campaign "Pour une justice migratoire" aims to propose political recommendations to the Belgian government, the European Union and the United Nations. It is coordinated by the CNCD (Centre national de coopération au développement2) and its Flemish counterpart 11-11-11. Four objectives structure the campaign[3]: 1) reducing inequalities in emigration countries through development policies; 2) implementing legal and safe access to European territory for people on the move by opening borders; 3) proposing equal access to socio-economic rights to immigrants to promote social cohesion and therefore fighting discrimination; 4) communicating fair and positive speech on migration and against prejudice. These principles were presented, elaborated and defended during various events in 2017–2018, such as local assemblies to discuss these points or public meetings with representatives of the Francophone political parties. The CNCD also organized

a counter European summit in December 2017 in Brussels. In 2018, as local elections approached, the campaign moved to the issue of hospitality with two initiatives: 1) "Rendons notre commune hospitalière" ("make our municipality welcoming") to force municipalities to declare themselves sanctuaries for people on the move; 2) joining the European citizens' initiative "We are a welcoming Europe".

In France, in June 2017, 470 NGOs and citizens' associations across the territory called on the newly-elected President Emmanuel Macron and his government to organize a general conference on migration. In September 2017, the government announced the preparation of a new law on asylum and migration, actually increasing migration control. This law was discussed in the French Parliament in spring 2018 and adopted on August 1, 2018 with very little consultation with NGOs. Meanwhile, citizens' groups took an active part in helping people on the move from 2015 onwards (Coutant 2018), sometimes facing the criminalization of their solidarity acts (near Nice, in the Hautes-Alpes, and around Calais). In November 2017 in a press conference, representatives of NGOs and citizens' groups launched the "Etats généraux de la migration" (EGM). It consisted of decentralized meetings across France, public actions against the law and a national event on May 25, 2018. In a plenary session, 500 activists discussed and adopted a Manifesto "for a migration policy respecting fundamental rights and human dignity". Six main ideas were detailed: 1) a dignified welcoming of newcomers; 2) respect for asylum law; 3) equality between foreigners and citizens; 4) recognition of citizens' initiatives supporting migrants; 5) modification of rules concerning access to French territory as well as European and international migration policy; 6) conditions to implement an alternative migration policy[4]. The EGM is coordinated by an ad hoc group composed of national organizations (such as Gisti – Groupe d'information et de soutien des immigrés, CRID – Centre de recherché et d'information pour le développement or La Cimade) traditionally involved in the protection of migrants' rights, and local assemblies of citizens and residents.

A textual analysis[5] of some of the first documents produced in these campaigns shows the difficulties in creating a cohesive narrative on the causes of migration. Firstly, words that would have been expected are not so present. "Hospitalité" (hospitality), "ouverture" (openness), "militarisation" (militarization), "illégal" (illegal) are not considered significant[6]. The words "sécurité" (security) and "frontière" (border) are also not used regularly. The Belgian campaign Justice migratoire does not emphasize "frontière" at all for instance. Moreover, these campaigns do not directly tackle the issue of "border security" nor do they attempt to meaningfully engage with ideas of "hospitality" concerning people on the move. This is despite the fact that most of the participants in these NGOs are involved with these issues on a daily basis.

Secondly, a division among the texts appears when looking at words like "accueil" (welcoming) and "développement" (development). Two major semantic groups can be delineated: the first one is centred on the respect of asylum and refugees' rights with words such as "droit/accueil/réfugiés", while the second one focuses on equality of mobility and development opportunities with terms such as "développement/inégalité/mobilité". The EGM campaign emphasizes "droit" (rights) and "accueil" (welcoming) while the Justice migratoire campaign stresses the development aspects behind migration. The Justice migratoire and the EGM campaigns differ greatly when they link migration to development and inequality (the first one is close to the semantic issues in the CNCD and Oxfam annual reports for example). When turning qualitatively to the texts produced by the campaigns (the manifesto for the EGM and the political recommendations for Justice Migratoire), the initial motivations behind the elaboration of the texts are different. The EGM is starting from the current French and European situation of general repression towards migrants and the legal attacks on acts of solidarity from citizens. Justice Migratoire is rather starting from the global inequality in migration opportunities. The Belgian campaign insists on the development issues behind migration (e.g. emphasis on equal opportunities, global warming, the importance of financial help and remittances to the South) and assumes an anti-militarist position (e.g. by explicitly refusing military intervention and the arms trade). Meanwhile the French campaign focuses on the issue of democratizing the governance of borders and migration by promoting an important role for citizens "in cooperation and consultation" with authorities and security experts. This clearly illustrates that concomitant and similar counter-narratives to migration control from NGOs defending migrants' rights diverge on moral grounds to legitimate their claims.

Thirdly, the two campaigns are similar when they discuss issues of rights and differentiate themselves from the isolated reports of NGOs. Both campaigns share recommendations to organize the welcoming of people on the move, to respect international conventions protecting refugees' rights (slightly criticized by the EGM who recommends adding new criteria for asylum), to end detention and externalization of control to third countries, and to promote free movement (more nuanced in Justice Migratoire which recognizes that "the closure of closed detention center will not happen in a short time," compared to the EGM which claims "freedom of entry, circulation and residence in European space for non-Europeans" and "unconditional welcoming"). Both advocate for reforming migration policies and establish new standards against the Dublin regulation and current European migration policies. In terms of integration of migrants in welcoming societies, the related issues of access to work, social security benefits and

to fight against social dumping are more elaborated upon in Belgium than in France.

