Constructing European Neo-colonial Masculinity through Emotions: 

Producing a Life to be Feared, Disgusted, and Compassioned

by

Ali Bilgic, Loughborough University

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The politics of migration is imbued with emotions. Those who are in favour of restrictive policies formulate their ‘rational’ arguments on the zero-sum understanding of migration (meaning more for migrants, less for citizens). ‘They will take your jobs away’, ‘they are exploiting the health system paid by your taxes’, ‘terrorists cross our borders unchecked and unchallenged’, and more are not simply representations of fear, anxiety, anger, and hate towards the image of ‘the immigrant’, a concept that enmeshes ‘refugee’, ‘illegal migrant’, ‘bogus asylum-seeker’, ‘economic refugee’, ‘undocumented migrant’ all together in the basket of ‘criminals’. They are also instrumental to justify exclusionary and restrictive policies to curb migration, and therefore, allegedly address feelings of fear and anxiety. On the other hand, diverse political actors, pro-migration NGOs, and international institutions equally evoke an emotional language of compassion and empathy towards those who are in distress and call for ‘our’ help. Both sides use visual materials to disseminate and raise certain feelings in their audiences’ affective and cognitive worlds: a plastic boat full of ‘non-white’ migrants, who are also sometimes depicted as violent individuals, such as when they climb the fences or burn the mattresses in the detention centres in the moment of protest; when a body of a three-year-old kid is washed ashore; when a face with stitched eyes and mouth protests forced return policies.

Emotions, or emotional performances, are ‘enacted upon’ power relations that permeate social, economic, and political relations: ‘how we feel is part of how we present, constitute, legitimize, and enact political views, values, attachments and even policies’.¹ Emotions expressed within the discussions of migration are not an exception. As a social phenomenon, emotions are constitutive to the production of gender, race, sex, and class hierarchies, as well as gendered, sexualized, racialized, and commodified bodies and subjects. Deriving from this

¹ Emma Hutchison, Affective Communities in World Politics: Collective Emotions After Trauma, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 83.
argument, the present analysis asks how masculinities are produced through emotional performances in the politics of migration control and management.

This paper aims to discuss the role of emotions in the biopolitical governance of migration, in particular, irregular migration. It will be argued that allegedly conflicting emotions, such as fear, hope, disgust, compassion, empathy, and self-centrism are performed together in the biopolitical governance of irregular migration by producing a ‘socially abject’ life as its object that is to be killed, disgusted of, animalized, and saved. Encounters between the irregular migrant and a European border security actor constitute a neo-colonial type of masculinity that combines, and equally differs from, liberal-rational and citizen-warrior masculinities. During the moment of the encounter with the other’s life, multiple and conflating borders, in both territorial and non-territorial sense, are produced through emotional performances of European border security actors as embodiments of the hybrid ‘sovereign man’ called ‘Europe’.

I will build up the argument in a rather non-conventional way by re-reading my Ph.D. thesis on security and migration in Europe; to put it differently, by encountering my former self who was a migrant in the UK during the writing period. The thesis was published as a book in 2013. One reason why I choose to re-read my previous work is that two emotions, fear and trust, constitute the core of the analysis, which aims to conceptualize security thinking and policies based on a peaceful co-existence of migrants and EU citizens. However, I refrained from calling them emotions and studying them as such in relation to the politics they are enacted upon. Therefore, this analysis will start with a self-reflection on my own work in order to discuss why an IR scholar avoids identifying her work as ‘emotional’ in spite of the growing literature and acknowledgement of the role of emotions in global politics. Another, and fundamentally more decolonizing, reason is that neo-colonial masculinity that is produced through biopolitical border security practices silenced the migrant subjectivity of myself. In other words, the academic discourse articulated through objectivity and rationality disables representations to signify and reflect feelings in the research, and, therefore, contributes to the mystification of the workings of neoliberal and biopolitical border security practices. If neo-colonial masculinity is to be challenged, it is important to understand how its violence in terms of silencing ‘the migrant in the researcher’ works.

The second section of the paper focuses on the critical exploration of what emotions do as ‘performances’ in the politics of migration in Europe. It starts with a conceptual discussion of how emotions can be studied in politics. Combining the works of Sara Ahmed, Emma Ali Bilgic, Rethinking Security in the Age of Migration: Trust and Emancipation in Europe, London: Routledge, 2013.
Hutchison, and Janice Bially Mattern, emotions will be conceptualized as performances embedded in power relations, which are reproduced or challenged through representations of feelings in the form of emotions. It is followed by a discussion of emotional performances of European border security actors in the biopolitical management of borders. Mainly deriving from the work of Nick Vaughan-Williams on ‘EUropean’ border security practices and Imogen Tyler’s social abjection theory, I will argue that the encounter between the irregular migrant and the European border security actor is a moment of emotional performance that produces the other-life to be killed, animalized, and saved. These emotional performances of fear, disgust, and compassion are constitutive to neo-colonial European masculinity.

