The Production of Illicit Lives: Racial Governmentality and Colonial Legacies Across the Strait of Gibraltar

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Abstract: For centuries, the Strait of Gibraltar has been a crossroads between Africa and Europe. Since the 1980s, however, it has increasingly become a "zone of illegality" (Hannoum 2020) where racial governmentality produces illicit lives and creates an apartheid-like hierarchy of humanity. By exploring how colonial legacies and EU policies play out in the Strait of Gibraltar, I show how categories of difference are made and remade across time and space. Through a genealogical and ethnographic approach, I study the historically produced particularities that make racialised "Others" emerge and explore how human differences are created in terms of race, gender, and class. Migrants are historical actors that shape and are shaped by the social fabric of a border region. I thus argue that categories of difference are not fixed entities, but instead they are simultaneously reworked, reinforced, contested, and subverted.
[al-hogra, border regime, colonial history, global apartheid, Morocco, race, Spain, whiteness]

Introduction

In 2012, the migrants' rights activist and well-known author Fabien Didier Yene publicly commented on the racism that West and Central Africans face in Morocco. Comparing the precarious situation of sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco with that of Moroccans in Europe, he addressed their shared experience of discrimination, marginalisation, and exclusion and appealed to the Moroccan people for solidarity with sub-Saharan migrants. He called for a joining of hands in the fight against racism: "*Notre lutte est commune*" (see also Menin 2016).[1]

In this article, I explore diverse manifestations of racism in Morocco and Spain through their "distinct genealogies" (Moffette and Walters 2018:98). On the basis of different realities and experiences of racism I study how colonial legacies, local particularities, and EU policies create and perpetuate racialised differences across national and continental frontiers. I explore how historical transformations of categories of difference figure in the contemporary making of borders. By showing how the genealogical and ethnographic engagement with race and racism expands our understanding of the contemporary EU border regime, I argue that categories of difference are not fixed en-

1 https://www.yabiladi.com/contributeurs/index/28/fabien-didier-yene.html [last accessed: June 3, 2021].

tities across time and place, but instead they are simultaneously reworked, reinforced, contested, and subverted.

The micro-region of the Strait of Gibraltar is a particularly suitable place to study how borders and race are mutually constitutive. For centuries, it has been a social, political, cultural, economic, and religious crossroads, dividing and connecting two countries and two continents (Stenner 2018). In the 1990s and in the course of the formalizing of the EU, irregular migration from Africa to Europe began at the Strait because it is the smallest stretch of water to cross in order to reach the European mainland. Ever since, the micro-region has been a model for the EU in terms of border securitisation and militarisation.

To explore Mediterranean dis/connectivities across the Strait, I draw on the anthropological scholarship that has explored borders as historically constituted social practices rather than delimitating territory disconnecting people and places (e.g. Donnan, Hurd, and Leutloff-Grandits 2017; Green 2013; Reeves 2014; Tošić 2017). When exploring cross-border migration, the question of how border policies manifest themselves in people's experiences and local contexts, and how they in turn shape macrostructural dynamics, is paramount (Lucht 2011; Souiah 2019; Tošić and Lems 2019). In this way I build on the large body of literature that studies the current management of migration through the complex constellation of laws, practices, temporalities, knowledges, and technologies that constitute the contemporary EU border regime (e.g. De Genova 2016; Hess and Kasparek 2017; Perl and Strasser 2018; Tazzioli 2018; Van Houtum 2010). The border regime – including nation-state and EU legal frameworks, border securitisation, and militarisation – selectively channels and structures human mobility across borders (Andersson 2014; De Genova and Peutz 2010; Tošić and Lems 2019). Extending far beyond European territorial frontiers, the EU border regime regulates North–South relationships by maintaining and increasing global inequalities (Law 2014). Migrants are displaced, detained, deported, pushed onto extremely dangerous travelling routes, and immobilised for an indefinite period of time.

By putting race at the centre of the analysis of contemporary border and migration regimes, this article contributes to the recently emerging scholarship on the racialised and racist dimension of EU borders. I explore the contradictory and complex context-specific processes of racialisation shaped by the historical legacies of racial violence. Therefore, engaging with critical race theory (CRT) offers important insights because it strengthens the study of how the contemporary project of the EU is inherently connected with the colonial legacies of racialised categories of difference (Moffette and Walters 2018:98). Although there is considerable scholarship in CRT that puts race centre stage in the critical study of borders and boundary making (e.g. Alexander 2019b; De Genova 2018; Ibrahim 2005; Isakjee et al. 2020; M'charek, Schramm, and Skinner 2014; Moffette 2018; Nayak 2010), it is still a marginal analytical category in migration and border studies (Moffette and Walters 2018:94). The selective mobilities produced by the EU border regime, however, are predominantly structured by race and

class, creating a racialised global world order that some scholars identify as a "global apartheid" that stems from the colonial hierarchical division between North and South (Besteman 2019; Cabot 2019; Hage 2016; Sharma 2005; Van Houtum 2010).