To sum up, when framing migration issues, the two campaigns differ on emphasizing development and socio-economic opportunities of migration which is more central for the Belgian campaign. However, they are similar when they focus on migrants' rights. A linguistic analysis of the two campaigns shows that the primacy of rights and protection is at the core of these complex narratives to challenge the securitization of migration. It indicates that humanitarianism and contestation over security are not unvarying, homogeneous and all-encompassing across Europe. Contesting varies according to national traditions of militancy in the migrants' rights domain. In spite of the intertwining of security, rights and humanitarian logics (Fischer 2017; Pette 2014), an analysis of the production of these texts is necessary to further understand the emphasis on rights and protection and the perceived distance from a security narrative, and consequently to better grasp the dilemma these NGOs actually face. For instance, light should be shed on organizational capacities, especially the balance between legal and/or humanitarian assistance activities and advocacy. This would also require a measurement of the autonomy of spaces of militancy in relation to the state in terms of resources, repertoires of contention and organizations. Alliance capacities should be explored too, as these two campaigns represent specific moments of alliance building in the history of the cause defending foreigners' rights in each country. More specifically, the link with political parties and elected representatives, as well as the relationships between national organizations and emerging citizens' groups need to be further analysed. This last point is crucial in France with recently elected representatives from En Marche!, the party of President Emmanuel Macron, whose presence unsettles the traditional affiliation of certain French NGOs to left wing parties for instance. In Belgium, the dynamism of citizens' groups and associations of undocumented people are central to the reconfiguration of this space of militancy (Vertongen 2018). Finally, further investigation is required to assess the modalities of a potential Europeanization of contestation on migration issues, specifically the elaboration of transnational campaigns at the EU level. This analysis could represent a first step in understanding the difficulties in generating coalitions among diverse national campaigns on migration, indeed emphasizing different values and strategies.

The Moral Battle in the Aegean Sea

Sibel Karadağ

One of the goals of this forum is to highlight the need to capture the plurality in the operation of morality across/beyond EUropean/Western geographies,

which transcends the discursive battles and ontological hierarchies of Western humanitarianism. Likewise, further attempts at enriching our understanding of multiple forms of humanitarian imaginations and expressions, are necessary. This piece aims to discuss certain forms in the production of moral hierarchies shaped around the geopolitical and spatial configurations of the Aegean Sea – a geographical border space between two sovereign states, Greece and Turkey, that share a rough history. The main argument of the piece is that the spatial configuration of sea borders and related practices of rescue enable particular justification strategies for border officials to utilize moral sentiments and the rhetoric of professionalism, and seek to establish moral hierarchies along "humaneness" and "real professionalism" in relation to non-state humanitarians. This moral battle also occurs between Greek and Turkish armed forces, where Turkish border officials present themselves as the more professional and benevolent of the two. Hence, this piece contributes to the existing discussion on critical humanitarianism through capturing particular manifestations of moral hierarchies on both sides of the Aegean Sea without neglecting the global character of contemporary humanitarianism since the 1970s. It not only focuses on the character of search and rescue humanitarianism at the border, but also analyses the complex discursive battles between state and non-state actors.

The renaissance of nongovernmental humanitarianism since the 1970s concomitantly contains a loss in its vision to obtain a long-term transformative capacity to denounce and change the social and political order (Feldman and Ticktin 2012; Redfield 2013; Weizman 2012). Since then, the term "emergency" and the rhetoric of moral urgency have started to dominate the language. The "crises", which are indeed a result of enduring sequences of historical and political events, have been portrayed as unconnected, groundless, unpredictable phenomena suddenly bursting onto the scene. This "emergency imaginary" (Calhoun 2010) necessitates an "urgent" response in the form of humanitarian assistance driven by a narrow affective grammar. Within this affective language, systematic inequality in contemporary political and social life gets reduced to individual suffering; structural violence becomes particular instances of trauma; concern for global justice and equality turns to affective responses to victims; and a vision to facilitate any political change gets manifested in simple care and the provision of basic needs (Agier 2011; Feldman and Ticktin 2012). This narrow affective grammar goes hand in hand with the professionalization of humanitarianism. With a highly valued staff, speaking of "beneficiaries", cultivating "clients" and donors, making use of their "brand", aspiring to increase their "efficiency", "operational capacity" and managerial governance mechanisms, professionalism has become the predominant character of humanitarian organizations (Ophir 2010). Scholarship on critical humanitarianism sheds

light on the career aspirations of humanitarians as "good professionals"; the ascendance of neoliberal discourse as "management" and "efficiency" in their language; the technical and quantitative knowledge in which numbering, counting, documenting and statistics have become lingua franca of the "experts" (Barnett and Weiss 2008; Feldman 2007; Malkki 2015; Redfield 2013). The complex relationship between border officials and rescue humanitarians in the Aegean Sea indicates that the humanitarians are not the only ones obtaining moral sentiments and the rhetoric of professionalism. The practices of rescue enable certain justification strategies for armed forces to establish moral and professional hierarchies in relation to rescue humanitarians. In order to produce these hierarchies, border officials use narratives of professionalism and expertise similar to those used by non-state humanitarians for rescue operations.

