After Humanitarian Reason?

Formations of Violence, Modes of Rule and Cosmopolitical Struggles at the »European Margins«

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Abstract: Over the last years the EU border regime has undergone a remarkable shift towards political technologies that act in growing disregard towards the suffering and possible death of migrants on their way to Europe. Especially since the EU-Turkey Deal in March 2016 this development has once again drastically deteriorated the situation on the Aegean islands. The ›hotspots‹ have been transformed gradually into open air prisons, in which lives are put on hold, different forms of violence overlap and an enclosed population is exposed to disproportional epidemic risks. Combining perspectives of a political and engaged anthropology as well as of Critical Border and Europeanization Studies this dialogue discusses the shape and effects of processes of spatial fragmentation at the ›margins of Europe‹. What does daily life look like in these politically produced zones of exception in times of COVID-19? How are they linked to the imperial and colonial histories of Europe, on the one hand, as well as to global regimes of controlling mobilities on the other hand? Which political rationalities and modes of governance overlap here? And taking the growing relevance of »necropolitics« in these border regimes into consideration: Should we assume that the era of »humanitarian reason« has come to an end?

Keywords: European border regime, Moria, humanitarianism, violence, cosmopolitics

The European border regime in the Eastern Mediterranean has steadily tightened over the last years. It has brought about different forms of spatial fragmentation serving the purposes of regulating and repelling migration. The »hotspots« on the Aegean islands stand out as politically created zones, in which life is put on hold, different forms of violence overlap, and an enclosed population is exposed to disproportional epidemic risks of Covid-19. Taking into consideration the growing relevance of different political technologies that act in disregard towards the possible death of migrants on their way to Europe: should we assume that the times of »humanitarian reason« have come to an end?

Jens Adam: Over the last years, you have followed as an ethnographer as well as an activist how the military base close to Moria has transformed into a hotspot camp for the European border regime. My first question is: what do you know about the

current situation? How did Covid-19 affect the daily life in the camp and its relations to the surrounding social, spatial and economic contexts on and off the island?

Valeria Hänsel: The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted further the reality of the situation on the hotspot islands. On the one hand, it made the disenfranchisement of people on the island even more obvious. On the other hand, however, it facilitated the covering-up of severe rights violations, after it became increasingly difficult to monitor the constantly deteriorating situation. Overall, the threat of the pandemic exacerbates and accelerates previous disenfranchisement, which we witnessed since the conservative Nea Dimokratia government came to power in Greece in July 2019. The Covid-19 pandemic is not the direct cause of these rights violations; the pandemic merely facilitates their implementation under the cover of a state of emergency where basic rights can be suspended for »security reasons«. For example, systematic pushbacks have been carried out from the beaches of Lesvos, Chios and Samos, and they have been covered-up by the need to implement quarantine precautions (Legal Centre Lesvos 2020a). Above all, the pandemic has facilitated the implementation of detention measures, and therefore it paved the way towards migrant incarceration that has been, for a long time, an adopted policy by the Greek government.

In this context, the Covid-19 pandemic has also played a crucial role in the events of September 8, 2020, when Moria burned to the ground. Since March 2020, a curfew had been imposed on the camp amid a severe lack of supplies. While there were only very loose Corona prevention measures implemented for the local population, many people living in the Moria camp were trapped without enough food. The Greek state prevented all non-repressive handling of the pandemic in the camp. For example, Médecins Sans Frontières had to close its corona clinic located next to the camp after a threat of imposing a huge fine for being an »illegal clinic« (Médecins Sans Frontières 2020). The pandemic facilitated the success of measures that had failed before. In the first months of 2020, the Nea Dimokratia government tried to erect new sealed-off prison-like facilities on the hotspot islands of Lesvos and Chios. However, massive riots by the local population prevented the implementation of the project (Are you Syrious 2020; dm-aegean 2020a). Eventually, the Covid-19 pandemic allowed the implementation of the policy of lockdown and segregation of migrants from the local society using the already existing camp facilities.

Around the time when the first positive Corona tests appeared, the government paid more than 800,000€ to a private company to fence the Moria camp with NATO wires and install surveillance technology (StoNisi 2020). Only days after that, on the night of 8th September, the first fire broke out, and over three days Moria burned down in multiple fires. After inhabitants of the camp had been tested positive with the Corona

virus and were to be brought into quarantine facilities, fear spread in the camp that everyone would be locked up. Then a fire started and quickly spread throughout the camp (Legal Centre Lesvos 2020b; dm-aegean 2020c).

Within less than a week, a massive new camp was set up in a former military area on the island. Most people who had stayed in Moria before were forced to go to the new facility. The government used several tactics to move the asylum seekers to the new camp. It advertised incentives for those who register, pressured police operations, and threatened to close the cases of asylum seekers who did not register in the new camp. The authorities later also evicted the solidarity refugee accommodation facility Pikpa, and moved their residents to the new camp, which was set up to serve as a semi-closed facility. In practice, it turned out that the supply within the new camp is even worse than it was in Moria. There was not even enough water and toilets, since only tents have been built. With the first heavy rain, many of these tents were flooded with water and became unusable (Refocus Media Labs 2020). At the same time, munition and toxic soil from the former military base was found on the campground (Aegean Boat Report 2020).