To understand how "race is put into motion" (Nayak 2010) in a specific border region, I explore the social, political, and historical conditions that racialise migration both in Morocco and Spain. Taking up this special issue's call to "rethink Mediterranean connectivities", I study how the social, historical, and symbolic fabrication of race, class, and gender plays out in the micro-region of the Strait of Gibraltar and ask how racialised differences are drawn. I approach these questions with the concepts of "racial governmentality" and "colonial legacies".

The complex Foucauldian term "governmentality" refers to the modern state's ruling and management of populations and lives via specific power techniques and through the creation of different subjectivities (Foucault 2003[1976]). Critical border studies have adapted Foucault's concept and explore the relational dimension of power, which is "sustained by dispersed sets of practices, institutions, discourses, and knowledges" (Moffette and Vadasaria 2016:295). I use the term "racial governmentality" on the one hand to emphasise the racial underpinnings of the EU border regime, and on the other hand to index the *longue durée* of ideological rationales and racialised modes of governing, representing, and knowing (Isakjee et al. 2020; Moffette and Walters 2018).

The term "colonial legacies" refers to the colonial imaginations, knowledges, ambivalences, and power relations that constitute contemporary modes of othering and exclusion. These legacies "haunt" the present in the form of racialised categories of difference that impact lives, subjectivities, and mobilities across the Strait of Gibraltar (Gordon 2011; Kehr 2018).

A genealogical approach (Asad 1993; Foucault 1977; Tošić 2015:403) allows me to explore the multiple and sometimes contradictory traces of the past that still linger and shape the racial dynamics of othering across the Strait. Instead of searching for a linear historicity or a single origin, I foreground questions of heterogeneity, emergences, and shifts and explore how colonial legacies shape the contemporary intertwinement of border and race. Approaching people's experiences and interpretations of racism across the Mediterranean through a genealogical lens enables a deeper contextualisation of contemporary constructs of human differences (Menin 2020) and illuminates the historical transformations of categories of difference in a specific region. Migrants' fates are not detached from a particular regional history, but, rather, they are historical actors that shape and are shaped by the specific social, cultural, political, and racial fabric of a border region. I thus consider a critical history as crucial to understanding how colonial imaginaries, epistemes, and representations haunt present-day migrations across the Mediterranean (Hannoum 2020; Kehr 2018).

My ethnographic approach rests on fieldwork at the Strait of Gibraltar carried out between 2014 and 2016. Although I lived for most of the time in the border town of Algeciras in southern Spain, I conducted several fieldtrips to Morocco. In this article,

I focus on the stories of a Cameroonian woman and a Moroccan man[2] and show how they navigate their racialised migration reality across the Strait.

Nadine is a young woman from Cameroon who left her home in 2012 together with her husband, Landry. After an arduous and at times life-threatening journey they arrived in Morocco, where they had initially planned to stay and make a life as musicians. However, due to the stigmatization they experienced in Morocco these hopes were quickly dashed and they decided to travel on to Europe. They spent two years in Morocco without residence and work permits before crossing the Strait in a rubber dinghy. I met Nadine in summer 2015 in the migrants' detention centre in Algeciras where I volunteered as a Spanish teacher. Also in 2012, Karim, a middle-aged man from Morocco, got divorced from his Spanish wife after having lost his job a few years earlier and left Granada, where he had lived for more than a decade. He travelled all over Spain in search of work and ended up in Algeciras, where I met him in the summer of 2015 in a homeless shelter run by a Catholic Socialist Church. He had become an "illegal" migrant a few years earlier, when his Spanish residence permit had not been renewed.

For Nadine, the crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar was a once-in-a-lifetime event and a road to the better future she hoped to have in Europe. For Karim, the same journey was a routine activity throughout his life until it suddenly became impossible.

Although their biographies differ greatly, both their lives are conditioned by "illegality" and both found themselves trapped in imaginaries that stem from unresolved pasts. What Karim and Nadine share is the fact that their disenfranchised status has made their lives illicit and prevents them from escaping "ethnic" or "racial" labelling (Matory 2015) – hence, they are always already marked as "the Other" who does not belong. Through subtle acts, however, they lay claim to the *white* Moroccan and Spanish spaces, thereby contesting, subverting, and shifting categorizations.