During 2015–2018, I conducted ethnographic research on both sides of the Aegean Sea. The fieldwork included participant observation in a local, non-governmental search and rescue organization in northern Lesvos as well as interviews with the following actors: FRONTEX members, Hellenic and Turkish coast guards, and rescue NGOs involved at various time periods in Lesvos (Refugee Rescue/'Mo Chara', Lighthouse Relief, Refugee4Refugees (R4R), ERCI, Proactiva Open Arms, Sea-Watch, IsraAid). The rhetoric of the "migration crisis" started in the summer of 2015 with a mass movement of people crossing the borders from Turkey to Europe. I began my fieldwork as this movement was starting, and finalized it in the summer of 2018. The immediate response of the Turkish prime minister at that time was to label it a "humanitarian tragedy" unfolding on Europe's doorstep in which "adopting a purely defensive approach" "to create a Christian 'fortress Europe'" would not work (Davutoğlu 2015). These moral sentiments have been part of the common narrative shaping Turkish political and foreign policy discourse on refugees.

The "emergency imaginary" is even more prevalent for rescue humanitarians due to the nature of the practice of border-crossing and rescue. As a result of the life- threatening nature of border-crossing requiring an immediate action, a discourse denouncing structural roots or politicizing the issue becomes much more difficult to produce (Cuttitta 2018). The saving of lives and the prevention of death become the absolute priority and humanitarian testimony and witnessing gets reduced to the numbers of deaths or "saved" lives by humanitarians. Within this temporal emergency, there is no time to think about the past, to be self-reflexive or to plan the future. This affective frame managing more effective rescue for people whose lives are saved concomitantly incorporates the rhetoric of managerialism and expertise adopted especially by the coordinators and the most experienced volunteers. During my field research, I found that young volunteers were mostly expressing their emotions for the suffering, whereas the coordinators

and more experienced people in the rescue NGOs tended to mention their trainings, past experiences and competence in the fields of rescue and medical care.

The spatial configuration of the sea border not only shapes the character and discourse of humanitarian action, but also enables particular justification strategies for the armed forces via the practice of rescue. The sea border has particular spatio-temporal characteristics in the modes of operation where the politics of death and the politics of life get more complicated. The disappearance of bodies makes the act of killing invisible, and the arbitrary use of power becomes entangled with the practice of rescue. Hence, armed forces in Greece and Turkey, not just discursively, but also practically become the ones who intercept, stop, and push/pull-back people on the dinghies, and then the ones who rescue them (see the reports and cases declared by the Alarm Phone[7]). Both the discourse and practice of rescue serve as tools to justify and give space of manoeuvre for border officials to cover the violent acts of control. When they are asked to define their primary mission, the answer is mostly "protecting lives". Both FRONTEX members and the Hellenic/Turkish coast guards specifically mention the unique, humane and fulfiling nature of their job, which is saving lives, in a very similar manner to humanitarians:

> Our first mission here is saving lives, of course. Rescue is the most significant part of our job. You see lives at risk and put all your effort to rescue them under very hard circumstances. Hence, our job is incredibly hard but at the same time quite fulfilling emotionally in terms of saving lives" (A, FRONTEX member, October 2017)

On the Greek side, the affective grammar adopted by the members of FRONTEX and the Hellenic Coast Guard contains the rhetoric of professionalism and expertise through which they seek to establish moral hierarchies in relation to rescue humanitarians. They adopt the same business language of "good professionals" in rescue operations where they represent themselves as the "real experts" having particular training in rescue operations and first-aid. They portray themselves as having technical knowledge compared to the "unprofessional, voluntary-based, and unskilled" non-state humanitarians (B, FRONTEX member, October 2017). Hence, the rhetoric of professionalization interestingly contributes to a competition among military forces and non-state humanitarians regarding rescue operations. Hence, the question becomes not only the blurred separation within the military-humanitarian assemblages (Pallister-Wilkins 2015; Stierl 2018; Vaughan-Williams 2015), but also the degradation of humanitarian acts by the same rhetoric they deploy.

Both members of FRONTEX and the Hellenic Coast Guard tend to represent themselves not just as the ones "saving lives", but also as the

"real professionals" in contrast to the "amateurs" (A, Hellenic Coast Guard, October 2017). As a Hellenic Coast Guard stated, they [the coast guards] are the ones who "teach the techniques of rescue to the volunteers who are unfortunately very unprofessional and overly emotional" (B, October 2017). They have the professional capacity to moderate their own emotions as opposed to "overly emotional" amateurs. The unprofessionalism of "amateurs" often ends up with: "jumping into the sea in a rush, putting migrants' lives in danger and trying to take photos and videos of migrants which is not an ethical approach" (C, FRONTEX member, October 2017). This dynamic demonstrates how the same assemblage of affective frame and professionalism becomes occupied and manipulated by border officials in order to justify and consolidate their morally superior position vis-à-vis non-state humanitarians.

