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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The violent inaction of the state and the camp as site of struggle: The perspectives of humanitarian actors in Moria Camp, Lesvos

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Abstract

Until it was destroyed in a fire in September 2020, Moria camp on the island of Lesvos, Greece, was widely referred to as 'a living hell'. This article investigates the causes and effects of poor camp conditions from the perspectives of humanitarian actors who have worked in the camp. We argue that poor conditions are intended to perform a deterrent function for both migrants and humanitarian actors. We also argue, however, that such camps are not simply static manifestations of violent borderwork, but complex, dynamic sites of struggle in which those who live and work there continuously make and remake the camp. This can be seen, for instance, in the ways in which humanitarian actors simultaneously fill the gap resulting from the violent inaction of the state while contributing to poor camp conditions, as a result of inter-agency competition and criticism, and the broader ways in which they challenge and reinforce the violent governance of migration.

Keywords: Migrant Camp; Security; Violence; Governance; Humanitarianism

Introduction

Moria camp on Lesvos island in Greece has been described by humanitarian actors as 'the worst refugee camp on earth'[1] and a 'living hell'.[2] After Moria was destroyed in a fire on 8 September 2020,[3] European Commission (EC) Home Affairs Commissioner, Ylva Johanson, said there would be 'no more Morias', which subsequently became a rallying cry among humanitarian actors and others.[4] However, conditions on the new camp, Kara Tepe, where thousands of

[1] The worst refugee camp on Earth', *BBC News* (2018), available at: {https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8v-OHi3iGQI} accessed 25 August 2020.

[2] UNHCR, 'Refugees Speak of Dreadful Reality Inside Lesvos' Moria Camp' (2020), available at: {https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5Xv5e-35Io} accessed 19 February 2020; Annie Chapman, 'A doctor's story: Inside the "living hell" of Moria refugee camp', *The Observer* (2020), available at: {https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/09/moria-refugee-camp-doctors-story-lesbos-greece} accessed 9 February 2020.

[3] Eva Cossé, 'Greece's Moria Camp Fire: What's Next? Refugees Now Sleeping on the Streets Need Protection and Assistance', Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2020), available at: {https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/12/greeces-moria-camp-fire-whats-next} accessed 22 September 2020.

[4] European Commission, 'Intervention in the European Parliament Plenary Session Debate on "The Need for an Immediate and Humanitarian EU Response to the Current Situation in the Refugee Camp in Moria"' (2020), available at: {https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/johansson/announcements/intervention-european-parliament-plenary-session-debate-need-immediate-and-humanitarian-eu-response_en} accessed 17 September 2020; Daphne Panayotatos, 'Greece must reform its failed asylum policies now', *The New Humanitarian*, available at: {https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2020/10/13/Greece-reform-refugee-asylum-policies?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=9dcac36f04-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_10_16_Weekly&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-9dcac36f04-75541537} accessed 13 October.

migrants[5] forced from Moria now reside, are widely regarded as 'worse than Moria'.[6] This article examines the impact of poor camp conditions on the work of humanitarian actors and, in turn, on the lives of those who live in such camps, as well as the perceived explanations of humanitarian actors for these conditions. In so doing, this article explores the perceived intended and unintended effects of violent border practices that expose migrants to considerable harm.

This article draws from literature on the securitisation of migration,[7] particularly critical scholarship that has built upon Foucault's concept of biopolitical racism to explore the governance of migration through death.[8] We also engage with the expanding literature on the refugee or migrant camp as quasi-carceral space.[9] We build upon this literature by discussing ways in which camps serve to contain, control, and segregate, as well as ways in which poor camp conditions can be regarded as carceral by operating as a deterrent and form of punishment. Within the broader literature on the securitisation of migration, much has been written on the (mis)management of refugee and migrant camps, on the (in)action of the state in responding to the needs of refugees and other migrants, and the harms inflicted upon those who seek refuge in the EU.[10] The increasing violence of the border has also led to a growing literature on 'humanitarian borderwork' required to help relieve the effects of such violence,[11] expanding volunteerism in this space,[12] and the policing and criminalisation of those who provide humanitarian assistance to migrants.[13]

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[5]Throughout the article we refer to migrants, although we recognise that many of those residing in Moria camp are refugees as defined under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and they are all 'migrants in vulnerable situations' who 'are unable to effectively enjoy their human rights, are at increased risk of violations and abuse and who, accordingly, are entitled to call on a duty bearer's heightened duty of care': UN Human Rights Council, 'Principles and Practical Guidance on the Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations', Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/37/34 (2018), p. 5, available at: {https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/HRC/37/34} accessed 1 March 2021.

[6]Marianna Karakoulaki, 'New camp for refugees in Greece "worse than Moria"', *DW* (2020), available at: {https://www.dw.com/en/greece-moria-refugees-new-camp-conditions/a-55053895} accessed 26 September 2020.

[7]Didier Bigo, 'Security and immigration: Towards a critique of the governmentality of unease', *Alternatives*, 27:1 (2002), pp. 63–92; Jef Huysmans, 'The European Union and the securitization of migration', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 38:5 (2000), pp. 751–77.

[8]Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Achille Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture*, 15:1 (2003), pp. 11–40; Vicki Squire, 'Governing migration through death in Europe and the US: Identification, burial and the crisis of modern humanism', *European Journal of International Relations*, 23:3 (2016), pp. 513–32.

[9]Mary Bosworth, *Inside Immigration Detention: Foreigners in a Carceral Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014); Kirsten McConnachie, 'Camps of containment: A genealogy of the refugee camp', *Humanity*, 7:3 (2016), pp. 397–412; Kelly Oliver, *Carceral Humanitarianism: Logics of Refugee Detention* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota 2016); Polly Pallister-Wilkins, 'Hotspots and the Politics of Humanitarian Control and Care', Society+Space (2016), available at: {http://societyandspace.org/2016/12/06/hotspots-and-the-politics-of-humanitarian-control-and-care/} accessed 18 October 2020; Martina Tazzioli and Glenda Garelli, 'Containment beyond detention: The hotspot system and disrupted migration movements across Europe', *Society and Space* (2018), pp. 1–19.

[10]Michel Agier, *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government* (Cambridge: Polity Press 2011); Thom Davies, Arshad Isakjee, and Surindar Dhesi, 'Violent inaction: The necropolitical experience of refugees in Europe', *Antipode*, 49:5 (2017), pp. 1263–84; Tazzioli and Garelli, 'Containment beyond detention'.

[11]Alison Gerard and Leanne Weber, '"Humanitarian borderwork": Identifying tensions between humanitarianism and securitization for government contracted NGOs working with adult and unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in Australia', *Theoretical Criminology*, 23:2 (2019), pp. 266–85; Pallister-Wilkins, 'Hotspots'; William Walters, 'Foucault and frontiers: Notes on the birth of the humanitarian border', in Ulrich Brockling, Susanne Krasmann, and Thomas Lemke (eds), *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges* (New York: Routledge 2011), pp. 138–64.

[12]Sotiris Chtouris and DeMond Miller, 'Refugee flows and volunteers in the current humanitarian crisis in Greece', *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 12:1 (2017), pp. 61–77.

[13]Jennifer Allsopp, 'The European Facilitation Directive and the criminalisation of humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants: Measuring the impact on the whole community', in Elspeth Guild and Sergio Carrera (eds), *Irregular Migration, Trafficking and Smuggling of Human Beings: Policy Dilemmas in the EU* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2016), pp. 47–57; Deanna Dadusc and Pierpaolo Mudu, 'Care without control: The humanitarian industrial complex and the criminalisation of solidarity', *Geopolitics* (2020), available at: {DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2020.1749839}.

This article builds upon this scholarship to investigate the impact of poor camp conditions on the work of humanitarian actors and the subsequent impact on the security and well-being of migrants. We argue that these harms are facilitated – actively or by omission – in order to discourage humanitarian actors and, thereby, migrants from travelling to Lesvos, where the services provided by humanitarian actors are regarded as a 'pull factor' for migrants crossing the Mediterranean. In presenting this argument, we specifically draw upon work investigating the poor conditions of Moria as intended to deter migrants.[14] We analyse ways in which humanitarian actors navigate the political and physical space of Moria and are impacted by the conditions in which they work, and how this interaction in turn influences their environment. This article aims to contribute to the large, related bodies of work on humanitarian borderwork and securitised responses to migration, by engaging with humanitarian actors' perceptions of and explanations for poor camp conditions, and the impact of such conditions on their work, which has, to date, generated comparatively little attention.

Methodology

The research involved in-depth, semi-structured, often multiple interviews with 33 humanitarian professionals and volunteers (hereafter humanitarian actors, unless specifically distinguishing between paid workers and volunteers) who have worked in Moria camp. These included representatives of key humanitarian organisations that operated in (or around) Moria camp, including UNHCR, MSF, Drop in the Ocean, and EuroRelief. Around half of the participants (n = 17) were female, and the rest (n = 16) were male. Their ages ranged from 22 to 77, and they were from Greece, Norway, United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Interviews were conducted in May – June 2019 and December 2019 – September 2020 in Norway, in person or via Skype, building on fieldwork conducted previously.[15] This diversity of research participants reflects our appreciation of the heterogeneity of the humanitarian community.[16] Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded according to the degree and type of impact of the conditions of Moria camp on their work, along with perceived explanations for such conditions. Pseudonyms were used from transcription and are used throughout this article for all research participants.[17]

Our primary interest is the impact of camp conditions on humanitarian actors and their work in Moria, and the explanations among humanitarian actors for those conditions. Hence, we only interviewed humanitarian actors, although we do engage with official texts and other secondary sources to further inform our understanding about the social, geopolitical and security context.