A Moment for Self-Reflectivity

It was 2006 when I applied for the UK student visa when I encountered the UK’s border for the first time. In fact, it was not the UK consulate that I submitted my application to but it a private company that the UK Home Office outsourced the visa application submission process, including checking documents, collecting fingerprints, and other biometric details. It was not possible to have an interview with this private agent without paying the required visa fee through a credit card. Bordering between the UK and me started in my home country even without facing a UK border institution and continued on my first flight to the UK on board. The flight attendant distributed a small form to be completed and submitted to the immigration officer with my passport when landed. This form was to be filled by everybody except UK, EU, and EEC countries citizens. In a six-seat row, some passengers including myself were filling the form but others did not. Bordering the body that was subjected to more surveillance and control and the one that did not fill the form was a source of uneasiness and, to a certain extent, shame for me: why was I a usual suspect? This was hardly the end of the story of bordering. After I entered the UK, as a student, I had to go to a police station to register. I was 24 then and it was my first time in a police station. I did not talk about this to my fellow PhD students from the UK and EU, who did not follow the same procedure. The border between the UK and me also became a border between me and other PhD students. While I could list many experiences of internal bordering, there was one experience that I should add to show how the biopolitical border between me and the UK was redrawn inside the geopolitical borders. In my second year, I was looking for a flat and called an agent. The biggest estate agent then in Aberystwyth answered my call. He told me that based on my accent, he understood that I was not British and he did not rent ‘his’ flats to immigrants. While some of my friends recommended me to report the agent because it was against the law, I did not because I was not sure how this act would have affected my precarious position as a student from the Global South in the UK.
While I was facing the UK border again and again in my daily ‘personal’ life, I was writing my PhD thesis on migration in Europe. I must note that the experiences that I had and those who were in the detention centres, boats, and the Sahara Desert are not comparable, but the biopolitical governance logic, which produced migrants at different degrees as abjected objects (see below), is the same. However, I could not integrate or reflect upon my own personal experiences in my thesis because it would appear emotional, not academic. Feminists in IR have argued that marginalizing emotions in academic research is a disabling practice. It restricts reflectivity about how a researcher studies the subject and how the research practice itself has transformed the researcher emotionally and cognitively.\(^3\) Emotional reflectivity is a feminist practice that not only problematizes the observer/observed dichotomy epistemologically, but also politically opens a new front in the struggle of revealing gendered and sexualized power hierarchies.

My argument here is that if the researcher (a public figure) silences the migrant in my case (personal), it serves a political purpose: the desire to be taken seriously by acting ‘objectively’, ‘scientifically’, and ‘academically’ is an important dimension of how neoliberal biopolitical power operates. Representations are the key tools to express and communicate feelings, and discourse is also produced through representations, whether they are linguistic, practical, or habitual.\(^4\) Academic discourse as a system of signification is not articulated through representations that can be used to express and communicate feelings and affects. The production of a ‘scientific academic’ subjectivity that avoids being ‘emotional’ is an epistemological practice that hinders the possibility of a knowledge that conceives emotions not as psychological and individualized, and, therefore, apolitical and ahistorical phenomena, but a psychosocial. The undesirability of representations of feelings in academic discourse (because of the risk of not being taken seriously, as well as questions of objectivity) can prevent the scholar from revealing and problematizing gendered, sexualized, class-based, and racialized power relations, although she herself is the subject and object of these power relations. Emotions, as will be discussed below, are performances that are constitutive to power relations where academic discourse is a fundamental epistemological sphere and where power hierarchies are produced through suggesting and imposing silence on emotions.

At least, this was the situation in my case. The ‘academic’ silenced the migrant during the research. ‘The migrant’ is not solely a legal/political status; it is a psychosocial condition that is experienced through the encounters of ‘the host’ with its borders, agents, and peoples. My


\(^4\) Hutchison, *Affective Communities in World Politics*, p. 139.
migrant-ness was produced when I filled the form on board or was lectured by a ‘male’ estate agent by making me feel angry, ashamed, uneasy, and uncomfortable. The control and discipline of my migrant life was performed emotionally. Similar to the Fanon’s ‘colonized man’, the feelings I had and the impossibility of representing them as my emotions both in academic and non-academic spheres of life was a biopolitical technology of border governance where I was produced as subordinated and ‘abjected’ in the neo-colonial era. Academic discourse prevented me from reflecting upon my own feelings, which were, in fact, embodiments of my abject position. As a result, one of the most important technologies of biopolitical border governance, emotional performances, was neglected by contributing to the mystification of this governance, as I could not vocalize the borders that I faced by pushing them back as ‘emotions’ dismissing them as signs of inferiority complex, which was about me. However, it was not just about me; rather, it was historical, social, and political.

