

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

## **Abstract**

This paper explores the communicative architecture of the border during Europe's 2015-16 "migration crisis". Drawing on fieldwork on the Greek island of Chios, the second biggest migrant entry point in South-Eastern Europe, the paper focusses on the border as a site where refugee and migrant reception takes place and where the parameters of Europe's ethico-political response to the "crisis" are set. The paper demonstrates that the continent's double norm of 'security and care' produces a new and highly ambivalent moral order, *hospitability*. Constituted through techno-symbolic networks of mediation, hospitability re-affirms dominant theorizations of the border as an order of power and exclusion but goes beyond these in highlighting micro-connections of compassion and solidarity that simultaneously co-exist with and attempt to challenge this order.

## **Keywords**

communication networks, mediation, communicative architecture, hospitality, securitization, hospitability, migration, refugees

## **Introduction: The dominant ethics of the Mediterranean “migration crisis”<sup>i</sup>**

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

Our starting point is the practical enactment of this requirement at one of Europe’s outer borders, the Greek island of Chios<sup>iv</sup>. Drawing on participant observation and interviews with key actors receiving migrants and refugees on the island, we explore the formation and implications of the communicative architecture of the border. By “architecture of the border” we refer to the dynamic networking of the communicative technologies, practices and discourses that hold together the island’s structures of reception, as well as its implications both for those who arrive and for those who receive them. Our analysis proposes that at the heart of the care/protection duality lies a particular moral order, what we term *hospitality*: a contingent and contradictory system of communication practices that reproduces existing global orders of power and exclusion whilst also allowing for intersecting connections of local affect and solidarity that may challenge but never interrupt these orders of power.

Drawing upon the Information Systemic definition of “hospitality maps” as military spaces with the capacity to both embrace and constrain a moving target’s likelihood to manoeuvre within a particular territory (Kanchanavally et al 2004), hospitality captures Europe’s outer border as an ambivalent moral order that reshapes both Europe’s humanitarian ethics and its politics of security. Hospitality is here introduced as an alternative to the two discourses of reception that have so far dominated academic and public debates on human mobility in Europe: hospitality and securitization. On the one hand, hospitality reformulates hospitality, a normative discourse of caring reception that defines the moral imagination of progressive Europe, for instance in Chancellor Merkel’s summer 2015 invitation to migrant populations to apply for asylum in Germany or in the #refugeeswelcome hashtags. On the other hand, hospitality complicates securitization, a conservative discourse that, under the threat of terrorism, financial crisis or cultural contamination, prioritises the indiscriminate closing of borders over care for victims of war. Rather than treating those two as polar opposites associated with different institutional actors and ideological positions, we employ the concept of hospitality to demonstrate that these two discourses intersect in and through the communicative architecture of reception across actors and positions, shaping Europe’s borders as sites of hospitality. The communicative architecture of the border, we argue, is not an optional add-on to hospitality but its very condition of possibility. Our contribution, thus, to communication studies is twofold: it draws attention to the constitutive role of the media in establishing the governance of the border; and it exemplifies the analytical power of a communication perspective in challenging dominant theoretical accounts of the border.

We first introduce the theoretical and empirical context of Chios as a site of humanitarian securitization –characterised by the fusion of care for and regulation of mobile populations (Duffield 2011). We proceed with our conceptual framework, according to which the communicative architecture of Chios is analyzed along two dimensions of humanitarian

securitization: (i.) networks of mediation, referring to the technological connections between and across media platforms (and how these remediate, intermediate and transmediate information), and (ii.) networks of discourse, referring to the meaning formations or voices articulated through these multiple mediations (human rights, military/security procedures, practical management, solidarity). These two dimensions, the mediation and discourses of the border, we subsequently demonstrate, cut across and reconstitute the three relatively distinct spheres of reception at the border: *military securitization*, which include the Greek navy and police forces, as well as the European border security service (Frontex); *caring securitization*, which include the UNHCR agents and a number of NGOs active on Chios; and *compassionate solidarity*, which encompasses a small but significant number of activist and volunteer groups on the island, such as the “Collective Kitchen” and local resident groups. In conclusion, we discuss the inherent ambivalence of the emerging moral order of reception as hospitality and reflect on its implications for understanding the politics and ethics of Europe’s border today.