Zooming out from the latest events, it is important to observe that the policy of confinement that is based on the pretext of a state of emergency is not entirely new. The recent events in Moria are only the peak of the policies adopted long before. Under the EU-Turkey Statement of the 18th of March, 2016, flight-migration was strongly securitized as an alleged threat, and it was governed under the motto of emergency response. The EU-Turkey deal was introduced as »a temporary and extraordinary measure which is necessary to end the human suffering and restore public order« (European Council 2016). The opposite was the case: the hotspot islands were sealed off and people were trapped for months or even years on the five Greek islands (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos) close to the Turkish shore (Hänsel 2019). The hotspot camps were transformed from registration centres—designed also to enable relocation—into detention facilities for long-term confinement. While they were officially planned as border zones regulating the entry into the European Union, they have in fact been transformed into spaces of abandonment.

Jens Adam: You just recalled the zones of exception that the EU has created to control and repel migration at its external borders. I would like to dig deeper into the possible effects of such zones on the epidemic. In one of his articles, Didier Fassin refers to historically and politically created »environments« in order to explain why HIV hit the Black population in South Africa so much harder than other communities (Fassin 2009a). In brief, he argues that a history of land confiscation and expulsion of the Black population, the creation of exploitative labour regimes, the segregation of

Black mine workers in overpopulated barracks, the virtually systemic recourse to sex work, and some further dynamics give rise to environments in which the virus could »thrive«. Thus, Fassin relates the massively unequal distribution of HIV in South Africa—as much as the deadlier course of the disease once it had broken out—to the socio-spatial surroundings in which people were forced to live. Are these observations in any sense informative for the zones of exception of the EU-border regime? Do we have evidence that the politically created environments in which migrants are forced to live propel the infection with Covid-19?

Valeria Hänsel: It would be very interesting to apply this analysis to the situation in the hotspots. The camps deliberately create an environment that can quickly lead to the suffering and death of thousands of migrants trapped inside. The Covid-19 pandemic affects everyone regardless of nationality but it also exposes the basic principles on which the current hotspot system is built: when it comes to a real threat, those left behind and abandoned are the people marked as others. Packing 15,000 people in the camp makes it impossible to implement any safety measures: there is neither enough clean hygiene facilities, nor enough soap, disinfectants or masks. Densely packed, people are forced to queue for hours for basic food needs.

Already before the virus, the number of deaths among the residents in Moria was extremely high because diseases were insufficiently treated (Médecins Sans Frontières 2017). People were allowed to go to a hospital only if they got a special permission to leave the camp. Covid-19 spreads at a much higher rate within the camp than among the locals living outside of the camp, for whom prevention measures were implemented (Pantelia 2020). Also, because of the severely limited access to health care within the camps, the impact of the virus is much worse inside the camp than for the local population.

The different values of life established through the encampment system, the »bio-inequality« (Fassin 2009b), create condition for suffering and death. Environments in places such as the Greek islands, with their particular role in the European border regime, are not only given geographies; they are also politically created zones serving the purpose of regulating migration and organizing inclusion and exclusion. Building on Jason de León's work on the US-Mexican border (2015), Elizabeth Dunn (2019) recently recalled that the instrumentalization of the surrounding environment—such as in the Mexican desert or, in our case, the Aegean Sea and the eastern Aegean islands—can be an integral part of bordering practices, using certain geographies to secure national borders. Furthermore, the death of migrants is tacitly accepted as not active killing but »something more than letting people die and something less than killing them«, as we saw in Greece in March 2020, when several people were shot at

the Greek-Turkish land border, and in early July when four people died in a pushback operation in the Aegean Sea. There is furthermore a fine line between the creation of deadly spatial arrangements and forms of active killing.

In this context, I would like to point out the general trend towards the fragmentation of the European border regime. The hotspot islands play a key role within this process and we describe them as an »extraterritorial space« (Hänsel/Kasparek 2020). Despite their location on EU-territory, they form a border zone that is removed from the surrounding system: firstly, the islands became a geographic buffer zone restricting the movement of people. Secondly, they became a »special legal zone« (Hänsel 2019). A special transit procedure—the fast-track border procedure—is exclusively implemented within the hotspots. And thirdly, a situation with a severe lack of accountability has been created. For example, the EU border police, FRONTEX, and the EU asylum office, EASO, are not subject to the local judicial system. There is neither sufficient control by the European or national parliaments nor a clear system in place how they can be held accountable for rights violations. We argue that this setup leads to a situation where basic rights are effectively suspended for migrants, since it is in practice nearly impossible for them to validate their own rights.