Remembering Fanon, ‘the deep down colonized subject knows no authority. He is dominated but not domesticated. He is made to feel inferior, but by no means convinced of inferiority’. The following is a belated academic research of the migrant who is not convinced about his inferior masculinity. 

*Neo-colonial European Masculinity through Emotional Performances: Encountering the Other’s Life*

There is a growing literature and many disagreements about how to formulate and use the terminology about emotions in social sciences. In this paper, three interrelated concepts will be used. The first one is feeling, which refers to ‘a sensation that has been checked against previous experiences and labelled’. Affect, on the other hand, means a non-conscious bodily reaction and experience (speeding up the heart beat or a change in facial expressions). Emotions are conscious expressions or manifestations of bodily feelings. While feelings and affects are experienced individually, emotions are performed through linguistic and non-linguistic communication systems and technologies, in other representations that individuals use to communicate their feelings. That said, the claim that emotions are personal does not mean that they are ‘privatized’. Deriving from the powerful piece of Saeidi and Turcotte

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7 Ibid.
8 Hutchison, *Affective Communities in World Politics*, p. 19.
emotions in feminist research, privatization ‘silences systemic inequities and limits access to the claims of personal politics; it individualizes the moment of exchange and disconnects it from larger circulations of power’. Emotions are not resources that ‘rational’ individuals possess to instrumentalize for political objectives; they are not ‘properties’. They are effects of power.

Emotions as relational, social, and cultural practices of individuals are ‘performances’ of individuals whose representations of feelings contribute to or challenge power relations that are historically and culturally produced. As representations, which constitute discourses, are never devoid of power, emotions cannot be conceptualized, thought, and practiced without considering the role of power relations operating in and through the society. For example, increasing heart beat and adrenaline of a white supremacist in an encounter with a non-white individual and expressing the feeling as anger is an emotional expression. Affects can be biological but they are hardly natural and apolitical. Expressing feelings in relation to affects, how to communicate them, or non-expressing or non-communicating them for that matter, abet power, and therefore constitute a political question. Power structures, and hierarchies, have an impact on what types of emotions are felt, who performs them, and how they are communicated. Sometimes, as in academic discourse (see above), power is also produced by disabling representations of feelings as emotions.

What do emotions do? As performances, emotions ‘surfaces or boundaries are made: the ‘I’ and ‘we’ are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others’. Emotions are relational and constitutive to ‘the self’ in relation to others. Emotions shape, and are reshaped, in relation to individual and collective identities, bodies, subjectivities, and spaces. They are expressions of ‘being’ through which ‘the self’ in its pluralism communicates with the outside world. They ‘slide’, as Ahmed puts, between objects, individuals, times, and

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16 Bially Mattern, A Practice Theory of Emotion.
places. However, this sliding is not neutral. As discussed above, emotions are felt, acted upon, and projected depending on the historically constructed contexts where power relations operate. How one makes sense of herself and her surroundings, what she values, how she relates with ‘the other’, and what she aims to become are questions that require an understanding of emotions which cannot be wished away or ignored.

According to Ahmed, emotions as identity-construction performances operate as follows. A subject feels something in relation to another and this feeling is accompanied by affective reactions. These feelings (and affects) are hardly arbitrary; they are derived from experiences of history of previous encounters, or better to say, from discursive representations of this political history. A subject expresses, communicates, or enacts the feeling through either linguistic or non-linguistic practices, which also originate from a history. Through performing an emotion, a subject produces the target of the emotion as the object which ‘naturally’ and ‘essentially’ carries the characteristics associated with that particular emotion (for example, finding someone ‘disgusting’). This becomes ‘the truth’ in relation to the object. In conclusion, borders are (re)drawn between the self and the other, and the subject and object of emotional performance.\(^\text{17}\) While these borders can be material/spatial and immaterial/cognitive, hierarchical power relations can be produced through emotional performances, even when these emotions are not aversive, but positive.

What about the role of emotions in the production of certain political subjects in global politics? One of the most important contributions of the works on emotions in IR is to conceptualize and empirically discuss the ways in which emotions operate in the producing of bodies, subjectivities, and identities. They particularly question the historical, social, and political processes that constitute certain emotional performances in local and transnational spaces.\(^\text{18}\) Emotions are so embedded in global political relations that they can be even ‘institutionalized’, meaning that emotions are constitutive to the identity of institutions.


whose representatives perform emotions to enact the institution’s agency.\textsuperscript{19} They contribute to drawing and redrawing the boundaries of political communities and sometimes break them to a certain level that ‘the self’ loses its ontological presence.\textsuperscript{20} While power is almost always problematized in these studies, many feminist IR scholars, as discussed above, question the marginalization of emotions epistemologically with the purpose of promoting objective, rational, and scientific knowledge, or the ‘feminization of emotional knowledge’.\textsuperscript{21} Attributing emotionality has been studied as one of the techniques of constructing gendered identities.

