The Humanitarian Politics of European Border Policing: Frontex and Border Police in Evros[1,2]

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This paper explores humanitarianism in the practice of Frontex-assisted Greek border police in Evros and of Frontex at their headquarters in Warsaw. Building on the increase in humanitarian justifications for border policing practices as well as the charges of a lack of humanity, the paper analyzes the relations between humanitarian responses and border policing where humanitarianism is used for framing and giving meaning to institutional and operational practices. In offering an interpretive view of border policing undertaken by people in their working lives across sites and scales, it builds on the critical literature addressing the multifaceted nature of border control in Europe today. At the same time, it speaks to wider debates about the double-sided nature of humanitarian governance concerned with care and control. It argues that while humanitarian motivations have implications for operations in the field and help to frame "good practice" at the policy level, humanitarianism should not be seen as additional or paradoxical to wider border policing operations within forms of governance developed to address the problems of population. Conflict arises in the paradox of protection between the subject of humanitarianism and policing, the population, and the object of border control, the territorially bounded state or regional unit.

My role is very specific, it is to face the problem of illegal migration, however, when we need to save people, of course! Human life is the highest thing. All our operations and all our actions have one common axiom, the protection of human life! (Brigadier Georgios Salamagas, Orestiada Police Station, October 8, 2012).

The tragic death toll resulting from this kind of illegal immigration is unacceptable and must therefore be significantly reduced. (European Commission memo/08/06, Brussels, February 13, 2008, quoted in *Beyond the Frontiers, FRONTEX: The First Five Years*).

There has been an increased use of humanitarianism in *both* the discourse and practice of European border policing over the past decade. This humanitarianism takes many forms: framing and legitimizing interventions at sea, promoting certain technologies and shaping operational responses. It is articulated and practiced in multiple sites on multiple scales and by multiple actors in European migration control, from the border police patrolling the Greek–Turkish border, to Greece's Ministry for Citizen Protection, to experts, facilitators, and practitioners at Frontex. Concomitantly, humanitarianism forms the basis for many counter responses by civil society groups and transnational human rights institutions challenging border policing practices today (see Doty 2006). These include recent responses to the 2011 "Left to Die Boat" (see BBC World Service 2012; Heller, Pezzani, and Situ Studio 2012; PACE 2012) and charges of "push-backs" (Amnesty International 2013). Humanitarianism can be located in border policing operations in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, in migrant detention centers across Europe and along the land borders of the European Union such as the River Evros and its surrounding borderland. It is increasingly being used to frame policy and operational practices attempting to standardize and institute "best practice" for border police. This humanitarianism does not usurp or replace existing trends within security practices; instead it forms a component within policing, developed over time to address the problems of population (see Foucault 2009). As a Greek police officer explains, their role is "very specific, it is to face the problem of illegal migration, however, when we need to save people, of course! Human life is the highest thing. All our operations and all our actions have one common axiom, the protection of human life!"

This paper explores the care and control duality of humanitarianism in the practice of the Frontex-assisted Greek border police in the region of Evros, along the Greek–Turkish border, and in the practices of Frontex at their headquarters in Warsaw. Building on the increase in articulated humanitarian justifications for border policing practices as well as the charges of a lack of humanity in these practices, the paper uncovers and analyzes humanitarian border policing at both the level of border police, where the policing of groups who are both *at* risk and *a* risk (Aradau 2004), who are in need of both care and control, is a constant feature of the border police's daily work, and at the level of expert practitioners at Frontex. The paper shows how the daily practices of border police in Evros are shaped by the need to manage the relationship between care and control that has historically defined policing (Foucault 2009) and marked it as separate from more military forms of defense. Meanwhile, if we consider the specific task of the "border" police and pay attention to the role of the border in their work, the *at* risk and *a* risk dichotomy speaks to a larger paradox within border policing itself. Here, those categorized as at risk become a risk when they enter the space marked by the border and policed by the border police. The paradox in border policing is between the individual subject of humanitarianism and/or policing, the migrant, and the object of border control, the territorially bounded state or regional unit (Arendt 1973:267–302; Huysmans, Dobson, and Prokhovrik 2006). This paradox of protection, between the protection of the individual against harm and the protection of borders and an internal space (Bigo 2006:89–90), manifests itself on the ground in the daily activities of border police as a tension between the need to care for migrant welfare and the need to control migrant mobility, as evidenced by migrant testimonies accusing the Greek border police of engaging in "push-backs" (Amnesty International 2013:9–14). At the level of operational management in Frontex, "the protection of human life" and "facing the problem of illegal immigration" is combined and used in processes of framing and giving meaning to what Frontex is, and does, in managing risk (Neal 2009). In offering a bottom-up interpretation of border policing undertaken by people in their working lives, and by people across sites and scales, the paper

builds on the critical literature addressing the multifaceted and diverse nature of border control in Europe today (Andreas 2003; Bigo and Guild 2005; Salter and Zureik 2005; Huysmans et al. 2006; Walters 2006, 2011; Carrera 2007; Balibar 2009; Neal 2009; Feldman 2011; Andersen, Klatt, and Sandberg 2012; Bialasiewicz 2012; Karyotis 2012; Vaughan-Williams 2012). It also speaks to wider debates about the double-sided nature of a humanitarian governance concerned with care and control (Fassin 2005; Ticktin 2005; Feldman and Ticktin 2010; Agier 2011; Weizman 2011). By employing a lens offered by this critical work on humanitarian governance to analyze the practices of European border policing, the paper advances the field in two ways. First, it analyzes the humanitarian politics of border policing at both the state and European level, in contrast to its more common use in analyzing transnational humanitarian relief efforts and agencies contributing to the emerging discussions around the "humanitarian border" (Walters 2011; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) in practice. Second, it suggests that there is nothing contradictory in the use of humanitarian ideas and practices in European border policing, arguing instead for a reiteration of the care and control dichotomy in the history of both humanitarianism and policing.