Jens Adam: While listening to you, I had to think about discussions about the »margins« as—politically, economically, and socially—produced zones, in which different forms of violence overlap and where the exposure to physical violence becomes more likely. Some colleagues traced the relationships between systematic exploitation, environmental degradation, the exclusion from social infrastructures or continuous disregard and the proliferation of interpersonal violence at the »urban margins« of the Americas (Auyero/Bourgois/Scheper-Hughes 2015). They have shown how, under such circumstances, physical violence can become a relevant resource for daily survival or for social mobility (Auyero/Kilansi 2015; Karandinos et al. 2015). On a conceptual level, they propose a notion of violence as a »subterranean undercurrent« permeating these spaces designated as »the margins«, »spreading laterally« or as a »concatenated« process (Quesada 2015).

I was wondering to which extent such perspectives can shed light on what is happening on Lesvos. The violent transformation of the Mediterranean into a »death zone« (Mbembe 2019a; 2019b) or a »deathscape« (De Genova 2017), as an effect of the militarization and externalization of the EU-border policies, has already been documented and criticized by many researchers (Andersson 2017; Heller/Pezzani 2017; Stierl 2017). But do you see above a similar concatenated presence and overlap of different forms of violence in Moria? And could it make sense to speak of the

hotspots as politically produced »European margins«, in which violence spreads and gets a creeping presence?

Valeria Hänsel: The discussion of entangled and overlapping forms of violence at the »margins of Europe« can shed light on many aspects of the events we are currently witnessing on the Greek islands. There is a variety of forms of violence and discriminatory practices at play that interact and often cause each other: the structural conditions of confinement—that is visible in the martial setup of the camp structures, making them look like high security prisons instead of accommodation centres for refugees—join the lack of goods and facilities for basic needs. This comes together with the violence that people already experienced in their home countries and along the flight route, which follow them even after they reach the camps. Networks imposing violence on the camp inhabitants could easily spread in camp structures, such that of Moria, where hardly any protection was provided for migrants.

Currently, one of the most dramatic forms of physical violence are pushbacks in the Aegean Sea. Since March 2020, they became a new normal. Most people who eventually manage to reach the Greek islands have suffered several violent attacks by the Greek or Turkish Coast Guards and illegally been pushed back from the Greek waters into the Turkish ones. Some of those who managed to arrive on shore have simply »vanished« from the beach and were brought back to Turkey (dm-aegean 2020b; Legal Centre Lesvos 2020a). On top of this, migrants are criminalized; some of those who were not pushed back and eventually arrived between March and April in Lesvos, were charged with the alleged offence of »illegal entry« (HIAS 2020; dm-aegean 2020a).

The violence then continues in the next stage, in the Greek hotspot camps. There is no safe environment to process any of the experiences made on the flight route and beyond; instead, people face police violence, violence of neo-fascist groups, as well as intercommunal violence (Voices of Freedom 2020). In their desperation, many people also harm themselves or commit suicide.

Regarding exploitative structures within the camp, I will briefly outline an example: several people in the Moria camp were stabbed to death with knifes, sometimes because they refused to give their phones to gangs trying to rob them. There is a strongly racialized dimension to this—victims were often Black. And perpetrators were often minor refugees who were traveling alone and were then drawn into criminal structures established in the camp, in a desperate attempt to secure their own survival. As minors, they do not get cash assistance from NGOs and often do not even receive a tent, because they are required to stay in an especially protected and supplied minor section. But in reality, they have no chance entering this section,

because it is constantly overcrowded. So, they are left without any assistance and become an easy target for criminal networks that offer them protection. The police is not particularly interested in stopping these activities, probably because these violent structures kept the Moria camp under control. There were even incidents, where it became clear that the police directly made use of migrant networks violently oppressing others, using them to search the camp for people for whom the police had an arrest warrant.

Beyond the forms of direct physical violence, the bureaucratic process of the asylum procedure puts an enormous pressure on the people in the hotspot camps. Above all, hangs the sword of Damocles, rejection of the asylum application and deportation. This causes a gruelling state of limbo and fear, where affected people live in a constant state of detainability and deportability (De Genova 2019). On top of this, there are experiences of everyday racism and neglect within the lengthy asylum procedures and its bureaucratic apparatus, which lead to strong frustrations. This is also due to the specific legislative context of the islands as a border zone of the European Union with differential treatment of different groups, based on nationality and gender.

As far as I know, you conceptualize violence as a relational phenomenon. Can you explain how far a relational concept of violence can help us understand the situation on the hotspot islands? How can we connect it to the post-colonial dimension of bordering practices?

Jens Adam: Thinking about violence relationally implies, first of all, expanding a probably more established narrow understanding that conceives of violence as an intentional physical act that harms a respective victim (Riches 1986). For that purpose, we can build on different contributions that have led to grasping »invisible« forms of violence (Bourgois 2009): Pierre Bourdieu's »symbolic violence«, for instance, highlights the widespread »misrecognition« of the in fact permanent violence that underlies many social hierarchies and forms of domination (Bourdieu 2001; Bourdieu/Wacquant 1992). Similarly, different reflections on »structural violence« emphasize the massive economic inequalities that continue to result from (colonial) histories of exploitation, the shape of international trade relations or the structurally uneven access to resources, education, health services or protection (Farmer 2004). Additionally, normalized »everyday violence« has been pointed out in public institutions or bureaucratic acts (Scheper-Hughes 1992; Basaglia 1987) as you just described them. From these perspectives, violence cannot be limited to the outbreak of physical force; it rather constitutes a steady condition or capacity of societal as well as global relations.