On the Turkish side, the moral battle is pursued against the European "other". The politics of border-making in Turkey has a different character compared to its European counterpart due to the highly centralized governance without any involvement of non-state actors in the border space. The only actors who have permission to enter the military security zone are the members of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). However, the IOM's role is primarily financial, covering the expenses of the basic needs of water, and rescue blankets, etc., as opposed to being directly involved in the practices of rescue, landing (first aid and distribution of basic needs) and documenting. In contrast to the Greek side, Turkish coast guards are the only actors operating on the Aegean Sea without any witness of a non-state actor. Therefore, since they do not allow non-state humanitarians in their sphere of action, they are highly keen on displaying their morally and professionally superior position in relation to the European "other" – FRONTEX members and Hellenic coast guards. The affective frame they adopt usually refers to the "benevolent nature of Turkish identity" compared to the "rigorous policies" of the counterpart (A, Turkish Coast Guard, September 2018):

> For example, when you look at the statistics of deaths in the Central Mediterranean Sea, you will understand the unique role of Turkish Coast Guards. We are different you know, we are full of compassion as Turks. This is why the number of deaths is much lower on the Aegean Sea". (B, Turkish Coast Guard, September 2018)

During the same interviews, members of the Turkish Coast Guard also detailed the specific military tactics used in order to intercept a moving dingy heading towards the Greek islands. These mostly include naval tactics of manoeuvre with their high-speed boats and certain strategies such as removing the fuel hose using a rope hook, which they call "the apparatus of stopping". Although they frequently repeated that they never shoot at people, but deploy "methods of soft power" to intercept, all these tactics have the high potential to sink the dinghy. If the dinghy sinks as a result of their naval

tactics, then they implement a rescue operation. After listing these techniques of interception, they insist on the particular difficulty of their job, which is completely different from that of European border officials. As one of them stated: "preventing the ones exiting the shores is much [more] difficult than the prevention of entry" (C, Turkish Coast Guard September 2018).

Hence, this requires a "professional superiority" where "Turkish Coast Guards are the best in the world" (D, Turkish Coast Guard, September 2018). Some even go so far as to warn FRONTEX patrols in an uncoordinated way. When FRONTEX vessels do not follow "the proper coordinates" in patrolling by coming very close to the Turkish border, they usually create "a pull factor for migrants" which is defined by the Turkish border officials as "the magnet effect" (B, Turkish Coast Guard, September 2018). As opposed to the involvement of multiple actors causing such unintended consequences on the Greek side, they depict themselves as a fully centralized, professional and coordinated force, as well as a benevolent one.

In short, in addition to the political, social and historical circumstances, the spatio- temporal configuration of the space shapes the content and expression of moral sentiments generated and utilized by particular subjects. This piece provides particular insights from both sides of the Aegean Sea. First, it shows how moral manifestations in border politics are not exclusively the purview of humanitarians, but are also deployed by border officials. There is an assemblage of affective frame and rhetoric of professionalism utilized by all state and non-state actors in various forms contributing to a moral battle in the Aegean Sea. Second, the utilization of moral discourses differs among border officials. Whereas members of FRONTEX and the Hellenic Coast Guard seek to position themselves as "real professionals" and degrade rescue humanitarians; Turkish Coast Guard uses similar rhetoric in relation to their European counterparts by portraying themselves as the more professional and coordinated force. When "saving lives", temporal emergency and expertise become the key features of the humanitarian imagination today, it inevitably prepares opportune circumstances to be occupied, co-opted and manipulated by military actors.

The Violence of Becoming (In)visible

Leonie Ansems de Vries and Signe Sofie Hansen

"It's like a bomb in here", a migrant says as he passes us. We are looking at the aftermath of a police raid on an informal migrant settlement in Dunkirk, Northern France. Although journalists, volunteers and researchers are banned from the area, we have managed to walk in through the back, where there is no police presence. We are looking at a space of destruction. Damaged tents and sleeping bags have been dumped in a skip at the edge of

the woods. Food, clothes and children's toys are scattered across the muddy ground. We are shocked, yet we are also aware that such raids take place several times a week and have become another violent ab/normality in the lives of the migrants residing here. In this piece, we reflect on the methodological implications of our encounters in Northern France, and of researching violence more generally. Specifically, we ask: How to conduct participatory visual research in spaces of violence? What are the implications for studying migration more generally? And, how to support migrant struggles without amplifying the violence of migration management?

These are crucial questions, firstly, for ethico-political reasons. As feminist scholars have long pointed out (e.g. Ackerly and True 2008; Lugones et al. 1983), methods are political and can replicate or exacerbate social, political and other hierarchies and inequalities, however, existing scholarship has not sufficiently considered how this might affect participatory research in violent contexts. Secondly, the questions are important because we tend to shy away from discussing the messiness of methods 'on the ground', including how we are affected by and affect our research and the people we work with. One of the insights we gained from our encounters in migratory spaces of violence is that we need to discuss these experiences and feelings of unease, doubt, shock and failure in order to conduct this kind of research without becoming paralysed by the idea that we might be doing more harm than good.