The paper will proceed as follows: first, locating myself as a scholar, before locating Evros and Frontex in European border control operating across many sites and through multiple actors. Second, drawing on a Foucauldian framework, humanitarianism as both a concept and a practice in the governance of populations will be discussed, along with the historical inclusion of humanitarian concerns within policing. The paper then moves on to arguments growing specifically out of my fieldwork experiences. I start with an analysis of Evros border policing, focusing on the relationship between rescuing migrants, preventing their entry, and catching the smugglers who act as facilitators. Following this ground-level analysis of humanitarianism and border policing, attention shifts to discuss the European level regime of humanitarianism articulated and encoded by Frontex, where similar relationships between divergent meanings of protection of people and space are also present, although at a distance far removed from that of the border guards in Evros.

Locating Myself

The argument presented here is based on field research conducted in September and October 2012, at Frontex's headquarters in Warsaw, in Athens and in Evros. During this research, I had the opportunity to carry out structured and semistructured interviews with key Frontex personnel in the following units: public relations, research and development, risk analysis and the land borders section of the operations division. In addition, informal discussions were held with those working on risk analysis for the Eastern-Mediterranean and Evros.[3] Research in Athens involved meetings with NGO representatives working in the field of migrants' rights and activists involved in documenting Greek police operations. In Evros, the research involved observations of Frontex and Greek police border operations around the town of Orestiada, where I was able to follow a Joint-Operation patrol of Greek border police and their Frontex counterparts, structured and semistructured interviews with key personnel including the Chief of Police for the District of Orestiada, and informal discussions with Greek police working in the border-control division.[4] I will only refer to my informants by name when the interview was formally conducted and the interviewer was officially speaking on behalf of the Greek police and/or Frontex. Elsewhere I will

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[3]In total, five structured and five semistructured interviews were held with personnel at Frontex HQ.

[4]In Evros, two structured interviews were carried out with representatives of the Greek Police, while seven semistructured interviews/informal discussions were held with Greek police officers working in Evros.

not refer to my informants by name to protect their anonymity, as they were not speaking to me in an official capacity. Additionally, it should be noted that the interview with the Chief of Police of Orestiada, Brigadier Georgios Salamagas, was conducted in Greek with the aid of an interpreter.

In employing an interpretive approach to make sense of how others make sense of the world (Geertz 2000:56–58), and my unique experiences in the field (Thaddeus Jackson 2008:92), I cannot know the extent to which my identity as a European and a woman impacted on the answers given. Here, I question the role my identity as a "liberal European subject" had on the humanitarian focus of the answers, and question the extent to which I was perceived to be concerned with humanitarianism because I am both European and female. I draw attention to my female identity due to the gendered nature of much humanitarian work, which is premised on the ideas that women "care more" and are better suited to humanitarian considerations, with humanitarianism traditionally constructed as a feminine sphere of international practice. I should stress at this point that I did not seek to uncover humanitarianism in the work of either Frontex or the Greek police during my field research, quite the opposite in fact. My fieldwork and thus my research questions were principally concerned with technologies, security, risk, and questions of sovereignty in theory and practice. It was the repeated articulation of humanitarianism in answers given, in unprompted discussions or in justifications and observations of practice that has led me to focus on its relationship to, and role in, border policing in Evros and at the European level, and to question its repeated articulation, even in the face of contrary evidence.

In analyzing the persistent presence of humanitarian concerns in the way that Greek border police and Frontex staff present, justify, and give meaning to their work, consideration must be paid to the limits of analyzing practice through the way practitioners talk about their work and placed alongside migrant testimony that challenges this portrayal. In studying law enforcement personnel—a form of "studying up" (Nader 1974)—Didier Fassin suggests that "secrecy and opacity are the rule, disclosure, and transparency the exception," while popular depictions of the police have rendered them, for the most part, "distant, exotic and heroic" (2013:14). According to Fassin (2013:18), police officers readily identify with this image, especially when it casts them as heroic, even though it is often far removed from the relative mundanity of much police work. Furthermore, Merje Kuus' (2013:118) observations on researching foreign policy actors stress that these actors are "trained to give charming interviews that do not reveal information but feed it." In approaching the methodological aspects of my research, questions remain about the extent such work has been able to engage in "open-ended conversations that reach beyond the reiteration of rehearsed talking points" (Kuus 2013:116). That said, what do these possibly "rehearsed talking points" themselves tell us? What can we learn from possible "attempts to feed information" in the discursive construction of the actors involved?