The article is structured into three parts. I first show how the Strait of Gibraltar became a zone of illegality based on exclusion from and exclusionary inclusion in European space. Secondly, I study the complex dynamics of anti-Black racism in the *white* Moroccan space through the multi-layered interplay of colonial, pre-colonial, vernacular, and EU power relations. And thirdly, I explore how racial categories of difference are hierarchised, contested, and subverted in postcolonial Spain.

Exclusion and Exclusionary Inclusion Between Spain and Morocco

Exclusion from and exclusionary inclusion in the national territory are legal means of controlling mobility. While exclusion is enforced through interlinked border, visa

2 To protect their identities, I anonymised them and altered some biographical details that are irrelevant to the article's argument.

and deportation regimes, exclusionary inclusion builds on spatial integration and legal exclusion from the national body.

By the end of the twentieth century, the Strait of Gibraltar had become a "zone of illegality" (Hannoum 2020) underpinned by racial governmentality that determines which bodies do and do not belong to the European space (Loftsdóttir, Smith, and Hipfl 2018:13). Especially in the 1990s, the Strait underwent a fundamental transformation in terms of the production of illicit lives and mobilities. In Spain, the process of illegalising migrants began in the 1980s and culminated in the Alien Act (LO/1985), adopted in 1985. In the same year France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands signed the first Schengen Agreement, one year before Spain entered the EEC (European Economic Community). The 1981 version of the Alien Act, namely the "Bill on the Rights and Liberties of Foreigners in Spain (Organic Law)", already contained measures and regulations on work permits and the expulsion of foreigners; however, it was not until the Alien Act (LO/1985) that the legal category of the "immigrant" (*inmigrante*) was introduced, thereby creating the category of the "illegal". Prior to that, laws regulated the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners, yet, differently to other European countries, migration was not framed in terms of il/legality (Moffette 2018:25–33). When the Alien Act was drafted, Spain was in the middle of EEC accession negotiations and aspired to enter the emerging Schengen Area. To prove its Europeanness and to become part of a borderless Europe, Spain introduced tourist visas for Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian citizens in 1991. Before that, citizens from the North African countries only needed a valid passport to enter Spanish territory.

Morocco's cooperation has been pivotal for the creation of a zone of illegality. In exchange for European and Spanish development aid, diplomatic favours, and economic and political agreements, the kingdom entered the European project of border securitisation. Aware of the strategic importance of its geographical location, Morocco aimed to strengthen its geopolitical role in the region through active participation in European border and migration control (Natter 2013). In 1992, Spanish and Moroccan government officials signed a readmission agreement allowing Spanish authorities to deport Moroccan migrants within forty-eight hours. And in 2003, Morocco passed its first migration law, which repealed earlier provisions from French colonial times (Elmadmad 2004). Law No. 02-03 criminalizes irregular entries to and exits from Moroccan territory and panelises them with a fine and/or imprisonment for one to six months (ibid.:3–5), and has thus created a "new category of 'illegality'" outside of Europe (Hannoum 2020:18).

The micro-region of the Strait of Gibraltar is embedded in what Catherine Besteman calls a "militarized global apartheid", which she defines as "a loosely integrated effort by countries in the global north to protect themselves against the mobility of people from the global south" (2019:26). Besides the legal developments mentioned above, the instalment of the national border surveillance system "SIVE" in the early 2000s was a first step towards the militarisation of the border and an additional effort to exclude African bodies from national and, ultimately, European space. Praising its

effectiveness, the Council of the EU recommended installing similar systems across the Mediterranean Sea (Civipol 2003:66), which resulted in the foundation of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency "FRONTEX" in 2005 (Perl 2018).

Such constraining, restricting, and selecting of human mobility plays a central role in the creation of "a racialized world order" (Besteman 2019:26). Apartheid-like politics of exclusion create illicit lives by preventing certain kinds of bodies from crossing borders and by criminalising them through rigorous laws. Yet, there is another apartheid-like dimension that relies more on "exclusionary inclusion" (Moffette 2018:35) than spatial exclusion. Exclusionary inclusion denotes a legal strategy to divide people who co-exist spatially, temporally, and socially, into different legal spaces (ibid.). The "hierarchical labor market" (Besteman 2019:26) exemplifies this strategy well: to incorporate informal workers in the formal labour market and to exploit them as a cheap workforce, regulations following the Spanish Alien Act (LO/1985) introduced temporary regularisation programmes that provided illegalised migrants with renewable work and residence permits (Arango and Jachimowicz 2005). Although scholars often interpret these programmes as a progressive means for the legalisation of migrants, they actually result from the creation of illegality by the Alien Act. This law allowed a new form of governing that confines different groups of people living in the same place to distinct legal spaces, a central element of apartheid systems (Moffette 2018:35).