In 2017, we were awarded a small grant to explore, together with film-maker Imran Perretta, how the arts can support and amplify self-narration of marginalised voices. Initially, we referred to it as 'giving voice' to migrants, however, this expression presumes that migrants have no voice of their own and thus plays into the prevailing dehumanising narratives that we set out to challenge. We made two trips to Calais and Dunkirk in August and September 2017 to ask migrants to capture their lives on film as a way of challenging dominant representations of migrants as either threatening mass or helpless victim and, more generally, to counter the violence of representing (marginalised) 'others' through our eyes. Despite having conducted similar auto-photographic projects and despite extensive reflexive discussions on the politics of knowledge production and the radically uneven impact of borders prior to setting off, we were unprepared for what we encountered.

Our previous research had drawn on ethnographic approaches: hanging out with people, becoming familiar with the environment and getting a sense of their lives, before asking those who seemed most suited for the project to capture their own lives visually over the course of a week. This time, however, as we listened to the stories of the people we met and as we observed some of the daily violence they encountered, we became increasingly uncomfortable with our planned research. People described what we came to refer to as a 'zone of irregularity', a space and time in which the legal and the illegal have become intricately entangled; a zone in-between in which notions

of legality and illegality are stretched, undermined and rewritten by all who become part of it.

The larger informal migrant settlements in Calais and Dunkirk that were destroyed in 2016 were also precarious spaces, yet these were starkly different from what we encountered in 2017. The so-called 'jungle' in Calais grew into a town with an extensive informal infrastructure, including shops, restaurants, churches, mosques and schools. After the destruction of these settlements, the French authorities adopted the explicit aim of preventing new settlements from emerging, which was pursued through regular raids to destroy everything that could facilitate migrants' conduct of daily life. The lives of the people we met thus revolved around hiding their shelters, bodies, belongings and identities to evade police surveillance and control. Even in times of relative calm – when there had not been a raid for several days – they felt increasingly nervous, knowing that the next raid could be imminent. For many, hiding had become a mode of being, not just vis-à-vis the police but also with respect to journalists, volunteers and researchers. They were therefore concerned about (in)visibility and exposure as much as we were, however, in very different ways: We wanted to support them to show their lived experiences; they showed us how dangerous such exposure could be. As one of them told us, 'The camera is too dangerous to keep. Where can I have it? I have nothing else than the clothes I'm wearing. If police find it, we're finished.'

It felt ethically and politically problematic to ask people to film their daily lives for the purpose of our research, even if our aim was to expose the range of physical and structural violence to which they are subjected on a daily basis. Or, indeed, drawing on our previous research, our initial intention was to show how they retain active (political) subjectivities despite the violence of the border regime. We sought to contribute to a body of literature that moves away from depicting migrants as either passive victims or active agents, instead focusing on the complex relationality of practices of migration management and migrant struggles for mobility (see: Ansems de Vries 2016). We would highlight the value of participatory approaches that create collaborative spaces of knowledge production among researchers and participants through self-narration and self-visualisation. Yet, our encounters profoundly challenged these ideas: We felt shocked about the conditions the migrants endured, anger about the border regime, uncomfortable about our privilege and disappointed about the prospect of our project falling apart.

This led to lengthy research team discussions about the conditions of violence and how this impacted our research participants, our research project and us as researchers. Whilst we remained uncomfortable and concerned throughout – and often angry, too – our sense of failure slowly morphed into the realisation that we had been pushed towards a more significant research question than the one we had set out to answer. We now asked: How to conduct participatory research in spaces where border

violence is most intense? How to stay true to our intentions of creating participatory spaces of knowledge production without putting migrants in danger; how to establish the limits of exposure? These questions have no easy answers, yet the crucial move was to ask them in the first place.

How did this affect our research? We agreed that it was important, politically and ethically, to show the conditions 'on the ground' and to draw attention to the violence of migration management, especially since media and political attention had waned. Despite their wariness of being exposed, the migrants we met also complained about the lack of visibility of their situation. We also agreed that we should be very careful not to produce material that could be used to enable further border violence, and, that this was an impossible task. Our tentative and uneasy responses consist of three moves, which we put forward as a starting point for developing a method for conducting (participatory) research in spaces of violence. The first move is to acknowledge that the issue is irresolvable and that this is part of the research process. Conducting research is messy, political and exhausting; and we should articulate both the messiness of the research and the impact it has on us, rather than writing these out of the process in an effort to produce a 'clean' method. Relatedly, whilst awareness of our privileged positions is crucial, this should neither stop us from developing collaborative approaches with marginalised people, nor lead us to disregard how we are impacted in the process. This requires an experimental approach of improvisation, revision, fracturing and innovation (Ansems de Vries et al. 2017; cf Aradau et al. 2015).

In the context of our project, we reshaped and improvised our questions and approach – e.g. changing the balance between and shape of visual and narrative aspects. Those people we spent most time with, we asked whether they felt comfortable filming, and we handed out cameras to those who agreed (sometimes for a few days; sometimes no longer than 20 minutes and whilst we were with them). Those who did not want to film we asked what they would have filmed if they had felt comfortable doing so. In addition, we shot still and moving images ourselves, mostly showing spaces without capturing people, feeling that, in this case, the most powerful way of countering dehumanising representations was to remove migrants from the visual frame.

