

Re-producing the Humanitarian Border

Paolo Novak

To cite this article: Paolo Novak (2022): Re-producing the Humanitarian Border, Geopolitics, DOI: [10.1080/14650045.2022.2105699](https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2022.2105699)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2022.2105699>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.



Published online: 01 Aug 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 501




View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Re-producing the Humanitarian Border

Paolo Novak 

Development Studies, SOAS University of London, London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

ABSTRACT

Scholarship dissecting the EU humanitarian border has consistently emphasised its productive nature. The enmeshment of securitarian and humanitarian logics produces new forms of control that transform pre-existing techniques and practices; new geographies of connection and demarcation; new (non) knowledges and realities that discipline migrants. This article builds upon these contributions yet expands their remit to account for the productive relation that articulates the humanitarian border with place-specific social forces and dynamics. It is in this relation, the paper argues, that the border finds the conditions of possibility for its concrete emergence and reproduction. Through the study of asylum seekers' reception centres in a central Italian province, an important node of the humanitarian border, the paper, first, underscores how borders externalisation connects an amalgam of places designated as both internal and external to the EU, into non-contiguous forms of border control. Second, it highlights how these forms of border control do not operate in a *tabula rasa*, but rather articulate with place-specific social dynamics cutting across different spheres of social life. The humanitarian border not only produces death and fabricates worlds, but it also constitutes a productive relation with the social context(s) in which it operates. Lest we conceive the relation between border controls and migrants' subjectivities as a dialectic that is avulsed from the social contexts in which it takes place -lest we conceive it, in other words, as unfolding on an ontological plane of its own- it is crucial to reorient studies of the humanitarian border towards an appreciation of the latter's place-specific articulations.

Introduction

Borders externalisation, understood here as the process of activation of border control functions away from borderlines through collaborative initiatives performed by state and non-state actors,¹ has characterised migration management practices for well over three decades (Casas-Cortes et al, Intro to this Volume). Unsurprisingly and in parallel to the proliferation of these policies and practices, academic literature critically engaging with the externalisation drive has also burgeoned. Drawing from varied epistemological perspectives,

CONTACT Paolo Novak  pn4@soas.ac.uk  Development Studies, SOAS, Development Studies, 10 Thornhaugh St., London, WC1H 0XG, United Kingdom.

© 2022 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

these contributions have underscored how externalisation measures undermine the right to seek asylum (Moreno Lax 2017), reconfigure governance scales (Cobarrubias 2020), articulate with imperialist (Pradella and Rad 2017) or national political projects (Smith 2015), and express biopolitically and necropolitically violent governmental strategies (Tazzioli and De Genova 2020). Emphasising the transformational character and effects of externalisation, this literature has produced increasingly sophisticated tools for conceptualising it and for delineating political responses to it.

In what follows, I build upon and engage with this broad field of enquiry by seeking to understand the conditions that allow for the emergence and reproduction of externalisation strategies and practices in place-specific settings. In delineating this investigative perspective, I am inspired by recent contributions who have sought to understand how an examination of the every day practice of externalisation sheds new light on the unanticipated and often unpredictable effects of global and local agency (Savio Vammen, Cold-Ravnkilde, and Lucht 2021). Importantly for what follows, these contributions have also underscored how the proximity of the past (Ould Moctar 2020) is significant for understanding how externalisation is confronted, contested, and performed, within and outside institutional spaces (Iversen et al. 2022), once it takes root in daily lived realities (Deridder, Pelckmans, and Ward 2020). Border spaces, from this perspective, are the by product of stratified patterns of mobility, power relations and institutional structures that can enable or restrain the movement of people as well as the initiatives to manage it (Gaibazzi, Bellagamba, and Dünwald 2017, 15; see also Peano 2021 below)

More specifically, I suggest that externalisation literature is primarily concerned with the dialectic between border controls and migrants, and that, for this reason, it risks losing sight of the articulation between border externalisation and its actual, contextual, and contingent unfolding. This articulation is crucial, I argue instead, to understand the conditions that allow for externalisation strategies and practices to emerge in their concrete forms and to reproduce themselves. Lest we conceive the relation between border controls and migrants' subjectivities as a dialectic that is avulsed from the social contexts in which it takes place -lest we conceive it, in other words, as unfolding on an ontological plane of its own- it is crucial to reorient studies of border externalisation towards an appreciation of the latter's place-specific configurations.

I develop this argument taking the concept of humanitarian border, an influential interpretive lens for the study of EU borders,² as analytical referent. As developed by William Walters, the humanitarian border is constituted by the uneasy alliance between a politics of alienation and a politics of care, which crystallises a way of governing border crossings as a matter of life and death, and which transforms borders into zones of humanitarian governance (Walters 2011, 137, 142, 144). Deploying this concept allows me, first, to

focus the analysis of border externalisation exclusively on migration controls. I am thus not concerned here with other forms of externalisation related to, for example, trade or economic integration, or post-conflict institutional building. Second, to conceive externalisation not so much as a tool of exclusion and violence, but rather as a process of spatial differentiation (Rajaram 2003) that reacts to diverse kinds of migrant subjectivities and that produces differentiated forms of access and rights (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015). Third, to build on contributions that do not conceive externalisation as an exclusively *outward* relocation of border control functions, but rather as a process that operates inside borders too, blurring, or at least complicating,³ the distinction between their outside and inside (see also Sahraoui, This Volume). Externalisation, as understood here, creeps inland and across multiple domains (Frowd 2021), producing site-specific, racialised and gendered experiences (Gross-Wyrtzen 2020), and could perhaps be better characterised as the localised activation of border controls away from border lines. As such, and as argued in the following pages, it is only through an appreciation of the ways in which externalisation processes articulate with place-specific social structures, forces and dynamics that its concrete emergence and reproduction can be captured.

Empirically, I study the humanitarian border through an investigation of the Extraordinary Reception Centres for asylum seekers (*Centri d'Accoglienza Straordinaria*, or CAS henceforth) established by the Italian government in 2015. Aimed at hosting migrants until the legal resolution of their claim to asylum, these Centres are an integral component of the dialectic of care and control that characterises the humanitarian management of EU borders (Novak 2019; Pinelli 2017). They are part of the border zone which connects places like Macerata, the central Italian province that functions as the place-specific setting where this study unfolds, to militarised containment zones in the Mediterranean, or detention centres in Libya, across Europe and elsewhere. CAS are an important site for the development of critical reflections on European and Italian asylum policies (Ciabbari and Pinelli 2017), and for teasing out how these policies take on specific connotations in relation to local economic, political and historical configurations (Bolzoni and Donatiello 2018; Casati 2018). Moving beyond the exclusive concern with the migrant-humanitarian border dialectic that characterises most literature on the subject, thus, the article empirically demonstrates how the emergence and reproduction of CAS is dependent on place-specific social forces and dynamics, which the humanitarian border draws upon and transforms, while being transformed by them.