Additionally, questions remain regarding those border policing practices I was allowed to witness when observing the working environment of the border police in Evros. Here, it is interesting to note that while my observation of border policing practices was under the control of the Greek border police and Frontex, not all aspects of their work were under their control, as our encounter with the Greek military that held up our border patrol for 30 minutes attests.[5] The analyt-

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[5]I was not able to access the borderline and its immediate borderland unless accompanied by both the Greek border police and an attaché from the Greek military. When being shown the borderline and the border fence by the Greek police working on Joint-Operation Poseidon Land, access to the border was controlled by a military checkpoint, and we were made to wait while the Greek military checked my identification even though I was accompanying a border patrol.

ical implications of this encounter are not of direct relevance to the argument presented here, but the actuality of this encounter shows the inability of my research subjects to control and micromanage my entire research experience. Keeping the limitations of my fieldwork experiences in mind is not to dismiss the presence of humanitarianism in how the subjects of this research make sense of the world, in both their speech and practice. Dismissing such humanitarian utterances and practices would be denying that humanitarianism forms a part of border policing operations in Evros and policy considerations in Warsaw. My research findings, when triangulated with additional resources, suggest that humanitarian governance operates in conjunction with territorially fixated border policing which produces, at its extreme, the contradictory practice of push-backs.

Locating Evros and Frontex

"The land border is attractive because it is cheaper and you are immediately on the mainland. An island is an effective prison," says Jozef Balli, Head of Land Operations at Frontex. The Evros borderland marks the southeastern land border of the European Union and, as such, is a point of entry for migrants. The Evros borderland between Greece and Turkey takes its name from the Greek administrative region of Evros which shares its name with the River Evros. The river marks (for the most part) the borderline; over the past 5 years an increasing number of migrants have attempted to cross it and thus enter the Schengen area of the European Union. The reasons for the increased number of migrants crossing into the Schengen area via this route are manifold and many have served to reinforce each other (Andersen et al. 2012), making the Evros borderline a particularly attractive point of entry for migrants. Chief among the reasons for Evros' elevated role in EU border policing was the relative ease of access articulated by Frontex's Jozef Balli above. This ease of access, prior to the erection of the border fence, saw migrants able to cross from Turkey into Greece along a 10.5 km stretch of land border located in the midst of agricultural fields between the villages of Kastanies to the north and Nea Vyssa to the south. This stretch of the land border is the only portion not marked by the River Evros and made the crossing relatively "risk" free. The fence, meanwhile, even before it was finished in late 2012 was, according to the Greek border police and Frontex risk analysts, responsible for shifting migratory routes toward the River Evros. In response, and after continued criticisms about the number of migrant crossings (European Commission 2013), Operation Aspida (Shield), a "police surge" of 1,800 extra officers, was launched by Greece in August 2012 (Amnesty International 2013) to secure the river border. Following the completion of the border fence and Operation Aspida, alongside Joint-Operation Poseidon Land,[6] migratory routes have shifted back toward the Aegean, where previously Joint-Operation Poseidon had worked to shift routes toward the land border as a "relatively" control free, and incidentally a relatively "risk" free, entry point. Here, the knowledge about routes possessed by the migrant and the smuggler—the latter of significance for operational responses—is important in constructing the shifting migratory routes in response to closures elsewhere.

Frontex is the EU agency charged with assisting member states in their responsibility to guard the borders of Europe. As an agency it is often used as "short hand" for objections to European migration control policies, with the accusation that "Frontex kills" being common among activist communities. Frontex was recently the subject of a damning Human Rights Watch (HRW 2011) report into their role in the ill treatment of migrants in Greece. This report is interesting

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[6]For more on Frontex Joint-Operations see http://frontex.europa.eu/operations/roles-and-responsibilities.

not only for the content of its criticism but also for its target, Frontex in this instance, and for Frontex's subsequent response. What the report inadvertently highlights is the ambiguous position Frontex holds as a facilitator, concerned with coordination and material support. In practice, this leads to Frontex being seen as partially responsible for any subsequent practices that are undertaken with its assistance. While Frontex acknowledged the criticisms, it re-affirmed its commitment to fundamental rights, highlighting what it termed "exceptional circumstances," and again reiterated its facilitation role and the responsibility of individual member states for migration control practices (Frontex 2011a). What both the accusations of HRW and Frontex's response reveal, is the unreconciled relationship between member states' sovereign responsibility for border control on behalf of Schengen, and attempts at solidarity, facilitation, and coordination in border control at the European level, institutionally represented and materially operated by Frontex (for more on the development of Frontex, see Neal 2009). Additionally, it speaks to Arendt's (1973:269) observations about sovereign states alone having the capacity to uphold a person's rights.

Frontex operatives in Warsaw are keen to stress their ambiguous position in European border control when any criticism of their work is highlighted. Their position as expert policy enactors and practice enablers—as opposed to policymakers, something that remains with the Commission, the Council and the Parliament combined—means that, in the words of certain senior Frontex operatives, these situations are all but inevitable under the current EU border policy. This policy sees border control remain the sovereign responsibility of individual member states, leading as it does to overlapping and divergent regimes of control and responsibility. Humanitarian responsibility and justification operate within these at times contradictory, and at times complementary, operational regimes, uncovering further tensions and interrelations between humanitarian concerns and border policing action.