The second and related move, which feminist scholars have also highlighted, concerns the need to remain self-reflexive throughout the research process. Pink (2013, 189) argues that such reflexivity should 'reveal the very processes by which the positionality of researcher and informant were constituted and through which knowledge was produced.' This also entails considering how we use our privilege, for instance by asking what we bring to light; for what reasons; and with what risks to research participants. However, it is equally important not to decide what is ethical and/or dangerous on behalf of others (Pink 2013; Rose 2016). Several migrants readily

acknowledged the dangers of exposure, however, they considered it more important to show their conditions to the wider world.

Following from this, the third move is to consider the politics of knowledge production throughout the research process, including when discussing and/or publishing ideas. We had extensive discussions about the dangers of visibility *and* invisibility both within the research team and with the people we met. Whilst imagery recognisably depicting migrants could obviously put them in danger, there were many other ways in which visibility through knowledge production could be problematic. Given that the authorities' efforts to manage mobility had morphed into a politics of exhaustion by creating and maintaining violence, destruction and uncertainty, the range of knowledge practices that could be detrimental to the migrants' well-being and safety was extensive. Showing migrant shelters with the aim of drawing awareness to their living conditions may make them identifiable to police; describing migration routes to show how people are pushed back-and-forth may assist the development of increasingly restrictive border controls; showing their continued efforts to build their lives might be used as an argument that the situation is not that bad. Yet, this also raised the stakes of showing the conditions of violence in a way that does not depict them as either threatening mass or helpless victim. Thus, whilst conducting research in spaces of violence complicates participatory methods, it also renders them more significant as a way of amplifying marginalised voices. This resonates with the idea of 'militant research' in the sense of disrupting the 'disciplining' of migration research and employing the politics of knowledge as a tool in social struggles (Garelli and Tazzioli 2013).

The radically uneven impact of the management of mobility has brought home the importance of exposing the violence of bordering practices in solidarity with those most exposed to and affected by this violence. Yet, the research process has also brought to light the importance of (self-)reflexivity on the range of borders, boundaries and exclusions that we (help to) produce and/or sustain as researchers, whether these are physical, political, psychological, epistemological or ontological. As researchers, as people affected by the violence we study, and as privileged migrants, we must carefully consider, and continue to ask questions about, the impact of conducting research in spaces of violence as we are inevitably and intricately entangled in the practices that (re)produce these spaces.

Morality, Ethics and Irresolution: Rethinking the Critique of Benevolence

Debbie Lisle

During fieldwork into the 2015 migration 'crisis' on the island of Kos in Greece, I remember feeling utterly dislocated from my surroundings. I tried

to stay critically attuned and engaged when talking to migrants, NGO workers and locals, and I tried to stay focused when physically tracing migrant routes on and off the island. But overall, I found this really difficult. Somehow, I could not hold onto the available intellectual framings of the situation, and instead kept sinking into much more foundational questions like: How could this have happened? What are we going to do about this? What am I even doing here? This constant sinking told me two things: (i) that the intellectual framings available to me were incapable of addressing the serious challenges that irregular migration posed to the supposedly unassailable foundations of security, sovereignty, legitimacy and community; and (ii) that in the face of these challenges, I became a cliché of the angst-ridden liberal intellectual: utterly focused on my own positionality, complicity and emotional responses. El Qadim and İşleyen's invitation to consider morality, ethics and rights at the border allowed me to think more carefully about these feelings of dislocation, and more importantly, to resist the urge to resolve or get rid of such feelings. Indeed, I want to proceed with this general disposition of discomfort as I consider the big questions at stake in these interventions.

I sense a similar discomfort driving El Qadim and İşleyen's call to begin a conversation between those seeking to decentre the study of borders and migration, and those pursuing the ethical turn in Anthropology. I welcome this renewed focus on morality, ethics and rights: for too long, studies of borders and migration have been limited by a belief that mobile bodies can ultimately be contained within the global sovereign order. Within this conventional frame, challenging questions of right and wrong get reduced to meaningless sound-bytes or buried within the procedural language of technocrats and professionals. In contrast, the research agenda being articulated and explored here gives us some resources to expose how complex moral and ethical struggles shape the everyday life-worlds, experiences and practices of migration. What interests me most about this conversation is its capacity to transform dominant discourses around humanitarianism and migration. Conventional efforts to 'humanely' manage increasing numbers of irregular migrants are flawed because they proceed from a normative perspective that is incapable of questioning the political work that humanitarianism is actually doing. Normative scholars simply assume the 'moral rightness' of helping – a rightness that is solidified in 'crisis' and 'emergency' conditions – and proceed to argue over the best arrangement of resources to do so. This is why Fassin's (2011) work is so important in this conversation because it provides an epistemological framework through which we can politicize the 'humanitarian reason' driving this normative formulation, and expose its constitutive logics of power.