Consequently, the interplay of apartheid-like dynamics of exclusion and exclusionary inclusion constitute contemporary Mediterranean connectivities along the North–South divide. Yet, as I show in the following section, not only legal frameworks produce illicit lives but racial governmentality underpinned by colonial legacies makes the racialized migrant body also socially and culturally illicit.

The Complex Dynamics of Anti-Black Racism in Morocco

West and Central Africans tell many stories about racist abuse in Morocco. Although people also report acts of compassion and support, verbal and non-verbal humiliation, demeaning social interactions, and life-threatening brutality dominate their narratives.

Anti-Black racism is widespread in Morocco and it is nourished by the complex interplay of different power relations, such as the colonial production of the *white* Moroccan space, the pre-colonial legacy of slavery, *al-hogra* – the hierarchically structured practice of humiliation –, and Europe's outsourcing of racist violence.

Moroccans, in general, do not identify as Africans. They classify themselves as *white* and associate Africanness with Blackness (Hannoum 2020:147). Accordingly, Morocco is considered to share cultural belonging not with Africa but instead with the "Arab world", the Middle East (Hannoum 2020; Menin 2016), the "Maghribi Mediterra-

nean" (El Hamel 2002), or Europe.[3] What and who counts as *white* is always relational, and in Morocco the figure of the imagined "Black African" as "the Other" plays a central role in the country's flexible and situational postcolonial modes of identification.

Morocco's political and cultural detachment from Africa originated primarily in the French colonial division between *Afrique Blanche*, contemporary Maghreb, and *Noir*, often referred to today as sub-Saharan Africa (Lehtinen 2008:123). When colonial powers introduced the concept of race in North Africa as a "form of thinking and governing" (Moffette and Vadasaria 2016:301), they flattened different histories, languages, political organisations, and cultural practices and created the homogenising divide between Black and *white* (Desmond and Emirbayer 2009). In pre-colonial times, complex categories of difference did exist but they were drawn in terms of genealogical, tribal, religious, and regional affiliations (Hannoum 2020:14).

Whiteness, like Blackness, cannot be reduced to a phenotype. *Whiteness* is rather the colonial inheritance of an imagined supremacy over racialised "Others". Leaning on Frantz Fanon (2008[1952]), Sara Ahmed argues that "colonialism makes the world 'white'"; it makes the world home for "certain kinds of bodies" who can truly inhabit a space, while "non-white bodies feel uncomfortable, exposed, visible, different, when they take up this space" (2007:157). Nadine experienced the racialisation of her body as non-*white* in Moroccan cities in particular. "Sometimes," she said, "they would spit on us and shout: 'Go and live in the forest!' They would say that we're not needed in town. Some even give you a banana, trying to tell you that you are a monkey". To protect themselves from humiliating insults, racist slurs, and physical attacks, sub-Saharan migrants barley move around alone in public space but in groups of four to five people forging "tenuous but essential relationships" (Bachelet 2019:849). Many change their names, and, if they are not Muslims, they pretend to be. Nadine called herself by the Muslim name Fatima, and she dressed in the traditional Moroccan clothing called *djellaba* and wore a *hijab*. Collective movements and temporary identity shifts are small and everyday strategies to blend in to the *white* and Muslim Moroccan space, where the Black body is hypervisible and, unlike the *white* European body, does not have the luxury of going unnoticed (Hannoum 2020).

In one of our conversations, Nadine explained the hostile attitude towards Black migrants as follows: "Moroccans, or Arabs in general, don't like Africans: first because they say we eat pigs and that's *haram*; secondly, they say that we drink alcohol and that's *haram* too; and then they say, we listen to pornographic music". The same could be said of many *white* migrants living in Morocco; however, due to the racial hierarchies at work, only the Black body is considered impure. *White* Europeans have a privileged position in terms of race and class that exempts them from local norms of conduct, and their distinctive ways of life and religious affiliations are widely accepted. *White*

3 Arguing for Morocco's physical proximity to Spain, and therefore to Europe, in 1987 the kingdom applied for membership in the EEC. It was rejected, not to mention ridiculed, by European authorities (Lister 1997:90).

European bodies transmit a modern and cosmopolitan feel, and their presence in the Moroccan space goes unquestioned. They are met with either benign indifference, hospitality, or positive curiosity (Hannoum 2020:148). Their movement within the northern Moroccan space is "the most natural action" (ibid.:164) because they truly blend in. They, in turn, project their own racist stereotypes infused by colonial imaginaries onto the Moroccan and West and Central African people.