Humanitarianism, Policing, and the Governing of Populations

Humanitarianism, its tensions and its relations to, and inclusion within, multiple forms of governance have been the focus of much academic work across disciplines, in International Relations (Wheeler 2000; Aradau 2004; Doty 2006; Huysmans et al. 2006; Barnett and Weiss 2008), anthropology (Collier, Lakoff, and Rabinow 2004; Fassin 2005, 2012; Ticktin 2005; Feldman 2009, 2012; Feldman and Ticktin 2010; Rozakou 2012), and geography (Hyndman 2000). Meanwhile, humanitarianism in military and security practices has been critically reviewed in various situations such as refugee camps (Agier 2011), rescues at sea (Andersson 2012), in the Greek management of refugees (Rozakou 2012), and the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip (Feldman 2009, 2012; Weizman 2011). All of this work speaks to a tension in humanitarianism between its dual roles of care and control and reflects larger metatrends around the end of bipolarity, the relative decline of interstate war and the perceived growth of nonstate threats where threat is thought to emanate not from states alone, but from the population itself.

Ideas of responsibility and care for the well-being of populations have a long history in earlier forms of pastoralism concerned with governing people as opposed to ruling over territory and subjects. As such it has a central role in the emergence of security practices concerned with the governance of populations (see Foucault 2009). In recent years, two defining trends in humanitarian action have been identified: first, there appears to be a growing willingness to help those defined as at risk or in need of care; and second, due to advances in technology and growths in capacity, there appears to be an improved ability to rescue (Barnett and Weiss 2008:2). To this, we can add a third trend that

contradicts the defining principles of humanitarianism outlined by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) based on humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality (Pictet 1979). In this third trend, these principles are undermined, ignored, and transformed as humanitarian motivations are deployed by militaries, police forces, and government agencies in various situations for the governance of "problematic peoples" such as insurgent populations, colonized subjects and in the case under discussion here, migrants (see Feldman 2009, 2012; Agier 2011; Weizman 2011; Andersson 2012; Khalili 2012). Whether these defining principles of humanitarianism, outlined by the ICRC, were ever more than principles is also important when we consider that humanitarian or pastoral concerns were behind older forms of policing and governance starting in the seventeenth century (Foucault 2009).

The mobilization of what has been termed the "humanitarian reason" (Fassin 2012) in the "humanitarian present" (Weizman 2011) has resulted in confusion over what exactly is meant when "humanity" is invoked. Fassin (2012) has argued that what he terms "moral sentiments" have become a powerful and essential force in contemporary political life, feeding hegemonic discourses, and legitimizing practices, especially in relation to those perceived to be disadvantaged. Importantly, scholars of humanitarianism such as Craig Calhoun and some humanitarian practitioners themselves stress the difference between humanitarianism as a gift and human rights as an entitlement (Calhoun 2010:37). But, as more and more people claim to speak in the name of "humanity," no one can monopolize its meaning, while in practice, humanitarian action may turn out to be contradictory as these practices stake out and construct clear subject positions and power hierarchies. For, as Feldman and Ticktin (2010:1) observe, "to speak on behalf of humanity stakes out a powerful position."

These moral sentiments, or norms and values, through which we define and give our world meaning, "oscillate between sentiments of sympathy on the one hand and concern for order on the other, between a politics of pity and policies of control" (Fassin 2005:365–366). Humanitarianism's universal claims, premised on "humanity" as a whole, are often challenged in many instances when the disorder or risk from which people are in need of rescue or care are the products of other human beings. Therefore, humanity is linked to sympathy and compassion and ideas of fear and insecurity. Here, then, it is important to see humanitarianism not as a value-neutral field but as an act based on relations and hierarchies of power and utilized for the governance of populations. This is one tension that exists at the heart of humanitarianism, based as it is on universal claims that can be both oppressive and liberating, and in practice are almost impossible to engender in a world made up of categories and boundaries through which we make our world safe.

There is no obvious contradiction in the relationship between humanitarian concerns and forms of policing designed to secure populations. Humanitarian concerns based on earlier forms of pastoralism find new life in modern forms of governmentality focused on securing the population through a range of mechanisms, one of which is border policing. As has been touched upon already, humanitarian action contains within it the presence of risk, insecurity and disorder, and practices designed to contain and control. Michel Foucault (2009) has explored the historical modes of policing that were tasked with reproducing conditions conducive to the production of positive wealth and their concomitant role in parallel forms of social control. More recently, Agier (2011:4–5) has written in detail about the increasingly symbiotic relationship between humanitarian government and policing, arguing that "there is no care without control" and that there exists a functional solidarity between the humanitarian world (the hand that cares) and the police and military (the hand that strikes). Assistance

in humanitarianism, Agier reminds us, is simultaneously an instrument of control over its beneficiaries. In discussing the seventeenth century almoner, Vincent de Paul, Agier (2011:12) draws our attention to the rapid shift from the giving of alms or charity, to the state and its police decreeing the internment of the poor as a condition of official responsibility. This is echoed in the Greek context by the decisions under the recently enacted Operation Xenios Zeus to create "closed hospitality centers" in the face of a "humanitarian crisis" for migrants "who live and survive in miserable conditions" (Hellenic Republic 2012). Ticktin (2005:359) has suggested that humanitarianism and policing are two sides of the same coin, "intimately linked, with policing often accompanied by a gesture toward the humane, and toward the ethical, where force is justified in the name of peace and right." Aradau (2004) has called attention to the dual logic of humanitarian discourse and the policing of risk in studying responses to females trafficked for sex, where women are both a victim and a risk. Risk is understood by Aradau as a continuum, whereby the migrant is both *at* risk and *a* risk thereby invoking a humanitarian police response. Furthermore, humanitarian motivations, or what Bigo (2006:84–85) terms "protection," increasingly intersect with forms of "filtering, channeling, and surveillance," where the agents of this protection are the police and the subjects are the population, or more specifically the victims. The intersections of these actions and actors work toward what Walters (2011:142) identifies as a "complex assemblage, comprising particular forms of humanitarianism, specific forms of authority but also certain technologies of government" that works to produce what he terms the humanitarian border.