To avoid an undifferentiated and rather unproductive lament about the deplorable omnipresence of violence in our world, I would propose addressing violence from the perspective of its effects: that leads us, on the one hand, to threatened, denigrated, damaged, shortened or full scale destroyed lives, and on the other, to spatial forms and geopolitical zones of exception, where violence can spread and victims of violence often become further brutalized. Consequently, damaged and neglected lives or such purposefully created or tolerated spatial forms can be our analytical starting points to explore and criticize the violent undercurrent of geopolitical and societal relations. As far as I can see, in places like Moria, we are confronted with both types of effects. Quite obviously, these zones of exception are products of political decisions and political protraction, of the collective irresponsibility of European and national decision makers. And we should not hesitate to qualify the manifest forms of detention, interruption and rejection as violent, as they obviously harm lives or inhibit their unfolding. Moreover, a relational concept of violence calls on us to link the »European margins« to the zones of war or environmental degradation from which refugees were forced to escape in the first place, in addition to the violence in all its forms along the migration routes. And then, we must talk about the postcolonial character of our world order, of course.

Valeria Hänsel: In your book »Decentering Europe« you propose to study contemporary Europe from its geopolitical, epistemological and postcolonial margins. Could this approach enable us to include the Greek hotspot islands in our analysis? On the other hand, what do the hotspot islands tell us about the configuration of European modernities?

Jens Adam: Indeed, this book relates quite well to what we just discussed, as it argues for an understanding of Europe as »a heterogeneous, multiple and incomplete project, a product and producer of its global entanglements and post-colonial relations« (Adam et al. 2019: 7). In doing so, we aim at overcoming a »methodological and conceptual Eurocentrism« (ibid.: 14) that can be identified as a rather normalized rationality in many of the political, academic as well as journalistic approaches towards »Europe«. We argue that the »question of Europe« has so far been dominantly debated as an »internal affair« involving the relations between European states and societies and the supranational institutions that have been created as part of European integration over the last decades. Consequently, this well-established perspective somewhat systematically disregards the global entanglements that have substantially contributed to bringing about contemporary Europe, and which are of major importance to understanding the current processes of geopolitical reconfigura-

tions. Against this background, the culminating crisis of the European project, which we have been observing over the last fifteen years or so, should, at least partially, be conceived as a sequel of this denial. In other words, to renew the European project, we have to address it as a global question, a global problem, and a globally entangled formation.

With regard to places like Moria, I would like to point out three analytical perspectives that would take up these conceptual reflections and that could be combined quite productively with partially similar approaches elaborated within critical border studies (Hess/Tsianos 2007; Hess/Kasparek 2010; Hess et al. 2015):

First of all, our approach suggests working on alternative genealogies of the European border regime that becomes so manifest at the hotspots on the Greek islands. In this spirit, we can decentre hegemonic discourses on »Europe's borders« and the alleged necessity to protect them by examining the present situation as just one, rather awkward, historical moment in a centuries long history of political and cultural trans-Mediterranean entanglements (Römhild/Knecht 2019: 73). This allows us to analytically reposition the contemporary camps on the Greek islands by re-centering the Mediterranean as an extensive and mutable, transregional and transcontinental space that has been created most of all by the manifold mobilities, relations and exchanges between its shores and beyond. Only then, the arbitrariness and brutality of the current border regime will come even more clearly to the fore.

My second point is closely connected to this interest in alternative genealogies and draws on our understanding of the »imperial« as a constitutive component of contemporary Europe (Adam et al. 2019: 28). From my point of view, the involved practices of detaining and controlling, of interrupting the movements of some and enabling the mobility of others, of classifying people according to their origin, worthiness, usefulness or vulnerability, should all be closely examined as re-enactments of imperial rationalities. If nothing else, this will show that these practices would hardly be possible without building on the old colonial divide between »us« and »the others«, between those who allegedly »belong« to Europe and those who do not. In one of our previous conversations, you described Moria as a micro-space that prevents people from leaving a (post-)colonial constellation. I think this statement catches it quite well as it makes clear that Moria is not only a purposely created hotspot of EU-border policies but an ethnographic hotspot that allows us to trace currently ongoing global dynamics of securitization, of racialized classifications and redistribution of wealth in their historical embeddedness. In this spirit »Decentering Europe« can imply bringing Moria in line with the many spatial arrangements and processes of borderization that aim at denying or interrupting the entanglements that colonialism has brought about.

This directly leads to a third perspective: it is »Europe as such« that is at stake in its border zones. These daily practices of categorizing, interrupting, detaining and repelling that one can observe on the Greek islands point to the question in which Europe do we want to live: in a »postcolonial racial formation« (De Genova 2014: 294) that aims mostly at defending the wealth of its elderly, and predominantly white population, or in a globally entangled cosmopolitan democracy that drops its claim for exclusiveness?