The argument is developed in three substantive sections. The next one advances the argument conceptually. It engages with contributions deploying Walters' (2011) humanitarian border concept and delves on its productive nature. Drawing from the same "Foucauldian toolbox" that Walters appeals to and expands (ibid 142), the section points to a shortcoming of this literature,

namely its neglect of the productive relation that entangles the humanitarian border with place-specific social dynamics. The following two sections explain the significance of this relation. The first one illustrates how this relation explains the concrete forms taken by the humanitarian border in place-specific settings. The following one identifies the conditions that allow for its re-production in those same settings. The last section develops the argument in full.

The article draws from four bouts of field research, a total of nine months, conducted in the Macerata province and surrounding areas between 2016 and 2019. Evidence used here comprises participant observation, formal and informal interviews, focus groups, notes from encounters and exchanges with over 100 asylum seekers, documents collected from government officials and NGO officers. Methodologically, this field research was guided by geographical approaches to institutional ethnography (Billo and Mountz 2016). Field research was approved by the SOAS Ethics Panel in 2016.

Productive Humanitarian Borders

Concerned with the emergence of what he deems a novel development within the history of borders and border-making, William Walters conceives the humanitarian border as a peculiar governmental strategy which gives rise to a non-contiguous assemblage of particular forms of humanitarian reason, specific forms of authority and associated technologies of government (Walters 2011, 142–3). This strategy is the product of a distinct logic of government which, problematising the border as a site of suffering and death, compensates for the social violence embodied in the regime of migration control (ibid, 139). The concept has been widely influential for the conceptualisation and study of the transformations associated with contemporary borders and migration regimes, in ways that exceed the scope of this article. Here, I will focus on two elements of Walters' analysis that are essential for the development of this article's argument. They both underscore the humanitarian border's productive nature.

First, Walters casts the humanitarian border in relation to a governmental analytics (ibid, 142). Drawing from Fassin (2012), Walters conceives humanitarianism as a way of governing precarious lives, which emerges in the faultlines between the global North and the global South. Intervening in an already securitised environment it does not simply function as an add on, but rather transforms and is transformed by such an environment. While the outcomes of this governmental strategy may not be substantially different from a regime of militarisation, the governmental logic that produces the humanitarian border is distinct, as humanitarianism operates alongside, and

not outside of, the violence of borders (Dadusc 2019). Combining violent deterrence with forms of care, its seemingly benevolent but selective border practices enable to dye militarisation with a humanitarian hue (Stierl 2018).

For this reason, Walters situates the care and control dialectic that gives birth to the humanitarian border also in relation to biopolitics (Walters 2011, 142). The knowledges materialised in this distinct governmental strategy act as disciplinary modes of power which govern by fostering life (Dadusc 2019, 596). They are constitutive of new spaces of care and control that dislocate and decentralise border enforcement to the Mediterranean, to transit and origin countries (Cuttitta 2018), and to countries where asylum reception is performed (Novak 2019). These emergent geographies (İşleyen 2018) produce spaces of circulation that contain, channel, decelerate and divert migrants' movement (Garelli and Tazzioli 2018), new legal statuses and differential channels of protection, deportation and illegalisation (Tazzioli 2018), new spaces of abjection that (re)produce lines of distinction between proper and improper forms of life (Vaughan Williams 2015). The productive nature of the humanitarian border stems precisely from its capacity to enact differentiated categories of life (Pallister-Wilkins 2017), which are, essentially, hierarchical (Perkowski 2016).

Second, the emergence of the humanitarian border is not smooth, but rather the result of a series of elements, contradictory processes, and events, as the very boundaries of the humanitarian are determined by political struggles (Walters 2011, 145, 155). These struggles may relate to the ways in which both humanitarian and military strategies are reconfigured by their being deployed together (Garelli and Tazzioli 2018), or to the direct contestations performed by humanitarian agents (Cuttitta 2018). They may, more mundanely, refer to the frictions produced by the intermingling of the manifold agents who aim to manage migration and to their interlaces with things of all sorts (Dijstelbloem and van der Veer 2021). They may emerge from heterogeneous state practices at the sub-national level (İşleyen 2018). More fundamentally, these struggles are to be seen in relation to the uncontainable force of migration, as the humanitarian border reacts to and is transformed by migrants' subjectivities (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015). Being at once constitutive of and constituting in encounters with migrants, the border is transformed by their abiding and resistant, visible and hidden agencies (Kallio, Häkli, and Pascucci 2019). Succinctly, the humanitarian border is simultaneously constituted by the productive nature of power and by the rich fabric of resistances that criss-cross it at the level of everyday life (Cobarrubias, Casas-Cortes, and Pickles 2011). For this reason, it is subject to deflections, transformations, and undoing.

It is at this analytical juncture that the argument developed in this article unfolds. The field of interaction just delineated, Walters contends, requires revisiting and supplementing the Foucauldian toolbox traditionally used for

the study of borders, territory, and security, as it is insufficient on its own to treat the birth of the humanitarian border as one more instance of an ever-widening regime of biopower (Walters 2011, 152). If terms like biopolitics and biopower are to have any critical purchase, he continues, we should note all those instances where they combine with other forms of power and other specifications of the subject (ibid). The task that Walters delineates, then, is one that involves specifying how these other forms of power might combine, mutate, and transform the humanitarian border in specific circumstances (ibid, 151).

Literature on the subject has certainly taken up this challenge, offering ever more sophisticated tools to capture the variegated forms in which care and control are re-configured in contemporary borders and migration regimes. It has offered complex theorisations of the emergent geographies produced by the humanitarian border through concepts such as borderscape (Brambilla 2015) or itinerant scale (Cobarrubias 2020), or by accounting for situated processes of borderwork (Pallister-Wilkins 2017). It has clarified the (bio) political stakes associated with humanitarian border practices, drawing from the analytical vocabulary associated with concepts such as necropolitics (Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi 2017) or autoimmunity (Little and Vaughan-Williams 2017), or offering new concepts like that of biopolitics multiple (Aradau and Tazzioli 2020). The ordering effects of these practices have been exposed in their neoliberal (De Genova 2017), racialised (Gross-Wyrtzen 2020) and gendered (Sahraoui 2020) nature.

Yet, not enough attention has been devoted to how place-specific social dynamics deflect, mutate, and transform the humanitarian border. Anchored to Walters' foundational concern with the government of border crossings, literature on the subject has only scantily veered away from theorisations that take as the privileged object of analysis the productive relation between care and control, on one side, and the uncontainable force of migration on the other. However, if it is accepted that the humanitarian border materialises only under quite specific circumstances; that the production of humanitarian knowledge takes place in highly situated ways; that the uneasy alliance between politics of alienation and politics of care displays unique place-specific features (Walters 2011, 146, 152, 145); then, where the border exists, for whom, and how it comes about (Kallio, Häkli, and Pascucci 2019) can only be investigated in place-specific settings (Novak 2017). Through such investigation, the concrete ways in which the humanitarian border is produced and the situated mechanisms that allow for its reproduction emerge more clearly.