Moral sentiments and humanitarian concerns now frame Frontex's discourse and action. The "Code of Conduct for all persons participating in Frontex activities" contains two articles (four and five) concerned with the maintenance of fundamental rights and international protection. The 2011 amendment to the Council Regulation establishing Frontex's mandate, Regulation 1168/2011, now makes reference to Frontex's commitment to human rights, standards missing from the original Frontex regulation of 2004 (EU Council 2011). These changes, in line with humanitarian considerations, are what European human rights groups demand. Yet, these changes also exist alongside a hardened attitude to border policing among a large proportion of the European public demanding that border guards seal the border ever tighter against external threats embodied by the figure of the migrant. This tension between risk and rescue, this paradox of protection where the subject must be saved while the object is kept safe, therefore, exists in the wider European milieu in which the border guards and Frontex operatives carry out their work.

Law enforcement agencies, however, are not in practical terms humanitarian agencies, such as Oxfam or MSF. This is in spite of the relationship between humanitarianism and control in their history (Foucault 2009), as evinced by the prior focus on humanitarian agencies as primary agents in the construction of the humanitarian border (Walters 2011). Law enforcement's primary concern is adherence to legally sanctioned/determined behavior, and their primary subject is thought to be the criminal, not a refugee or an impoverished economic migrant, even as policing practices are growing ever larger, and criminal activity is thought to include an ever greater number of practices (Laffey and Weldes 2005; Ericson 2007). The traditional criminal of concern to border policing is the member of the organized criminal network, the *Mafiosi/Scafisti*, engaged in activities such as smuggling (drugs, contraband, people), and vice and money laundering, both of which are (traditionally) illegal and often transnational, and thus concern both national and transnational police (for example, Europol and Interpol) and border police. What the border guard knows, understands, and can handle operationally as a law enforcement officer engaged in policing is

criminals, or "catching bad guys" in the words of Frontex officers. The catching of these "bad guys" in turn becomes the focus of much of Frontex's discourse and the operational efforts of officers in the field.

Rescuing, Catching, and Stopping in Evros Border Policing

The relationship between care and control in discussions of the humanitarian governance of migration has often been illustrated using the example of the Sangatte refugee camp in Calais (Fassin 2005; Ticktin 2005). Here, the refugee center was closed due to humanitarian concerns about the migrants' physical health, with the remaining migrants subjected to police brutality. More recently, HRW (2011) and Amnesty International (2013) have critiqued the detention of migrants in Evros on similar grounds. The practices of the Greek border police in Evros offers another paradigmatic example, similar and yet different to that of Sangatte. Border policing in Evros speaks to both the relationship between care and control in the governance of populations and its intersection with more traditional policing practices built around preventing entry and "catching bad guys." Here, the subject of operations is the population; however, border guards are also responsible for the guarding of a territorially bounded state and/or regional unit where their role is to prevent entry and ensure the safety of not only the population of the space but also the space itself resulting, as Amnesty International (2013) has most recently documented, in alleged "push-backs." This intersection works to create a tension in the everyday operational practices of policing the border.

To illustrate the point, I will recount my conversation with a Greek border police officer, working with the border control division in the Orestiada district, as we were out on patrol and walking the borderline where the Greek government was still constructing a 10.5 km fence. This police officer worked alongside border police from other EU member states seconded to Frontex and Joint-Operation Poseidon Land and was a commanding officer of the Greek border police in the area. As we walked the borderline, they explained to me that their role was first and foremost to prevent migrants crossing the border. They stated that they had a duty to protect this part of the border on behalf of the rest of Europe but that sometimes it was very hard and they realized they could be construed as heartless. This officer was keen to display moral sentiments by stressing that he was "a human with feelings and ... not heartless" and that it was "impossible not to be moved by the things that you see and to want to reach out and help." The conversation at this point neatly encapsulates the dichotomy of *at* risk and *a* risk in border policing (Aradau 2004:252), while touching on the paradox between policing populations and guarding space that is the complex role of border policing. The officer went on:

> One night we were patrolling this part of the border, it was the winter, and it was very cold, when we spotted a group of migrants waiting in the field there across the border where they had been left by the smugglers. They were waiting for our patrol to pass, waiting to cross, but we saw them and stopped them. We obviously couldn't let them cross into Greece. But, we could not cross to get them either. They did not know where else to go because they had been left there by the smugglers, and they were so close to the border, 5 m away, they were waiting in the field, and they were freezing cold and thirsty. We couldn't cross to them, so we threw them some blankets and some water. There were not enough blankets to go around, so we tried to explain to them that they would be warmer if they grouped together like penguins and shared the blankets between them. They had been left there in the freezing cold by the smugglers, they did not know where to go, they were scared to go back. We waited guarding them for hours.