But let me ask one question that might contain a component of hope about a possible future: can we conceive of the camps as cosmopolitical sites? Here, I am not thinking about the rather normative understandings of »cosmopolitanism« that consciously appreciate cultural or religious difference, or the need to learn how to deal with the very co-presence of difference. I have no doubt that the inhabitants of Moria had to undergo that kind of learning process in their daily coexistence. What I have in mind are perspectives that underscore that the very composition of the world might be at stake in these zones, on which different fault lines of a postcolonial world order overlap (Adam 2018: 317; Latour 2004). Can we examine Moria as a site where political struggles about the future shape of the world, about rights of access and movement, and about forms of conceiving and sharing the planet are taking place? Or is that perspective too far away from the more basic struggles for subsistence that constitute the daily life in the camps?

Valeria Hänsel: For sure, the Greek hotspot islands form places that assemble and reinforce global struggles. Located at the very frontier of the EU, the hotspot islands have become a laboratory where anti-migration policies are implemented in order to contain migration. However, we still see the impact of the autonomy of migration. Even if people were several times attacked and detained on their journey to Europe, many eventually succeed in crossing to Greece. Seeing how much money, staff and equipment is spent on preventing this migration, the tenacity with which people fight for a better life trying to reach the EU is remarkable. As you also pointed out, this situation shows that the islands are in fact a culmination point where struggles around global inequality, exploitation, racist exclusion as well as the sovereignty of nation states and the European Union materialize within a small border area. The very movement to cross the border symbolically dividing the global north from the global south is in itself a political act that challenges the system of global inequalities.

At the same time, the small islands themselves are cosmopolitical sites where a variety of different actors cooperate or struggle against each other: there are asylum seekers from numerous countries, and activists, NGOs, international and EU organisations from different European countries and beyond. There have been countless

self-organized protests by migrants on Lesvos, sometimes also supported by activists from Greece and from other EU countries. In a way, new political alliances are forming and cosmopolitical networks are emerging. While these networks have become more solid since 2016, the direct struggles, such as protest marches, are however often violently oppressed. Those who suffer most from this are migrants forced into subaltern positions. The peak of self-organized protests on Lesvos was in 2017, when hundreds of people from all the different nationalities protested in a well-organized manner against the EU-Turkey deal and for the opening of the islands. They also blocked the port and prevented deportations. However, the protests were repressed, the camp was raided, and people were sweepingly detained, deported or convicted in court. Since then, the protests weakened (Amnesty International 2017; Legal Centre Lesvos 2018). The measures of dividing people through a selective asylum and detention regime also fuels intercommunal conflicts and makes it difficult to unite movements on a bigger scale. Nevertheless, the fire that destroyed the Moria camp was no coincidence; it was a form of resistance in a desperate situation where people's voices were systematically ignored. These developments have an impact on the EU level as well. The EU cannot entirely ignore the situation it created in the hotspots.

But let me come to another question I would like to discuss. While the islands play a significant role within the European border regime, several authors have pointed out that the phenomena of spatial fragmentation, including the formation of particular sovereignties, security and legal systems, are not particular to European territory and migration control; they are globalized and closely bound to the age of neoliberalism (Sassen 2006). You recently mentioned that Achille Mbembe—reflecting on the Palestinian situation—argued that »large sections of the world are becoming Gaza« (2017). How can we understand this claim and to which extent does it shed new light on the Greek hotspot islands and their role within the European border regime?

Jens Adam: Indeed, Achille Mbembe has discussed Gaza as paradigmatic and as a laboratory for contemporary modalities of rule that he designates as the »the normalization of abandonment«—thus the spread of a form of domination that is hardly if at all concerned by the damage and destruction it exerts on the lives and living conditions of a given population (2017). From my point of view, two components of this argument can inspire our attempts to understand what is going on at the European margins.

Firstly, Mbembe argues that the present situation in Gaza points to a recurrent problem of rule, with which many colonial, expansionist or state projects had to grapple: »What should we do with people who happen to be in our midst, but whose very existence is a threat to ours« (2019b)? He recalls quite different »spatial exclusion-

ary arrangements« (ibid.) that were created as an answer to this question over the last centuries. Gaza represents a particularly salient contemporary example of this longer history.

We could claim that this specific problem of rule has further gained in importance in our times which Mbembe characterizes so convincingly by a close »dialectics of entanglement and separation« (ibid.). From this perspective, the erections of walls and fences, the fragmentation and enclosure of territories, the exclusion and encampment of specific groups of people and comparable practices we can observe all around the world are tightly linked to the increasingly unavoidable fact that our lives are, on a planetary scale, »inextricably exposed to each other« (2018). Consequently, the hotspots can be read as reactions to a contemporary version of the above mentioned question: »What shall we do with these people that knock on our doors, that are with us, but not of us« (ibid.)?

