

**Hospitality: The Communicative Network of Humanitarian Security in Europe's
Borders**

Abstract

Introduction: The dominant ethics of the Mediterranean “migration crisis”ⁱ

More than one million people arrived at the Mediterranean shores of Greece and Italy throughout 2015 and until March 2016ⁱⁱ. How has Europe responded to this unprecedented challenge? Early signs of benevolent reception, such as the ephemeral openness of Germany and Sweden, gradually turned into resolute hostility, with Eastern European member-states sealing their borders and others following suit. By March 2016, around 57,600 refugees were encamped in Greece with those seeking asylum waiting for a hoped permission to reside and the rest facing deportation. This trajectory shows Europe’s response to the ‘crisis’ to be a precarious combination of competing ethical claims, security and care; an ongoing “search for the balance of humanitarian needs with concerns over sovereignty”ⁱⁱⁱ. The focus of this paper is the communicative structure of this dual morality: to uphold the humanitarian imperative to care for vulnerable others and, simultaneously, to protect European citizens from potential threats by those same others.

Our starting point is

Drawing upon the Information Systemic definition of “hospitality maps” as military spaces

securitization: (i.) networks of mediation, referring to the technological connections between and across media platforms (and how these remediate, intermediate and transmediate information), and (ii.) networks of discourse, referring to the meaning formations or voices articulated through these multiple mediations (human rights, military/security procedures, practical management, solidarity). These two dimensions, the mediation and discourses of the 2024 0 0 0.2d

performative capacity of communication to produce and circulate differential meanings about different populations. For instance, through ‘neutral’ practices of passport control or biometrical profiling, migrant populations are positioned within particular “biological epistemologies” (Ticktin and Feldman 2010) that define whether they are “legitimate” or “illegitimate” for border crossing in line with Western governments’ security interests. Evidently, then, securitization does not approach the border simply as a physical line separating territories, such as European from non-European lands, but views it as a symbolic practice of “bordering” that “seeks to rhetorically identify and control the (very) mobility of certain people, services and goods that operate around its jurisdiction” (Vaughan-Williams 2015: 6). In Chios^v, for instance, rhetorical identification occurs through the Registration of new arrivals. Here, institutional forces of protection, such as the Greek police and Frontex, name and classify the new arrivals according to nationality, thereby selectively granting them a set of limited rights: some could claim asylum and hope for admission in certain European destinations, while others are detained and subsequently expelled back to non-European countries. Humanitarian agencies are also crucially involved in this process – when NGO staff fuse into the securitization process by operating on and supporting the Registration process through translation assistance and information-sharing.

Indeed, critical migration studies and securitization literature have long been sceptical of the ways in which state-controlled bordering is entangled with humanitarian practices (Dalakoglou 2016; Dillon 2008). The articulation of protection with benevolence, the critique has it, subordinates the latter to the former, prioritizing discipline over care. Theorised in terms of its biopolitical potential, the humanitarian aspect of bordering is here seen primarily as a technology of power that aims at the management of life, in the form of ensuring survival, but not fully engaging with the humanity of mobile populations. In the UNHCR camp, for instance, set up close to the original registration centre in Chios, care for such

populations involved the use of number-based identification bracelets and the distribution of one nutrition bar a day per person. Such practices, the literature claims, may be providing bare essentials but do not grant them the dignity they deserve as human beings nor do they listen to their

humanising effects of bare life. Rather than conflating a theoretical account of power as biopolitics with the empirical account of how historical practices of the border actually address the needs of human suffering, our approach aims at establishing the relative autonomy of the latter over the former and at keeping the two in a reflexive tension. Following this dialectical approach, which allows for a more open understanding of biopolitical effects, we next introduce our conceptual framework and analytical approach.

Conceptual framework: Bordering practices as a communicative architecture

In order to avoid the determinism of bordering a (al) 0.2 (3537 8c)0.2 (onc) 0.8 BTu.24r 0 0 50 0 0 T20 014

networks: mediation and discourse. *Networks of mediation* refer to differential distributions of technological platforms and information flows across three media routes: *remediation*, which is about vertical mobility of social media content shifting onto mass media platforms (for instance, from local Facebook posts to the local or national press); *intermediation*, which is about horizontal mobility across social media contexts and contents (for instance, when an activist Facebook message becomes a twitter hashtag or when an activist twitter message appears in local websites); and *transmediation*, which is about mobility from online to offline contexts (for instance, from online Facebook contact to offline cooking and food distribution by the “Collective Kitchen”; Chouliaraki 2013a for this analytical vocabulary). *Networks of discourse* refer to the differential distribution of discourses of international law (rights), geopolitical interests (policy mandates), activism (solidarity), or practical management (information, coordination, etc.) that circulate by different agents. Here, the analytical task is to identify which discourses of reception shape which practices of care or security across spaces of the border: Registration centre, UN camp, volunteers’ kitchen etc.

informants but also perhaps as women willing to participate in the care process, relationships of trust developed quickly and we were able to obtain significant insight into the everyday practices of those involved. Our data collection relied mainly on multi-sited observation (divided between us) and, where appropriate, participation, online communication (through our inclusion to local Facebook groups), document collection and interviews. In many cases, the latter took the form of informal conversations rather than protocol-driven events and, occasionally, took place in-between hectic activity; for this reason, we chose to prioritise informality and mutual trust and kept notes instead of using tape-recorders^{vii}.