Methodologically, we adopt a narrative approach,[18] whereby interviewee explanations of forms of insecurity in the camp, and the impact on those who reside or work in the camp, are

[14]Daniel Howden, 'Moria: Anti-shelter and the spectacle of deterrence', in Tom Scott-Smith and Mark Breeze (eds), *Structures of Protection?: Rethinking Refugee Shelter* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020), pp. 57–70; Polly Pallister-Wilkins, 'Moria hotspot: Shelter as a politically crafted materiality of neglect', in Scott-Smith and Breeze (eds), *Structures of Protection?*, pp. 71–80.

[15]Henrik Kjellmo Larsen, 'Spontaneous Volunteers – Motivations and Attitudes amongst Young Adults - An Autoethnographic Case-Study on Spontaneous Volunteering on Lesvos' (Master's thesis, Monash University, Melbourne, 2018).

[16]While we refer to 'humanitarian actors' when referring to research participants in order to protect anonymity, we recognise that different humanitarian organisations and individuals have different roles, different agendas, and different perspectives that are also not necessarily fixed. The fact that the humanitarian community is diverse and does not always present a united front is shown in the later section on inter-agency competition and criticism and where we refer to the different approaches taken by humanitarian actors when facing the dilemma of whether engagement in Moria is complicity with a practice that causes great harm to migrant residents or, conversely, is more essential.

[17]With the exception of Salam Aldeen who was willing to revoke his right to anonymity, and whose arrest is widely known and influential among volunteers: his specific identity and story was therefore considered to be important to our analysis of the impact of news of arrests.

[18]Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2020); Paulo Ravecca and Elizabeth Dauphinee, 'Narrative and the possibilities for scholarship', *International Political Sociology*, 12:2 (2018), pp. 125–38.

privileged. This enables us to engage with a counter narrative to popular and official securitising discourses, which position the migrant as threatening, as constituting a risk rather than 'at risk',[19] and those who help him or her as irresponsible and needing to be policed. Through engaging with this counter narrative, we question the explanations given by securitising actors and present alternative visions of security and alternative narratives of security, risk, and harm. We also shed light on the conditions in Moria, which, until recently,[20] have escaped robust scrutiny despite being Europe's largest refugee camp and referred to by some humanitarian actors as 'the world's worst refugee camp'.[21]

We also draw from our professional experience, as a founder of a humanitarian organisation, Northern Lights Aid, which provides humanitarian aid to refugees in Greece (Larsen), and as a scholar-practitioner in peacebuilding and migration more broadly (Gordon). We employ interpretive autoethnography, principally Finnen's concept of the 'participating observer',[22] to inform our desk-based and primary research: our direct engagement in the field has informed our motivation, our research questions, and the way in which we interpret data, and has also been instrumental in gaining access to, and gaining the trust of, research participants.

We begin this article by presenting the theoretical framework within which our analysis sits, building upon the literature that analyses state and non-state discourses and practices that expose migrants to harm, justify that harm, and portray the harm inflicted as the only logical response to the threat that migrants present. We then engage with the primary data to discuss, in turn, the camp conditions, explanations for the poor camp conditions by humanitarian actors who work there, and the perceived impact of camp conditions on those who live and work in the camp. Finally, we broaden our discussion to consider the intended and unintended effects of poor camp conditions, as well as reflect upon the camp as a complex, dynamic site of struggle and a manifestation of violent borderwork.

Governance through death

We locate our research in the literature that investigates the processes that propel and justify the reneging of responsibilities on the part of state authorities to respond to the needs of refugees and other migrants.[23] Such literature has revealed that these processes help create and support the logic of securitised, militarised, and even violent responses to migration.[24] Scholarship has referred to the construction of the threat presented by migrants and migration as legitimising what might otherwise be regarded as heavy-handed responses or 'illiberal practices'.[25] Maurizio Albahari uses the concept 'crimes of peace' to refer to actual crimes, violence, and injustices perpetrated in response to the threats ostensibly posed by migrants.[26] These politically

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[19]Claudia Aradau, 'The perverse politics of four-letter words: Risk and pity in the securitisation of human trafficking', *Millennium*, 33:2 (2004), pp. 251–77.

[20]Howden, 'Moria'; Pallister-Wilkins, 'Moria hotspot'.

[21]BBC, 'The worst refugee camp on Earth'.

[22]Alex Finnen, 'Research design for those who are both senior practitioners and academics: The role of the "authoritative observer"', in Eleanor Gordon (ed.), *Researching and Working in Conflict-Affected Environments* (Leicester: Department of Criminology, University of Leicester, 2015), pp. 27–47.

[23]Maurizio Albahari, *Crimes of Peace: Mediterranean Migrations at the World's Deadliest Border* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Tugba Basaran, 'The saved and the drowned: Governing indifference in the name of security', *Security Dialogue*, 46:3 (2015), pp. 205–20; Huysmans, 'The European Union and the securitization of migration'.

[24]Bigo, 'Security and immigration'; Huysmans, 'The European Union and the securitization of migration'.

[25]Dimitris Skleparis, '(In)securitization and illiberal practices on the fringe of the EU', *European Security*, 25:1 (2016), pp. 92–111; Didier Bigo and Anastassia Tsoukala, 'Understanding (in)security', in Didier Bigo and Anastassia Tsoukala (eds), *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty: Illiberal Practices of Liberal Regimes after 9/11* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 1–9.

[26]Maurizio Albahari, 'Death and the Modern State: Making Borders and Sovereignty at the Southern Edges of Europe', Working Paper 137, The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California, San Diego (2006), available at: {https://ccis.ucsd.edu/_files/wp137.pdf} accessed on 18 October 2020.

acceptable and legally enforceable 'lethal border practices', as described by Albahari, 'constitute a clear paradox of liberal-democratic power and rule of law'.[27] Similarly, Omid Tofighian and Boochani have developed the Manus Prison theory to show how 'systematic torture' and other forms of violence and oppression exist within Australia's border regime, drawing from Boochani's experience of being incarcerated as a migrant on Manus Island.[28] Indeed, thousands of people are allowed to die attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea and many more are systematically oppressed and left to suffer in the deplorable conditions of Moria camp 'in the name of the freedom, security and justice of EU citizens'.[29]

While such practices may ostensibly contradict the tenets of the EU, liberal democracies have always functioned on the denial of those presented as 'other' or less than human – such as racialised or colonised subjects – their full humanity.[30] Indeed, portraying migrants as a threat operates as a form of governmentality, whereby power can be exercised by the state to create security for some (worthy of protection) by withdrawing it from others (needing to be sacrificed).[31] These 'illiberal practices' can therefore be seen as part of the European project, with concepts such as 'the rule of law' and 'good governance' being effective tools in the oppression and exclusion of others through seemingly non-racialised, objective, technocratic means.[32] The harm suffered by migrants travelling to and trapped within Moria camp is therefore not antithetical to neoliberal governance, but instrumental to it. The further paradox, explored later in this article, is how humanitarian actors simultaneously ameliorate the harms caused by such 'illiberal practices' while contributing to their continuation through the provision of aid and assistance to camp residents and thus the sustenance of such camps.[33] This paradox is exemplified in the decision by several humanitarian actors to pull out of Moria and not engage in Kara Tepe, unwilling to be complicit in a practice which detains, degrades, and dehumanises camp residents, while others stayed.[34]

That 'they' should be left to die to protect 'our' well-being is conceptualised in what Foucault refers to as 'biopolitical racism'; whereby power is exercised through division of groups within society, the devaluing of some groups over others, and leaving the racialised 'other' (and those deemed 'inferior' or threatening) to die, so that others can live – to 'make live and let die'.[35] Mbembe's work on 'necropolitics',[36] building on the concept of biopolitics, shows how entire populations become disposable and are allowed to suffer and die. Migrants and would-be

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[27] Albahari, 'Death and the Modern State', p. ii.

[28] Omid Tofighian 'Introducing Manus Prison theory: Knowing border violence', *Globalizations*, 17:7 (2020), pp. 1138–56 (p. 1140), available at: {DOI: 10.1080/14747731.2020.1713547}.

[29] Albahari, 'Death and the Modern State', p. 29; Rachel Donadio, '"Welcome to Europe. Now go home"', *The Atlantic* (2019), available at: {https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/11/greeces-moria-refugee-camp-a-european-failure/601132/} accessed 18 October 2020; Helena Smith, '"We left fearing for our lives": Doctors set upon by mob in Lesbos', *The Guardian* (2020), available at: {https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/04/we-left-fearing-for-our-lives-doctors-set-upon-by-mob-in-lesbos} accessed 18 October 2020.

[30] Michel Foucault, *'Society Must Be Defended': Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003 [orig. pub. 1997]); Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

[31] Bigo, and Tsoukala, 'Understanding (in)security'.

[32] David Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).

[33] See S. M. Reid-Henry, 'Humanitarianism as liberal diagnostic: Humanitarian reason and the political rationalities of the liberal will-to-care', *Transactions*, 39 (2014), pp. 418–31 on how humanitarianism 'has the potential to reinforce or set limits on state powers and market forces' (p. 428).

[34] Polly Pallister-Wilkins, 'Humanitarian borderwork', in Cengiz Gunay and Nina Witjes (eds), *Border Politics: Defining Spaces of Governance and Forms of Transgressions* (New York: Springer 2017), pp. 85–103.

[35] Foucault, 'Society must be defended', p. 241; Albahari, 'Death and the Modern State'; Luca Mavelli, 'Governing populations through the humanitarian government of refugees: Biopolitical care and racism in the European refugee crisis', *Review of International Studies*, 43:5 (2017), pp. 809–32; Squire, 'Governing migration through death'.