### **Theoretical context: The humanitarian securitization of European borders**

The care/protection regime in Chios participates in the broader order of securitization, dominant in the politics of reception in Europe. Defined as a practice of power through which ‘a political community’ is invited to ‘treat something as an existential threat ...and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat’ (Buzan and Weaver 2003: 491), securitization is today established as the dominant paradigm of Western government. Even though it is regarded as a key element of inter-state regulation, securitization is nonetheless more complex than straightforward military control. This is so because, rather than the use of armed force (though this happens too), securitization relies on the

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

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

populations involved the use of number-based identification bracelets and the distribution of one nutrition bar a day per person. Such practices, the literature claims, may be providing bare essentials but do not grant them the dignity they deserve as human beings nor do they listen to their voices (Watson 2009). Reflecting Darling's analysis of the asylum-seeker as a figure carrying the "paradigmatic status as the outsider par excellence" (2009: 649), humanitarian care in Chios seemed to reproduce a process of biopolitical de-humanisation, where migrants' biological integrity is protected, their symbolic recognition is denied to them (Ticktin 2006).

At the heart of the biopolitical theorization of the border lie two epistemological assumptions of the migration and security studies literature. The first claims that "the human" is not an a priori given but is itself a material effect of power embedded within the practice of humanitarian securitization (Ticktin 2006; Millner 2011). Through regulative acts of institutional benevolence, such as the identification bracelet or the nutrition bar, the migrants are deprived of their human quality as individuals with biographical and emotional depth, and are constructed as "bare life": ambivalent subjectivities, whose life may be worthy of protection yet whose death is not a cause for prosecution and may go unpunished or ungrieved (Agamben 1998). The second epistemological assumption, following from this, is that bare life is the only and inevitable modality of the human in humanitarian securitization, independently of the historical and political contexts in which bordering practices occur (Fassin 2005). Agents of humanitarian care, such as NGOs or activist groups, it follows, also participate in this regime of power and are, consequently, regarded as themselves benevolent perpetrators of de-humanisation.

Even though, in line with this literature, our analysis also understands migrant subjectivities to be inherently linked to various forms of control, we nonetheless challenge the view that securitization is a homogenous regime of power singularly bearing the universal de-

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

### **Conceptual framework: Bordering practices as a communicative architecture**

In order to avoid the determinism of bordering as biopolitical subjection, our approach conceptualizes humanitarian securitization as a configuration of incomplete and fragmented situational engagements that respond to an emergent situation of uncertainty in a variety of ways. Our assumption is that this mobilization of agents, practices and discourses relies upon multiple networks of communication that, in different ways, may legitimize or challenge those actors, practices and discourses – thus constituting a communicative architecture inherently linked to regimes of power but bearing different effects of power. This is a move from a homogenous conception of power as totalising towards, what Barnett refers to as, “a more modest understanding of what state and non-state actors are capable of doing, for good or ill” (2015: 21). It implies that, while we do expect that, in line with the biopolitical account, the communicative networks of securitization work to exclude certain refugees and migrants from the spaces of freedom and safety they aspire to inhabit, we are also open to the possibility that other modes of care and subjectivity may emerge – ones that overlap, complement or conflict with the biopolitical account<sup>vi</sup>.

Our conceptual approach defines, therefore, humanitarian securitization as an unstable process of population government with its own range of institutional and non-institutional agents, which include the state and EU agencies, international NGO professionals, such as the

UN, as well as local activists and volunteer groups; and not least refugees and migrants themselves. The former, state and EU staff of the police and army forces, *operate on the mandate of security* and their job is to identify and register the status of all arrivants with a view to protecting the Greek and European borders from illegal border crossings. The latter, essentially two distinct groups, operate on the *mandate of care*: international and Greek NGOs work on clearly delineated agendas, sharing the responsibilities of migrant accommodation, nutrition, information/translation and medical care; and local activists and volunteers contribute by offering dry clothes, drinks, and food to refugees on arrival, pre-and post-registration at the Registration centre and at the UN camp. Whilst each of these agents operates independently, they inevitably communicate with one another so as to facilitate the swift management of arrivals. As mentioned, for instance, even though Chios' Registration centre consists of army and police staff only (Greek special forces, intelligence, and Frontex), there is collaboration between those and UN personnel, who also populate the Registration centre offering advice to those waiting to be registered. At the same time, the camp for temporary accommodation is in close proximity to the Registration centre, establishing direct links between the different care networks. It is these necessary, or, at least, inevitable, connectivities between and across the agents of human securitization that we take as our analytical unit.