Secondly, Mbembe calls our attention to the overlaps of quite different political rationalities and modes of rule as part of contemporary border and security regimes (2017; 2019a). With regard to Gaza, he observes a »modulated blockade« that decides who and what might enter or leave under which conditions; military interventions that can be ramped up at any moment; different forms of extrajudicial killings and collective punishment; all that combined with humanitarian strategies that still aim at reducing some of the suffering. As an effect, a »peculiar carceral space« is created, »in which people deemed surplus are governed through abdication of any responsibility for their lives and their welfare« (2017).

Even though I recognize certain political and methodological risks of exposing the case of the Israeli occupation as ***the*** *paradigm of contemporary state violence, I still believe that this perspective on Gaza as a prefiguration of »what is yet to come« (2019a) enables us to ask urgent questions about the character as well as about the historic and geopolitical embeddedness of the spatial arrangements created as part of EU-border policies on the Greek islands. I am especially intrigued by Mbembe's suggestion to trace, in a detailed way, how different political rationalities overlap in a respective site such as Moria, and how this interlacing might create a rather specific socio-spatial arrangement. As ethnographers we should be able to document how the »ingredients«, the respective combination of techniques and modes of rule, can differ from site to site. In that sense, Moria will turn out to be specific and therefore different from Gaza—without denying the broader dynamics and links, as well as the translocal circulation of techniques of surveillance and modes of rule.*

These remarks lead us to a final aspect that is already implied in our title: »After humanitarian reason?« I think that many of us share the impression that something has changed over the last years, that the frames of reference and central moral and

political coordinates have substantially shifted. Even though Didier Fassin argued that »humanitarian reason« has always combined »compassion« and »repression« in governing precarious lives (Fassin 2012: 5), it looks like the repression-part has mostly taken over in the meantime. A sober account would need to take notice of the continuing militarization and externalization of the EU-borders, the criminalization of refugees' protest as well as of refugees' supporters, the steady expansion of denied rights, the habitual encampment of a growing number of people under untenable conditions, the increasingly open recourse to necropolitical modes of abandonment and letting die on the Mediterranean, the narrowing down of the »compassion slot« and of the willingness to alleviate even the most obvious suffering—What is your impression? How do these components assemble? And what do these developments tell us about the current state of humanitarian reason at the European margins? And what might come next?

Valeria Hänsel: I would agree that the modes of rule on the hotspot islands have shifted towards abandonment. While in 2015 and right after, the humanitarian discourse was a central frame of reference, it has since then lost significance. Still, a variety of NGOs provide different sorts of assistance within and outside of the camps. They literally save lives but at the same time enact control and contribute to maintaining the current form of the hotspot system. The asylum law following the EU-Turkey deal, for example, still included humanitarian exceptions that lead to exempting those designated as »vulnerable« from the fast-track border procedure and transfer to the mainland. Speaking with Fassin, already in this period, the shift »from right to favour« (Fassin 2016) was obvious, since only some were spared from deportations because of humanitarian concerns. Since then, the humanitarian notion has not entirely vanished but became less significant. For instance, the humanitarian exception within the asylum procedure was removed from Greek law. Beyond that, NGOs and activists were put under strong pressure by some neo-fascist and right-wing inhabitants of the islands, and some are even criminalized by the Greek state. Most NGOs either refuse to work in the new camp on Lesvos, citing the terrible conditions, or fail to get required government permissions.

Simultaneously humanitarian discourses are increasingly instrumentalized to justify the rising significance of the carceral system. On Kos, we see, for example, that all people arriving since January 2020 are detained directly upon arrival in closed camps, including families and children. On Lesvos, the humanitarian crisis, after the fire in the Moria camp, enabled the swift erection of huge new space of confinement that lack basic living facilities. This way, »humanitarian reason« serves to implement repressive detention policies.

This is the rise of »necropolitics« (Mbembe 2019c). It is an era when it has become normal to let those perceived as »others« die in border spaces deliberately created as deathscapes, provoking virtually no public outcry. Still, I would not say that it is a post-humanitarian era—actors such as Solidarity Cities and Seebrücke still struggle to evacuate the islands and small numbers of people have been relocated to other European states. But measuring their effects in numbers, this is a drop in the ocean. As Fassin outlines, allowing for humanitarian exceptions has always been part of humanitarian governance that is, at the same time, used to affirm the precarious state of the masses and to prevent them from leaving their position.

I cannot foresee the future, and I do not know if these developments continue or if the world will become Gaza. However, within the current political developments with the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and the reform attempts of the Common European Asylum System—which are strongly driven by the German state—we see the intention to systematically use certain geographies and spatial arrangements within Europe and beyond as zones where groups of people cannot access basic rights. The reforms follow the rationale of exclusion and confinement through pre-checks, filtering and fast-track procedures within transit areas. This is why we argue that the hotspot islands serve as blueprint for emerging broader EU migration policies (Hänsel/Kasparek 2020). The New Pact on Migration and Asylum will strongly influence the process of spatial fragmentation within the EU, and it will manifest global inequalities through preventing people from even entering the asylum system.