[36] Mbembe, 'Necropolitics'.

migrants, in this case, become the 'walking dead',[37] caught between the threat of death and insecurity if they remain, and the threat of death and insecurity if they leave. As one man living in Moria camp said: 'If I go back to Iraq, I'll die … [but] if I stay here I'll die … Right now, I won't die. But little by little, I'll die.'[38] Migrants in other camps in Europe refer to the 'slow death' resulting from deliberate inaction and indirect, as well as direct, forms of violence,[39] creating what Mbembe refers to as a 'death-world'.[40]

In effect, 'they' are reduced to 'bodies',[41] or 'bare life',[42] stripped of their humanity, reduced to numbers and to a problem needing to be solved, thus rendering their suffering and death of little consequence.[43] Drawing from Foucault's work on biopolitics, Vicki Squire refers to this normalisation of death at borders as part of the process of 'governing migration through death' (or thanatopolitics – the politics of death).[44] Even where death does not come but, instead, migrants are kept in perpetual insecurity and suffer perpetual injury or harm, this too can be regarded as a means of control and necropolitical governance.[45] We must not neglect, of course, as has sometimes occurred with the application of biopolitics in security studies and border studies, that there is a profound racial dimension to dehumanisation and the subsequent infliction of violence.[46] It is not, after all, white Westerners dying in their thousands in the Mediterranean Sea or trapped in inhumane conditions in official and makeshift camps.

Hell on Earth

Moria camp has been described by humanitarian actors as 'the worst refugee camp on Earth',[47] a 'living hell', 'worse than hell',[48] or 'hell on earth' by some of our research participants.[49] The camp, situated in Moria village on Lesvos island in Greece, was a Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) for asylum seekers and migrants. It was only intended to be a transit centre for migrants to stay a short period of time while filing their asylum applications, before being transferred to the mainland for further processing.[50] However, Moria camp became a bottleneck as a result of the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement, whose geographical restrictions disallowed migrants from travelling to the Greek mainland to lodge asylum applications.[51] In effect, Moria became

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[37]Ibid., p. 40.

[38]Eric Reidy, 'Winter warnings for Europe's largest refugee camp', *The New Humanitarian* (2019), available at: {https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/11/14/Greece-Moria-winter-refugees?fbclid=IwAR2tim9arUXxydk41ubOhtsKMHPAB_cz1B1tkR0ZZ1O1GpqWG7d7Lj7bBz0} accessed on 18 October 2020.

[39]Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi, 'Violent inaction'.

[40]Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', p. 40.

[41]Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2017 [orig. pub. 1951]).

[42]Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

[43]Roxanne Doty, 'Bare life: Border-crossing deaths and spaces of moral alibi', *Society and Space*, 29:4 (2011), pp. 599–612.

[44]Squire, 'Governing migration through death', p. 513; see also Claudia Aradau and Martina Tazzioli, 'Biopolitics multiple: Migration, extraction, subtraction', *Millennium*, 48:2 (2020), pp. 198–220.

[45]Mbembe, 'Necropolitics'; Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi, 'Violent inaction'.

[46]Mbembe, 'Necropolitics'; Aradau and Tazzioli, 'Biopolitics multiple'; Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*; Thom Davies and Arshad Isakjee, 'Ruins of empire: Refugees, race and the postcolonial geographies of European migrant camps', *Geoforum*, 102 (2019), pp. 214–17.

[47]*BBC*, 'The worst refugee camp on Earth'.

[48]UNHCR, 'Refugees Speak of Dreadful Reality'; Chapman, 'A doctor's story'; Evgenia Iliadou, 'Safe havens and prison islands: The politics of protection and deterrence of border crossers on Lesvos island', *Graduate Journal of Social Science*, 15:1 (2019), p. 81; Refugee Trauma Initiative (RTI), 'The Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees in Greece' (2020), available at: {https://static1.squarespace.com/static/577646af893fc0b5001fbf21/t/5ef0bb675598594c56fcad77/1592835023114/2020-06_RTI_COVID19_REFUGEESGR.pdf} accessed 16 October 2020, p. 6.

[49]Interview with Igor, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-fifties, 26 November 2019.

[50]Interview with Angus, male Swedish humanitarian professional and field manager in his mid-forties, 9 March 2020.

[51]See European Union, Council of the European Union, EU-Turkey Statement (2016), available at: {https://www.refworld.org/docid/5857b3444.html} accessed 1 April 2021.

a long-term camp – simply without the provisions, services, and support a long-term camp requires.[52] Many humanitarian actors subsequently pulled out of Moria, regarding it as a place of detention, unwilling to be complicit in this new policy by continuing to provide humanitarian assistance.[53]

This further compromised the conditions of Moria and the services and support available to migrants in the camp. The camp also became severely overcrowded, with the capacity of around three thousand people far exceeded with up to twenty thousand people residing in and around the camp.[54] Almost half this population were under the age of 18, many of whom were unaccompanied children, and many families lived without any type of shelter.[55] Outside the official camp was the unofficial camp, the Olive Grove, where migrants 'overflowed' from the main camp or fled growing violence.[56] There were thousands of people in the Olive Grove, where there was extremely limited, if any, access to water, sanitation or washing facilities, or electricity, which severely compromised the health and well-being of those who were there.[57]

All research participants described Moria's conditions as deplorable. Annie Chapman describes it as having become 'a place of violence, deprivation, suffering and despair'.[58] Most research participants said that conditions in the camp had severely deteriorated over 2019–20. One humanitarian volunteer remembers people staying only for a few days in 2015, but by 2019 they stayed for years in the most deplorable conditions:

> It's the middle of winter, we have hundreds, well thousands, of children living in tents, with no heating, generally no sanitation, no running water, most of the areas no electricity, and not enough food. It's totally desperate and hardly anyone is being moved anywhere.[59]

Others who had previously worked on the island were shocked that the terrible conditions they had experienced could have deteriorated further:

> Four years ago, I thought that this is horrible, but there is a large influx of arrivals and people were not prepared, and people will just stay there a little while, so if we give it some time things will improve. I would never have thought that it would be worse after four years. Not in my wildest imagination.[60]

Research participants invariably spoke of the overcrowding, the absence of proper shelter, the unhygienic conditions due to mounds of rubbish everywhere, and the lack of basic services, including healthcare, clean water, and food. Research participants also spoke of hopelessness,[61] as well as the terrible mental and physical health conditions of those who resided in the

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[52]Interview with Anna, female Norwegian humanitarian professional in her late forties, 3 December 2019.

[53]Pallister-Wilkins, 'Humanitarian borderwork'.

[54]Interview with Anna, female Norwegian humanitarian professional in her late forties, 8 June 2020; see also Chapman, 'A doctor's story'; Apostolos Veizis, 'Commentary: "Leave no one behind" and access to protection in the Greek Islands in the COVID-19 era', *International Migration*, 58 (2020), pp. 264–6.

[55]Chapman, 'A doctor's story'; Harriet Grant, 'UN calls for urgent evacuation of Lesbos refugee camp', *The Guardian* (2020), available at: {https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/feb/11/un-calls-for-urgent-evacuation-of-lesbos-refugee-camp} accessed 18 October 2020.

[56]*BBC*, 'The worst refugee camp on Earth'; interview with Rita, female Norwegian volunteer in her early fifties, 5 December 2019.

[57]Veizis, 'Commentary: "Leave no one behind"'.

[58]Chapman, 'A doctor's story'.

[59]Interview with Greta, female English volunteer and coordinator in her late forties, 30 January 2020.

[60]Interview with Anna, female Norwegian humanitarian professional in her late forties, 3 December 2019.

[61]Interview with Nina, female Norwegian volunteer in her late fifties, 26 November 2019.

camp.[62] This was compounded by the poor camp conditions,[63] which often led to self-harm and suicide,[64] including among children.[65] Participants also spoke of violence, especially at night,[66] including physical and sexual violence.[67] Several referred to Moria as being a very dangerous place to be, especially for children.[68] One volunteer referred to many fights, including a recent fight that left a child dead.[69] Since 2015 there have been regular reports of violence resulting in fatalities in the camp.[70] Research participants commented on the increasing frequency of such violence since 2018, attributing it to the dire conditions of the overcrowded camp, which lacked basic facilities.[71]

UNHCR underscores the importance of shelter for those who are displaced to restoring their personal security and dignity.[72] According to Thom Davies, Arshad Isakjee, and Surindar Dhesi, such appalling conditions on Moria demonstrate deliberate state indifference, which in itself 'is tantamount to violence by EU states towards refugees'.[73] This indifference, which manifests itself in inaction and abandonment by the state, results in significant physical and psychological harm because basic needs are unmet (including safe shelter, adequate food and clean water, and access to healthcare). It is this structural violence that characterises the violent inaction of the state. Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi further describe, drawing from Johan Galtung,[74] how there is a 'violent accord' between such structural violence and physical violence, where camp conditions increase the likelihood of physical violence within and directed towards the camp and its residents.[75] This 'violent accord' leads to Mbembe's 'death-world', in which migrants become the 'walking dead',[76] disposable and allowed to suffer and die. Drawing from fieldwork in Calais and Croatia, Isakjee and colleagues show how such violence manifests itself in diverse ways, from direct physical violence at Croatia's borders to subtle, everyday forms of violence, such as state-sanctioned structural violence, including being denied adequate food, shelter and WASH facilities in the 'Calais jungle'.

[62]Interview with Anna, female Norwegian humanitarian professional in her late forties, 3 December 2019; and see Refugee Support Aegean (RSA), 'Moira Nightmare' (2020), available at: {https://rsaegean.org/en/moria-nightmare/} accessed 18 October 2020; Willemine van de Wiel, Carla Castillo-Laborde, Francisco Urzúa, Michelle Fish, and Willem Scholte, 'Mental health consequences of long-term stays in refugee camps: Preliminary evidence from Moria', BMC International Health and Human Rights (2020), available at: {DOI: 10.21203/rs.3.rs-18160/v1}.