Nadine's husband, Landry, underscored a further dimension of anti-Black racism: "They believe that we will be slaves eternally". Nadine concurred, sighing: "Slaves forever." Nadine and Landry also complained about being addressed with such pejorative terms as *'abd* (meaning "slave", and used more generally as "Black") and *'azzi* (meaning "Black", "negro", or "slave"). Their statements in regard to slavery show how disenfranchised they feel, how excluded they are from the *white* Moroccan space, how their bodies are permanently racialised, and how they are constantly exposed to unpredictable violence. Nadine's and Landry's experience resonates with scholarship that explores the complex and multi-layered connection between contemporary racism and racial legacies of slavery in North Africa (e.g. El Hamel 2013; Alexander 2019a; Ennaji 1999; Menin 2016, 2020).

Slavery formed part of social, cultural, and economic life in pre-colonial Morocco and lingers on in contemporary society in form of prejudice towards and the "inherited marginalization" of Black bodies (El Hamel 2013:2).[4] Yet, in pre-colonial Morocco, initially it was not the phenotype that was decisive for categories of difference, but rather genealogical origin and Muslim belonging. It was not until the seventeenth century that slavery became increasingly racialised in the Mediterranean Muslim world, thus contributing to the colonial "imaginative overlapping of slavery and blackness" (Menin 2020:13–14). This legacy persists into the present in form of the racialisation of difference and diversified hierarchies of humanity. Historian Chouki El Hamel states that a "culture of silence" dominates the discourse on race, racism, and slavery in Morocco today. The public as well as scholars tend to de-emphasise the violence of slavery in North Africa,[5] especially in comparison to the transatlantic slave trade, thus preventing critical and open discussion (El Hamel 2013). However, racial legacies and racism in Morocco are not uncontested: migrants' associations and Moroccan and international human rights organisations regularly launch campaigns to denounce racist violence against Black people, thereby raising awareness of the racial inheritance of slavery in Morocco (Alexander 2019b; Bachelet 2018; Menin 2016).

In addition to the legacy of slavery, *al-hogra*, meaning humiliation, contempt, and deprivation, forms part of the complex dynamics of anti-Black racism in Morocco. "*Al-*

4 A detailed engagement with the complexity of slavery and its legacy in Morocco would go beyond the scope of this article, thus, for a more nuanced discussion see El Hamel 2013; Ennaji 1999; Menin 2020.

5 Slavery and the Arab slave trade in Morocco began in the seventh century and were officially abolished shortly after independence in 1956 (Alexander 2019a; Menin 2020).

hogra" is a highly charged term in Moroccan Arabic and includes verbal and non-verbal practices of humiliation and structures everyday interactions (Yachoulti and Lachhab 2018). Small everyday gestures, like disparaging gazes or gloating, are as common forms of *al-hogra* as public humiliation or physical attacks. *Al-hogra* describes the systematic abuse of power and penetrates all strata of Moroccan society, from the palace to the ordinary family home, from rich to poor, from old to young.[6] The notion further expresses the state's contempt for its citizens and everyday "humiliation, unfairness, and attacks on one's dignity" (El Qadim 2018:296). Although it was a pre-colonial phenomenon, it was taken up and instrumentalised by colonial powers, and, after Morocco's independence in 1956, by national governments to ensure political and social order in the country (Hannoum 2020:109–113).

Al-hogra stratifies the *white* Moroccan space, and although racist violence is embedded in its top-down hierarchy, West and Central Africans who are newcomers to the country do not form part of it (Hannoum 2020:152). However, this exclusion is a violence in itself. Instead of being included in Moroccan society, illegalised Black migrants represent a "foreign body", the absolute "Other" stripped of any rights and exposed to arbitrary rules (Hannoum 2020:159). West and Central Africans often describe how young Moroccan gang members harass, beat, and rob them. These men are at the bottom of the social hierarchy and *al-hogra* is inflicted on them repeatedly. Humiliated themselves and with limited power, they perpetrate violence against those who are completely marginalised (ibid.:152). Lorand Matory (2015) uses the concept of "ethnological schadenfreude" to explore the "impulse" of stigmatised and stereotyped people to humiliate even more powerless groups. "Ethnological schadenfreude" takes place mainly between the powerless and denotes the striving for superiority by disparaging others. Black migrants in Morocco serve as an object of humiliation for the most marginalised within *al-hogra*, thus allowing them to elevate their own marginal position. Today, *al-hogra* is crucial for sustaining and legitimizing anti-Black racism in Morocco.