Formalising the argument through the Foucauldian toolbox that Walters deploys and expands, the productive nature of the humanitarian border has been conceived in literature in two main ways. First, the humanitarian border has been conceptualised as productive in a disciplinary sense, as it produces realities, knowledges, and things (Foucault 1977). Second, its productive

nature is seen in relation to it being constituted by and constitutive of struggles (Foucault 1979). The following pages are instead concerned with underscoring a third dimensions of border's productive nature, that is, the *productive relation* between the humanitarian border and the social forces and dynamics of the various places in which it is rendered concrete. In these concrete settings, the humanitarian border becomes responsive to and is constituted by forces and relations that exceed the border-migrant dialectic as developed in the following two sections.

Building on the above considerations, these sections dis-place the study of humanitarian borders and of migrant struggles beyond the ontological plane defined by their dialectical relation, foregrounding instead the structured, but contextual and contingent, productive relation between borders and the stratified landscapes in which they intervene (Peano 2021; see also Gaibazzi, Bellagamba, and Dünwald 2017 above). They aim to capture the fluid and dispersed ways through which the humanitarian border manifests itself across society (Novak 2015) and in so doing, they attempt to theorise it by accounting for its singularities (Samaddar 2020).

Producing CAS

The dramatic, but to an extent hopeful events characterising the long summer of migration (Kasperek and Speer 2015), saw a dramatic increase in the number of first-time asylum seekers in Europe, rising from the 180 thousand applications lodged in 2012 to the over 1.2 million recorded in 2015.⁴ Unsurprisingly, the sheer force of this social movement (ibid) engendered a series of profound transformations across the continent, within each individual EU Member State, and beyond. Those related to border controls and the humanitarianization of border management will be presented in this section following the analytical insights developed above.

First, this social movement engendered an emergent geography of control, surveillance and enforcement spanning entire continents. Consolidating a series of border security operations led by FRONTEX from the mid-2000s to the early 2010s, Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council formalised a four-tier Integrated Border Management (IBM) system concerned, amongst other things, with better managing mixed migratory flows.⁵ This four-tier access control model comprises measures in third countries, arrangements with neighbouring countries, border control measures at the external borders, and measures within the Schengen area. IBM's external control measures and surveillance operations (e.g. EUROSUR), cooperation projects (e.g. IBM Silk Routes and the Budapest Process), and border assistance missions (e.g. EUBAM), produce militarised spaces of circulation that, as detailed below, reticulate well inside European member states.

Second, such delocalised securitisation of border management is accompanied by its humanitarianization. According to the IOM, the dual task of humanitarian border management consists of both protecting crisis-affected migrants, guaranteeing their human rights and interests in accordance with international law, and ensuring border security. The above Regulation, much like the one approved in 2019 superseding it, take great care in emphasising this duality. For example, as per Art 10(1.h) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, the European Borders and Coast Guard Agency is tasked with assisting Member States in specific circumstances by launching rapid border interventions *but* must do so considering that some situations may involve humanitarian emergencies which should be dealt with in accordance with Union and international law. It envisages joint operations with Third Countries (Art. 36.1.c) *but* subordinates them to Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 stipulating that the surveillance of the external sea borders must be performed in accordance with the European Court of Human Rights dicta, in full respect of human dignity and of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. It sanctions that the Agency should work in close cooperation with EASO, the EU asylum agency, and with FRA, the EU agency for fundamental rights. Even in its most militarised expression, thus, the Regulation fulfils the dual task of humanitarian border management as it animates the above-identified emergent geography of control, surveillance, and enforcement with a specific humanitarian concern with the rights of migrants and asylum seekers. Care and control, and their uneasy alliance, are the defining governmental logic of the EU IBM system -at least on paper.

Third, this “should not be understood as a simple two-step process, a matter of action and response – as though first there is securitisation and then humanitarianization, which comes along to sweep up the human collateral damage” (Walters 2011, 147). Rather, this uneasy alliance is to be conceived as a fluid assemblage, always transformed by a series of elements, contradictory processes, and events (*ibid*). To capture the interplay between tactics and counter-tactics that define the humanitarian border at a more molecular level (*ibid*), it is thus imperative to analyse how these elements, processes and events deflect and transform the humanitarian border at different scales.

In the first instance, this interplay unfolds at the national level, as both human rights and border policing remain the sovereign responsibility of territorially bounded states (Pallister Wilkins 2015). Indeed, whether this is seen in relation to Greece (*ibid*), Spain (Godenau and López-Sala 2016), or Norway (Peterson 2020), the transformations engendered by the long summer of migration and by the EU’s reactive responses to it, speak of a humanitarian border that is differently declined in each Member State.

This is especially so in countries like Italy, where the force of migration was felt prior to the summer of 2015. Ever since the tumultuous period associated with the so-called Arab Spring, in fact, the Italian government have been active

in the development of its own care and control strategies, both externalising migration controls through operations such as Mare Nostrum and rapidly developing, at times seemingly improvising, administrative and legal responses to the deficiencies of its asylum system. The arrival of over 60 thousand migrants in the first nine months of 2011, a dramatic increase over the approximately fourteen thousand average arrivals per year in 2009 and 2010,⁶ evidenced the structural deficiencies of an asylum reception system geared to accommodate no more than five thousand migrants, and set in motion the development of new strategies (see Novak 2019 for an overview).

The CAS emerge as the apex of these strategies, a response to the arrival of further 370 thousand asylum seekers in the period 2012–15.⁷ Tightly connected to the naval operations in the central Mediterranean route, these extraordinary reception centres were a demonstration of the Italian government's commitment to border management strategies characterised by both military and humanitarian logics. After reaching Italian territory either autonomously or through military interceptions in so-called Search and Rescue Zones, irregular migrants would be classified as asylum seekers and transferred to one of the over 7,500 CAS opened within one year of the promulgation of the 2015 Legislative Decree that sanctioned their institutionalisation. Conceived as an emergency solution to the structural problem of asylum reception (Ambrosini 2020), CAS became, in the space of a few months, an important node in the care and control machinery set up by the Italian government and the EU at large, hosting over 70% of the total asylum seekers in the system (SPRAR 2017). CAS connect municipalities and provinces across the peninsula to militarised operations at the EU's external border and beyond.