Our analysis focuses specifically on reconstructing the communicative networks of this architecture. It avoids a top-down framework which perceives institutions as the actors of securitization and populations – local or migrant – as mere subjects of institutional power. It works instead in a dialectical manner so as to map out its networks of communication as we experienced them on the ground, yet inevitably also informed by our theoretical and conceptual approach. Depending on the agents involved, security or care-oriented ones, these communicative practices, as we establish below, are linked up through two kinds of



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

### **Analytical discussion: The communicative architecture of bordering in Chios**

Our empirical material comes from a ten-day fieldwork on Chios in December 2015; all analytical discussions below refer to that period of time and reflect reception arrangements that were consolidated throughout 2015. Our pre-existing connections with key actors on the island enabled us to establish immediate engagement with a range of agents in the field. We had access to all relevant locations and could witness and participate in the whole circuit of bordering, from the provision of local care upon their arrival to the process of formal registration (though aspects of this were naturally off-bounds) and from UN/NGO management meetings to activists’ work for food provision, baby-care and legal aid; we also had one meeting with the local authorities. As Greeks among Greeks accompanied by local

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

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

communicative architecture of the border, in turn, keeping in mind that all descriptions refer back to December 2015.

### **Military securitization**

Military securitization refers to the networks of mediation and discourse that render the border a practice of identification, classification and control for mobile populations. During the peak of arrivals, in Chios, military securitization took place exclusively at the Registration Centre. There was a conspicuous absence of the state at various other crucial locations, such as arrival bays, by the port, en route to the Registration centre or any other transit spots and this absence was filled by NGOs and local volunteers. The Registration centre was the space where refugees were subjected to the compulsory process of passport control, de-briefing (short interviews) and digital identification – a process that decided whether they could continue their journey towards Northern Europe (if they are Syrian, Iraqis and Afghanis) or go to Greek detention camps (if they belong to any other nationality). Military staff consisted of fourteen Greek army and police officers as well as seven Frontex (European Security Agency). They were all hosted gratis in a derelict factory; a large, sheltered area with no proper flooring (uneven and semi-destroyed cement), a number of smashed windows and no proper heating or lighting. The area was powered by a temporary electrical generator and was divided into working areas: a medical area at the back, the queuing corridor and the interview and identification areas at the front, consisting of six passport control desks as well as four Euroduct PCs (the digital system of fingerprint identification); next to this, there was the translation desk, where the certified NGO Metadrasi offered translation services in Arabic and Farsi. Despite this inadequate working infrastructure, assembled piecemeal through the personal initiative of local officers, the pace and efficiency of the process rendered Chios an example of “best practice in refugee management”. Given the combination of low resource/high arrival numbers (up to 1,800

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

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

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

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

***Intermediation.*** The efficiency of registration as a site of securitization rest on the identification system of Euroduct. A digital technology that works across space in near real-time, Euroduct offered confidential information on the biometrical make-up of each migrant, enabling their insertion in global matrices of surveillance and their subsequent classification in categories of legality/illegality. Intermediation operates thus as biopolitical practice, separating "authentic" from "non-authentic" claims to entry on the basis of bodily attributes used as "instruments in the politics of mobility" (Ticktin 2011: 319). Rather than a stand-alone technique of power, however, this digital bio-politics of intermediation was effectively used in parallel with the face-to-face cross-examination of suspect cases of entry. The most prominent example of combined securitization was the arrest of two Chechen criminals posing as Afghani refugees, who, having come under suspicion due to their accents, were held in a provisional detention area and were exposed as illegal entries only when the Chios officers brought into their detention cell a couple of Russian women working at a local bar. After 24-hours of waiting and chatting together, one of the suspects accidentally used the original name of his co-traveller in clear Chechen accent – a detail that the women passed on to the border officers. A discourse of humanitarian care did also inform practices of intermediation, in that digital speed and efficiency were appreciated by registration officers for reducing the waiting time of families with small children and sick arrivants. Yet, the predominant understanding of the process was one of security. Euroduct helped protect Europe from, what the chief officer termed, an 'invasion' of foreigners and potential terrorists