If gender is performed and emotions are performances of ‘the self’ that has a bordering function, the question we face is how gender is emotionally performed, and what emotions do in constructing gendered identities, subjects, and objects. Firstly, emotions are socially and culturally embedded practices. In the construction of the social and the political, gender plays a fundamental role along with race, sex, and class. Affects and feelings are personal, but how and if they are enacted, expressed and communicated is social, where gender codes and gender roles dynamically operate. In other words, when emotions are performed, this performance reflects gendered relations and power hierarchies. Secondly, in relation to the first angle, when individuals and communities perform emotions, they can reproduce (or challenge) the gendered roles and hierarchies embedded in power relations. Since emotions are relational, the encounter between ‘the self’ and ‘the other’ is the moment where gendered identities are reproduced through emotional performances. The moment of the encounter, however, carries ambivalence regarding which feelings are experienced and which affects slip into the world of representation. Individuals are not machines that repeat ‘self-expressive routines’, but they exceed the routines, or their creativity ‘leaks’ into the social order (Bially Mattern, 2011: 74). For this very reason, emotional performances always embody a potential for transforming what type of the self is to be presented.

Masculinities and masculinized bodies and subjects are produced through emotional performances as much as feminized and queer ones. Because of the historical relation between man/masculinity and state/sovereignty, emotions deserve special attention to understand the politics of bordering and power relations associated with bordering practices. To put it differently, how do emotional performances (re)produce a type of masculinity and a masculinized subject that modulates itself as ‘in charge of’ protecting the political body?

\textsuperscript{19} Crawford, Institutionalizing passion in world politics.

\textsuperscript{20} The works on trauma is hereby significant, among others see Jenny Edkins, \textit{Trauma and the Memory of Politics}. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

\textsuperscript{21} Ahmed, Cultural Politics of Emotion, p. 6.
In the discipline of IR, the mutually constitutive relationship between man/manhood/masculinity and state/statehood/sovereignty has been critically discussed. These studies, in general, argue that statecraft and sovereignty as fundamental principles and practices of international relations and IR have been (re)constructed along with the production of Western man, manhood, and masculinity. While masculinizing the state and sovereignty legitimizes multiple binaries, including inside/outside, state/society, citizen/non-citizen, and security/insecurity, the ‘man’ as a political subject has also been reproduced as an embodiment of statehood and sovereignty. These processes of political construction of ‘proper man’ and ‘proper state’ are inasmuch conflated as masculinized bodies, identities, spaces, and ideologies occupy a privileged position in politics from local to global. However, it must also be noted that not all masculinities and men enjoy the same privilege as race, sex, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity; other power-induced identity markers interact dynamically with masculinities. As masculinities cannot be essentialized but reproduced contingently in relation to power relations, there are power hierarchies among masculinities in global politics.

There are multiple masculinities in global politics and they interact with each other, transform, and are challenged in/by historical, social, and political conditions, as several works in feminist IR have shown. One important contribution of these studies is to conceptualize the nation-state and its practices through the prism of masculinities. It has been argued that the state is a masculinized (and in some cases, hypermasculinized) political institution, which means that its ontology and practices are produced, normalized, and

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legitimized through masculinizing it.\textsuperscript{26} This, in turn, contributes to a production of ‘man’ that is proper and acceptable: a man who sets the standards of being man. Gender and gendering processes that pervade individual, social, state, and supra-state levels of politics are an instrumental and fundamental part of reconstructing binaries, dichotomies, and borders, and, therefore, power hierarchies between ‘valorized’ and ‘devalorized’.\textsuperscript{27}

In my previous work, I have argued that Euro-Mediterranean security relations can also be studied through the prism of masculinities.\textsuperscript{28} Contemporary European (read, both EU and its member states) practices targeting its southern neighbourhood are produced and legitimized through two types of masculinities. Citizen-warrior and liberal-rational models of masculinity are interlinked and can be observed in European security practices in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Aggressiveness and excessive militarization of the former is often combined with rational, prudent, and even compassionate liberal practices towards its neighborhood. I call this the ‘hybrid hegemonic masculinity of EU’, which aims to shape and transform the Euro-Mediterranean region in accordance with its realist/liberal security interests. This has produced power hierarchies between the EU and political actors in North Africa through gendering.