A second layer of deflections and transformations that gives concrete forms to the uneasy alliance between care and control in place-specific settings unfolds at the subnational level. Indeed, the geographical unevenness in the materialisation of the humanitarian border operates before as much as *after* migrants cross the formal demarcation lines between the nation states (İşleyen 2018). The case of CAS is exemplary in this respect. The Ministerial Decree instituting them in law sanctions that each of these facilities is meant to provide an adequate standard of living to asylum seekers, to guarantee their subsistence and to protect their physical and mental health until their claim to asylum is resolved, in accordance with EU regulations. What this means in practice is delegated to the provincially decentralised offices of the Ministry of Interior (*Prefettura*), and to the specifications contained in the Public Tenders that they organise to subcontract the management of asylum seekers. These specifications are meant to guide the operations of the contractors. They define housing standards, level and type of subsistence provisions, and so-called “integration” services (linguistic and “cultural” assistance, legal information, psychological, medical, and bureaucratic support, etc.) that each asylum seeker

is entitled to. These specifications also include administrative management obligations on the part of subcontractors, such as asylum seekers' registration and a daily report on presences.

The decentralisation of the task of setting the precise nature and volume of provisions and the privatisation of the management and delivery of these entitlements significantly contributes to producing a geographically uneven care and control dialectic across and within each of the Italian provinces (Novak 2021). Even if abiding to the same national and European reception standards, such decentralised management of asylum implies that there are variations across provinces in terms of the level and type of provisions each asylum seeker receives. In some cases, this can be attributed to the widespread cases of corruption and malpractice highlighted by many reports, which occur despite the monitoring responsibilities of the Ministry of Interior, its provincially decentralised offices (Prefettura), and a Parliamentary Commission. In other cases, it is about the inefficiencies in the Questura (the provincially decentralised office of the national Police), which may slow down the asylum claim process. Even leaving these cases aside, the specifications contained in each Prefettura's tender instituting CAS in their jurisdiction create profound lines of differentiation across provinces.

Indeed, a third layer of deflections is defined by the activities and contested identities (Walters 2011, 156) of the humanitarian agents that render these specifications, and in turn the humanitarian border, concrete at provincial level. The Legislative Decree institutionalising CAS in law confers a central role to the Prefettura subcontractors, who are tasked with operationalising care and control. They identify housing facilities, arrange, and deliver provisions within them, and fulfil public order duties, such as verifying the presence of asylum seekers within each facility. Their activities may well involve acts of repoliticisation (Cuttitta 2018), or, as in the case of Macerata province, they may simply reproduce the imperatives set out by the Prefettura. These acts, or their absence, are clearly not whimsically performed. Neither are they exclusively to be understood as a consequence of the different discursive frames informing each of the subcontractors' actions, however, as discussed below.

Before delving further into these dynamics, it is worth reiterating the points made so far. The governmental logic that explains the emergence of the humanitarian border is fluid and dynamic as it is produced by a complex interplay of tactics and countertactics which plays out, molecularly, at a variety of scales. The national and subnational ones have been discussed in this section to highlight how the Italian government peculiarly assembled the care and control imperatives associated to EU border management, and how, beyond that, the formal legal equivalence and the standardised entitlements that define CAS as a node of the humanitarian border mask profound differences in asylum reception's practices and operations at provincial level. CAS are a productive response to the force of migration, a node of the non-

contiguous EU humanitarian border and an administrative unit of the border zone that connects Italian provinces and municipalities to European hotspots, to cooperation projects and to military surveillance and patrolling operations across continents. The rich fabric of resistances that criss-cross the humanitarian border and that produce it at the level of everyday life (Cobarrubias, Casas-Cortes, and Pickles 2011), however, are not exhausted by the force of migration, or indeed by the frictions produced by the intermingling of manifold agents tasked with managing migration (Dijstelbloem and van der Veer 2021), as discussed next.

Place-specific Transformations

Paraphrasing Walters (2011, 155), until now I have proceeded as though the ‘Macerata province’ was a relatively clear entity. To an extent this is the case. It is one of 107 Italian provinces, which are constituent entities of the Italian state operating in an intermediate position between Regions and Municipalities. They are territorially demarcated administrative units where peripheral government bodies like Prefecture or Questure exercise their jurisdiction. Much like at other scales, non-state agents engage with these bodies, in a complex interplay of adversarial or connivant tactics and counter-tactics, contributing to define the concrete form taken by the complex assemblage between care and control defining the humanitarian border in each provincial setting.

Macerata province is not an abstract territorial unit, however, a *tabula rasa* where EU and Italian government’s care and control strategies unfold unproblematically. Rather, Macerata is a stratified landscape defined over centuries by interventions on land, property, and people (Peano 2021; see also above Gaibazzi, Bellagamba, and Dünwald 2017). Like in any other province or indeed place across the humanitarian border zone, the humanitarian border’s actual, contextual, and contingent configurations are dependent on the place-specific forces and dynamics that are contained and animate such landscape. These forces and dynamics exceed the care and control assemblage defining the humanitarian border in the first place, yet articulate with it, transforming it as they are being transformed by it. It is such a productive relation that provides the conditions of possibility for the humanitarian border to emerge and reproduce itself in concrete settings. This relation can be seen, in very schematic ways, as composed of at least three dimensions.

First and at the most basic level, the humanitarian border is transformed by its productive relation to the geomorphological terrain over which it unfolds, as suggested by Vaughan-Williams (2015). Macerata’s administrative jurisdiction is a relatively narrow strip of land which stretches from the Adriatic coast to the Sibillini mountains. Sea and mountains are connected by two major roads, and one railway, running across flatlands and surrounded by hills. Historic burghs and towns sit atop those hills. The major shopping centres

and malls as well as the variously sized, but mostly small, industrial and artisanal clusters are unsurprisingly located near or adjacent to roads and railways, with the rest of the land mostly comprising mechanised agricultural fields where sunflowers, hay and other crops are grown. CAS are scattered across this landscape.

The overwhelming majority, in 2017, were located in Macerata city, yet these accommodated no more than 30% of the total asylum seekers in the province that year. The remaining asylum seekers were accommodated in more remote facilities, some of which considerably distant from any urbanised setting. Their location within this landscape uniquely defines the ways in which the humanitarian border is rendered concrete in the province.

For example, while the forced circulation of migrants as a containment and dispersal tactic is a characteristic of the humanitarian border at large (Tazzioli 2018), the peculiarities of Macerata's landscape and the location of each CAS within it, provided the conditions of possibility for subcontractors tasked with managing asylum seekers in the province to establish peculiar punitive or rewarding paths of forced circulation across them. Larger and more remote quasi-detention facilities were used by subcontractors as a first accommodation for new arrivals, while the more central ones would be the point of arrival for those asylum seekers who would conform and comply with a set of expectations about their conduct and behaviour. Any deviation from these expectations would mean a return to quasi-detention facilities. Such perverse assemblage of care and control practices based on performance-based rewarding and punishing trajectories of forced circulation (Novak 2021) could only take such shape given the peculiar characteristics of Macerata province's landscape and the location of each CAS within it.

Similarly, while practices of resistance to the CAS system by migrants and others are common across Italy (e.g. Avallone 2018), the relative remoteness of each CAS would provide specific conditions of possibility for migrants to engage in acts of transgression of the set rules of conduct, easier in remote facilities as visits from subcontractors' staff were rarer at nights and over weekends, or in more overt oppositional stances, such as collective marches, which could only be organised in less remote and larger facilities.