When I asked how this ended I was told that the migrants eventually decided to cross into Greece and be arrested by the border police, whereupon they were taken to the Fylakio detention center. This incident in the everyday operational practice of the Greek border police, in cooperation with their Frontex mandated counterparts, is illustrative of the relationship between caring and controlling in humanitarian policing and the larger paradox between policing subjects and protecting territorial space. Not only was the language used by the officer to recount the story influenced by humanitarianism but also the actions undertaken in regard to the migrants demonstrated an adherence to forms of governance where humanitarian considerations play a part. The border police, through the giving of blankets and water, showed what they believed to be a concern for the welfare of the migrants while simultaneously denying them entry to Greece, and when the migrants did enter they stopped and arrested them, thereby fulfilling their job as securers of the European border.

The practice of rescuing migrants from perilous situations, often created by the actions of smugglers, is a constant theme in narratives about policing the borderland. During my interview with Brigadier Georgios Salamagas, Chief of Police for the District of Orestiada, repeated references were made to the practices of rescue undertaken by the Greek authorities and their Frontex counterparts. Additionally, I was shown countless pieces of footage shot with various borderline cameras. This footage repeatedly showed how the smugglers put the migrants in danger as they attempted to cross into Greece and how the authorities were charged with rescuing the migrants, while the smugglers themselves keep out of harm. It was suggested that operational practice is further influenced by humanitarian concerns where the authorities are careful about when they intervene in rescue operations "... because it is very dangerous for the migrants who are being transferred. For their safety if we intervened in the river they could drown ... It is dangerous and we don't want to endanger anyone's life." The extent to which we can read this as an accurate account of all policy in Evros is challenged by migrant accounts detailing how the Greek border police have forcibly returned them across the river to Turkey (Amnesty International 2013).

However, the operational imperative to catch smugglers is also present in the everyday practices of the Greek border police in Evros, with some expressing a clear preference for this type of police work in informal discussions. The need to intercept and disrupt the smuggling networks does not operate separately from rescue operations or migrant interceptions, rather the three goals intersect and influence each other. For example, the success of earlier attempts at disrupting the smuggling networks by "catching the bad guys" resulted in an increase in the number of rescues as the smugglers altered their *modus operandi* which, according to the police, led to greater danger for the migrants. As Salamagas explains:

> ... Now they push them over... [He begins to show another video]. These are the traffickers on Turkish land and the boat goes on the river alone and in a few minutes the boat is sunk. That is why we have missing persons, persons trapped; this is why we have had a lot of rescue operations. [He points at another image of people sitting in a dingy clinging to trees.] Here we have 42 people trapped on an island in the middle of the river. The water was continually rising ... Every day and every night we have people needing rescue [shows an image of a man being rescued] we had people trapped we took him from very deep waters, it was −10°C and then we arrested him. The migrant thanks God and the people who rescued him...This is a different incident ... where they couldn't cross over, there were nine people, if we hadn't been there they would never have managed to cross.

This quote from Salamagas captures the relationship between rescuing migrants, preventing their entry and catching the smugglers who facilitate entry. His recounting of an operation where they rescued a migrant from freezing waters only to arrest him immediately after ("we took him from very deep waters, it was −10°C and then we arrested him") highlights the migrant as both *at* risk and *a* risk, as a subject needing to be rescued and apprehended, and shows policing as concerned with both care and control. Furthermore, Salamagas' recounting of these stories alongside surveillance footage captured using technologies provided by Frontex, speaks to assertions that the humanitarian work of today is increasingly made possible through changes in technology (Barnett and Weiss 2008:2). It intersects with processes of surveillance (Bigo 2006:84) working to create an assemblage of humanitarianism (Walters 2011). Much of the technology used for border policing has been provided by Frontex and is just one of the ways that Frontex assists the Greek police in their border control efforts under the auspices of Joint-Operation Poseidon Land. This technology, as well as having a real-time surveillance role, is used for the collection of data that is then used back in Warsaw by the Frontex Risk Analysis and Land Border units in mapping migration trends, calculating levels of risk and allocating resources. Finally, when I asked Salamagas whether he felt like a humanitarian, he offered the quote which starts this article and which both reaffirms the relationship of humanitarianism and policing and suggests a tension between this relationship and the need to secure the border. "My role is very specific, it is to face the problem of illegal immigration, however, when we need to save people, of course! Human life is the highest thing. All our operations and all our actions have one common axiom, the protection of human life!"

Catching Bad Guys, Rescuing Migrants, and Strengthening the EU Border at Frontex HQ

Frontex operatives work both in the field, alongside their Greek counterparts, and at their HQ in Warsaw, away from the borderline. Border police, working in the field under the auspices of Frontex in Joint-Operations, are seconded from member state police and border forces, yet many directly employed Frontex personnel from Warsaw also make regular trips to fields of operations. This creates a very clear, direct relationship between the work of on the ground border policing and Frontex. For example, while I was at Frontex HQ, many of the operatives I talked to were preparing for an upcoming field visit to Frontex's regional base in Evros. However, less overt relations also exist between the field and the office in this instance. These relations do not simply work in hierarchical or parallel chains of communication and/or command; they work more as spheres of overlapping regimes of governance due to the current operationally disjointed nature of European border control between various EU institutions and individual member states. This operational disjointedness is something Frontex operatives express some exasperation over in evaluating their work, while concomitantly, it is something Frontex seeks to address through its attempts at instituting "best practice" in accordance with European norms. Frontex here "aims to regulate and harmonize the border practices of individual states, preventing arbitrariness and erosion of rights that are associated with national sovereignty over borders and migration" (Neal 2009:347). In this relationship of intersection and rupture, certain themes are produced and reproduced in both sites. One of these themes is humanitarianism, which works in part to help Frontex frame what it is they do: who or what the subject/object of their work is, and who they are as managers of risk (Neal 2009). In addition, humanitarianism sets very clear operational objectives as Frontex aims to secure the EU border, create EU-wide standardization in "best practice," and enforce a "Code

of Conduct" for border guards. Humanitarianism works alongside the policy of "catching bad guys" that, in the case of Frontex HQ, also has a humanitarian objective. In addition, humanitarian concern for migrant welfare is a paradoxical objective to strengthening European borders where the object is the territorial unit of the European Union itself.