[63]Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), 'Overcrowded, Dangerous and Insufficient Access to Healthcare in Moria' (2018), available at: {https://www.msf.org/greece-overcrowded-dangerous-and-insufficient-access-healthcare-moria} accessed 18 October 2020.

[64]MSF, 'Confronting the Mental Health Emergency on Samos and Lesvos: Why the Containment of Asylum Seekers on the Greek Islands Must End' (2017), available at: {http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/2017_10_mental_health_greece_report_final_low.pdf} accessed 18 October 2020.

[65]*BBC*, 'The worst refugee camp on Earth'; 'Lesbos migrant camp children "say they want to die"' (2019), available at: {https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL6HLA7JxoY} accessed 18 October 2020.

[66]Interview with Phoebe, female Greek journalist in her mid-thirties, 5 June 2020.

[67]See also HRW, 'Greece: Camp Conditions Endanger Women, Girls' (2019), available at: {https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/12/04/greece-camp-conditions-endanger-women-girls} accessed 18 October 2020; Iliadou, 'Safe havens'; RSA, 'Moria Nightmare'.

[68]Joint interview with Ariel and Vidar, Norwegian volunteers (female and male) in their late seventies, 2 December 2019.

[69]Interview with Igor, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-fifties, 26 November 2019.

[70]Jess Staufenberg, 'Refugee crisis: Three people stabbed in riots amid "chaotic" and unsanitary conditions in Greek camps', *Independent* (2016), available at: {https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-stabbed-riots-greek-camps-a6963481.html} accessed 18 October 2020; Andrea Vogt, 'Teenager killed and two injured in stabbing at notorious Lesbos refugee camp', *The Telegraph* (2019), available at: {https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/08/25/teenager-killed-two-injured-stabbing-notorious-lesbos-refugee/} accessed 18 October 2020.

[71]Interview with Phoebe, female Greek journalist in her mid-thirties, 6 May 2020.

[72]UNHCR, 'Shelter', available at: {https://www.unhcr.org/shelter.html} accessed 27 January 2020.

[73]Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi, 'Violent inaction', p. 1264.

[74]Johan Galtung, 'Violence, peace, and peace research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 6:3 (1969), pp. 167–91.

[75]Ibid., p. 1270.

[76]Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', p. 40.

They also demonstrate that while such violence sits 'uncomfortably with the liberal, post-racial image' of the EU, in fact, it 'embodies the inherent logics of liberal governance'.[77]

Like Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi, we argue that state inaction displays an indifference towards the lives of migrants, results in significant physical and psychological harm, and can be used as a technique and demonstration of control.[78] With regard to the latter point, we further argue that the sustained harm inflicted upon migrants is a form of necropolitical governance through which migrants (and would-be migrants) are controlled, not least through the ever-present threat of death. These practices of withholding the means of survival also serve to shift blame from the inaction of the state to the migrant, with the violent conditions and harms suffered by migrants reframed as 'of their own making', effectively serving to obscure the violence of the state.[79]

In early 2020, conditions in Moria had further deteriorated as a result of the threat posed by COVID-19 and responses to it.[80] Moria camp was subject to additional restrictions, beyond national restrictions introduced in March 2020 and those placed upon local residents of Lesvos, which placed strict limitations on the mobility of the camp residents and the activities of humanitarian organisations.[81] While restrictions for the general population were lifted on 4 May, Moria's continued until the camp was destroyed by the fire on 8 September.[82] These measures have been described as 'unacceptable and discriminatory … [making] the refugee population trapped in the camps more vulnerable to the virus than the rest of the population'.[83] The restrictions also contravened international human rights law, which demands that any restrictions of rights for public health or national emergency reasons must be lawful, necessary, proportionate, and non-discriminatory.[84] There was also concern that such measures increased migrants' stress and fear and also, as a result, violence in the camp.[85] Such measures were also regarded as having fuelled tensions between migrants and the island's permanent residents, as fears about the virus increased distrust of, and anger towards, migrants as well as humanitarian actors who helped them.[86]

Meanwhile, those who resided in Moria camp remained especially vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 because of the unhygienic conditions, overcrowding, lack of clean water (with up to 1,300 sharing one water tap), limited availability of soap, poor access to adequate healthcare, and the need to queue for hours each day to get food,[87] which further compromised any effort to socially distance.[88] A large number of people also shared sanitation and washing facilities,

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[77]Arshad Isakjee, Thom Davies, Jelena Obradović-Wochnik, and Karolína Augustová, 'Liberal violence and the racial borders of the European Union', *Antipode*, 52:6 (2020), pp. 1751–73 (p. 1751).

[78]Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi, 'Violent inaction'.

[79]Emma Laurie and Ian Shaw, 'Violent conditions: The injustices of being', *Political Geography*, 65 (2018), pp. 8–16; Isakjee et al., 'Liberal violence'.

[80]Katy Fallon and Harriet Grant, 'Lesbos coronavirus case sparks fears for refugee camp', *The Guardian* (2020), available at: {https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/mar/11/lesbos-coronavirus-case-sparks-fears-for-refugee-camp-moria} accessed 18 October 2020.

[81]HRW, 'Greece: Move Asylum Seekers, Migrants to Safety' (2020), available at: {https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/24/greece-move-asylum-seekers-migrants-safety} accessed 18 October 2020; Veizis, 'Commentary: "Leave no one behind"'.

[82]Interview with Greta, female English volunteer and co-ordinator in her late forties, 6 August 2020; see also 'Greece: Fire sweeps through refugee camp on virus lockdown', *CNBC* (2020), available at: {https://www.cnbc.com/2020/09/09/greece-fire-sweeps-through-refugee-camp-on-virus-lockdown.html} accessed 17 October 2020.

[83]Veizis, 'Commentary: "Leave no one behind"'.

[84]HRW, 'Greece: Move Asylum Seekers, Migrants to Safety'; UNHCR, 'Key Legal Considerations on Access to Territory for Persons in Need of International Protection in the Context of the COVID-19 Response' (2020), available at: {https://www.refworld.org/docid/5e7132834.html} accessed 17 October 2020.

[85]Veizis, 'Commentary: "Leave no one behind"'.

[86]Fallon and Grant, 'Lesbos coronavirus case'.

[87]Interview with Nina, female Norwegian volunteer in her late fifties, 26 November 2019.

[88]Sarah Souli, 'Greek island refugee camps face coronavirus "disaster", aid groups warn', *The New Humanitarian* (2020), available at: {https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/03/27/greece-island-refugee-camps-coronavirus} accessed 17 October 2020; RTI, 'The Impact of COVID-19'.

which again compromised socially distancing efforts. In some parts of the camp there were 167 people per toilet and 242 people per shower; respectively, eight and five times more than the recommended minimum standards in an emergency setting.[89] Many of these people are also more likely to be vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 as their immune systems have been harmed as a result of ill health from stress and trauma, malnourishment, and living in unsanitary conditions, and because they have limited access to healthcare.[90]

On 2 September 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in the camp, prompting the Hellenic Ministry of Migration Policy, which is responsible for Moria, to lock down the camp, preventing migrants from exiting or entering the site.[91] On 8 September, as we were concluding our research, Moria camp was destroyed by fire, amid protests about camp conditions and mis-communication about the movement of some camp residents who had contracted the disease to a quarantine facility:[92]

> If you treat people terribly for long enough, they will do bad things, simply out of frustration … We have seen how the conditions under which they live have become less and less hospitable and how this affects their ability to have a dignified life and keep their hopes up. This is something we have warned against for a long time, in the end it finally happened.[93]

Several research participants had previously mentioned fires having occurred regularly in the camp due to technical faults as well as migrants protesting camp conditions, or, as referred to by another research participant, 'desperate refugees who said they wanted to burn the camp to the ground, out of desperation'.[94] A number of these fires have resulted in deaths, including of children.[95]

The fire on 8 September forced up to 13,000 migrants to evacuate and seek shelter in the surrounding area.[96] However, they were prevented from moving too far away:

> I have spoken to families with young children who tried to get as far away from the burning Moria as possible as their children were terrified. They tried to get to safety but were stopped by police, which forced them to sleep in the street just outside Moria.[97]

After ten days sleeping on roadsides and in fields, and following their protests against the insufferable conditions, which were stopped with police violence and tear gas,[98] the migrants were moved into a new camp, Kara Tepe.[99] There are already reports that the conditions on the

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[89]Veizis, 'Commentary: "Leave No One Behind"'.

[90]Souli, 'Greek island refugee camps face coronavirus "disaster"'; Veizis, 'Commentary: "Leave no one behind"'.

[91]Cossé, 'Greece's Moria Camp Fire'.

[92]Just over a week later there were 243 positive cases of COVID-19 in Kara Tepe; Sertan Sanderson, 'More than 240 new COVID-19 infections among migrants on Lesbos', *Info Migrants* (2020), available at: {https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27464/more-than-240-new-covid-19-infections-among-migrants-on-lesbos} accessed 17 October 2020.

[93]Interview with Anna, female Norwegian humanitarian professional in her late forties, 28 September 2020.

[94]Interview with Igor, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-fifties, 26 November 2019.

[95]Souli, 'Greek island refugee camps face coronavirus "disaster"'; Katy Fallon, 'Child killed in Lesbos refugee camp fire', *The Guardian* (2020), available at: {https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/16/child-killed-in-lesbos-refugee-camp-fire} accessed on 17 October 2020.

[96]Cossé, 'Greece's Moria Camp Fire'.