The control of irregular migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region is one of the areas where the EU’s hybrid masculinity is crystallized. Emotions are fundamental in this process. This construction process through emotional performances produces ‘socially abject objects’. Imogen Tyler describes social abjection is ‘a psychosocial theory—which speaks to how subjects and states are reconstituted as longer histories of violence and struggle that converge within the bordering practices of the political present’.\textsuperscript{29} In the production of the state, some populations are continuously imagined, presented, and configured as ‘revolting’ to the ‘hygienic’ body politic, which is essentialized as ‘good and clean’. Populations that can potentially contaminate the body are put under surveillance and control. Borders between the abjected and the body politic are repeatedly redrawn in urban ghettos, prisons, hospitals, and detention centres. Therefore, the sovereign can govern through fear and anxiety regarding an

\textsuperscript{26} Maruska, 2010; Stachowitch, 2013.


ever-present risk of being contaminated. For the present analysis, one of the most important contributions of Tyler’s social abjection theory is that it explores emotions as technologies of governance. In particular, she argues that ‘disgust functions to affirm the boundaries of the social body (the body politic) through the (actual or symbolic) expulsion of what are collectively agreed to be polluting objects, practices or persons’. Deriving from Ahmed’s approach to emotions as boundary-producing performances, Tyler explores the historical and political production of particular populations as ‘disgusting objects’ in the UK.

Tyler’s abjection theory, not as an ahistorical and apolitical psychoanalytical, but a psychosocial look at how historically and socially conditioned emotional performances contribute to redrawning the boundaries between the abjected objects and the subject in biopolitical governance, is crucial for the present analysis. People of colour, migrants, women, gays, transgenders, disabled, working class and low income status populations’ abjection surely requires an intersectional analysis as well as one that historicizes their abjections as colonial and imperial practices. Tylor successfully integrates and empirically discusses the power politics of emotions in the neoliberal age, and, therefore, paves the way for investigating the neo-colonial dimension of contemporary abjection practices. That said, abjection can be performed before the populations’ presence within the territorial borders and these performances can be conducted at supra-state and sub-state levels. That is why the focus should be on the sovereign, not the state, and on how the sovereign as a gendered subject is produced through emotional performances. In the following, I will discuss the role of fear, disgust, and compassion in European biopolitical migration management as performances of its neo-colonial masculinity by producing fearsome, disgusting, helpless ‘irregular migrant’ as an abjected object.

In the last few decades, European border security has been studied critically from two main perspectives. Deriving from Foucault, Derrida, and Agamben, the first perspective questions the biopolitical practices of border security, which engender multilevel security practices to manage the risk, discipline the body, and control the borders. In parallel with the neoliberalisation of security, biopolitical borders reproduce the life as its target, especially life that cannot be grasped and contained through/within territorial borders. Especially associated with counter-terrorism, migration control has increasingly become an ever-expanding industry of surveillance, militarization of borders and seas, empowerment of private security companies, and outsourcing. The second critical literature problematizes the

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30 Tyler, Revolting Subjects, pp., 16-22.

31 Ibid. p. 23.
discrepancies between the EU discourse on rights and freedoms, and security practices on the field that violate international and European legal rules, universal human and migrant rights, and European norms and values that define the ontology of the EU. Some of these studies argue that current security policies produce insecurity for EU and migrants defying their purpose. Instead, a more liberal migration management regime that involves reception and integration of migrants is recommended. In my book, I define the two approaches as fear-based security policies and trust-based ones and categorize them as two competing approaches to security. This is the point that needs revisiting.

Nick Vaughan-Williams has recently argued that European border security does not have a generalizable system, but operates with a biopolitical logic that aims to kill and save life concomitantly. Biopolitical border security aims to minimize the risks for ‘the trusted traveller’s mobility and security through differentiating and controlling those who are not trusted, mainly irregular migrants. To achieve this aim, private security companies are hired to introduce the latest technology of surveillance, agreements are made with the neighbouring countries to ensure their cooperation with the EU, land and sea borders are highly militarized. All these security practices reflect a mode of governance that makes the life its object to be protected and saved. That is why ‘humanitarianism’ is not the alternative of European border security, but its fundamental dimension. For example, saving life and reducing human suffering as biopolitical border security practices legitimize increasing militarization of land and borders. However, according to Vaughan-Williams, the European borders can also be understood as ‘thanatopolitical borders’, where the sovereign ban, as put by Agamben, is unpacked to kill in cooperation with environmental factors (i.e. bad weather and sea conditions). Furthermore, they are also ‘zoopolitical borders’ that ‘animalize’ the life, or reveal ‘the animal in the man’, to make ‘the unknown’, and therefore risky, knowable. He argues that encounters between irregular migrants and border security agents can result in one of the aforementioned practices that is difficult to determine a priori. Rather, multiple logics of biopolitical border security resemble an immune system that protects the life, and while protecting it, autoimmunity can sometimes lead to termination of ‘virus’.