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

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

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

articulation of dominant discourses of threat, where migrants figure as potential terrorists, with ambiguous discourses of humanization, reflected in the evocation of international law as well as the selective recognition of some migrants as “people like us” and in the denial of such recognition to others. Military securitization emerges here as a heterogenous regime of meanings that is subject to the pressures of its specific historical and geo-political context. On the one hand, security, rather than purely a matter of digital surveillance, appears also to be a matter of co-presence and cultural sensibility; gazes and bodies appear as important to the biopolitical management of mobile populations as the long-distance operations of digital media. On the other hand, security discourses incorporate not only elements of professional duty and nationalist rhetoric but also self-sarcasm, hints of compassion and an implicit but intense distrust to authority; similarly migrants do not simply figure as passive “bare life” but also as active and creative agents who seek to take their fates in their hands. Far from a monolithic structure of biopolitical power, securitization emerges here as an impure regime of meanings, which reveals its actors’ heterogenous range of reflections, desires and commitments and which, at least momentarily, may humanize the de-humanizing practices of those who enact it.

### **Securitized care**

Unlike security, which is about protecting European borders, the mandate of care is about protecting migrant lives, through the provision of humanitarian assistance and human rights advocacy by international and national agencies. Assistance and advocacy on Chios were geared towards emergency care, addressing the urgent needs of the continuous migrant flow and bringing agencies in collaboration with one other, as well as with the local authorities. The largest were the UNHCR (accommodation and nutrition; rights), the Red Cross (ICRD; missing persons; psychological), Doctors of the World (DoW; medical) and the Norwegian

Refugee Council (NRC; information) but there were also smaller ones, such as WAHA and Drop In The Ocean (group offering assistance at sea).

The two priorities of emergency care, to offer immediate aid and information on asylum applications and travelling options, were shaped by two prerogatives: first, the temporary character of the migrants' sojourn, since, unlike the long-term camps of Turkey or Lebanon, the duration of their stay on Chios in 2015 was seldom longer than two days; second, the significance of the migrants' border experience, which, brief as it may have been, was also the moment of decision: asylum or deportation. This double prerogative shaped care provision on the island in terms of, what NGOs called, "proactive humanitarianism": care oriented towards "transit", rather than "resident" needs, including shelter, food and health, as well as towards the provision of information – from advice about registration to ferry itineraries and maps. In the process, the areas and practices of care were closely articulated with security ones, as for instance, Doctors of the World shared the securitized space of the Registration centre and had a say on the registration protocol; sick migrants on Chios, in contrast to Lesbos, would be seen by doctors prior to, not after, registration. Similarly, in the rare cases of unrest at the camp, NGO staff would help ensure that order is re-established.

The transit character of securitized care rendered speed an important challenge of proactive humanitarianism (how to take equally good care of everyone in 48 hours?), further impacting on the emotional dynamics of the site. Migrants, anxious and tired as they were, were also euphoric for having survived the sea-crossing and hopeful about next steps (their first question upon arrival to the UN camp was often "where is the port?"). NGO staff, however, felt that such fast pace deprived them of deeper bonds with individual people. Even though for some this simply meant minimizing interaction with migrants and simply handing out leaflets to them, others made a point of speaking to them; some would defend the nutrition bar or the ID-bracelet as "legitimate options" to manage the mass needs of the camp, but



others would demonstrate a more profound sense of care: “at nights, I cannot sleep for long. I need to visit the camp again and again to make sure they sleep well and have a good rest. They are in the middle of a long journey”, confessed NRC’s Head. Within this complex structure, what are the networks of mediation and discourse that communicate the practices and affects of securitized care?

***Re-mediation:*** There were two ways in which securitized care gained visibility in mainstream media. First, through mainstream news reportage on what NGOs did on the ground and how they reacted to political developments that affected their practice and second, through news reports on other actors’ (e.g. politicians’, celebrities’ etc.) evaluations of NGOs themselves. Remediation primarily relied on journalists’ own reports from the island, registering the invaluable work of securitized care, in the absence of state infrastructures, but also expressing concern for the implications of the minimal regulation of their operations. Journalistic criticism focused on a number of minor NGOs plus volunteer groups and individuals, some of which did not even register with local authorities and which acted without co-ordination with others, potentially creating “more chaos on their small islands rather than a coordinated response” (Nianias 2016). Remediation was also about quoting NGO statements on various political actors, as, for instance, UN’s demand for “stronger leadership” from Greece in the face of massive incoming flows (Tagaris 2015). By the same token, what was also remediated was the Greeks’ mixed reactions to the UN (and other global actors) for such criticism, as local politicians both thanked the UNHCR for their assistance and accused it of having unrealistic expectations from a country in deep economic crisis.