[97]Interview with Anna, female Norwegian humanitarian professional in her late forties, 28 September 2020.

[98]Cossé, 'Greece's Moria Camp Fire'; 'Moria migrants tear-gassed by Greek police in protest over new camp', *BBC* (2020), available at: {https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54131212} accessed 12 September 2020.

[99]Interview with Anna, female Norwegian humanitarian professional in her late forties, 28 September 2020; and see Sofia Barbarani, 'After Moria fire, refugees decry conditions in new camp on Lesbos', *Aljazeera* (2020), available at: {https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/09/18/after-moria-fire-refugees-decry-conditions-in-new-camp-on-lesbos/} accessed 18 October 2020.

new camp are as poor, if not worse. There have been concerns about contaminated soil of the old military barracks potentially leading to lead poisoning among those who live and work there, and reports of unexploded ordnance on the camp.[100] Safety conditions have also been sharply criticised, especially after the rape of a toddler in December 2020 on the camp.[101] Some NGOs have refused to work there to avoid sanctioning the move of migrants to such a poor camp, while research participants say others are only granted access if they agree not to criticise the camp.[102] It seems, therefore, that the pledge of EC Home Affairs Commissioner that there would be 'no more Morias' has been quickly forgotten.[103]

Camp conditions: Punishment, containment, and deterrence

Most research participants believe that the worsening conditions in Moria were because the Hellenic Ministry of Migration Policy reneged upon its responsibility to effectively manage the camp.[104] The reason for doing so, research participants supposed, was because Moria was regarded as a transit camp. This is despite thousands of people having resided on the camp for many months, sometimes years. Thus, the attitude of governing authorities was that services, facilities, and support should not be provided that could acknowledge, or even encourage, a more permanent status. As one research participants told us: 'The conditions are what they are, because they don't want a permanent structure.'[105] In effect, the temporality of a supposed transit camp ostensibly excused the poor conditions of the camp.[106] There have been reports of the import of accommodation being obstructed by local authorities,[107] as well as the refusal of plans to build a kindergarten, because it was argued that permanent structures should not be built in a transit camp.[108] Even so, the camp had inadequate facilities for a transit centre[109] and did not meet UNHCR's transit centre standards.[110] There was even less requirement, it seemed, to respond to basic needs outside the official camp in the Olive Grove.[111]

As mentioned above, these poor conditions contributed to significant security, health, and psychosocial harms, and led to insecurity and violence. In other words, the 'violent inaction' of the state directly results in significant harm and generates conditions that lead to direct forms of violence and further insecurity.[112] Poor camp conditions, and the resultant harms and violence, contribute to framing the migrant as dangerous and deviant, as 'undesirable',[113] as risky rather than at risk. We hear of the fights and the protest fires, but rarely the conditions that have led to them.

[100]HRW, 'Lead Poisoning Concerns in New Migrant Camp' (2020), available at: {https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/08/greece-lead-poisoning-concerns-new-migrant-camp}.

[101]Benjamin Bathke, 'Doctors confirm rape of 3-year-old girl at Kara Tepe migrant camp', *InfoMigrants* (21 December 2020), available at: {https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/29226/doctors-confirm-rape-of-3-year-old-girl-at-kara-tepe-migrant-camp}.

[102]Interview with Anna, female Norwegian humanitarian professional in her late forties, 28 September 2020; see also Karakoulaki, 'New camp for refugees'.

[103]European Commission, 'Intervention'.

[104]Moria camp was administratively under the Hellenic Ministry of Migration Policy and any reference to 'authorities' in this article is a reference to this Ministry unless stated otherwise.

[105]Interview with Ole, male Danish volunteer in his early thirties, 29 February 2020.

[106]Pallister-Wilkins, 'Moria hotspot'.

[107]'Lesvos mayor prevents freighter from unloading huts for Moria hotspot', *The Greek Observer* (2017), available at: {https://thegreekobserver.com/blog/2017/12/11/lesvos-mayor-prevents-freighter-unloading-huts-moria-hotspot/} accessed 18 October 2020.

[108]Interview with Erica, female Norwegian volunteer and researcher in her early thirties, 10 December 2019.

[109]Interview with Angus, male Swedish humanitarian professional and field manager in his mid-forties, 9 March 2020.

[110]UNHCR, *Emergency Handbook. Site Planning for Transit Camps* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2020).

[111]Interview with Angus, male Swedish humanitarian professional and field manager in his mid-forties, 9 March 2020.

[112]Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi, 'Violent inaction'; Staufenberg, 'Refugee crisis'; Vogt, 'Teenager killed'.

[113]Agier, *Managing the Undesirables*.

As will be discussed shortly, presenting migrants as threatening and deviant serves to absolve the state of responsibility towards them and can be an effective strategy to alleviate any guilt felt about their suffering. In effect, this not only justifies withholding humanitarian assistance, it also legitimises the use of punitive, even violent, means to control migrants.[114] Such constructions can also encourage attacks by far-right extremist groups as well as feed local hostility.[115] Tensions with local permanent residents of Moria had also been increasing, alongside violent protests by residents and vigilante attacks on migrants and humanitarian actors by far-right extremist groups.[116] This violence escalated after Turkey opened its borders to Greece on 29 March 2020, resulting in tens of thousands of migrants attempting to cross the border. Far-right extremist groups attacked migrants and humanitarian actors, doctors, and journalists.[117] The resultant violence was so extreme that many humanitarian actors left the island, bringing to a halt many of the humanitarian projects they were working on, including the provision of food and medical assistance.[118] This departure left migrants, especially the most vulnerable among them, exposed to further harm and even harsher conditions as essential provisions and services were drawn back. The departure was also hastened because of the perceived lack of protection by the local authorities and police from such violence:

> When the Norwegian volunteers were attacked by the mob of locals, the volunteers at one point drove past a police bus that was stationed next to a road block. There were riot police with gear inside the bus looking out, and they did nothing to stop the visibly angry and violent locals following the volunteers.[119]

Several research participants reported that police not only turned a blind eye to violent attacks against them, but that they felt targeted and harassed by the police, including random police checks perceived as being targeted at humanitarian actors.[120] While several research participants referred to good collaboration with the local police and camp authorities,[121] others were left reluctant to contact the police for assistance if, for instance, a fight broke out on camp as 'they would escalate things further or be too brutal'.[122] Some said calling the police would be 'a last resort'.[123] Others suggested that, in order to address the needs of the migrants, they sometimes had to work against, rather than with, the police. Many research participants regarded a perceived lack of partnership and cooperation with the police as likely to undermine efforts to address the needs of migrants and further compromise their well-being and security.

Many also regarded what they perceived as targeting practices by the police as 'a deterrent and … meant to work as such';[124] intended to make their work more difficult, scare them away, and

[114]Basaran, 'The saved and the drowned'.

[115]Eric Maddox, 'AYS special from Lesvos: Right-wing attacks on refugees, volunteers, and locals', *Are You Syrious* (2020), available at: {https://medium.com/are-you-syrious/ays-special-from-lesvos-right-wing-attacks-on-refugees-volunteers-and-locals-9f98779aef8e} accessed 18 October 2020.

[116]Reidy, 'Winter warnings'; 'How the Greek island of Lesbos became a hub of right-wing activism', *TRT World* (2020), available at: {https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/how-the-greek-island-of-lesbos-became-a-hub-of-right-wing-activism-36275} accessed 18 October 2020.

[117]Fallon and Grant, 'Lesbos coronavirus case'; Maddox, 'AYS Special from Lesvos'; Smith, '"We left fearing for our lives"'; Souli, 'Greek island refugee camps face coronavirus "disaster"'.

[118]'Female refugees face dire situation after aid workers flee Lesbos', *ITV* (2020), available at: {https://www.itv.com/news/2020-03-07/female-refugees-face-dire-situation-after-aid-workers-flee-lesbos/} accessed 18 October 2020; Grant, 'Lesbos coronavirus case sparks fears for refugee camp'.

[119]Interview with Olga, female Norwegian humanitarian professional in her mid-thirties, 26 November 2019.

[120]Interview with Evan, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-forties, 11 December 2019.

[121]Interview with Igor, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-fifties, 26 November 2019.

[122]Interview with Nina, female Norwegian volunteer in her late fifties, 26 November 2019.

[123]Interview with Leonard, male American in his early twenties, 26 November 2019.