Vaughan-Williams borrows the immunitary borders idea from Roberto Esposito.\(^{32}\) While Esposito’s approach surely deserves a more detailed discussion, in a nutshell and risking its simplification, the immunitarian paradigm’s first function is to define the identity of the

subject a priori: something to be conserved, preserved, and protected, which is the second function of the paradigm. In other words, when the identity of the subject is defined, it also leads to an identification of the wrong, like a virus, which would potentially risk the survival and existence of the subject. As a reactionary mechanism, the *immunitas* acts when ‘the virus’ first ‘threatens’ the body. Operationalizing in the settler-colonial case of Israel, Svirsky argues that the Israeli *immunitas* operates by, firstly, ‘the separation of bodies from the possibility of opening subjectivities to alteration by concrete others, and (secondly) their distancing from collaborative and shared ways of existence’. The ‘double refusal…is the way Zionism immunised itself from intercultural life’. Although, as will be discussed below, the European *immunitas* shares this colonial outlook of pushing the ‘unwanted’ bodies back or confining them to pre-empt a possible contamination of the body politic, the very same a priori-defined identity also contains an equally colonial ‘essence’ called humanitarianism. The a priori defined identity (for me, it is the European neo-colonial masculinity) could only survive if the same racialized, gendered, and sexualized ‘deterioralized’ life is both pushed away and saved at the same time.

The importance of Vaughan-Williams’ reading of European border security governance for the present analysis has two dimensions. Firstly, European border security practices do not consist of contending practices reflecting alternative logics of security, but pertain to a single biopolitical border security governance logic. Exclusionary and militarized security practices and ‘humanitarian’ ones are not opposite mirror images, but complete each other to protect the life by differentiating the ‘good’, ‘trusted traveller’ from ‘the bad’, who supposedly ‘threatens’ (like a virus) the health of the body. Fear-based security and compassion-based security may not be alternatives to each other. Rather, they are implications of the identity a priori defined as the *immunitas*. Secondly, ‘encounter’ is a key moment in the process of deciding what kind of biopolitical relationship is performed between the irregular migrant and border security actor (i.e. how the immunitary mechanism works). This actor can be a coastguard, soldier, ship captain, NGO member, FRONTEX officer, fisherman and so on. One of the most important consequences of European border security governance is to produce individuals (with official competence or not) as border security agents with an authority to make momentary decisions regarding the ‘irregular’, deterrioralized life. The decisions and

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34 Ibid, p. 6.

performances of individuals in their encounters with the irregular life kill, animalize, or save it.

If this is the case, and if emotions are indistinguishable parts of cognition and practice, I argue that immunitary borders are performed emotionally. In other words, European border security practices are emotional performances that are constantly redrawing boundaries between the ‘good and clean’ self and the abjected other, who can be killed, animalized, or saved in order to prevent a possible contamination of the body politic. The EU’s biopolitical hybrid masculinity is reconstructed through these emotional boundary-producing performances. These performances are not apolitical and ahistorical; rather, they reflect the political representations of previous encounters with ‘the other’ during the colonial and post-colonial eras. The EU’s hybrid masculinity is a neo-colonial identity whose construction depends on the emotional production of the abjected other in the body of an irregular migrant.

It has been widely discussed that fear is one of the driving forces of the migration-security nexus in Europe, and it is also the emotion that reconstructs the EU’s citizen-warrior masculinity. Fear, and associated feelings such as anxiety and uneasiness towards ‘the other’, as well as the urge to eliminate the risks and potential threats to self-preservation are highly associated with the citizen-warrior masculinity. This masculinity produces mainly male (albeit not exclusively) bodies and subjects as the militarized, aggressive, and proactive protectors/citizens of the community against risks and threats inside the spatial borders. The fear that once the political body is penetrated by ‘the other’, its existence would be in jeopardy, is the overarching feeling of this type of masculinity. When the feeling of fear and its affective reactions are expressed, communicated, and represented, it becomes an emotional performance that redraws the borders between the self-life that needs protection and the other-life that can be killed. European border security actors, from FRONTEX officers to ship captains, can feel fear and anxiety not because it is natural to feel it (see above, emotions are relational and social), but because Europe’s citizen-warrior masculinity in relation to ‘irregular migrants’ has been produced and reproduced in Euro-centric social relations and politics through performing fear (meaning, representing and communicating fear in a discursive context through speeches, policy papers, implementing new surveillance

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37 Bigo, Security and Immigration.
technologies, etc.). During their encounters, European border security actors can perform fear by pushing back irregular migrant boats and letting them die in bad weather and sea conditions. Therefore, the border is redrawn between the life and ‘the other’ life that can be killed. The citizen-warrior masculinity of the EU produces and is produced by the momentary decision of the individual to perform fear.