Remediation, consequently, established a contradictory network of discourses around securitized care. On the one hand, there was a positive discourse of gratitude towards the humanitarian sector, where media acknowledged its decisive significance in the management of migration flows; yet, on the other, there was a negative discourse of suspicion and critique

towards them – either for voicing their critique against Greece (in the case of global players) or for their dubious intentions and their potential for damaging rather than assisting caring practices (in the case of minor aid groups).

***Inter-mediation:*** If remediation is about the global visibility of securitized care, intermediation is the backbone of their horizontal communication on the ground. Two intermediation networks co-ordinated NGO activism in Chios: between NGOs themselves and between NGOs and external parties – notably refugees and migrants. The former relied on the WhatsApp’s instantaneous and multi-participant communication affordances that enabled major NGOs to be on a 24/7 alert and keep constantly updated on each, rendering their mobile phones their most important work instrument. Even though it was geared towards collaborating with local authorities and minor agencies, however, this closed circuit did establish an internal hierarchy in the field, relegating minor humanitarian players to satellite status. The latter were involved in the circuit only through hashtag groups or twitter accounts (e.g. @wahaint) - as a local volunteer put it, “they [international NGOs] are friendly with us, but they just want us to follow”. Nonetheless, it is in the second intermediation network where the most significant hierarchy is established, that between NGOs and migrants. While intermediation was multi-platform, utilising a range of media to reach out, there were no social media links between NGOs and migrants – despite 80% of the latter owning smartphones. Online communication was restricted to “Nethope”, a minimum-function WhatsApp circuit that simply forwarded pre-formulated messages, such as “I’m ok”, to a restricted number of contacts (migrants’ families or friends). The bulk of intermediation occurred through pre-electronic and hence non-connective technologies: pamphlets, maps, diagrammes, posters or announcement boards or screens.: Printed UN pamphlets, for instance, offered information on rights and asylum appeals at Registration while announcement boards were used for information on further travel. Pre-electronic forms of

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

***Transmediation:*** The transmediations of securitized care similarly took a dual form. First, through the use of online platforms, notably WhatsApp, which updated and co-ordinated NGOs’ offline action; for instance, the nocturnal arrival of boats (anytime between 3:00 and 5:00 am) would be signalled on mobile phones and get everyone on their feet and on their way to their posts. Second, through pre-electronic technologies, used to co-ordinate the mobility of migrants on the island, for instance, through speaking trumpets upon arrival at Registration. Even though these transmediations did succeed guiding large groups through the often chaotic process of queueing, their effects were restricted to contexts of physical proximity, inevitably having no impact across extended and multiple space-times; nor did they offer options for interactivity, feedback and fine-tuning with the receivers. Migrants’ smartphones remained, again, largely unexploited as a communications resource and, as with intermediation, online-offline transmediations were also defined by a hierarchical structure that excluded migrants from the networks of securitized care and deprived them having their voices heard.

The communicative structure of securitized care sustained, in turn, a polyphonic but stratified discourse network. This consisted of two major discourses: an operational discourse of emergency care that intermediated and transmediated connections among major NGOs; and a

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

### **Compassionate solidarity**

Driven by a progressive politics of solidarity and operationalized through informal and emotionally-charged acts of support towards newcomers, the network of compassionate solidarity was distinctly different to the previous ones. Despite its informality, this network is impressively effective: for example, the "Collective Kitchen" used to cook up to 1,600 portions of food a day; the volunteers of the fishing village Ayia Ermioni provided, on a daily basis, dry clothes to dozens and sometimes hundreds of migrants and refugees landing at their shores soaked; and the lawyer group "Lathra?" prided itself for exposing a case of torture by the port authorities on the island, a case migrants won. Different in their constitution and values to those of security forces and NGOs, non-institutional local structures of care represented an organic element of the bordering architecture, as they themselves were a product of their unplanned but inescapable encounter with the arriving migrants.