Frontex have been clear that humanitarian concerns frame their operations, building on utterances from the Commission around the loss of life on the borders of Europe (Frontex 2010:42) and making them (absurdly to some) an actor in the construction of the humanitarian border (Walters 2011). Such concerns are clearly articulated in the Frontex produced DVD "Borderlands," which follows operational activities and explores what is termed "the complex issues of irregular migration and border control" (Frontex 2011b). This articulated concern for the well-being of migrants intersects with the operational need to "catch the bad guys" who facilitate migrant journeys. The term "bad guys" is not mine. It is a term used by Frontex personnel in describing the work they do in Evros and elsewhere in European border policing. I was told that the term is a discursive construction created to communicate quickly and simply "what we do," alluding to a form of antipolicy "whose stated objective is to combat bad things" (Walters 2008:267). When discussing overall operational remit and goals, or specific sites of migratory pressure, Frontex personnel consistently refer to the subjects of their work as "bad guys." This is especially noticeable among those who work in risk analysis and out in the field on operations. The "bad guys" in this instance are the organized criminal networks who facilitate migration in a myriad of ways: through organizing routes, responding to changes in border-control practices, providing false documents, and transportation. Stopping these "bad guys" is, I was told, the "most fundamental part" of "what we do." In Warsaw, away from the borderline and the immediate effects created by the proximity to situations that require life-saving interventions (what Brigadier Salamagas referred to as the "highest thing"), commitment to human life as the central element around which policing operations orbit remains, yet is filtered through the need to catch the "criminals" responsible for putting such human life at risk.

So, the discourse built around "bad guys" follows a traditional policing logic concerned with protecting life by preventing and/or intervening in those people and events that threaten it (see Spain's invocation of Safety of Life at Sea for an alternative instance, Andersson 2012:8). The job of Frontex is not to simply stop the "bad guys" "exploiting weaknesses in member state and European border controls," I was told by a senior risk analyst, but to "prevent the bad guys exploiting migrants for their own criminal ends." Furthermore, the unclear practical divide between smuggling and trafficking was referenced repeatedly. In all of these stories, however, the migrant was a victim *at* risk, cynically exploited for the criminals' own personal gain. The migrant was a human cargo at risk and in need of care and control. Therefore, the discursive construction of the organized criminal networks as "bad guys" speaks to the inclusion of humanitarianism in border policing. It references Frontex's core mandate of border law enforcement and humanitarianism premised on a victim and savior dichotomy that has (as we have seen) come to dominate multiple forms of governance over the previous two decades. The focus on "catching bad guys" at the expense of a migrant-focused border policy suggests an operational logic that is concerned with tangible results. Migration as a phenomenon can only be controlled and governed, not eliminated. By focusing on those who are thought to facilitate migration it becomes operationally possible to police using operatives trained to catch "bad guys," as opposed to eradicating the multiplicity of drivers of migration that stem from numerous sources of conflict and injustice. This practice of course differs from the wider European discourse that constructs migrants as a threat, allowing that discourse to continue undisturbed while operational

practice in the field acknowledges that such a threat cannot be eliminated only controlled, governed, and contained in line with Andrew Neal's (2009) arguments concerning Frontex as managers of risk.

The simultaneous policing of people—migrants in this instance—that are in need of care and control, combined with catching a risk group—the smugglers—in the process of border policing, may appear to create a tension as operational aims. As we have seen, in practice, they sometimes are. However, as operational objectives they aid Frontex in framing what it is they do, giving meaning to such practices in turn. Humanitarian policing of risk groups and "catching bad guys" help Frontex "fill the gap" between practices grounded in the everyday encounters of border police across Europe and Frontex's role as facilitator, operational manager and expert in European border governance. This "gap filling" in turn gets written into the "Code of Conduct" for European border guards Frontex are responsible for creating. This Code includes ten quick "dos and don'ts" including "respecting human dignity at all times and paying particular attention to the need of vulnerable persons." Such humanitarian considerations determining "best practice" are illustrative of what Feldman and Ticktin (2010:1) mean when they talk of "speaking on behalf of humanity staking out a powerful position. When Frontex frames border policing "best practice" in terms of humanity it simultaneously casts itself as a moral actor and protector of human life, securing itself against criticism and strengthening its position as an actor in European border policing.