[124]Interview with Ole, male Danish volunteer in his early thirties, 29 February 2020.

deter other humanitarian actors from coming to Lesvos. This can be seen as part of a larger trend across Europe of policing those who provide humanitarian assistance to migrants,[125] to further feed the rhetoric that migrants are threatening, and must be feared and distrusted rather than helped.[126] This helps fuel anti-migrant sentiment and exposes those in need to insecurity and harm.[127]

Ultimately, research participants regarded the overall poor conditions of Moria as operating as an effective deterrent for would-be migrants coming to Greece. Polly Pallister-Wilkins refers to the poor conditions on Moria camp as constituting 'a callous disregard for the well-being of those seeking shelter … and a purposeful policy of neglect intended to act as a deterrent within a wider system of exclusionary border practices'.[128] A number of humanitarian organisations have also publicly stated that the conditions in the camp were kept deplorable to discourage others:

> The EU and Greek authorities continue to rob vulnerable people of their dignity and health, seemingly in an effort to deter others from coming. This policy is cruel, inhumane and cynical, and it needs to end.[129]

Many research participants questioned the extent to which the poor conditions were intentional or, rather, the result of an overburdened, inefficient Greek administration.[130] Most research participants, however, considered that conditions on the camp were intentionally poor to discourage migrants from attempting to enter the EU through Lesvos:

> It is startling who the situation was bad then, and there were sounds of alarm you know, and then it's three or four or five times as bad. It just keeps on being this way, and it's not like there are steps taken to change the situation, rather there are steps taken to make it worse.[131]

> It was obvious that the reason the conditions were the way they were was so that it would not be tempting to come to Moria.[132]

> It's a way to make it even less tempting to come to Greece. Having Moria horrible is enough. To tell the refugees that you are not getting in to Europe, all you are getting is prison.[133]

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[125]Allsopp, 'The European Facilitation Directive'; Yasha Maccanico, Ben Hayes, Samuel Kenny, and Frank Barat, 'The Shrinking Space for Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees: How the European Union and Member States Target and Criminalize Defenders of the Rights of People on the Move', Transnational Institute (Amsterdam, 2018), available at: {https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/web_theshrinkingspace.pdf} accessed 18 October 2020; Lina Vosyliūtė and Carmine Conte, 'Crackdown on NGOs and Volunteers Helping Refugees and Other Migrants', ReSOMA (2019), available at: {http://www.resoma.eu/sites/resoma/resoma/files/policy_brief/pdf/Final%20Synthetic%20Report%20-%20Crackdown%20on%20NGOs%20and%20volunteers%20helping%20refugees%20and%20other%20migrants_1.pdf} accessed 18 October 2020; UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, 'Saving Lives is Not a Crime', Report of the Special Rapporteur to the General Assembly, A/73/314 (7 August 2018).

[126]Allsopp, 'The European Facilitation Directive'.

[127]Kristin Sandvik, 'Juridification, criminalization and lawfare in humanitarian space', in Mark Salter et al. (eds), 'Horizon scan: Critical security studies for the next 50 years', Security Dialogue, 50:4S (2019), pp. 9–37, 28–9.

[128]Pallister-Wilkins, 'Moria hotspot', p. 75.

[129]MSF, 'Greece: Three Years of "Cruel, Inhumane, and Cynical" Treatment of Migrants and Refugees' (2019), available at: {https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/news-stories/news/greece-three-years-cruel-inhumane-and-cynical-treatment-migrants-and} accessed 17 October 2020.

[130]Interview with Erica, female Norwegian volunteer and researcher in her early thirties, 10 December 2019.

[131]Interview with Ole, male Danish volunteer in his early thirties, 29 February 2020.

[132]Interview with Stephen, male Norwegian male volunteer in his late seventies, 15 January 2020.

[133]Interview with Evan, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-forties, 11 December 2019.

That poor camp conditions were intended to deter would-be migrants, while generally not openly admitted by Greek officials, is also evidenced in a recent statement made about the planned establishment of 'closed controlled structures' (camps with increased security and restricted access for NGOs, media personnel and others) on the Aegean islands by the Minister of Immigration and Asylum, Notis Mitarakis: 'closed controlled structures for us are a fence for future events. They certainly work as a deterrent.'[134] Endeavouring to ensure camps are not 'attractive' to migrants relates to broader arguments that 'pull factors' for migrants have contributed to a massive influx of migrants. The argument continues that such 'pull factors' must therefore be removed, regardless of the consequence to migrants' lives, including Search and Rescue capabilities in the Mediterranean, for instance.[135] Such arguments, of course, discount the many push factors involved in migration, including armed conflict, persecution and extreme poverty, and the desperation of migrants.[136]

Moria as carceral space

The official Moria camp was a former military base. Before it was destroyed by fire, it was guarded by police and was referred to by residents and visitors as carceral in nature. Pallister-Wilkins refers to the 'assorted security architecture such as watchtowers and loudspeakers',[137] and research participants also thought Moria resembled a prison because of the perimeter fences, barbed wire and gates, checkpoints and police guards.[138]

Moria's prison-like appearance feeds into the narrative of Moria operating as a deterrent to others who might travel to Lesvos seeking asylum. Resembling a prison can be useful when we recall the role of a prison is to punish (to deprive of liberties), to protect society (from those who threaten it), and to prevent wrongdoing (to serve as a warning or deterrent for others). As described by Daniel Howden, 'Moria's architecture is shaped by containment and punishment, inspiring fear and violence … where the suffering of those sheltered is performed as a deterrent to those who might otherwise choose to follow them.'[139] In this regard, the camp is an 'anti-shelter',[140] the antithesis of what a shelter should be. As discussed in the previous section, the poor camp conditions, and the further insecurity that these give rise to, can also be regarded as carceral as they feed into the deterrent narrative and can also be regarded as operating as a form of punishment.

Supporting the analogy of the camp as carceral space, is the fact that the movement of migrants is restricted.[141] Indeed, Moria did not just look like a prison; it became a space of indefinite confinement. In fact, many migrants have referred to the enforced waiting as 'prison time', when they are 'stuck' and wasting time and life that cannot be regained.[142] Evgenia Iliadou refers to this waiting and wasting of time as 'some of the most obscene forms of violence exercised upon

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[134]Notis Mitarakis 'Radical Change in the Image of Immigrants: Who Pays Immigrants' Benefits' (11 August 2020), available at: {https://www.newsit.gr/politikh/mitarakis-sto-newsit-gr-riziki-allagi-stin-eikona-tou-metanasteytikou-poios-plironeita-epidomata-ton-metanaston/3137348/}; Daphne Panayotatos, 'Blocked at Every Pass: How Greece's Policy of Exclusion Harms Asylum Seekers and Refugees', Issue Brief, Relief International (24 November 2020), available at: {https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2020/11/20/blocked-at-every-pass-how-greeces-policy-of-exclusion-harms-asylum-seekers-and-refugees}.

[135]Maccanico et al., 'The Shrinking Space'; Mavelli, 'Governing populations'.

[136]Mavelli, 'Governing populations'.

[137]Pallister-Wilkins, 'Moria hotspot', p. 77.

[138]Interview with Stephen, male Norwegian volunteer in his late seventies, 15 January 2020.

[139]Howden, 'Moria', p. 66.

[140]Ibid.

[141]Mary Malafeka, 'Moria Refugee Camp: Restriction of Movement and Living Conditions', University of Oxford (2018), available at: {https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2018/04/moria-refugee} accessed 18 October 2020.

[142]Iliadou, 'Safe havens', p. 80.

border crossers on Lesvos Island'.[143] This violence manifests itself in lives wasted, a 'slow death',[144] with Moira a 'graveyard',[145] or 'death-world',[146] for those who spend their lives 'in limbo'.[147]

Scholarly literature on the refugee or migrant camp as quasi-carceral space engages with the ways in which migration is managed through incarceration, separation, and containment.[148] Kirsten McConnachie makes an analogy between refugee camp and concentration camp as both being used to contain 'the other' or 'matter out of place' – or migrants' 'unruly mobility',[149] as Glenda Garelli and Martina Tazzioli put it – and to separate that which is deemed 'other' or 'out of place' from the rest of society.[150] Ways in which the 'other' is separated and contained, and the deplorable conditions commonplace in such camps, are justified by recourse to the threat that 'the other' is presented as posing to 'us'. Segregation is both a response to this threat and serves to enhance the perceived threat posed by 'the other'.[151]

Othering is a common practice whereby marginalised groups are further disempowered through presentation of them as a threat, causing the broader population to fear them and accept measures to control or repress them, or allows them to die so that we can live.[152] Othering also delegitimises any complaints on the part of 'the other', including claims for security, justice, and dignity. What results is a continuum of violence against the dispossessed and marginalised, the normalisation of overt forms of social control, and an insulation of 'us' from its effects.

Rendering invisible to magnify the threat and minimise the harm

Paradoxically, the status of 'the other' and its perceived threat is maintained, in large part, by rendering invisible 'the other' through segregation and containment in camps.[153] Rendering invisible enables a discourse to be constructed and maintained around the migrant, relatively unchallenged by direct knowledge. We see in Moria that information about the camp was carefully managed. Many research participants, for instance, referred to the police objecting to photos or video footage being taken: 'If they get your camera, they delete everything'.[154] The high-profile arrest of Salam Aldeen on 11 December 2019, while he was distributing food and blankets to people in Moria camp, was also regarded by Salam and other research participants as being motivated by him being a vocal critic of the Greek authorities and their treatment of migrants, and because he was documenting conditions.[155] His arrest (this being the second related to his humanitarian work with refugees on Lesvos) was perceived by many research participants as intended to silence and discourage those who document and publicise perceived wrongdoings of the Greek authorities, as well as deter others 'from doing this type of work'.[156] This perceived strategy to silence camp critics has been potentially formalised in the confidentiality clauses of a recent Greek

[143]Ibid.

[144]Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi, 'Violent inaction', p. 1280.

[145]Iliadou, 'Safe havens', p. 81.

[146]Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', p. 40.

[147]Iliadou, 'Safe havens'.

[148]Bosworth, *Inside Immigration Detention*; Moran, *Carceral Geography*; Mountz et al., 'Conceptualizing detention'; Howden, 'Moria'; Oliver, *Carceral Humanitarianism*; Pallister-Wilkins, 'Moria hotspot'; Tazzioli and Garelli, 'Containment beyond detention'.

[149]Tazzioli and Garelli, 'Containment beyond detention', p. 16.

[150]McConnachie, 'Camps of containment', p. 406.

[151]Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

[152]Foucault, 'Society must be defended'; see also Albahari, *Crimes of Peace*; Mavelli, 'Governing populations'; Squire, 'Governing migration through death'.

[153]McConnachie, 'Camps of containment'.

[154]Interview with Amalie, female Norwegian volunteer in her late fifties, 14 November 2019.

[155]Interview with Salam Aldeen, founding member of the NGO 'Team Humanity', 28 January 2020.