**Remediation:** Despite their intense local presence, mainstream media only occasionally focused on the work of the compassionate solidarity groups: . “Chios does not attract much attention [in the media]. That can only be a good thing”, said a volunteer who explained that the media were always looking for negative stories and the story of Chios was not one of those. The mass media had little interest in the acts of these networks and, respectively, activists did not seek their attention; on the contrary, they were very wary of them; in fact, their engagement with digital platforms was itself a contestation of mainstream media authority. The only case when these groups were systematically remediated, therefore, was in the course of the mass media-driven campaign for the “Nobel Prize to Greek islanders” (December 2015-January 2016) – a nationalist campaign that de-politicized their solidarity, turning it into a manifestation of the “Greek spirit” of benevolence and hospitality.

**Intermediation:** The effectiveness and accountability of activist groups on the ground relied on two digital sub-networks of intermediation: their inter-group platforms of coordination and action (SMS; Facebook; WhatsApp; Viber); and the public platforms that communicated narratives of solidarity to the local population. Intermediation here was about empowering civic voices beyond those of institutional militarization and securitized care. To this end, members of the volunteer and activist networks used the online newspaper *Aplotaria* – popular among Chios locals. Alongside their Facebook network, *Aplotaria* allowed activists to be vocal about their own experience of reception, by condemning both Europe’s dehumanizing security and major NGOs’ managerial care provision. Thus, as a popular portal to the local society, *Aplotaria* became an interface between the wider population of Chios and the activists’ alternative voices of resistance.

**Transmediation:** Most encounters among activists and between activists, refugees and migrants were face-to-face and enacted through collective action, such as meal distribution and provision of dry clothes at the shore. Yet, this physicality of care was both managed and

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

Compassionate solidarity’s networks of mediation articulated a complex discourse of solidarity defined by a spirit of resistance to the power of the border and an acknowledgment of the humanity and vulnerability of arrivants that directly contested all structures of securitization. This discourse was founded on the ethics of unconditional commitment to help others in need without asking back and, indeed, the Chios activists and volunteers not only dedicated all their efforts to assist the needy without asking back but even disliked any manifestation of public acknowledgement. This reluctance emanated from their politicized understanding of compassion as a radical act of resistance against established power structures rather than as impartial good-doing inviting praise by the establishment – such as the Noble prize. Thus, compassionate solidarity, in practice, combined empathy towards the vulnerability of others with the imperative of socio-political critique. From this perspective, activists regularly criticised humanitarian NGOs as a neutral space of “administering needs”

that prioritised emergency care over struggle in the exclusionary policies of the European establishment: “We are a movement, not a bureaucratic organisation”, they said, and “we need to be prepared to defend the refugees against the fascists”.

The treatment of refugees as “people like us” highlights humanity as the other dominant discourse of compassionate solidarity. The key feature of this discourse is its explicit references to the activists’ affective identification with migrants: “It is obvious why we help them. They could have been us”, a member of the “Collective Kitchen” explained. “The difference between those in solidarity movements and others is that the former are emotionally attached”, another added. Such claims are important because they entail an explicit recognition of the humanity of arrivants, that is “a concern for the existential fate of other human beings, a concern that extends into the affective” (Honneth 2007: 123); and, in so doing, differentiated compassionate solidarity from both securitization, with its emphasis on policing, and securitized care, with its reliance on professionalised service provision.

However, the discourses of compassionate solidarity are neither pure nor unaffected by securitization. Despite stark opposition to it, these discourses still functioned within the wider regime of bordering that contributed to the classification of newcomers and their needs from an uneven position of privilege and recognition (as citizens of Europe “inside” the border). For example, some volunteers strongly criticized some arrivants’ eating habits, manners or gender roles, mobilizing mechanisms of othering that separate “us” from “them” and privilege a view of humanity as exclusively “our own” humanity. Such familiar narratives represented these people’s attempts to make sense of these “new strangers” from within familiar cultural frameworks and discourses, in a context where the briefness of their encounters, combined with pressures for timely care and severe linguistic constraints, resulted in significant ruptures in communication and an inevitable de-personalization of solidarity relations – a fact that activists and volunteers were themselves painfully aware of:

“We ... used to know them, now we don't anymore. They have all become one. The voice of the people has been lost. And the political work to this direction is also lost, as we are just trying to meet needs”.