Finally, while the informal labour recruitment of migrants hosted in CAS is common across Italy (Omizzolo 2019), the dispersal of CAS across the province and the concentration of asylum seekers in relatively remote areas meant that recruitment practices could not unfold through labour pick up points, as in other parts of Italy. Rather, labour contractors would visit CAS offering their 'services' and organise recruitment informally through word of mouth and WhatsApp messages, rather than following nationality or kin-based affiliations as in other provinces (Salvia 2020). Those living near industrial clusters would instead be able to seek employment in Italian and Chinese owned shoe- or packaging factories, without intermediation. Those living in

more central locations could aspire to become the underpaid workers for the many traders setting up stalls across the province's markets, or, in the most "fortunate" cases, care workers for the elderly.

Put differently, the geographical unevenness that defines the humanitarian border at sub-national level is not only defined by the practices and narratives of local administrations (İşleyen 2018). Forced relocations, resistance practices, access to jobs and services are rendered concrete through and by the productive relation between the humanitarian border and Macerata's landscape. This is, of course, not just about geomorphological terrain and the relative location of each CAS across them.

Indeed, second, the humanitarian border is transformed by its productive relation with place-specific, and entrenched, social structures. Processes of political confrontation and bargaining at provincial level find their roots in the social history of each province and are in turn productive of innovative political and social configurations (see Bini and Gambazza 2019). Across the Macerata province, for example, the political opposition expressed by some municipalities to the presence of asylum seekers reproduces national party-political confrontations. The articulation between national government directives and municipal electoral politics functions as a field of struggle constraining and/or enabling the Prefettura's provincial management of the humanitarian border (Novak 2019). Similarly, and perhaps more importantly, entrenched social structures also shape the activities and identities of the humanitarian agents that render concrete the humanitarian border at the provincial level (see Walters 2011, 156, and above).

In 2017 six subcontractors managed the over 1000 asylum seekers in the province, one grassroots cooperative, one for profit organisation, three local NGOs and the provincial branch of an international humanitarian organisation. They fulfilled the care component of asylum specified in the Public Tender, and they enforced the control imperatives set by the Prefettura by establishing their own surveillance mechanisms and relaying information obtained in each facility to them. Their activities did not involve acts of repoliticisation as in other parts of the humanitarian border zone (Cuttitta 2018), yet variations, deflections and transformations did occur, as each of these organisations adopted but also adapted the care and control logic that their role of sub-contractors had bestowed upon them. For example, smaller cooperatives privileged a more direct contact with their 'beneficiaries' and managed a very limited number of asylum seekers. They valued "integration" activities, offering visits to museums, helping draft CVs and providing some training. At the other end of the spectrum, for profit organisations interpreted the Prefettura's specifications in their bare minimum standards, for example using publicly funded language courses as part of their fulfilment of obligations and effectively offering no support to migrants beyond that related to

their biological reproduction. Larger subcontractors were mostly focused on increasing the scale of their activities, to make the technical provision of services and the fulfilment of the Public Tender's specification more efficient.

Yet, their divergent practices cannot exclusively be explained by the different discursive frames shaping their activities or by each subcontractor's position within the wide spectrum of humanitarianisms that characterises the humanitarian border (Stierl 2018). Rather, their practices need to be set against more material and place-specific social structures. A church-based cooperative used housing facilities which were donated to the diocese by various benefactors, and while this was conducive to discursively frame their operations as geared towards a direct contact with beneficiaries, it also effectively determined the maximum limit of asylum seekers they could manage. The president of the largest subcontractor, on the contrary, had deep connections with local elites and with one of the main political parties. For them, finding housing facilities was a matter of connections. By seeking out facilities across the province, they managed to host over half of the total of asylum seekers in the province. The president of another subcontractor was a Board member of a Trust managing a large land estate. Asylum seekers were hosted in housing facilities within such estate, which were refurbished and modernised for the purpose.

Indeed, landlords themselves had their own motivations for (not) renting facilities. Some had failing hotel businesses, which were rejuvenated by the flow of public funds disbursed for the reception of asylum seekers. Others had acquired buildings as part exchange for services offered to a municipality, which they were happy to transform into reception facilities to promote their image as a responsible enterprise. While some landlords, at the height of the 'crisis', were calling subcontractors' offices daily offering them rural houses, others were refusing to rent their apartment for the purposes of hosting migrants, reinforcing the political opposition of municipal administrations beyond the realm of the institutional bargaining set up by the central government. This goes beyond housing facilities. The for-profit organisation had strong connections with a local restaurant which was then used as a sub-subcontractor for food provisions. Others preferred to use a food cooperative with which they had their own connections and political affiliations. For some, considering the remoteness of their facilities, a local restaurant was the only available option.

Put differently, while the identities and discursive frames of humanitarian agents define the humanitarian border at large as a contested political space (Walters 2011), if observed in their place-specific settings, subcontractors and all those that participate in the management of asylum seekers in various ways are not just "humanitarian agents", but rather part of the social fabric of the Macerata province. They are, more accurately, societal agents whose relationships among them, and between them, state and market become entangled with

the humanitarian border (Novak 2015). Their peculiar social identities, which are only partially defined by their humanitarian operations, expand the realm of forces and logics that explain the humanitarian border's emergence and configuration in place-specific settings. These forces and logics exceed the dialectic between care and control, on one side, and the force of migration on the other.

Third, the humanitarian border transforms the places it intervenes upon, and in this productive relation it finds the forces that allow for its reproduction. There would hardly be any asylum seekers in Macerata were this province not part of the EU humanitarian border zone. There would be no buses transporting migrants from one of the ports of disembarkation for so-called Search and Rescue Operations to a highway stop in Macerata province. There would be no long queues at the immigration office on Thursday mornings, when asylum applications are dealt with. There would be no reception centres, or labour contractors visiting them to recruit underpaid labourers to pick salad or plant seeds in the relatively large agricultural fields that dot the province. There would be no researchers like me spending their summers driving back and forth to reception centres scattered across the province.

The presence of over 1000 asylum seekers engendered new jobs, especially coveted by younger generations, which were able to seek employment in the newly established provincial migration industry. Italian teacher, interpreter, project manager suddenly became careers prospects in an otherwise ossified job market. To the point that a local university established a new Master programme on "cultural interpretation" to cater for these aspiring workers. Former asylum seekers were recruited to supervise facilities, while others decided to return to Macerata from other parts of Italy seeking positions with the subcontractors that once hosted them in their CAS. Even more molecularly, the local discount chain Eurospin began selling spices or varieties of rice previously unseen in local supermarkets. "Indian" and "African" shops, Lycamobile sellers, formal and informal remittances operators mushroomed across provincial towns. Betting agencies opened fancy new rooms, offering wifi connections, and air conditioning, which became hanging out places for many asylum seekers. Long established as much as newly improvised churches began renting warehouses or large rooms on Sundays to deliver functions to (and collect money from) asylum seekers, while members of the Jehovah's church confession offered listening ears and the possibility of future employment to those asylum seekers who would join them. Some local football teams would "sign" asylum seekers to play for them, while others would ostracise the signing of "blacks" in their squad.

