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International Affairs Working Paper 2009-03
March 2009

Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings, November/December 2007.

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Graduate Program in International Affairs
The New School
International Affairs Working Paper 2009-03
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www.gpia.info/working-papers

ABSTRACT

Immigrant and asylum-seeker camps like those in Libya and Morocco are the creation, manifestation, and part of the new, borderless Europe. They consist of a new post-colonial, new-liberal border-zone, a space continuously negotiated by the movement of people, new forms of surveillance technology, and new processes of supranational government. The camps are a response to both a "security" and "humanitarian" crisis, brought into reality through two governing regimes: one of policing and one of protection. The precise mechanisms produce spaces which not only divide people into citizens of one nation-state or another, but produce certain populations as surplus humans.

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The Offshore camps of the European Union: At the border of humanity

In 2000, the first reliable press reports revealed that internment camps for migrant workers existed in Libya. *Le Monde Diplomatique* reported that there were several camps in which migrants and refugees lived, and had done so since 1996 – about 6,000 Ghanaians and 8,000 people from Niger in just one of them alone. It was later revealed that in the fall of 2000, "pograms" were perpetrated against the migrant workers in these camps, killing somewhere between 130 and 500 sub-Saharan Africans (Dietrich 2005). In 2004, the Italian state TV channel RAI showed photos of a Libyan refugee camp; hundreds of people were depicted in a heavily guarded courtyard; no sleeping facilities were visible in the barracks (Dietrich 2005). Subsequently, it was reported that between 2003 and 2005, the Libyan government deported close to 145,000 migrants to sub-Saharan countries (de Haas 2006), usually dropping them off in the desert.

In Morocco, similarly, ad-hoc camps for undocumented immigrants and/or refugees exist at important entry and exit points, for example, close to Ceuta and Melilla; near the Algerian border at Oujda; and at Laayoune, the jumping off point for the Canary islands. There are also camps near larger cities. La CIMADE, a French-based immigrant and refugee rights group, issued a report on the camps in 2004, suggesting that of the 95 people interviewed, 67 had suffered violence at the hands of the Spanish civil guard, and 15 at the hands of the Moroccan forces, including several people killed (Schuster 2005). The report stated that this violence had occurred despite the fact that some in the camps had already been recognized by the UNHCR (the UN refugee agency) in Mali and Guinea, and others had legitimate claims for asylum.

How, we might ask, did these camps come to be? Who established them, for what purposes, and what relationship do they have with one another? If you picked the usual European suspects, then you were right: they are the creation and the manifestation of the new, borderless Europe. Borderless, here, seems to mean that Europe can once again extend its reaches into select areas. These camps have been "officially" in the works since 2003 when the British proposed two forms of "externalized asylum," from regional protection zones (RPZs) located in the region where refugees are fleeing from, to transit processing centres (TPCs) in the countries bordering the EU (Schuster 2005:1), but they were clearly imagined and informally in process well before then. While many of the EU members had strong initial negative reactions to the British proposals, including France, Spain and Sweden, in 2004, they too signed on as willing participants in the production of these off-shore zones of Europe, where unwanted people are warehoused (Minder, 2004). Germany and Italy were the quickest to put their weight behind the idea of camps in North Africa; indeed, in October 2004, without waiting for EU legislation, Italy deported 1,000 people to Libya from Lampedusa, and Libya, unencumbered by international conventions to which it is not signatory, in turn deported them to Egypt and Nigeria without checking whether any of them had any claim to asylum (Schuster 2005:12).

Let's return, though, to the nature of these camps. I want to suggest that they are not, precisely, part of Libya, or Morocco, or Algeria for that matter where they also exist, but that they are a part of Europe, insofar as they are its constituent outside; more specifically, they consist of a new post-colonial, neo-liberal border-zone, one which does not have clear territorial lines, but which exists more as a mobile, exceptional, law-free

zone, a space whose contours are continuously negotiated by the movement of people, new forms of surveillance technology, and new processes of supranational government. Indeed, the camps on the outer territorial fringes of Europe must be seen as part of the same regime as those on the territorial inside – here, I speak of the detention centers for immigrants and refugees housed throughout Europe in airports, police stations and even in private hotels which, for a profit, have agreed to become agents of incarceration for the state. This "camp universe" (Dietrich 2005) is the border zone I am addressing.

The creation of these off-shore camps is premised on a double sided logic of crisis or emergency. First, the camps are a response to what might be called a "security" crisis. This includes the increasing numbers of migrants and asylum-seekers attempting to enter Europe, which has in turn been conflated with an entirely different phenomenon: the fear of global "terrorism," as represented in Europe by the 2004 Madrid train bombings, and the 2005 London subway bombings. Second, these offshore camps are a response to a sense of "humanitarian" crisis, exemplified by the great numbers of people dying as they try to enter EU states. One association for victims of undocumented immigrants (The Association des Amis et des Familles des Victimes de l'Immigration Clandestine) estimates that 3285 bodies were found in the Straits of Gibraltar alone between 1997 and 2001 (Schuster 2005:2), and another report suggests that 10,000 people have drowned in the Mediterranean since 1992 (Dietrich 2005:5). The humanitarian side was clearer in the media a few years ago: for instance, when the refugee boats docked on the Mediterranean coast in the 1990s, Italy and Spain declared a humanitarian state of emergency, and local inhabitants brought the refugees clothes, blankets and food. While we see less and less of these public welcoming gestures, they remain an integral part of the logic of crisis.