[156]Interview with Ole, male Danish volunteer in his early thirties, 29 February 2020.

ministerial decision on the operation of temporary migrant sites. This decision prohibits the disclosure of 'personal data, information and any other material' by anyone who works in such camps to any third party, and is regarded by several humanitarian actors as an attempt to 'muzzle' humanitarian actors sharing accounts of abuses inside camps.[157]

When we do not have contact with or sight of 'the other' and when information about 'the other' is carefully controlled, their dehumanisation and discourse about the threat they pose can remain unchallenged. This not only justifies harsh responses to contain the threat, but the violence directed toward 'them' does not matter, because 'they' are 'not like us' and so do not feel pain or suffering as we would. When people are rendered invisible, stripped of their humanity, reduced to numbers, to a problem – they become 'superfluous',[158] or 'bare life',[159] and their deaths, then, no longer matter.[160] The deplorable conditions in Moria, including camp residents constantly living under the threat of violence, in other words, become acceptable and any responsibility we have for their suffering – including, for many, their deaths – is denied or made invisible. The outgroup's suffering is ignored, and they are treated as *infrahumans* whose humanity is essentially different or of less value than that of the ingroup.[161] When suffering cannot be seen, when it is confined behind prison-like barriers, and when it is kept from public scrutiny by destroying camera footage, it is easier to dehumanise and to deny that human rights violations and other harms have occurred.[162]

Tugba Basaran describes how preventing 'unwanted contact and communication' between securitised populations, such as migrants and the general public, facilitates detachment and indifference to the plight of the migrant and is also a 'well-established governing technique … to reduce possible acts of solidarity'.[163] We forget that 'no one leaves home unless / home is the mouth of a shark … [and that] no one puts their children in a boat / unless the water is safer than the land'.[164]

Policing of those who take photos or video footage is also indicative, perhaps, of the desire to keep what was happening in Moria away from public scrutiny. When large parts of what happens remains unseen and camera footage gets destroyed, Moria becomes, paradoxically, more effective as a deterrent: the spectre of detention (as a deterrent) is all the more powerful because of the element of the unknown. Research participants told us that official visitors would only be shown a small part of the camp and only after that part that had been cleared and cleaned. Some interviewees also explained how these visits were stage-managed to avoid public scrutiny and criticism. As Erica told us:

> They don't want to keep the camp so bad so that Greece reputation is completely ruined. When Angelina Jolie and the pope visited, they cleaned up the camp a little bit.

[157]Ministerial Decision 23/13532 – Government Gazette 5272 / B / 30-11-2020, 'General Regulations for the Operation of Temporary Reception Structures and Temporary Accommodation Structures for Third Country Nationals or Stateless Persons, which Operate with the Care of the Reception and Identification Service', Greek Minister of Immigration and Asylum (30 November 2020), Art. 8.1, available at: {https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-allodapoi/upourgike-apophase-23-13532-phek-5272b-30-11-2020.html}; Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 'Greece's New Confidentiality Law Aims to Conceal Grave Violations against Asylum Seekers' (11 December 2020), available at: {https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/4057/Greece%E2%80%99s-new-confidentiality-law-aims-to-conceal-grave-violations-against-asylum-seekers}.

[158]Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

[159]Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

[160]Doty, 'Bare life'.

[161]Jacques-Philippe Leyens, Paola Paladino, Ramon Rodriguez-Torres, Jeroen Vaes, Stephanie Demoulin, Armando Rodriguez, and Ruth Gaunt, 'The emotional side of prejudice: The attribution of secondary emotions to ingroups and outgroups', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4:2 (2000), pp. 186–97.

[162]Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*.

[163]Basaran, 'The saved and the drowned', p. 215.

[164]Warsan Shire, 'Home' (poem), SeekersGuidance (2015), available at: {https://seekersguidance.org/articles/social-issues/home-warsan-shire/}accessed 18 October 2020.

Journalists are not let in … They don't want to show the worst part of the camp, but they want to make sure it's bad enough to not want to come.[165]

A difficult balance must therefore be secured between communicating a threatening deterrent to prospective migrant communities (and those who might help them), responding to the concerns of local residents as well as powerful anti-immigration sentiments of influential stakeholders, while avoiding public criticism for reneging upon responsibilities by critical audiences in Europe. Erving Goffman's work on the dramaturgy of social life shows us that only through ensuring different audiences are kept apart and carefully managing the impression each audience receives, can legitimacy and order be maintained.[166]

Inter-agency coordination, competition, and criticism

The poor conditions in Moria camp adversely impacted the work of humanitarian actors, causing significant difficulties, stress, and hardship.[167] It was not, however, just poor camp conditions that adversely impacted the work of humanitarian actors, nor were poor camp conditions solely the responsibility of Lesvos, Greek, and EU migration authorities. Research participants referred to several other factors that undermined the effectiveness of their work, including inter-agency coordination challenges, competition, and criticism,[168] as well as the absence of overarching government coordination and support, which in turn further compounded the poor camp conditions and compromised the well-being of camp residents.[169]

While some research participants referred to the existence of coordination mechanisms in the camp, many spoke about poor collaboration, coordination, and information sharing between humanitarian organisations working in the camp, and between them and camp authorities.[170] It was suggested that these deficiencies resulted from the absence of anyone taking overarching control of the camp. People also referred to competition and territorialism leading to poor coordination, driven by the need to make money and retain a profile, which undermined the efficiency of efforts. The perception of humanitarian organisations being in competition or being driven by profit further sours the relationships between humanitarian actors and local residents, which can further compound the difficult conditions in which migrants live and humanitarian actors work.[171] Prioritisation of organisational profile above addressing the needs of migrants also further contributes to the deterioration of camp conditions as important tasks, such as cleaning washing facilities or clearing rubbish, are ignored in favour of activities that might better enhance the profile of an organisation.[172]

Others referred to mistrust between organisations and there being a lot of criticism of each other, including between humanitarian organisations and local, national, and supranational authorities, with constant shifting of responsibility and blame:[173]

Everyone is saying 'this is not my job' and not my responsibility. So, no-one is actually accepting overall responsibility … It has been the case all way along. The Greek government will blame the UNHCR, the UNHCR will blame the Greek government, and we go around and around and no one is accepting overall responsibility.[174]

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[165]Interview with Erica, female Norwegian volunteer and researcher in her early thirties, 10 December 2019.
[166]Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959).
[167]Interview with Evan, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-forties, 11 December 2019.
[168]Interview with Angus, male Swedish humanitarian professional and field manager in his mid-forties, 9 March 2020.
[169]Interview with Angus.
[170]Interview with Angus.
[171]Interview with Greta, female English volunteer and co-ordinator in her late forties, 30 January 2020.
[172]Interview with Nina, female Norwegian volunteer in her late fifties, 26 November 2019.
[173]See also Howden, 'Moria'.
[174]Interview with Greta, female English volunteer and co-ordinator in her late forties, 30 January 2020.

Some research participants saw this lack of cooperation between organisations as resulting from, or even being fostered by, the responsible ministries in an attempt to ensure conditions in the camp remained poor and thus deter migrants and those who seek to assist them:

> [P]eople do work with each other occasionally, but they have so many problems with the police, with authorities, cars getting stopped, police confiscating licence plates. There is so much hassle, so I think they try not to get involved in other people's projects. In some way, the Greek police and authorities have managed to create a hostile environment for NGO workers.[175]

> [A]ll the authorities are doing is making the job of NGOs more difficult … because they want them out.[176]

As this section has explored, humanitarian actors are impacted by and, in turn, impact camp conditions. Essentially, our research has shown how humanitarian actors can simultaneously critique and perpetuate the poor conditions of the camp, as well as contribute to and ameliorate the resultant harms.

Intended and unintended effects

The deplorable conditions in and around Moria camp, compounded by coordination challenges between organisations, severely compromised the safety and well-being of those who resided in the camp. They also made the work of humanitarian actors more difficult. These poor conditions, and their consequences, were compounded by perceived targeting practices by the police, hostility from local residents, and violent attacks by far-right extremist groups. It was widely perceived that conditions were kept poor in Moria camp to deter humanitarian actors and, especially, migrants from coming to Lesvos: 'a purposeful policy of neglect intended to act as a deterrent within a wider system of exclusionary border practices'.[177] Discouraging humanitarian actors from remaining within, or travelling to, Lesvos was regarded by research participants as an attempt to remove the 'pull factor' for migrants.[178] One humanitarian volunteer told us: 'It was obvious that the reason the conditions were the way they were was so that it would not be tempting to come to Moria',[179] and perhaps encourage others to 'self-deport'.[180] Despite this, it is clear from the number of people who still attempt to cross the Mediterranean to Lesvos[181] that it is not an effective deterrent: 'Moria is the way it is to because the Greek authorities wants to make it inhospitable as possible. It is clearly not working because people are still coming.'[182] Other research participants pointed out that the very fact migrants continue to come to Lesvos 'is very telling about what they are travelling from'.[183]

Many humanitarian actors also told us that the challenges they experienced made them more committed to stay. As Carl said, he was 'not going to be bullied into not helping people in

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[175]Interview with Evan, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-forties, 11 December 2019.

[176]Interview with Greta, female English volunteer and co-ordinator in her late forties, 30 January 2020.

[177]Pallister-Wilkins, 'Moria hotspot', p. 71.

[178]Interview with Charles, male Norwegian humanitarian professional in his late forties, 6 June 2019; and see Pallister-Wilkins, 'Moria hotspot'.

[179]Interview with Stephen, male Norwegian volunteer in his late seventies, 15 January 2020.

[180]Aila Spathopoulou, Anna Carastathis, and Mytro Tsilimpounidi, '"Vulnerable refugees" and "voluntary deportations": Performing the hotspot, embodying its violence', *Geopolitics* (2020), available at: {DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2020.1772237}.