**The communicative architecture of bordering: From humanitarian  
securitization to hospitality**

In this article, we sought to identify the communicative architecture of Europe's outer border in the “migration crisis” of 2015-6, and to reflect on its implications for those involved – reception agents and migrants/refugees. We saw that, rather than a matter of either strict military policing or open borders, reception was a complex structure of practices and discourses informed by diverse ethical values. Bordering, we have established, was not simply a geo-political or legal order but, primarily, a moral one. By moral order we refer to the structured practices that recognize refugees' and migrants' right to cross borders as well as the hosts' right to accommodate them (or not), as well as also to the normative discourses that legitimize these practices through particular moral claims. Whilst existing literature defines the contemporary moral order of reception in terms of humanitarian securitization, the fusion of military border security with professional humanitarian benevolence, our attention to the communicative aspects of the border revealed a more nuanced understanding of this moral order.

Specifically, Chios' communicative architecture of reception complicates the anti-humanist determinism of bordering as a biopolitical order that produces undifferentiated power effects of exclusion and de-humanises arrivants as “bare life”; at the same time, it also challenges the optimism of hospitality that relies on the moral order of unconditional openness to strangers. Instead, the communicative architecture works through multiple and intersecting networks of connectivity and competing discourses, which establish the European border as a hybrid: both



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

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

***Military securitization*** is defined by a dual tension: between digitality and corporeality (mediation), and between obligation and self-reflexivity (discourse). The first tension refers to the Registration process, which, as we saw, uses the Euroduct platform to digitally access transnational data and establish migrant identities as genuine and safe; simultaneously, however, it also relies on corporeal and cultural clues to “read” authenticity and trust off migrants’ posture, face and language. What this tension throws into relief is the intimate complicity of technology with the body in the power relations of the border. Digital technology may have produced, what we earlier called, new biometrical epistemologies of the border, yet it appears that these epistemologies continue to be undercut by technologies of co-presence – bodies, gazes, spoken words. Similarly, unlike accounts of biopolitical security as all-encompassing surveillance, “performances” of the refugee, for instance when migrants

throw their passports away and turn to face-to-face communication in the hope of being granted asylum, point to minor but occasionally effective acts of agency that challenge the impenetrable bordering military securitization. The second tension refers to the competing discourses of the security agents. They spoke proudly about their national (“protecting of ‘our’ borders”) and professional (“need to process them”) commitments, whilst, at the same time, employing a range of self-reflexive discourses, including empathy for the arrivants (“can’t let them wait”), light-hearted self-sarcasm, strong camaraderie (doing it “for each other”) and critical commentary over their invisible labour (24/7; minimal pay), which rendered protection possible in the first place. This tension suggests that, its dehumanising potential granted, military securitization does not simply operate as an impersonal, totalising technology of power, devoid of humanism. It is rather infused with contradictory judgments and emotions that places its actors in the fluid position of the “perpetrator/benefactor/victim” and renders biopolitical judgment difficult to sustain.

The hospitality of military securitization is, therefore, a contingent and fragile regime of reception: it inevitably contains, classifies and dehumanizes migrants, yet simultaneously allows for individual performativities that may undermine its boundaries and turn a critical and reflexive gaze upon itself. Similarly, its own agents are both policing experts who guard the border of Europe and simultaneously part of an invisible labour force that bears the consequence of this continent policies.

*Securitized care* is organised around two related tensions: between facilitating and excluding voice (mediation) and between detachment and attachment (discourses). The first tension highlights the fact that the very media connections that maximize care for migrants and refugees simultaneously marginalize the voices of these populations. What this tension demonstrates is that, for all its celebrated horizontal connections, social networking ultimately entails its own hierarchical orders: who gets to speak and who is listened to is a

matter of the power relations through which the network's enabling practices emerge in the first place. The second tension highlights the competing discourses of care in the border: service provision or affective attachment. Whereas this tension between minimal engagement with the vulnerable and emotional acknowledgment of their individuality has always been intrinsic to the professionalization of compassion (Chouliaraki 2013b), the size and transit character of mobile populations on the border has foregrounded this ambivalence, rendering it an object of intense problematisation for its practitioners.