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Jens Adam (PhD) holds a position as senior researcher at the U Bremen Excellence Chair Research Group »Soft Authoritarianism«. As a cultural/social anthropologist he focuses especially on current struggles around democracy and public policy, the intersections of humanitarianism and political violence as well as on contributions to a ›critical Europeanization research‹.

Ilker Ataç ist Professor am FB Sozialwesen der Hochschule Fulda. Schwerpunkte in Forschung sind Migrationspolitik und lokale Politik, soziale Bewegungen und Zivilgesellschaft, und undokumentierte Migration. Er ist Mitherausgeber der Zeitschrift *movements*.

Sanchita Basu lives in West Berlin since the 1980s. The 1990s influenced her activism. Her political standpoint developed in opposition to White feminists whose center-periphery logic she did not accept. This struggle led her to her project: Noziz-we - the first feminist educational project in Berlin for women of the ›two thirds of the world‹. Today she is the director of ReachOut, a counselling center for victims of racist, right-wing and anti-Semitic violence.

Enis Bicer is a social scientist and post-doctoral researcher. His research interests are on racism and discrimination, immigration societies, media and discourse research, intergroup conflict and social networks. Currently, he is staff member at the research project "The Threat Scenario of 'Islamist Terrorism' from the Perspectives of Politics, Media and Muslim Communities".

Lina Brink is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Augsburg. She finished her Ph.D. on media representations of protests in Egypt 2011-2014 at Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, working as a member of the junior research group »Transcultural Public Spheres and Solidarity«. Her research fields are discourse research, critical media studies, social movement studies, cultural studies, gender studies and postcolonial studies.

Jasmin Eding is a social pedagogue. She has been active in the black movement for over 30 years and is co-founder of ADEFRA e. V. (Black Women in Germany) and co-author of the book Children of Liberation: Transatlantic Experiences and Perspectives of Black Germans of the Post-War Generation (Ed. Marion Kraft 2016). She describes herself as an anti-racist-feminist-lesbian grassroots activist. ADEFRA roots is a forum by and for black women that fights against racism and other forms of discrimination.

Esin Gizem Göksoy hat Soziologie, Philosophie und Interkulturelle Kommunikation studiert. Sie promoviert am Lehrstuhl für Ethnologie an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München und untersucht die soziopolitischen Auswirkungen der ›neuen Türkei‹ in Deutschland. Sie setzt sich für antirassistische Perspektiven sozialwissenschaftlicher Forschung ein und kämpft gegen natio-ethno-kulturelle Zuschreibungen.

Helena Ayoka Grebner hat Theaterwissenschaft und Interkulturelle Kommunikation studiert und im Fachbereich Ethnologie zur Lebensrealität illegalisierter Menschen in Deutschland an der LMU in München promoviert. Sie arbeitet im flüchtlingspolitischen Bereich.

Valeria Hänsel does her doctorate at the Institute for Cultural Anthropology/ European Ethnology at the Georg-August University of Göttingen, Germany, on the reconfiguration of the European Border Regime in the Aegean. As activist she is engaged in support work on Lesvos Island. Valeria Hänsel is member of the *Network for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* and the network *deportation monitoring: aegean.bordermonitoring.eu*.

Charles Heller is a Research Fellow at the Graduate Institute in Geneva. He is co-director of the Forensic Oceanography project based at Goldsmiths, University of London, and a co-founder of the WatchTheMed platform. He is currently co-president and the Migreurop network.

Marie Hoffmann lebt in Marburg. Sie studiert Politikwissenschaft und arbeitet(e) währenddessen bei Pro Asyl und an der Philipps-Universität Marburg. Ihr Forschungsinteresse gilt in der kritischen Migrations- und Grenzregimeforschung besonders materialistischen und neogramscianischen Ansätzen. Die jüngsten zivilgesellschaftlichen Kämpfe in der deutschen und europäischen Gesellschaft nach dem Sommer der Migration bilden ihren momentanen Arbeitsschwerpunkt.

Bernd Kasparek is a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for European Ethnology and the Berlin Institute for empirical integration and migration research, both at Hum-

boldt University. His book *Europa als Grenze. Eine Ethnographie der Grenzschutz-Agentur Frontex* was published by transcript in June 2021. He is a member of the network for critical migration and border regime studies and member of the editorial board of movements.

Leoni J. Keskinkılıç ist Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Berliner Institut für empirische Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (BIM) der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin und promoviert zur Migrationsgesellschaft in Ostdeutschland am Institut für Europäische Ethnologie der HU Berlin. Sie arbeitet zu den Themen Migration und home-(un)making, Teilhabe, urbane Nachbarschaft sowie soziale und politische Ungleichheit.

Jessica Korp studied social and cultural sciences at Goldsmiths College and wrote her bachelor's thesis on collective melancholy and empire. She is involved in antiracist self-organisation, empowerment and social engagement in cultural contexts. She is interested in postcolonial migration history, labour in late capitalism and everyday life as a stage for social interactions. She is a MA student of European Ethnology, an active member of the Activistar Film and Video Productions Collective and Sonic In(terv)entions.