In recent decades, the EU and Spain have significantly contributed to the racism in the country. By co-opting non-European countries into their border management, the EU and Spain outsource violence against Black migrants to Morocco. The externalisation of EU borders to the African continent combined with visa and deportation regimes aims to keep Black and Brown bodies from moving north (Andersson 2014; Besteman 2019; De Genova and Peutz 2010). While European colonialists required racist technologies to expand their empires (Moffette and Vadasaria 2016), the EU's racial governmentality expands border control to prevent certain bodies from entering Europe. Thereby, they mask the racial logics that underpin their policies, thus allow-

6 Depending on "local dynamics and historical specificities", *al-hogra* operates differently and in contrast to Algeria and Tunisia; in Morocco it still heavily influences social, political, and economic life (Hannoum 2020:109).

ing them to uphold the idea of European liberal and democratic values (Isakjee et al. 2020).

In the next section, I move to Spain and drawing on scholarship that has explored the intertwinement of humanitarianism and race (e.g. Barnett 2011; Loftsdóttir 2014; Muehlebach 2018), I explore how a racialised "hierarchy of humanity" (Fassin 2012:231) across the Strait of Gibraltar is grounded in the troubled history between Spain and Morocco.

The Colonial Inheritance of Spanish–Moroccan Dis/connectivities

As often described in the literature, racist paranoia about "Muslim invasion" and "Islamist radicalisation" projected onto North African migrants in Spain has certainly increased after 9/11, 11-M (the Madrid bombings in March 2011), and the Barcelona attacks in August 2017. However, what struck me most during fieldwork in southern Spain was a deep-rooted visceral mistrust of Moroccan men in particular. Moroccan men are always under suspicion, and Andalusians often justify their pre-emptive distrust with their experience of having been cheated and lied to. Whenever I asked for concrete examples, usually people did not tell me their own but rather second- or third-hand experiences. These were considered reason enough to keep Moroccan men at arm's length. People often insinuated that Moroccan men were unreliable, aggressive, and ungrateful, and a feeling of superiority, even arrogance, towards Moroccans often resonated in their statements. Spaniards frequently warned me about the Moroccan men taking part in my research being canny (*listo*), and several times I was advised to be cautious. I was never told to be equally careful with West African men, or with any other men for that matter.

The Racialized and Gendered Postcolonial Moroccan Body

The "*moro*" (Moor) has been a constant though changing figure in the Spanish national imaginary that has been reworked time and again according to new social circumstances (Mateo Dieste 1997:18–19). During the Spanish colonisation of Morocco (1912–1956[7]), the *moro* became an ambivalent figure of Western Mediterranean connectivity. With the increased Moroccan immigration to Spain in the 1980s, followed by irregular entries in the 1990s, the derogatory word *moro* experienced a revival and a reinterpretation based on the myths of the past (ibid.:59).

An "irreconcilable contradiction" was inherent to Francoist Spain until Morocco's independence in 1956: Spanish identity was based on a nationalist and Catholic ideol-

7 This timeframe refers to the Spanish protectorate in northern Morocco.

ogy at the same time as a "progressive pro-Arabism" aimed to end Spain's international isolation (ibid.).

During the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), Francisco Franco celebrated the colonised *moro hermano* (brotherly Moor) who fought at his side, and condemned the *moro salvaje* (salvage Moor) who opposed the colonial powers (ibid.:57–58). The Spanish "colonial regime of migration" (Hannoum 2020:2) did not seal off its southern borders; instead, Moroccan mercenaries were actively included in the fascist military as exploitable soldiers who often served as cannon fodder. The integration to the Spanish military was a form not of legal but ideological exclusionary inclusion to the Spanish national body. Republicans harboured a fear of the *moros* because they were conceptualised as allies of fascism who fought ruthlessly against the Spanish Republic (ibid.:25).

The *moro* is first and foremost a male category and comparatively little has been written about his female counterpart, *la mora*. Colonial discourse considered the Moroccan man to be guided by his "irrational impulses" and thus stereotyped him as a "demographic and sexual threat" due to his suspected promiscuity and homosexuality. The *mora*, however, was eroticised, and colonialists were wary of her "exotic sexuality" and her potential to seduce the "white man" (ibid.:34). Colonial cultural productions such as photographs and postcards showing half-naked local women in lascivious poses speak of such fantasies (Alloula 1994[1981]).