Importantly, this relation is not always and not necessarily an enabling one. On the contrary, the productive relation at the heart of this discussion may also work in a disabling sense. At the level of individual subcontractors, for example, a self-declared humanitarian entrepreneur from a northern Italian region participated in the Prefettura's Public Tender in 2016, and was awarded

a contract for the management of approximately 25 asylum seekers. He had rented a hotel in a remote municipality, which he refurbished for the purposes of accommodating them. Yet, as the refurbishment was almost complete the hotel was subject to an arson attack, and the potential arrival of asylum was further disrupted by threats of road blockages.

Systemically, on the 3rd February 2018, Luca Traini, an Italian man affiliated with the right-wing party Lega and with extra-parliamentarian right-wing political groups, went on a shooting spree in the streets of Macerata, wounding six persons who only had the colour of their skin in common, and firing bullets at the offices of the largest Prefettura subcontractor and of the ruling political party. In the ensuing elections, a few weeks later, the Lega became one of the dominant parties, both nationally and at provincial level, engendering a series of profound transformations in the CAS system (Pitzalis 2020), and ultimately leading to its almost complete demise in the Macerata Province (Novak 2021). The Prefettura closed all CAS in Macerata city, and prevented the Ministry of Interior from sending further asylum seekers to the province. Two of the largest subcontractors were investigated by the Guardia di Finanza (the national financial crime police) for alleged financial irregularities and local banks started recalling loans that were crucial for their daily operations. Many asylum seekers left the reception system, making their way to other parts of Italy or Europe. By 2020, only 100 asylum seekers hosted in two CAS were present in the province. The transformations of the social landscape that had provided the conditions of possibility for this node of the humanitarian border to emerge and flourish until then, disabled the further reproduction of this particular node of the humanitarian border.

In sum, the humanitarian border connects CAS in Macerata to the so-called Mediterranean and Balkan routes and their militarised and violent operations. And migrants hosted in CAS, in turn, connect Macerata with remote valleys along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, with villages in Delta State Nigeria, with neighbourhoods in Rangpur Bangladesh or Serrekunda in The Gambia. The care and control logic that animates the EU management of border crossings transforms a tranquil province like Macerata into a globalised node of the humanitarian border. This process of transformation does not occur on a tabula rasa. Macerata is a stratified landscape defined over centuries by interventions on land, property, and people (Peano 2021), which articulates with the humanitarian border, transforming it as it is being transformed by it, molecularly. It is in such productive relation that its *force* finds a rich fabric of resistances that allow for its emergence, reproduction and, potentially, demise.

Conclusions

The force of the humanitarian border stems from its capacity to engender social change. An expression of the novel strategy for the management of border crossings that holds together care and control in an uneasy alliance, the

humanitarian border is transformational: it produces knowledges, realities and things and it is constitutive of struggles, deflections and contestations. The force of the humanitarian border, however, goes well beyond the management of border crossing, as the above pages have demonstrated.

If we conceive the humanitarian border exclusively as a biopolitical machine that contains, immobilises, and differentiates for the purposes of the government of border crossing, we risk losing sights of the material forces, social dynamics, and contingent deflections that provide the conditions for the humanitarian border to concretely emerge and reproduce itself in place-specific settings. In these settings, diverse individuals and social groups seek in the operations and practices engendered by humanitarian border management the force that allows them to pursue their own reproduction strategies. In these settings, the humanitarian border is transformed by the social forces and dynamics of the places that it transforms into its own operational nodes. It becomes responsive to, as it is constituted by, forces and relations that exceed the border-migrant dialectic, that articulate with it, that shape its actual, contextual, and contingent unfolding, and that potentially sanction its demise.

The previous pages empirically accounted for such productive relation. Section 3 cast the emergence of the EU humanitarian border against the social movement of migration and explored its productive nature by sketching the emergent geography of control, surveillance, and containment across Europe and beyond that was engendered by this governmental strategy. Focusing on the emergence of CAS as a node of the EU humanitarian border, the section disentangled the various layers of deflection that render it concrete and give it unique place-specific forms. Section 4 threaded the opposite analytical trajectory. Focusing on the unique characteristics of the Macerata province, it explored the ways in which they articulate with the humanitarian border, transforming, while being transformed by, it. The section wanted to move out of an ontological understanding of the humanitarian border that takes the border-migrant dialectic as its ontological plane.

Accounting for this productive relation, the article attempted, on one side, to avoid the pitfalls of perspectives that find contemporary border transformations and the productive nature of their power as the only source of biopolitical differentiation across society. The humanitarian border is constituted by the articulation between its *force* and the stratified landscapes characterising the various places in which its operations unfold. On the other side, accounting for this productive relation avoids the pitfalls of positions that stress particularity to the point where the systemic features of externalisation are dissolved (cf. Neilson, Rossiter, and Samaddar 2018), as it recognises that the *force* of the humanitarian border operates well beyond any single one of its concrete manifestations.

By focusing on one concrete manifestation of the humanitarian border the previous pages thus contribute to literature on externalisation in two ways.

First, they suggest that great analytical traction can be gained by starting the analysis of externalisation from its concrete manifestations, rather than from an a priori epistemological understanding of the forces that animate them (Novak 2017). The unevenness with which the humanitarian border manifests itself is not a parochial or secondary concern within broader theorisations of what the humanitarian border is or what it does. Rather, as demonstrated above, it is one of its constitutive elements, and as such should be treated analytically. This article is a minor attempt at theorising the humanitarian border starting from its singularities (Samaddar 2020).

Second, and strictly related, if it is accepted that the humanitarian border not only reacts to and is transformed by migrants' subjectivities, or by the discursive positioning of humanitarian agents within the wide spectrum of humanitarianisms that characterise it, but also by the social structures and relations that characterise the stratified landscapes it intervenes upon, then it is crucial to re-orient the analysis of externalisation beyond an ontology defined by the dialectic between bordering tactics and autonomous mobilities. The humanitarian border manifests itself across society in fluid and dispersed ways. It not only co-produces and fortifies multiple forms of sovereign control (Pallister-Wilkins 2015), but also other forms of societal ordering, domination, and exploitation. Political strategies that seek to oppose the force of the humanitarian border and the social transformations that it brings about, thus, should be as fluid and dispersed as its manifestations. This requires reorienting our political vocabulary so that it more directly speaks to the place-specific articulations between the management of border crossings and entrenched forms of societal ordering, domination, and exploitation.