What emerges out of our rich fieldwork material is a pattern of intersecting media and their meanings that can be categorised in terms of three core communicative spaces: military securitization, securitized care and compassionate solidarity. Networks of mediation refer to the configuration of media platforms and their contexts through which agents connect and flow through one another or, in other words, through which they are remediated, intermediated and transmediated; in military securitization, for instance, networks of mediation refer to the connection between Eurodact (digital fingerprint identification) technologies, situated in an old factory (the Registration centre), and international crime registers, available through the intermediation of intelligence data, in the course of migrant identification. Networks of discourse refer to the formations of meaning that each network of mediation articulates and to the identities established through these meanings; in compassionate solidarity, for instance, intermediations of Facebook and twitter activist messages bring together discourses of compassion with critical discourses of “Fortress Europe”, thereby constructing activists as radical political subjects who go beyond benevolent humanitarianism and practice a form of counter-hegemonic resistance against the neoliberal bordering practices in Europe. Let us now explore each dimension of this

people a day), this achievement was largely due to the working ethos of its team, with its relentless processing rates (shifts 24/7) and co-ordination abilities. The Chief of the registration process justified this performance on multiple grounds, speaking of the team's sense of patriotic duty and professional commitment, but also their compassionate spirit, "we can't let those poor people and their small children wait for days, as they do in Mytilene [Lesbos]"; one of the officers further mentioned that they do it because of their team spirit and professional devotion to their chief: "we would never let our Chief or each other down".

This exceptional performance needs to be contextualised within the wider frame of the Greek economic crisis that was, at least partly, responsible for the inability of the state to support local securitization infrastructures, as well as to provide staff with adequate salaries. While, therefore, the infrastructure was scrambled together by the entrepreneurial initiative of the military chief (a 30-year-old Special Forces officer and his staff), salaries remained deplorably inadequate, especially in comparison to the Frontex ones of the European team. Income discrepancies became, consequently, the focus of light-hearted jokes among the Greeks, despite the disproportionate burden of work that inevitably fell on them. What are the networks of mediation and discourse that organized these processes of securitization?

Remediation. Even though the Registration centre was a critical node in the mobility route of migrants, it was absent from the process of remediation – hardly ever republished or broadcast in mass or social media. This is for obvious reason. Regarded as matters of national security and classified as highly confidential, de-briefing and identification were kept resolutely outside the spotlight of publicity – we, as researchers, were allowed to take only a very limited number of selected shots. Media reports, in general, came primarily from refugee camps, rather than registration centres, and mostly involved ceremonial snapshots or statements of visiting state officials. Consequently, the networks of discourse available in mainstream media, throughout the 2015 period, involved the remediation of both

securitization claims (such as the Greek Minister's of Humanitarian Aid, requesting "European partners to send more officials to help register and process refugees") and human rights claims (when the same minister pleaded for Europe to stop using racist criteria for reception: "statements such as 'we want 10 Christians', or '75 Muslims' ... are insulting to the personality and freedom of refugees")^{viii}.

Intermediation. The efficiency of registration as a site of

–particularly in light of information that one of the November 2015 Paris attack terrorists had entered Europe through Leros, an island in Chios’ vicinity.

Transmediation. Moving from online to offline contexts, transmediation was about corporeally-grounded rather than digital encounters. The process, nonetheless, did foreground the role of passport and of the migrants’ habitus (linguistic, bodily) as themselves technologies of mediation that produced meanings about where people come from (passports), and how they relate to registration officers (body language and verbal communication). Indeed, according to the officers, the arrivants’ readiness for eye contact, their posture, tone of voice and dressing code predisposed them in particular ways – with the middle-class habitus of Syrian families perceived as respectable and dignified and thus regarded as “like ours”, while others’ (for instance, Pakistanis’ and Africans’) is seen as a habitus of outsiders and potential “cheaters”. Migrants were, in turn, acutely aware of the role of such technologies in border control and intentionally attempted calculated performances of “the refugee”: claiming to have lost their passports (piles of Pakistani or Algerian passports were accumulating by the main road outside the town of Chios) and pretending to be Syrians in the hope of being granted asylum. Discourses of transmediation, much along the lines of intermediation albeit through different technologies, subordinated thus a discourse of humanization and care for others to security and the protection of “our own”. These same technologies and discourses, however, simultaneously offered resources for migrants to negotiate their identities in the hope of claiming entry and continuing their trip.