By contrast, European border policing also sees Frontex preventing entry to European space that works *contra* to the policing of migrants and "bad guys." In this operational remit, the subject of Frontex's operations shifts from the risk population made up of migrants and organized criminal networks to the territory of the European Union and its member states. The territory is the object now at risk. Unlike "catching bad guys," I was told this need to prevent entry is seen in reality as operationally impossible to enforce within humanitarian and liberal norms and yet the need to defend the space from penetration remains. This is evidenced by the previously mentioned Amnesty International report, accusing the Greek border police of pushing back migrants into Turkey (2013). These tensions therefore remain while debordering practices designed to interrupt and block migrants outside of European space (see Bigo and Guild 2005) continue apace. This results in Frontex's increasing focus on supporting and engaging with Third Countries in a host of border control areas, including material and logistical support in border guard training, surveillance and biometrics alongside expertise and information sharing. Such debordering practices or mobile borders can be seen, in part, as an attempt to reconcile the tensions between a humanitarian border policing where the individual is the subject and the need to defend territory where the territory is the object. However, not all migration flows are intercepted before they come into contact with European border police operating in the European borderlands. These border police, working in Joint-Operations managed by Frontex in conjunction with member states, see border police and Frontex trying to balance a tension between policing the population and defending the territory of Europe.

Conclusion

This article has offered an interpretive exploration of humanitarian border policing in two European locations: the Greek region of Evros and the headquarters of Frontex in Warsaw. Building on a Foucauldian framework, the article has reaffirmed the argument that humanitarianism and policing are not two separate or competing practices. Policing continues to contain a strong humanitarian element in its practice and conversely humanitarianism contains a strong policing

element, meaning they are "intimately linked" (Ticktin 2005:359) with facilitating the governance of populations categorized as both at risk and a risk within a spectrum of care and control. The relationship between care and control is complicated in practice in both Evros and at Frontex with the operational drive to combat organized criminal facilitators, yet such practices remain within the traditional policing remits concerned with policing groups considered a risk. Where a tension emerges is in the relationship between humanitarianism and border policing specifically. Humanitarian border policing takes the population as its subject of action, something that it shares with the other policing practices of border police around "catching bad guys." However, there is a paradox between these population-focused forms of governance and preventing access to European space where the object of operations is the territory or space of Europe. This paradox plays itself out in everyday practice with the concomitant specters of rescue and "push-back" occurring within the same space and is suggestive of the fragmented nature of much ground-level border policing in Europe today. This results in a tension between forms of governance concerned with population and movement and forms of sovereign power concerned with more traditional notions of territorial defense, delimitation, and consolidation; what Mezzadra and Neilson (2013:171) term the "sovereign gesture." In Mezzadra and Neilson's (*ibid.*) analysis, the presence of the paradox of border policing is acknowledged, while the capacity for a humanitarian migration management is, in practice, seen as a dream within a bordered world system made up of sovereign territorial units.

In the context of border control in practice, the increased emphasis on humanitarianism works to widen the sphere of police operations to include humanitarian concerns. Meanwhile, the choice to deploy humanitarianism discursively and in everyday border policing practice does a number of things. First, when the Greek police and Frontex position themselves as humanitarian actors certain courses of action such as interception and intervention become mandated and legitimized when undertaken in the name of humanity with its explicit values of care. This argument is harder to make when done in the name of managing risk alone, where logics of care are more ambiguous and harder to untangle. When this interception and intervention occurs prior to situations where migrants are at actual risk, the Greek police and Frontex become agents of preemptive risk management. Second, humanity works to shield the Greek police and Frontex from some of the criticism leveled against them, while carving out a clear subject position and consolidating their place in the power structures of border control. Humanitarianism is put to work by Frontex, for example, in the framing narratives and discursive justifications given for the growing migration management assemblage as seen with the use of humanitarian justifications for the newly rolled out EUROSUR system following the recent boat tragedies off Lampedusa (BBC News 2013).

Humanitarianism as a strategy for Frontex and member state border police as actors concerned with life—even in the barest terms—works to acknowledge and challenge the accusations that "Frontex kills" and to offset criticism from other European institutions. Theoretically, however, the invocation and practice of humanitarianism alongside accusations of human rights abuses strengthens the distinction between humanitarianism as a gift and human rights as an entitlement. Further, it works to cement sovereign states as the final and only guardians of human rights and leaves Frontex only able to "talk" about rights. Ultimately, Frontex can talk in humanitarian terms, ask for humanitarian action, and manage risk in the name of human beings but, importantly, in light of the recent accusations by HRW and Amnesty International, Frontex cannot uphold human rights, neither can they ensure territorial security as both human rights and border policing remain the sovereign responsibility of the member states.

This leaves Frontex as a manager of risk, utilizing humanitarian logics to strategically counter criticism and attempting to secure the borders through (preemptive) interventions often justified in humanitarian terms.

Finally, the Greek police and Frontex's role in humanitarian border policing works to reconfigure the wider humanitarian field of who is a humanitarian actor and who is not. The humanitarianism of European border policing further blurs the line between humanitarian agencies and humanitarian practice as governments, transnational institutions, and security agencies explicitly articulate humanitarian positions and practice humanitarian forms of governance. What this means for humanitarian practice generally, and in relation to border governance specifically, is a question requiring more in-depth research in alternative sites both within and outside of Europe. As such, the utilization of care in the governing of migration conceptually and practically widens the forms of governance migrants are subjected to, showing that the arguments presented by, for example, Agier (2011) are not restricted to the refugee camps of Africa that inform his study. Furthermore, the case presented here speaks to the construction of the "humanitarian border" in the context of Europe suggested by Walters (2011), while broadening Walter's designation of who can be included as an actor in such a humanitarian assemblage.

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