[181]Donadio, '"Welcome to Europe. Now go home"'.

[182]Interview with Jenny, female Norwegian volunteer in her early fifties, 20 January 2020.

[183]Interview with Stephen, male Norwegian volunteer in his late seventies, 15 January 2020.

need'.[184] Others said that while 'the authorities actively make life more difficult for refugees and make humanitarian work more difficult, we have become more motivated to continue working because of this.'[185] Nonetheless, many humanitarian actors have left as the conditions became too difficult, particularly after the violence of far-right extremist groups and the introduction of harsh COVID-19 restrictions. As one British volunteer told us: 'The harassment of authorities has only made them determined to help. However, many people have left the island because it became so difficult to work.'[186] Many research participants referred to 'a massive gap in services' as a result,[187] resulting in 'only making the lives of people in the refugee camp even more miserable',[188] and exposing migrants to more harm and insecurity.

Sustaining poor camp conditions – and subsequent associations with disease and violence – can also serve to strengthen the discourse of the threatening or deviant migrant, which not only legitimises continued punitive responses to migration but also removes culpability on the part of EU states for helping to create conditions that have led to the migration crisis. The violence of the border is, thus, depoliticised, as responsibility and blame is shifted towards those who most suffer,[189] treating the migrant as an *object* of governmentality rather than a *subject* with needs and desires.[190]

The camp as a site of struggle

The disconnect between the perceived intended and actual effects of Moria's poor conditions can also be explained by the fact that the camp is not a simple objective, static reality or just a violent manifestation of control, but a site of struggle. Those who live and work in such camps are not simply victims of the material conditions of the camp but interpret, resist, and remake the camp and the way it operates, and constrain or enable its continuous making and remaking. This can be seen if we look beyond the teleology of the camp to the everyday life of the camp. Advancing a focus on the everyday life of the camp enables us to see the complex social relationships that operate within and through the camp,[191] and see how those who live and work in the camp make and remake the material and institutional structures of the camp.[192]

This making and remaking can be seen, for instance, in the volunteer humanitarianism of migrant and non-migrant humanitarian actors, which challenges, respectively, the deviant- or victim-status of the migrant and the conspirator in the 'control through care' of the humanitarian actor.[193] It can also be seen in the more destructive ways in which the migrant violently resists the violence to which she or he is subject, and the ways in which the humanitarian actor exacerbates the conditions of the camp by competing with or criticising other humanitarian organisations. Our fieldwork demonstrated both the ways in which humanitarian actors simultaneously fill the gap resulting from the violent inaction of the state while contributing to poor camp conditions, as a result of inter-agency competition, criticism, and mistrust, and the broader ways in which they challenge and reinforce the violent governance of migration. For instance, as discussed

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[184]Interview with Carl, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-twenties, 12 May 2019.

[185]Interview with Evan, male Norwegian volunteer in his mid-forties, 11 December 2019.

[186]Interview with Greta, female English volunteer and co-ordinator in her late forties, 30 January 2020.

[187]Interview with Greta.

[188]Interview with Jenny, female Norwegian volunteer in her early fifties, 20 January 2020.

[189]Reece Jones, *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move* (London: Verso, 2016).

[190]Maribel Casas-Cortes et al., 'New keywords: Migration and borders', *Cultural Studies*, 29:1 (2015), pp. 55–87.

[191]Diana Martin, Claudio Minca, and Irit Katz, 'Rethinking the camp: On spatial technologies of power and resistance', *Progress in Human Geography*, 44:4 (2020), pp. 743–68; McConnachie, 'Camps of containment'.

[192]Ashika Singh, 'Arendt in the refugee camp: The political agency of world-building', *Political Geography*, 77:102149 (2020); Adam Ramadan, 'Spatialising the refugee camp', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38:1 (2012), pp. 65–77.

[193]Elisa Sandri, '"Volunteer humanitarianism": Volunteers and humanitarian aid in the Jungle refugee camp of Calais', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44:1 (2018), pp. 65–80.

above, several research participants referred to competition between organisations driven by a need or desire to attract funds and 'unnecessary criticism' of other humanitarian organisations, which potentially compromise efficiency and the ability 'to raise more funds' when working together.[194] Fieldwork also demonstrated the broader ways in which humanitarian actors challenge and reinforce the violent governance of migration, by risking their own security and liberty to respond to the harms inflicted upon migrants and draw attention to the injustices suffered, while also helping to sustain the camps that cause such harm through the provision of life-saving assistance and basic services. This dichotomy is epitomised in the dilemma facing organisations when deciding whether provision of assistance to those in need might constitute complicity with policies and practices that inflict harm.

The dynamic, complex character of the camp is epitomised in the varied ways in which humanitarian actors interact with local authorities, including the police, and each other. It can also be seen in the ways in which humanitarian actors simultaneously challenge and perpetuate the violent governance of migrants,[195] and the ways in which migrants resist, repair (through the provision of aid and assistance to its victims) and perpetuate cycles of violence in the camp. These varied responses contribute to continuously making and remaking the camp and impact the lives of those who live and work there.

This reading of the camp as a dynamic and complex space and site of struggle, continuously made and remade by those who live and work there, acknowledges the agency of the migrant as well as the heterogeneity of the migrant and humanitarian communities. It moves beyond recent studies that rely upon Giorgio Agamben and reduce the migrant to 'bare life', caught in a permanent state of injury, precarity, and transience.[196] Everyday life within the camp can be regarded as forms of political agency and resistance, and not simply 'the silent expressions of "bare life"'.[197] The migrant is, in turn, not regarded as an object of harm or help;[198] not simply acted upon but acts, reacts, and shapes their world.

Likewise, the humanitarian actor is not simply complicit with violent border practices[199] or engaged in potentially transformative acts of resistance against such practices.[200] The political complexity of borderwork, shown through an analysis of how the poor conditions of Moria are experienced and explained by humanitarian actors, goes beyond the 'Humanitarian Industrial Complex' that 'is often complicit in the harms and violence of borders' and which is distinct from autonomous solidarity.[201] Humanitarian actors in Moria were simultaneously exposed to harm and precarity, and challenged the direct and structural violence inflicted upon migrants by filling gaps and drawing attention to harm. However, due to a lack of coordination, proper management, and oversight they also contributed to the harms suffered by those living in the camp though territorial competition and poor inter-agency communication. Alison Gerard and Leanne Weber refer to these contradictory tensions whereby humanitarian actors 'transform borders from below' while simultaneously being subject to potential co-option and control by 'governmental security imperatives' – in other words, shaping 'the translation of government power … [while contributing] to the government agenda of border securitization'.[202] It is through depiction of the camp as a complex and dynamic site of struggle,

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[194]Interview with Lennard, male Norwegian volunteer in his late seventies, 15 January 2020.

[195]Martin, Minca, and Katz, 'Rethinking the camp'; Pallister-Wilkins, 'Hotspots'.

[196]Singh, 'Arendt in the refugee camp'; Ramadan, 'Spatialising the refugee camp'; Davies and Isakjee, 'Ruins of empire'; Agier, *Managing the Undesirables*; Serena Parekh, *Refugees and the Ethics of Forced Displacement* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[197]Ramadan, 'Spatialising the refugee camp', p. 71; Martin, Minca, and Katz, 'Rethinking the camp'.

[198]Casas-Cortes et al., 'New keywords'.

[199]Pallister-Wilkins, 'Hotspots'.

[200]Leanne Weber, 'From state-centric to transversal borders: Resisting the "structurally embedded border" in Australia', *Theoretical Criminology*, 23:2 (2019), pp. 228–46.

[201]Dadusc and Mudu, 'Care without control', p. 1.

[202]Gerard and Weber, 'Humanitarian borderwork', p. 266.

imbued with contradictory dynamics and tensions, in which those who live and work there continuously make and remake the camp and are not simply passive victims of harm or control, that our research contributes to the literature on violent borderwork, drawing from the lived experiences and perceptions of humanitarian actors.

Conclusion

This article has analysed the ways in which the camp conditions in Moria impacted and were impacted by humanitarian actors, and the intended and unintended consequences of these conditions, as perceived by humanitarian actors. The poor conditions in Moria (and now Kara Tepe) and associated threats to security, health, and well-being, are widely regarded as intended to deter migrants and humanitarian actors, regarded as a 'pull factor' for migrants. While many humanitarian actors have become more resolute in providing assistance in an environment where they regard it as increasingly needed, the poor conditions combined with perceived targeting by police, hostile locals, and far-right extremist groups have led to several humanitarian actors leaving Lesvos. This further compromises the security and well-being of camp residents.

Poor conditions and the resultant harms, violence, and other forms of insecurity also contribute to reinforcing the discourse of the deviant, dangerous, and undesirable migrant. The poor conditions, alongside anti-immigration sentiment and even violent attacks, are, thus, paradoxically justified with recourse to the threat that migrants are presented as posing. A vicious circle ensues. In this context, policing of humanitarian actors can be regarded as an effort to punish and prevent those who seek to assist migrants, as well as an effort to control the discourse on migration, with policing reinforcing the link between migration and threat. The segregation of migrants and the careful management of information that is communicated out of camps on Lesvos help ensure this discourse is not challenged.

The camp, however, is not simply a static manifestation of violent borderwork. It is a complex, dynamic site of struggle in which those who live and work in the camp continuously make and remake the camp. This can be seen in the ways in which humanitarian actors contribute to the poor conditions of Moria due to deficiencies in coordination and the resultant inter-agency competition and criticism, while simultaneously filling the gap resulting from the violent inaction of the state, as well as the broader ways in which they potentially reinforce but also challenge the violent governance of migration.

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