I am interested, then, in this logic of emergency or crisis -- what Craig Calhoun has called "the emergency imaginary": what kind of politics does it produce? What kinds of spaces? What follows is some very preliminary thinking about this new border space. First, I want to examine what this "border" space consists of, what it looks like, and second, even more briefly, I will look at how it is governed. From the preliminary knowledge I have thus far, I want to propose that we think about this in terms of what Balibar (2004:126) calls a fragile new "superborder." In other words, this involves a border which brings into relief the distinction not between Europe and its Others so much as *life zones* and *death zones*, in an increasingly divided humanity.

Borders

So, I am going to turn first to the nature of this border zone. Some of the camps that help constitute this zone have been officially instituted, such as those in Libya. These have been pushed forward by Italy in particular, through an agreement in 2004 on "illegal immigration." Libya agreed to control the borders of the Sahara, in return for financial and material support. The camps in Morocco, on the other hand, have been created informally by migrants themselves, while the Moroccan government negotiates with the EU about the creation of "externalized" border control such as transit centers. Incidentally, this agreement between Morocco and the EU involves signing readmission agreements in exchange for development aid, financial support for border controls, military equipment, and limited temporary work permits for its own immigrants. Yet, despite a plan to formalize these transit camps, Moroccan police forces have arbitrarily destroyed several of the ad hoc migrant camps – the most notorious case was in Fall 2005

and involved 1,500 people being deported and abandoned in the desert (de Haas 2006:6). My point here is that the camps – as a part of this border zone -- are unstable, they are moving targets; occasionally they are set up by supranational organizations like the UNHCR and the EU, or via agreements between states, and sometimes, by the refugees and migrants themselves, and their smugglers.

How can we identify the border, then? What are its defining characteristics, beyond its mobility? Unlike "traditional" nation-state borders, this "superborder" is not based on territorial distinctions in anything more than a generalized way. It incorporates both internal and external territorial borders: the internal camps of Europe, and its external ones. I want to mention three ways that we can think about this border. First, it is about a distinction between *types* of people. This goes beyond racial or ethnic categorizations or typologies; if we think of it in Balibar's terms, there are people who are part of the "life zone," and then there are surplus populations who are given over to the "death zone." The goal of the border is to produce a distinction between these types of people. Of course, the point is that it is not clear how to identify a member of the life and death zones, for in the border space, they could be either – this is the moment of transition. It depends partially on who is doing the patrolling, and yes, it depends on racial, class, gender and religious ideologies, and how they map onto the global north and south. Certainly, on the whole, the border zone intersects with and intercepts the circuits of capital and people that flow, as Nancy Scheper-Hughes has noted, from South to North, Third World to First, poor to rich, and black and brown to white, female to male (2000:193). But even then, things get tricky: if Morocco is given a limited number of EU residency permits for its citizens in exchange for cooperation with the EU, Moroccans

can fall on the "inside" of the European super-border. But which Moroccans? When are Moroccans considered a security threat and conflated with terrorists, and when are they welcome? How can we tell? Who decides? Similarly, Libya quite abruptly is no longer an international outcaste, no longer immediately consigned to surplus humanity – two months after agreeing to deport unauthorized sub-Saharan migrants over Libyan territory to their countries of origin, the EU lifted its 18 year arms embargo, stating that Libya had abandoned its weapons of mass destruction program (de Haas 2006:6). Similarly, sub-Saharan Africans are not alone in traveling via the Sahara to the North Africa coasts – they are not the only targets for camps; they are not the only foreigners, the only "enemy" if we follow the logic of security crisis. Increasingly, migrants from China, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are doing the same. They fly to West African capitals such as Accra or Bamako, and then follow the common trails via Niger and Algeria to Morocco and Europe. They may go by foot, but they may also fly parts of the way. So who is kept out? Where? And by what means? The border is thus constituted at least in part by the people themselves – those designated the unwanted. They are its ground, but the ground is constantly moving.