Since colonial times, the *mora* has also been the subject of Spanish modernisation conflict and today Moroccan Muslim women are often conceptualised as victims of male oppression who "need saving" from non-*white* men, namely their husbands, brothers, and fathers (Abu-Lughod 2013). After decades of dictatorship and patriarchal oppression, the lives of women in Spain's young democracy have become very politicised, and today liberal values and women's rights are held high. Violence against women has become a pressing issue and numerous campaigns raise awareness. Yet although domestic violence has mainly affected Spanish women, the *hijab* figures as the most prominent symbol of male oppression. Public discourse calls upon Moroccan women to emancipate themselves and integrate into Spanish society through a "personal transformation" that implies the removal of the headscarf (Taha 2010:470). Women wearing a *hijab*, regardless of their education and qualification, have fewer chances of finding a job and are occasionally forced to remove the headscarf (Taha 2010).

Thus, not only Moroccan men but also Moroccan women experience gendered and racialised exclusion from Spanish society. They are considered a threat to the "hard-won success of gender equality in European countries" (Strasser forthcoming). Muslim women need to become more "Spanish" by culturally detaching themselves from Islam. These discourses are based on the colonial racialisation of the Moroccan body. However, framed in the liberal vocabulary of emancipation and democracy, notions of Muslim culture (equated with backwardness) and Islam (generally considered the religion of the *moros*) mask the racism inherent in these discourses.

The postcolonial category of the *moro/a* haunts the Spanish national imaginary today, sticking to people, words, and objects, and creating cultural stereotypes that turn people into outsiders, immigrants, and foreigners (Ahmed 2014[2004]:92).

Ambivalent Belonging

Karim considers himself a "real *Tetuaní*".[8] In some of our conversations, he occasionally dug up old memories and described the Mediterranean coast of his childhood, with its empty beaches, few and scattered buildings, scarce traffic, and the family atmosphere that characterised the region at that time. However, this place no longer existed. After decades of neglect and repression, King Mohammed VI initiated a regional transformation of northern Morocco in the late 1990s, attracting, as Karim explained, "poor people from the south selling cheap, low-quality junk". In addition, wealthy people from Casablanca and Rabat had discovered the Mediterranean coast as a holiday destination and, Karim said, "now overcrowd our coast, which has caused the rents to skyrocket". A cultural difference to people "from the south" often shone through Karim's stories and he emphasised his Mediterranean identity and affinity to Spain, especially in terms of "mentality" and "temperament".

Among the northern Moroccan population, the colonial past, which is "often remembered as a glorious time", and physical proximity create a strong connection with Spain (Hannoum 2020:147). Many have an ambivalent attitude towards the former coloniser, feeling both sympathy for the anti-colonial resistance and nostalgia for the colonial era (Fernández Parrilla and Cañete 2019:125; Mateo Dieste 2003:40). These feelings also arise from frustration with the *makhzen*, the Moroccan state/kingdom. Increasingly neoliberal politics since the 1990s have caused immense growth in unemployment as well as unrest in Moroccan society. During the so-called Moroccan "Arabic Spring" in 2011 and 2012, the "20 February Movement" organised protests against the kingdom's exercise of *al-hogra* that expressed people's despair and demanded political change (El Maarouf and Belghazi 2019; Yachoulti and Lachhab 2018).

When in September 2018 Moroccan border guards shot dead a young Moroccan woman who had tried to reach Spain in a dinghy, mass protests erupted in Tétouan. People marched in the streets shouting that they would "renounce Moroccan nationality" in exchange for a Spanish one. Some even waved the national flag of their former colonisers. When Moroccan authorities banned the protests, people used a soccer match of Atlético de Tetuán – a team formed during the time of the Spanish protectorate – to further express their dismay. Several thousand young people, all dressed

8 Between 1913 and 1956, Tétouan was the capital of the Spanish protectorate in Morocco.

in black, came to protest the death of the young woman, who was considered "an immigration martyr".[9]

In Morocco young people in particular have the feeling of not being able to progress in life. Therefore, the illegalised journey to the former metropole is often imagined as a path to a better future. However, in Spain, the formerly colonised subject is met with suspicion. No longer qualifying as *white*, Moroccans in Spain experience the racialisation of their bodies in very specific ways.

Racialised Hierarchies of Humanity

Racial discrimination against Moroccans differs between places in Spain and is closely linked to legal status and social class. Karim pointed out important nuances in regard to different racialisations of Moroccans in Spain by highlighting the distinction between the touristic university city of Granada, where he lived for more than a decade working as a librarian, and Andalusia's agricultural villages and towns, where he occasionally worked since he lost his job during the economic crisis:

> In Granada many Moroccans are students or academics, mainly from the north [of Morocco], and they are treated as such. But if you travel to Motril in the south, for example, you will be treated completely differently. There, the status of the *moro* drops because of the agricultural work. It's disastrous how the agricultural workers are treated. People lose all their dignity!