Neo-colonial masculinity’s other constitutive part is the liberal-rational masculinity. The liberal-rational sovereign ‘man’ is different from the citizen-warrior in the sense that ‘he’ does not valorise violence and aggressiveness, but praises prudence, rationality, and democratic and liberal values. This sovereign man is also presented as compassionate towards those are ‘in need’ of help, protection, and guidance. However, the liberal-rational man is not less violent towards the other in producing it as an abjected object. This will be discussed in two emotional performances in which disgust and trust deriving from empathy and compassion are crystallized in the biopolitical management of border security.

The first emotional performance concerns the animalization of irregular migrants through producing them as ‘disgusting’ other. In September 2015, a video recorded by an Austrian woman showed the world irregular migrants in a camp in Rozske, Hungary, who were thrown food by the camp officers who bodies are highly covered and protected with plastic gloves and sanitary masks. Therefore, their skin could not be exposed to irregular migrants’ bodies. Human Rights Watch’s emergency director stated that irregular migrants were held like ‘cattle in pens’. In April 2016, an irregular migrant from Pakistan, who wanted to apply for an asylum, stated that ‘only Pakistani and Bangladeshi people are being targeted. I think Greek officials hate us. They are treating Pakistani people like animals’. These accounts are not rare, neither on the European territories nor in the regions where the EU has outsourced irregular migration control. Being held in overcrowded rooms with limited facilities, forcing migrants to sleep in their own urine, restricting possibilities of having a shower, being thrown food, and being beaten ‘like animals’ especially outside the EU territorial borders are boundary-producing emotional performances of disgust that are practiced during the encounter between the irregular migrant and the European border security actor. The latter is reproduced as the embodiment of the clean and good ‘hygienic’ self, while the former is produced through a performance of disgust as an abjected object of the liberal-rational sovereign subject, ‘man’. Unlike the citizen-warrior, this sovereign man values life and protects it by animalizing the other-life.

Animalization of the irregular migrant through rendering it a ‘disgusting’ object is a bordering technology of biopolitical border management. While it does not let it die, it also does not allow the irregular migrant to pass the edge that separates the hygienic ‘white’ self and ‘disgusting’, animalized, other. This performance of disgust is not arbitrary, but builds up from the colonial practice that produces a certain colonized object, successfully described by Frantz Fanon: an animalized black man. The ‘white’ self cannot simply ‘kill’ the colonized other as ‘he’ needs ‘the other’ to be.

The second dimension or productive performance of the EU’s liberal-rational masculinity is about trust, empathy, and compassion towards the ‘irregular’ life. One of the fundamental practices of European border security management is to reduce human suffering and deaths during the irregular crossings. The European Commission as the pioneer of this practice repeatedly expresses the necessity of a humanitarian border management that takes the migrants’ life and well-being into account when formulating migration control policies. This ‘migrant-centred’ approach is underlined particularly first in the 1999 Tampere Program on the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, and in the 2011 Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. FRONTEX’s main objective is also defined as coordinating the ‘search and rescue’ (SAR) operations of EU member states. As argued by Vaughan-Williams, some literature considers the discrepancies between the humanitarian approach and continuing deaths and rights violations as the gap between the discourse and rhetoric. In contrast, he states that humanitarian border management is part of the biopolitical approach to migration control that aims to ‘save’ life, and I add that it is an emotional performance of its liberal-rational masculinity. I will discuss this point through a powerful representation of the compassionate, saviour, protective ‘white man’ towards the ‘womenandchildren’.

The following photo was taken in September 2015 and immediately became viral globally. It shows a Danish male police officer playing with a young refugee girl.

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Claus Fisker, AFP, Getty Images

The photo was distributed right after the one of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old body lying on a beach in Turkey and contrasted with the latter in order to convince the global audience that Europe does not address the Syrian refugee ‘crisis’ in a heartless and violent manner. ‘Touching moment’, ‘hope’, ‘love’ are recurrent themes of the news of the photo, which quickly entered the BBC’s ‘happy refugees’ photo album that also includes a Serbian policeman hugging a Syrian baby.\(^\text{43}\) The emotional performance of the Danish police officer is not an exception to European border security management, but integral to it. The issue here is not to judge how genuine his feelings are; rather, to argue that his emotional performance is political.