Stefanie Kron, PhD in Sociology (Freie Universität Berlin), is a Professor for Social Work at the Evangelische Hochschule Berlin. She specializes in international migration movements & migration politics, sanctuary & solidarity cities, transnational labor struggles & ethnographic research methods. Recent publications: With Henrik Lebuhn (2020): Building Solidarity Cities. From Protest to Policy, in: Feyzi Baban & Kim Rygiel (Eds.): Fosterin Cultural Pluralism through Solidarity Activism in Europe. Everyday Encounters with Newcomers. Cham (Switzerland): Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 81–105. With Stefania Maffeis (2021): Die Stadt als Sicherer Hafen: Kosmopolitismus und gelebte Solidarität, in: Susemichl, Lea /Jens Petz Kastner (Hg.): Unbedingte Solidarität. Münster: Unrast. S. 159-172. Moving cities Map (city profiles Barcelona & Zaragoza): moving-cities.eu.

Philipp Lottholz is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Collaborative Research Centre/Transregio 138 "Dynamics of Security" and the Institute for Sociology, Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany. His research focuses on peace, conflict, security and political and social change in post-Socialist Eastern Europe and Central Asia. His work has been published in International Peacekeeping, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding and Central Asian Survey.

Stefania Maffeis is Professor for Political Theory at the University of Applied Sciences for Social Work (EHS) in Dresden. She has written extensively on Hannah Arendt's political theory and its transnational reception, on the political philosophy of migration as well as on the approach of the transnational circulation of ideas. She teaches and researches within the field of political and social philosophy, focusing on the topics of migration and transnational citizenship. In her current research project she analyses intellectual and political struggles in Europe on the implementation of a human right to free global movement.

Polina Manolova is a sociologist working on intra-EU migration, technologies of migration governance, precarious employment and migrants' structural incorporation in urban contexts. Currently, she is a postdoctoral fellow and lecturer at the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, researching and teaching on issues of migrant incorporation, EU citizenship, intra-EU inequalities and global regimes of labour and social reproduction. She is a member of a newly-formed network for critical approaches to intra-EU regimes of migration, labour and social reproduction (www.eumignet.de) and 'Radio Migrant: voices from South-East Europe' podcast.

Alejandra Nieves Camacho is a student of the Master's program in International Relations at Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt Universität and the University of Potsdam. Her research interests are migration, racism and gender studies. She is a former member of the research project "The Threat Scenario of 'Islamist Terrorism' from the Perspectives of Politics, Media and Muslim Communities". Currently Alejandra is a research assistant at the German Center for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM) in the Migration Department.

Felicitas Qualmann studied Intercultural Conflict Management and Area Studies Asia/Africa. Her research interests are racism and discrimination, colonial continuities, and decolonial protest, as well as conflict transformation. Currently, she is a research associate in the BMBF funded project: „The Threat Scenario of 'Islamist Terrorism' from the Perspectives of Politics, Media and Muslim Communities". Felicitas is a member of Berlin Postkolonial.

Lisa Riedner is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis at the University of Munich (LMU). Her research interests lie in ethnography and regimes of intra-EU migration, labour and social reproduction with specific focus on urban spaces and racism. Her publications include the monograph "Arbeit! Wohnen! Urbane Auseinandersetzungen um EU-Migration" (2018, edition assemblage, open access). She is a co-editor of *movements*.

Gonca Şahin is a PhD student in the Gender Studies Program at Kadir Has University. Her research interests are migrant networks, transnationalism, informal labor, queer refugees, and intersectionality. Currently, she is working in an NGO where she focuses on economic empowerment and social cohesion of refugee and local women.

Helge Schwiertz is a postdoctoral research associate at the Chair of Sociology and Social Theory at Universität Hamburg and corresponding member of the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) at Osnabrück University. His key research areas are social and political theory, theories of radical democracy, citizenship, and solidarity, social movements and urban protests, racism and migration. He leads the international research project *Enacting Citizenship and Solidarity in Europe »From Below«: Local Initiatives, Intersectional Strategies, and Transnational Networks* [ECSEuro] and is a co-editor of *movements.*

Nadiye Ünsal is a PhD candidate working on coloniality of power and migration and currently the communications manager of the Antidiskriminierungsverband Deutschland *e.V.* and a lecturer. She is part of self-organized intersectional community movements (e.g. Coalition against Racism Berlin). She has organized commemoration activities for the victims of the National Socialist Underground-Complex and victims of racist police violence. She is a member of the *Activistar Film and Video Productions Collective*.

Tijana Vukmirović studied Literature, Gender Studies and Political Science. She is active in the field of migration and intersectionality and works in migrant-diasporic organizations. She came to Germany in the 1990s to live with her “Gastarbeiter”-grandparents and still does not have a German passport. Yugoslav-Berliner and is active as a language mediator since childhood. She is a member of the Activistar Film and Video Productions Collective.