Just like military securitization, therefore, the hospitability of securitized care emerges as a contradictory regime of reception: it inevitably regulates and dehumanizes migrants, yet is also informed by unspoken desires and minor acts of emotional attachment and personalized contact whilst subjecting itself to a reflexive critique of its own tenuous ethos and effects.

*Compassionate solidarity* offers, finally, the clearest manifestation of networked mediation as a means of social activism that can establish the border as a space of hospitality and make a difference in the lives of arriving migrants. Going beyond the neutral good-doing of securitized care, it combined a politics of resistance to Europe's practices of bordering with the emotional identification with those who suffer; as a result, it came closest to any other network of reception to the pure ideal of open borders. Its use of social media platforms, from Facebook and WhatsApp to blogging and online journalism, co-ordinated a considerable number of people to maximum effect, online and offline. Simultaneously, however, contact with the arrivants remained minimal and fragmentary and the latter were given no voice in the process; local activists, in this sense, formed part of the privileged European population that military securitization seeks to protect, excluded the very subjects of their solidarity, in the process of supporting them. As Millner puts it: "how can activists protest against the racial and economic biases of contemporary border controls, without appealing to their own condition of citizenship as a basis for political speech?" (2011: 323). The same ambivalence

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

### **Conclusion**

Our empirical research of Europe's communicative architecture of the border, during the 2015-16 "migration 'crisis'", revealed the border as a hybrid network that produces its own moral order, hospitality. Hospitality, we demonstrated, relies on three overlapping networks of mediation and discourse that both reproduce transnational hierarchies of humanity and accommodate an ethics of hospitality and critique. Hospitality is also traversed by self-reflexive forms of agency, as well as by competing affects, desires and judgments, which render it a tenuous, fluid and fragile moral order that, nonetheless, does not challenge the border's *raison d'être*: the classification of populations and the preservation of the global order. This dialectical micro-account of the border, we wish to emphasize, matters because it challenges the one-sided normativity of biopolitical accounts of security, and, at the same time, complicates the simplistic benignness of hospitality. It is by keeping this dialectic in sight that we can hope to deepen our understanding of the structures of power that continue to operate at Europe's border. And it is this dialectic that can help us better understand both how such structures of power dehumanize others in the name of humanity but also how minor acts of humanity are still possible in the midst of such dehumanization.

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<sup>i</sup> “Migration crisis” is placed in quotations to challenge Eurocentric uses of the term, which point to the high number of the 2015 arrivals as their main cause for concern and policy focus, whilst ignoring the ongoing conflict-related crises in the Middle East that led populations to flee, in the first place (Vaughan-Williams 2015).

<sup>ii</sup> See <http://frontex.europa.eu/news/frontex-publishes-risk-analysis-for-2016-NQuBFv> (accessed, April 12<sup>th</sup> 2016)

<sup>iii</sup> Report of the European Council on Foreign Relations (22/12/2015): <http://www.ecfr.eu> (accessed, January 26<sup>th</sup> 2016)

<sup>iv</sup> The securitization of Europe starts earlier, during the migrants’ sea-crossings which are regulated by Turkish, Greek, Italian and NATO marine forces. This dimension of securitisation, however, falls outside the scope of our fieldwork (but see Basaran 2014).

<sup>v</sup> Arrivals from Turkey to Greek islands between Jan-August 2015 increased by 886% compared to 2014. Chios is the second biggest entry point to Europe in Eastern Mediterranean (Chios Marine Force PPP, EU Poseidon Report, 2015).

<sup>vi</sup> Our approach can be defined as “critical fieldwork” along the lines of Madison’s definition - as a knowledge-producing practice that “...takes us beneath surface appearances ... bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power”, thereby also moving “from ‘what is’ to ‘what could be’” (Madison 2011: 5).

<sup>vii</sup> “Critical fieldwork” is as a knowledge-producing practice that, whilst relying on fieldwork and participant observation, it also “...takes us beneath surface appearances...bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power” (Madison 2011: 5).

<sup>viii</sup> Interview to Carolina Tagaris, October 11<sup>th</sup> 2015, Reuters website: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-europe-migrants-greece-minister-idUKKCN0S509920151011>

<sup>ix</sup> See UNHCR “Connecting Refugees” report (2015): <http://www.unhcr.org/5770d43c4.pdf>