If moving people constitute one dimension of the border, then the control technologies used to track them is another. In fact, they help constitute this virtual border. So, then, this is a second defining characteristic of this border space – it exists as a set of spatialized technologies – an outward manifestation of changing risk. In fact, rather than focusing on specific territorial locations, or even on specific people, these control technologies are used to find "where the greatest damage by irregular migration is imminent" (Dietrich 2005:4). Stated otherwise, the border is where danger is imminent –

how is that for unstable? Morocco and Spain began joint naval patrols aimed at catching boat migrants in February 2004 using the technology called "SIVE" (Spanish Integrated Service of Vigiliance of the Straits), which links all accessible data in real time in order to identify and follow all ships in a controlled area (Schuster 2005:13; Dietrich 2005:4). New biometric technologies allow for the tracing, monitoring and control of people with machine readable passports, iris scans, fingerprints, tagging, CCTV and IDs, and the goal is that EU countries provide the North African buffer zones with these technologies. Optronic and radar technology is being tested to detect refugees by air all over the Mediterranean. The Spanish Civil Guard has rediscovered the surveillance tower; from above, visual and electromagnetic identification technique can continuously scan the Straits of Gibraltar and the Moroccan coast. Italy is using drones along Libya's desert borders (Dietrich 2005:4). For now, new technologies are coordinated by ad hoc centers – sea surveillance centres in Spain and Greece, an air surveillance center in Italy. One center is responsible for "risk analysis." In 2003, a coordinating unit (of the practitioners, the PCU) was formed, calling itself "a crisis centre" that depends on focal points at external borders (Dietrich 2005:4). The language is clear – this technology is mobilized in response to a perceived emergency, a war even – this is a frontline. Here, a long-term political plan for immigration is very far from every radar screen.

The third constitutive aspect of the border zone I will mention is that of endemic violence. This is present in the camps and the routes that lead to the camps – most are by definition lawless zones. This violence is predictable, according to Agamben – for him, the nature of the camp is precisely a space of exception, where laws and norms are suspended, and thus were violence can be enacted with impunity. Humanitarian

organizations like MSF have been present in the camps since 2003, and report escalating violence against immigrants; according to testimonies of the migrants, 25% of MSF's patients seek medical treatment as a result of persecution and attacks, primarily caused by Moroccan police forces, Spanish police forces, criminal gangs and trafficking mafia (Daoud 2005:2). Just as Hannah Arendt describes in the pages of *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* a logic of national security enables an independent foreign policy of the police (288). In the absence of laws protecting migrants and refugees in these insecure border zones, it is an increasingly transnational police force that rules.

The destruction of makeshift camps, and the deportation and abandonment of camp residents in the desert, is, perhaps paradoxically a regular part of the violence of camp-life In addition to reporting "inhumane and degrading treatment" in the camps, la CIMADE (again the French immigrant and refugee rights group) claimed that more than half of the people they interviewed in camps had already been deported and had returned, in some cases up to 7 times (Schuster 2005:15). Of course, the violence is not only in the physical deportation, but in the place of abandonment – i.e. the desert, which kills untold numbers; in fact, we could say the violence begins the moment one starts on a journey to the other side of this superborder. The poorest may walk as far as 7,000km over 3 months, on a treacherous journey characterized again by violence, aggression and rape. Rape is a regular feature of this zone, one of its many gendered dimensions (Valluy 2007:16).

This border zone can be imagined then as layers, or perhaps overlapping circles – from the routes people take, to the camps they end up in, informal or formal, virtual or real, or on the outskirts of North African cities, or even in European cities. It is a space

forged by multiple actors, in multiple locations, moving, always moving. Here, for instance, the desert is a camp, a detention center, and a death zone, as well as part of a life zone – the route to life, a space of hope.

Government

I want to conclude now by way of a comment on how these border zones and camps are governed – how they are produced to be the zones I have just described. The double-crisis of security and humanitarianism that justified the creation of the camps is translated in practice into two contradictory but conjoined transnational governing regimes: one of policing, and one of protection. The agents of government include transnational humanitarian and human rights groups; the EU, the EC, and various state governments; organizations such as Frontex, the new EU border control agency; the military; smuggling and trafficking networks, mafia, and a very powerful, transnational police force.

It is this tension between protection and policing inherent in the logic of emergency that helped to produce the confusing headline that appeared in Agence France Presse in January 2005, "EU wants to help control immigration by protecting refugees." The article describes a pilot project conducted by the European Commission and the UNHCR, to give greater protection to refugees in their home regions and in transit countries. This includes financial assistance to 5 countries in North Africa and training in asylum practices and procedures. Through this lens, the transit camps I've been talking about are purportedly not about policing, but about building new forms of protection; the UNHCR's stated goal is to revitalize the 1951 refugee convention by better equipping

States to address new challenges and flows. However, as Jerome Valluy has pointed out, instead of exemplifying an ethic of protection for refugees, the UNHCR is complicit in this new regime of externalized of policing and borders, explicitly furthering it under the cover of helping to slow or mediate its effects (Valluy 2007). In fact, never has the sacred principle of non-refoulement been so disrespected.

In a similar manner, the various networks that work to protect trafficked migrants have been complicit in creating a protocol that criminalizes all forms of unauthorized border crossing; this has transformed domestic immigration law into a transnational legal obligation. In this way, countries of origin and transit are conscripted as agents of the states of destination (Hathaway 2008); those conscripted become the policemen, the border guards of a one-way highway, not the protectors.

I will end then in suggesting that we further examine the precise mechanisms that policing and protection get conflated as part of this particular logic of crisis, as this seems to produce spaces such as this border zones (these offshore camps of Europe), which not only divide people into citizens of one nation-state or another, but produce a swath of humanity as non-citizens, as everything but people deserving to be recognized as human.

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