What matters in this discourse are the humanitarians – the ones responding to migration: what does not matter in this discourse are the migrants

themselves who are rendered silent, objectified and inert. Migrants become pawns in the much more important 'policy' chess battle over who is more humanitarian, benevolent, and magnanimous. As these collected interventions show, Fassin's critique allows us to show what else is happening under the frame of 'doing good', and how, so often, 'conducting yourself well' requires the production of silent and abject bodies that you can act benevolently towards. For example, Karadağ shows us that NGO workers and security actors in charge of migrants on Lesvos do not necessarily live up to their own humanitarian ideals when they descend into struggles about who is more 'professional' in their efforts of care. Likewise, Simonneau shows us that NGO workers managing migrants who are already in the European landscape similarly undercut their own humanitarian ideals when they reproduce fixed narratives of security vs. rights which, once again, occlude the voices of migrants themselves. In a different register, Ansems de Vries and Hansen reveal their own profound moral struggles over how to make humanitarian gestures in the face of ongoing violence towards their migrant informants.

I think these critiques of the moral agents supposedly 'doing good' (e.g. NGO workers; volunteers; rescuers) are important and timely, and I appreciate my colleagues' efforts to demonstrate the tensions, contradictions and difficulties inherent in the multiple responses to irregular migration. Within a frame of morality, however, I think there is more work to do exposing the hypocrisy of benevolence; not just examining how 'doing good' often has adverse consequences for those being helped, but also the way elites use formulations of compassion, pity, charity and magnanimity to claim a moral high ground that allows them to absolve themselves of complicity. Here, I think the insights of Chouliaraki (2006, 2010) and Boltanski (2008) need to be placed alongside Fassin's critique of humanitarianism so as to expose the constitutive and unavoidable difficulties of helping: that no matter how 'good' one's intentions might be, chances are you will do harm in your mobilization of benevolence. Additionally, I think more work needs to be done critiquing the liberal individualism currently underscoring normative approaches to migration and shaping the prevailing humanitarian ethos. Indeed, El Qadim and İşleyen's turn to Postcolonial scholarship is an important starting point in this critique because it allows us to see how so much of the analysis, debate and discussion over humanitarianism is Euro-centric.

What interests me about the pervasiveness of liberal individualism in discussions of humanitarianism is that it also shapes critical positions. For example, critiquing individual acts of humanitarianism (e.g for being hypocritical, or disingenuous, or self-serving) simply reproduces the liberal individualist frame, and therefore downplays structural and systemic conditions. As a result, critical positions on humanitarianism can often unconsciously

reproduce a common liberal claim that only 'full' political subjects have moral agency. This certainly happens when we only focus on those 'full' subjects responding to migration (e.g. politicians, policy-makers, activists, academics, volunteers, philanthropists, NGO workers), and we forget to listen to the migrants themselves. In other words, we are so busy fighting amongst ourselves over who is a 'better' or 'worse' humanitarian, that we never consider that migrants themselves have a stake in those fights. This is where El Qadim and İşleyen make two crucial points; (i) that we must acknowledge the multiplicities of morality, ethics and rights; and (ii) that this hetereogeneity is best encountered in the realm of localized everyday practice. We must also be aware that the silencing of that multiplicity can also emerge from ethnographic work that avoids this 'elite' or policy focus on humanitarians, but ends up romanticizing and fetishizing migrants as the only locus of authenticity. Once again, what matters are the individual stories of migrants, and not the collective or structural forces that have produced irregular migration in the first place. While migrants are at the centre of these anthropological formulations, they are silenced by the powerful colonial frames of their representation: migrants must be exotic enough to be of interest, but never to the point of claiming agency; in other words, they must be silent, abject and in need. Here, the Postcolonial critiques articulated by El Qadim and İşleyen's research agenda are crucial. First, they allow us to expose the manner in which migrants are consistently denied full moral agency by the Euro-centric framing of the debates: they cannot speak within the elite policy-circle making decisions about their futures on their behalf, and they cannot speak within tropes that silence them as blank canvases upon which privileged spectators write their own feelings of desire and compassion. Second, these approaches allow us to begin exploring alternative and non-Western formulations of humanitarianism that trouble the foundational claims of liberal individualism.

What this research agenda helps to clarify for me is the central problem of humanitarianism: how can we critique the logics of power inherent in the humanitarian rescuer/abject migrant logic without reproducing that binary logic when we try to intervene in policy debates? For me, this means thinking about migration through ideas of encounter, which in turn, requires an epistemological shift into the terrain of ethics rather than morality (See also Bilgic 2018; Lisle and Johnson 2019). Here, I am not talking about the dominant way that normative scholars consider how the international community, or even specific states, institutions and neighbourhoods, should act in the face of the migrant 'crisis' (e.g. should we send more humanitarian aid to help build refugee camps? Should we increase our quota and take in more refugees?). Rather, I am talking about how a critical tradition within International Relations has contested the liberal individualism of moral choices by reformulating ethical claims through Derrida's work on

unconditional hospitality (Bulley 2006; Campbell 2005, 1994; Doty 2006). Here, morality is replaced by the conjoining of ethics and politics – what Derrida calls the ethico-political – in order to deconstruct conventional accounts of morality, metaphysics and liberal individualism. Indeed, El Qadim and İşleyen suggest, the work of Bulley (2016) and Rozakou (2012) mobilizes this understanding of hospitality with respect to irregular migration, refugees and asylum. This re-casting of agency means that migrants must be understood as full political subjects rather than abject vessels to be filled by the compassion and benevolence of helpers.