Military securitization, in summary, relied on a network of mediations that combined (i.) official practices of censored mainstream publicity, such as leaders visiting camps (remediation) with (ii.) digital practices of biometrical governance that guarantee the security prerogative (intermediation) and (iii.) local engagements, juridical and cultural, through the mediation of passports and habitus (transmediation). This network produced, in turn, the

others would demonstrate a more profound sense of care: “at nights, I cannot sleep for long. I need to visit the camp again and again to make sure they sleep well and have a good rest. They are in the middle of a long journey”,

intermediation further encompassed rumour or word-by-mouth, which NGOs regarded as an effective way to spread news; “the ripple effect” of these modes of communication was instrumental in “raising awareness” and “inspire trust” among local populations but also reaching those on the Turkish coast waiting to cross. While maximising communication efficiency was a priority among care structures, however, NGOs were reluctant to contemplate using social media more inclusively - Consequently, and despite their smartphone ownership and literacy^{ix}, migrant populations were kept outside the digital mediation and discours

mixed discourse of practical guidance (where to buy boat tickets or eat) and advocacy (UN's asylum application advice or the human rights of refugees) that included migrant and refugee groups as well as local populations. These networks were organized around a differential distribution of media use: inter- and transmediations among bigger NGOs occurred through digital media, only selectively including satellite ("secondary") NGOs, but those between NGOs and local or mobile populations occurred through pre-digital technologies; finally, inter-migrant digital communication was further restricted to minimal, formulaic phrases. Consequently, even though this mediation network allowed for a range of relevant voices to be heard, its structure was ultimately highly hierarchical. The major actors of securitized care did not only perpetuate uni-directional, top-down channels of communications with all actors other than themselves but, by being reluctant to explore interactive technologies, they fully silenced the migrants.

Compassionate solidarity

Driven by a progressive politics of solidarity and operationalized through informal and emotionally-charged acts of support towards newcomers, the network

regulated through a feedback loop that linked the digital to the physical, in three ways. First, it was through social media that calls for help were circulated beyond the core group of activists, appealing for collaborations; for instance, through invitations to bring donated good to particular locations or participate in low-key fundraising activities. Second, transmediation through Facebook groups or WhatsApp facilitated social get-togethers among groups of volunteers and activists, which functioned as support mechanisms of “decompression” after the intense emotional and physical strain of reception (many reporting inability to sleep and one reporting recently developed heart problems). Third, it enabled semi-public systems of accountability or feedback, as in the case of the volunteers at Ayia Ermioni; every time a dinghy arrived at the village port, locals hectically mobilized to support arrivants and, at the end of their exhausting shifts, lasting up to twelve or even eighteen hours, one of them would regularly return to Facebook to report on the day. In this way, the transparency of their activity and its moral economy unfolded on the ground as much as online.

Compassionate

that prioritised emergency care over struggle in the exclusionary policies of the European establishment: “We are a movement, not a bureaucratic organisation”, they said, and

“We ... used to know them, now we don't anymore. They

bearing biopolitical effects, in that it reaffirms the border as a site of biological and legal knowledge, and simultaneously producing new relationships of openness, solidarity and socio-political critique. It is this hybrid moral order that we attempted to capture through the concept of “hospitality”.

Hospitality, let us recall, refers to a flexible regime of reception that contains and regulates mobile populations at the same time that it contains and protects them. Even though the term originally refers to the capacity of military techno-spaces to enclose moving targets, offering them enough space for manoeuvring, hospitality, we argue, can also aptly capture the techno-discursive capacity of bordering to encompass refugees and migrants, allowing them various degrees of mobility in Europe. The moral order of hospitality resides in this hybrid capacity, suspended as it is between controlling enclosure and enabling mobility. Drawing on our analysis of its three communicative structures – military securitization, securitized care and compassionate solidarity – we now conclude by reflecting on three key points of tension and contradiction that define the moral order of hospitality, in the outer borders of Europe.

Military securitization is defined by a dual tension:

matter of the power relations thro

was further evident in the discourses of compassionate solidarity, which often articulated with the cultural stereotypes and moral judgments towards Europe's "others", combining a socio-political critique of the West with Orientalism. This contradiction constitutes a major existential challenge for those involved in practices of compassionate solidarity, compelling them to engage in a constant negotiation of various and often opposing affective states: compassion and guilt; dedication and powerlessness; sadness and indignation; hope and despair.

Conclusion

Our empirical research of Europe's communicative architecture of the border, during the 2015-16 "migration 'crisis'", revealed the border as a hybrid network that produces its own moral order, hospitality. Hospitality, we demonstrated, relies on three overlapping networks of mediation and discourse that both reproduce transnational hierarchies of humanity and accommodate an ethics of hospitality and critique. Hospitality is also