Notes

1. See Novak (2018) for a distinction between border lines and border functions.
2. See for example, (Cuttitta 2020; İşleyen 2018; Pallister-Wilkins 2015).
3. See Coleman 2007; Reid 2013. For an alternative take which accounts for state-centred territoriality and that thus complicates the transnational blurring between inside and outside that these authors and others suggest, see (İşleyen 2018; Novak 2019; Pallister-Wilkins 2015).
4. Data from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics Accessed 29 September 2021
5. See the full text of the Regulation at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R1624> (Accessed 29 September 2021). This Regulation was last updated in 2019. Integrated Border Management and the European Borders and Coast Guard are now governed by Regulation (EU) 2019/1896.
6. Data from <http://www.parlarecivile.it/argomenti/immigrazione/sprar.aspx> Accessed 28 September 2021.
7. Data from <https://www.openpolis.it/numeri/gli-sbarchi-italia-negli-ultimi-10-anni/> Accessed 28 September 2021.

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to all those that facilitated this research in Macerata, and to the many asylum seekers who overcame their legitimate fears and suspicions to share their thoughts and time with me. I thank, Karen Iversen, Hassan Ould Moctar, Ayse Çağlar, all of the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group's (CRG) staff, Fabio Amato, Miguel Mellino, Sebastian Cobarrubias, Maribel Casas-Cortes, Subir Sinha, my Alessandra Mezzadri, and many others, for constructively intervening in various stages of this project, and the anonymous reviewers for their engaging and productive comments.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research is funded by the British Academy/Leverhume Small Grant SG162483 "Asylum seekers' reception: Taxonomy and Location".

ORCID

Paolo Novak  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2259-8707>

References

- Ambrosini, M. 2020. The urban governance of asylum as a "battleground": Policies of exclusion and efforts of inclusion in Italian towns. *Geographical Review*. doi:10.1080/00167428.2020.1735938.
- Aradau, C., and M. Tazzioli. 2020. Biopolitics multiple: Migration, extraction, subtraction. *Millennium* 48 (2):198–220. doi:10.1177/0305829819889139.
- Billo, E., and A. Mountz. 2016. For institutional ethnography: Geographical approaches to institutions and the everyday. *Progress in Human Geography* 40 (2):199–220. doi:10.1177/0309132515572269.
- Bini, V., and G. Gambazza. 2019. The reception of asylum seekers in urban areas: The case of the city of Milan. *Belgeo Belgian Journal of Geography* published online January 6, 2020. Accessed January 21, 2022. <http://journals.openedition.org/belgeo/35559>.
- Bolzoni, M., and D. Donatiello. 2018. Prima accoglienza: Obiettivo inclusione. In *Le Città Globali e la Sfida dell'integrazione*, ed. M. Villa, 61–80. Milano: LediPublishing. Chapter 3.
- Brambilla, C. 2015. Exploring the critical potential of the borderscapes concept. *Geopolitics* 20 (1):14–34. doi:10.1080/14650045.2014.884561.
- Casas-Cortes, M., S. Cobarrubias, N. De Genova, G. Garelli, G. Grappi, C. Heller, S. Hess, B. Kasperek, S. Mezzadra, M. Neilson, et al. 2015. New keywords: Migration and borders. *Cultural Studies* 29 (1):55–87. doi:10.1080/09502386.2014.891630.
- Casati, N. 2018. How cities shape refugee centres: 'deservingness' and 'good aid' in a Sicilian town. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44 (5):792–808. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2017.1354689.

- Cobarrubias, S., M. Casas-Cortes, and J. Pickles. 2011. An interview with Sandro Mezzadra. *Environment and Planning. D, Society & Space* 29 (4):584–98. doi:10.1068/d03int.
- Cobarrubias, S. 2020. Scale in motion? Rethinking scalar production and border externalization. *Political Geography* 80:102184. doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102184.
- Cuttitta, P. 2018. Repoliticization through search and rescue? Humanitarian NGOs and migration management in the Central Mediterranean. *Geopolitics* 23 (3):632–60. doi:10.1080/14650045.2017.1344834.
- Cuttitta, P. 2020. Non-governmental/civil society organisations and the European Union-externalisation of migration management in Tunisia and Egypt. *Population, Space and Place* 26:2329. CUTTITTA 2018?. doi:10.1002/psp.2329.
- Dadusc, D. 2019. The micropolitics of border struggles: Migrants’ squats and inhabitation as alternatives to citizenship. *Citizenship Studies* 23 (6):593–607. doi:10.1080/13621025.2019.1634377.
- Davies, T., A. Isakjee, and S. Dhesi. 2017. Violent inaction: The necropolitical experience of refugees in Europe. *Antipode* 49 (5):1263–84. doi:10.1111/anti.12325.
- Deanna Dadusc. 2019. The micropolitics of border struggles: Migrants’ squats and inhabitation as alternatives to citizenship. *Citizenship Studies* 23(6):593–607. doi:10.1080/13621025.2019.1634377.
- Deridder, M., L. Pelckmans, and E. Ward. 2020. Reversing the gaze: West Africa performing the EU migration-development-security nexus. *Anthropologie & développement* 51:9–32. doi:10.4000/anthropodev.938.
- Dijstelbloem, H., and L. van der Veer. 2021. The multiple movements of the humanitarian border: The portable provision of care and control at the Aegean Islands. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 36 (3):425–42. doi:10.1080/08865655.2019.1567371.
- Ciabarri, L., and B. Pinelli, eds. 2017. *Dopo l’Approdo: Un racconto per immagini e parole sui richiedenti asilo in Italia*. Firenze: Editpress.
- Gaibazzi, P., A. Bellagamba, and S. Dünwald, eds. 2017. *EurAfrican borders and migration management. Political cultures, contested spaces, and ordinary lives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fassin, D. 2012. *Humanitarian reason: A moral history of the present*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*, Trans. A. Sheridan, London: Allen Lane.
- Foucault, M. 1979. *The history of sexuality: Volume 1*, Trans. R. Hurley, London: Allen Lane.
- Frowd, P. M. 2021. Borderwork creep in West Africa’s Sahel. *Geopolitics* 1–21. doi:10.1080/14650045.2021.1901082.
- Garelli, G., and M. Tazzioli. 2018. The biopolitical warfare on migrants: EU naval force and NATO operations of migration government in the Mediterranean. *Critical Military Studies* 4 (2):181–200. doi:10.1080/23337486.2017.1375624.
- Godenau, D., and A. López-Sala. 2016. Migration and borders: Empirical patterns and theoretical implications in the case of Spain. In *Global change and human mobility*, ed. J. D. Mújica, 37–52. London: Springer.
- Gross-Wyrtzen, L. 2020. Contained and abandoned in the “humane” border: Black migrants’ immobility and survival in Moroccan urban space. *Environment and Planning. D, Society & Space* 38 (5):887–904. doi:10.1177/0263775820922243.
- Avallone, G., ed. 2018. *Il sistema di accoglienza in Italia. Esperienze, resistenze, segregazione*. Napoli-Salerno: Orthotes.
- İşleyen, B. 2018. Turkey’s governance of irregular migration at European Union borders: Emerging geographies of care and control. *Environment and Planning. D, Society & Space* 36 (5):849–66. doi:10.1177/0263775818762132.