In an ethico-political framework, migrants are equal interlocutors who may, at times, require charity and helping, but they always deserve dignity, respect and rights. By rights, here, I am not talking about the bland platitudes invoked by humanitarian and charity circles (i.e. 'they are all humans, just like us!') that get translated through the blunt grammar of human rights (i.e. 'once they all have rights, everything will be fine!'). It is quite obvious how that frame reproduces a problematic liberal individualism. Rather, insights from critical hospitality scholars show that no matter how 'good' humanitarian intentions might be, they will always reproduce new forms of exclusion and violence. Indeed, the normative language of refugee quotas welcomes some migrants into a world of rights, while simultaneously excluding, dispossessing and abandoning others. Central to this argument is the distinction between conditional hospitality which protects the asymmetries of humanitarian rescuer/abject migrant, and unconditional hospitality in which everyone's subjectivity is at risk of dissolution. That shared experience of contingency – that our subjectivity is always at risk of being interrupted, re-ordered and deconstructed by encounters with difference – taps us into the irreducibly plural, heterogeneous and intersubjective character of ethico-political agency. In my own work (Lisle 2020), I have found this critical attention to the ethico-political has helped me to re-frame migration through more dynamic tropes such as encounter, translation, transgression, tension, friction and entanglement.

I am thankful for the two important and interrelated reminders that this research agenda offers. First, that we must work to constantly expose the fundamental questions of power that characterise humanitarian responses to migration. This means analysing not just the glaringly obvious conditions of radical asymmetry between humanitarians and migrants, but also the new and unforeseen mobilizations in which some speak whilst others are silenced, some are afforded full political subjectivity whilst others are rendered silent objects; and some act and others are acted upon. The interventions collected here suggest that we must be especially attuned to how acts of exclusion and violence are sequestered within claims about helping, for example, when offers of care become practices of control; when signals of welcome mutate into indifference and inattention; and when modes of inclusion for some

require the violent exclusion of others. Second, these formations of power are constitutive and ongoing, and much as we might like to permanently re-order the terrain of encounter, we must acknowledge the stubborn persistence of asymmetry. Certainly, we may experience fleeting moments of ethical encounter (Doty 2006, 55), or moments of rupture when our own complicity in the humanitarian industry is revealed (and here, I really appreciated Ansems de Vries & Sofie Hansen's honesty), but we must always be alive to the durability of asymmetry, and power's capacity to mutate, re-order itself, and catch hold in new ways.

Notes

1. A Durkheimian, 'deontological' approach (Karsenti 2012) defines morality as a bounded system of rules of conduct to which an agent can refer; while a Foucauldian, 'virtuous' approach (Faubion 2012), considers ethics as 'the subjective work produced by agents themselves in accordance with their inquiry about what a good life is.' An additional 'consequentialist' approach, 'which assesses conducts according to their consequences rather than their conformity with pre-existing rules or their resulting from a specific disposition of the agents. While these lineages are interesting to keep in mind, it is also important to note that it is often difficult to sort out between the different threads when analysing a given, specific situation (Fassin 2012b, 8).

2. Created in 1966, it is originally involved in international solidarity projects. Since the 2000s, it focuses on the call-out to national and international authorities about the respect of fundamental rights in relations between Northern countries and the global South. The CNCD is considered as the privileged interlocutor of the Belgian federal government on international cooperation. The NGO is nowadays split between a Francophone and a Flemish branch. In this paper, I focus on the advocacy work as experienced by the Francophone part.

3. Based on a paper document « Pour la justice migratoire – dossier de campagne », written on September 2017, as well as the description of the campaign online, https://www.cncd.be/-campagne-justice-migratoire- (consulted on September 2017).

4. Based on the « Manifeste 2018 des assemblées locales réunies pour la première session plénière des états généraux des migrations », Etats Généraux de la Migration, published online on May 28th, 2018, https://eg-migrations.org/Manifeste-des-Assemblees-Locales-reunies-pour-la-1ere-session-pleniere-des (consulted on May 2018).

5. I conducted a textual analysis using the online software Hyperbase, version 10. I constituted two corpuses. One corpus called "Campaign" contains texts from the two campaigns (press *communiqués*, the manifesto, political recommendations) (number of occurrences: 104 876, umber of texts: 2). The other corpus is called "NGO", it contains annual reports by NGOs in France and in Belgium involved in the campaigns (number of occurrences: 104 876, number of texts: 6). The corpus "NGO" is used as a reference of the lexical context on how the NGOs in Belgium and in France, usually talk about migration and from where the two targeted campaigns have emerged. The textual analysis compares how the campaigns frame migration issues regarding how the NGOs individually frame them as part of their regular activities.

6. I chose these textual units because they represent classical terms in current migration controversies between a security & control threat narrative, a right associated to

mobility narrative, and a global economy (development and opportunities through migration) framing (see Benson 2013).

7. https://alarmphone.org/en/category/reports/.

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