Since the normalization and legitimization of colonialism as ‘the white man’s burden’ to work for the well-being of the colonized, humanitarianism as the betterment of the ‘lower life’ has been an ideological undercurrent of the liberal-rational masculinity of the West.\(^\text{44}\) This humanitarianism has been reproduced by humanitarian interventions, humanitarian aid, and multiple renditions of human security that keep underlining the responsibility of the ‘white man’ towards fellow human beings sharing a common humanity.\(^\text{45}\) When the encounter of the Danish police officer and the refugee girl is contextualized within previous historical

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encounters between the white and non-white bodies, his compassionate and loving performance can be articulated not as an exception, but as a daily practice of liberal-rational masculinity. Similar to life to be killed and life to be animalized, ‘life to be saved’ is a neo-colonial gendered concept that produces the subject, a man, who is compassionate, loving and trusting and the abjected object who is ‘allowed’ to be a target of positive emotions, as ‘childrenandwomen’. This abjection does not stem from fear and disgust, but compassion and trust of the European border security actor who decides the worthy of the other-life to receive ‘his’ compassion. This renders compassion and trust towards irregular migrants inextricably neo-colonial and biopolitical as constitutive practices of the EU’s hybrid masculinity.

The abjection of the irregular migrant’s life is not limited to the ambivalence and uncertainty surrounding her body about whether she would be a recipient of compassion and trust. Following the shooting of the aforementioned photo, the young migrant girl disappears into the collective body of irregular migrants. There is a possibility that she did apply for asylum, maybe with her family members. What the emotional performance of compassion hides is the abjection that she can be subjected to after she is allowed to apply for asylum. As widely studied, there has been a trend in EU member states to restrict the rights and freedoms of asylum-seekers, and in some cases refugees. In many countries, asylum-seekers are not allowed to work or travel, have limited access to education and health services, and are subject to constant policing. Because she is allowed to receive compassion when she enters the spatial borders, this does not mean that her life is automatically included in the ‘hygienic body’ of the self. Through economic and social limitation imposed on her life, she remains the internal other of the sovereign ‘man’. Ironically, because she is stripped of economic, political and social rights and freedom, she becomes dependent on the social services that the sovereign grants and, thus, her life is produced as the one who ‘lives on the tax payers’ money’: an internal object of disgust.

In conclusion, this paper started the analysis with a personal academic question: how would I have written my PhD thesis on irregular migration and border security in Europe if I had considered emotions as political performances? Following the self-criticism, I have argued that fear and trust are not two competing security logics of European border security, but complimentary dimensions of the EU’s neocolonial masculinity.

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46 Didier Fassin also discusses the ‘humanitarian’ logic that categorizes migrants who are produced as the deserving humanitarian help or those who do not, see “Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries. The Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times.” Annual Review of Anthropology 40 (2011): 213-226.
Masculinities in global politics are emotionally performed. Fear, hate, disgust, love or compassion are emotional performances that are embedded in social and political relations where gender and gendering play important roles. Rather than a dichotomy between rationality and emotionality where the latter is associated with either femininities or subordinated masculinities, understanding what emotions do in the production of masculinities, both subordinated and hegemonic, is a step towards destabilizing power relations. By showing how fear, disgust and compassion are performed, I hope to pave the way for questioning the EU’s neo-colonial masculinity and how it is produced through performative emotional practices of European border security actors. Fearing, disgusting, and loving racialized, gendered, sexualized, and commodified bodies and lives are biopolitical technologies through which the EU’s neoliberal sovereign ‘man’ protects the hygienic self bordering against the abjected objects.

The ambivalence that surrounds who, under what conditions, what type of encounter (let it die, animalize, save) as a performance of which emotion (fear, disgust, compassion) is the technology of biopolitical border security practice. The EU’s hybrid neo-colonial masculinity that combines multiple characteristics of citizen-warrior and liberal-rational masculinities is undergird and legitimized by this ambivalence. The irregular migrant does not, cannot, know prior to the encounter with a European border security actor whether she will be let to die, be animalized or saved. This is a neo-colonial power over the racialized, gendered, sexualized, disabled other-life in the body of the irregular migrant. In conclusion, this ambivalence enables the EU to reproduce its identity both as the welcoming, loving, hospitable sovereign and the proactive, aggressive, strong sovereign that secures the hygienic body by producing spatial borders at the sea and detention centers. Immunitary borders are drawn and redrawn through fear, disgust, and compassion.

Finally, as Tyler argues, being socially abjected does not mean that the abjected does not have the agency to resist. The resistance of the abject lives is beyond the scope of this paper. It is important to note that a scholar of global politics who aims to study their resistance should consider what emotions do in their resistance as well. However, in order to conduct this analysis, there is an analytical and ethical imperative that the researcher should be true to her own feelings towards the subject she studies. Pretending that the researcher shuts down her emotions in order to be taken ‘seriously’ not only obscures the academic analysis, but also limits the political agency of the researcher to destabilize power relations. Emotions are constitutive and indistinguishable dimension of social and political worlds that the researcher is part of and studies. A true, critical self-reflectivity, and using Gramscian
language, being an organic intellectual of the abject populations starts with acknowledging this.