- Iversen, K., M. Bunn, R. C. Schuster, G. O. Boateng, K. Cameli, and C. E. Johnson-Agbakwu. 2022. Participation as confrontation: Resistance within and outside the Mesas de Participación established for IDPs in Colombia. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 35:368–95. feac010. doi:10.1093/jrs/feac010.
- Kallio, K. P., J. Häkli, and E. Pascucci. 2019. Refugeeeness as political subjectivity: Experiencing the humanitarian border. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 37 (7):1258–76.
- Kasperek, B., and M. Speer. 2015. Of hope. Hungary and the long summer of migration. Accessed January 21, 2022. <http://bordermonitoring.eu/ungarn/2015/09/of-hope-en>
- Little, A., and N. Vaughan-Williams. 2017. Stopping boats, saving lives, securing subjects: Humanitarian borders in Europe and Australia. *European Journal of International Relations* 23 (3):533–56. doi:10.1177/1354066116661227.
- Moreno Lax, V. 2017. *Accessing asylum in Europe: Extraterritorial border controls and refugee rights under EU law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Neilson, B., N. Rossiter, and R. Samaddar. 2018. *Logistical Asia: The labour of making a world region*. London: Palgrave.
- Novak, P. 2015. Refugee status as a productive tension. *Transnational Legal Theory* 6 (2):287–311. doi:10.1080/20414005.2015.1086198.
- Novak, P. 2017. Back to borders. *Critical Sociology* 43 (6):847–64. doi:10.1177/0896920516644034.
- Novak, P. 2018. Borders, distance, politics. In *Borderless worlds for whom?: Ethics, moralities and mobilities*, ed. A. Paasi, E. Prokkola, J. Saarinen, and K. Zimmerbauer, 49–62. London: Routledge.
- Novak, P. 2019. The neoliberal location of asylum. *Political Geography* 70:1–13. doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.01.007.
- Novak, P. 2021. Deservingness and uneven geographies of asylum. *Social Policy and Society* 20 (3):452–63. doi:10.1017/S1474746420000779.
- Omizzolo, M. 2019. *Essere migranti in Italia. Per una sociologia dell'accoglienza*. Roma: Meltemi.
- Ould Moctar, M. 2020. The proximity of the past in Mauritania. EU border externalisation and its colonial antécédents. *Anthropologie & développement* 51:51–67. doi:10.4000/anthropo dev.951.
- Pallister-Wilkins, P. 2015. The humanitarian politics of European Border policing: Frontex and border police in evros. *International Political Sociology* 9 (1):53–69. doi:10.1111/ips.12076.
- Pallister-Wilkins, P. 2017. Humanitarian borderwork. In *Border politics – defining spaces of governance and forms of transgression*, ed. C. Günay and N. Witjes, 85–103. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Peano, I. 2021. Specters of Eurafrica in an Italian agroindustrial enclave. Accessed January 16th, 2022. <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/coloniality-infrastructure/411213/specters-of-aurafrika-in-an-italian-agroindustrial-enclave/>.
- Perkowski, N. 2016. Deaths, Interventions, humanitarianism and human rights in the Mediterranean ‘migration crisis’. *Mediterranean Politics* 21 (2):331–35. doi:10.1080/13629395.2016.1145827.
- Peterson, A. 2020. Humanitarian border workers in confrontation with the Swedish State’s border making practices: “The death of the most generous country on earth”. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 35 (3):317–33. doi:10.1080/08865655.2017.1402199.
- Pinelli, B. 2017. Control and abandonment: The power of surveillance on refugees in Italy, during and after the Mare Nostrum operation. *Antipode* 50 (3):725–47. doi:10.1111/anti.12374.

- Pitzalis, S. 2020. Il continuum dell'emergenza. Criticità strutturali e mutamenti nel sistema di accoglienza prima e durante la pandemia da Covid-19. *Illuminazioni* 53:56–85.
- Pradella, L., and S. Rad. 2017. Libya and Europe: Imperialism, crisis and migration. *Third World Quarterly* 38 (11):2411–27. doi:10.1080/01436597.2017.1350819.
- Rajaram, P. K. 2003. Making place: The Pacific solution and Australian employment in the Pacific and on refugee bodies. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24 (3):290–306. doi:10.1111/1467-9493.00160.
- Sahraoui, N. 2020. Gendering the care/control nexus of the humanitarian border: Women's bodies and gendered control of mobility in a European borderland. *Environment and Planning. D, Society & Space* 38 (5):905–22. doi:10.1177/0263775820925487.
- Salvia, L. 2020. The restructuring of Italian agriculture and its impact upon capital-labour relations: Labour contracting and exploitation in the fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain of the Lazio Region, Central Italy. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 20:98–112. doi:10.1111/joac.12340.
- Samaddar, R. 2020. *The postcolonial age of migration*. Delhi: Routledge India.
- Savio Vammen, I. M., S. Cold-Ravnkilde, and H. Lucht. 2021. Borderwork in the Expanded EU-African Borderlands. *Geopolitics* 1–14. doi:10.1080/14650045.2022.2008734.
- Smith, A. 2015. Macro-regional integration, the frontiers of capital and the externalisation of economic governance. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 40:507–22. doi:10.1111/tran.12091.
- SPRAR. 2017. Rapporto sulla protezione internazionale in Italia. Accessed January 8, 2022. <https://www.retesai.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2-Sintesi-Rapporto-Protezione-2017.pdf>
- Stierl, M. 2018. A fleet of Mediterranean border humanitarians. *Antipode* 50 (3):704–24. doi:10.1111/anti.12320.
- Tazzioli, M. 2018. The temporal borders of asylum. Temporality of control in the EU border regime. *Political Geography* 64:13–22. doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2018.02.002.
- Tazzioli, M., and N. De Genova. 2020. Kidnapping migrants as a tactic of border enforcement. *Environment and Planning. D, Society & Space* 38 (5):867–86. doi:10.1177/0263775820925492.
- De Genova, N., ed. 2017. *The Borders of 'Europe': Autonomy of migration, tactics of bordering*. Chapel Hill: Duke University Press.
- Vaughan-Williams, N. 2015. We are not animals! humanitarian border security and zoopolitical spaces in Europe. *Political Geography* 45:1–10. doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2014.09.009.
- Walters, W. 2011. Foucault and frontiers: Notes on the birth of the humanitarian border. In *Governmentality: Current issues and future challenges*, ed. U. Bröckling, S. Krasmann, and T. Lemke, 138–64. London: Routledge.