By "treatment" Karim was referring to the widespread exploitation of agricultural workers in terms of low wages, poor working and living conditions, lack of contracts, and social security. But most crucially, his statement reflects significant graduations of marginalisation within Spanish society and shows that class is as important a factor in discrimination as racial, ethnic, or national membership. Due to his sudden poverty, losing legal residency, and a change of location, Karim experienced the "racialized hierarchies of belonging, rights, and human value" (Besteman 2019:35) that are conditioned by economic im/possibilities.

Poor and often undocumented Moroccan migrants in Spain are frequently deemed undeserving (Rogozen-Soltar 2012). I have often heard aid workers disparagingly say that it is more important to "help *subsaharianos* (sub-Saharan Africans) because all *moros* have a *primo* (cousin) who can help them". The prioritisation of sub-Saharan migrants is rooted in the assumption that they are needier and, therefore, deserving

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9 https://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2018-09-28/protesta-de-jovenes-en-tetuan-tras-la-muerte-de-una-estudiante-tiroteada-en-una-patera_1622751/?fbclid=IwAR3zJq_fZfJcyUYOhWKNvxpxUA85nokBMKAu8WJrNp0YYspnRe0TROoGecg
https://elfarodeceuta.es/marina-real-marroqui-dispara-patera-conducida-espanol/?fbclid=IwAR0Wdf2_JmIG6yVJ5Vkchi9hA4Tc0KbCT8jb3m_-XJFl6oT7xZbs3OqNFEY [last accessed: June 3, 2021].

because they are believed to have arrived alone in a foreign country and lack social networks. Awareness of the grim reality of anti-Black racism in Morocco further fuels these anti-Moroccan sentiments.

This racialised hierarchy of humanity causes a different allocation of compassion to different kinds of bodies. Yet, the heightened sympathy for the sub-Saharan body does not lead to long-term social solidarity or far-reaching inclusion in political space (Muehlebach 2018:131). Rather, Spanish aid workers and authorities often homogenise and infantilise sub-Saharan Africans, perceiving them as "orderly, rule-obeying, even docile", while considering Moroccans as "potential troublemakers" (Andersson 2014:8).

Neo-orientalist European ideologies and discourses constitute Moroccans as the "Muslim Other" (Strasser forthcoming), making them experience the racialised hierarchies of humanity that are tightly interwoven with colonial constructs of culture and religion. Yet, racialised subjects contest hegemonic attributions and harmful categorisations of difference.

In the shelter in Algeciras, I observed how Karim and other Moroccan migrants modified and subverted their racial categorisation as the "Muslim Other" through the identification with sub-Saharan Africans. Since aid workers extend compassion differently to the "African" and the "Moroccan" body, and often meet the latter with suspicion, the identification as African and Black is a way to stress their common vulnerability as (illegalised) migrants in Spain, to present themselves as deserving, and thus to make their lives matter. Moreover, the positive identification as non-*white* rejects the anti-Black racism of Morocco, contests racial hierarchies stemming from the colonial past, and reveals the contextual and relational dimension of race. This shifting of racialised categories of difference also complicates the above-mentioned Moroccan detachment from Africa and Africanness. "Making race" is thus also a mode to resist and subvert racist stereotyping and it shows how "race is made and remade from all sides … and not just from above" (Moffette and Walters 2018:99).

Andalusian–Spanish–European Relations

Not only Moroccans but also Andalusians occasionally identify as Africans. Interlocutors with left political leanings were especially likely to stress their Moorish heritage and African identity by saying, "we are more Moorish than anyone else" or "we are Africans, not Europeans" (Perl 2019:20). The idea of al-Andalus – the time of Arab-Muslim sovereignty on the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages, which today still nourishes the Spanish national imaginary – resonates in these statements. On the one hand, identifying as "Africans" and "Moors" demonstrates the rejection of certain forms of racism and resentment against migrants in Europe; on the other hand, the merging of the Moorish, African, and Spanish/Andalusian bodies articulates cultural detachment from Europe. The reference to a historically constituted shared Moorish identity does not so much translate into a shared contemporary belonging and solidarity with Morocco and Moroccans; rather it emphasises the cultural heritage of the Moorish past,

which distinguishes the Iberian Peninsula from Europe. Hence, Spanish claims to an African identity must be contextualised within Andalusian–Spanish–European relations and read as specific modes of detachment from Europe and Europeanness.

Andalusia is a historically marginalised region both within Spain and Europe from which many fled to "Europe" to escape poverty and the Franco dictatorship between 1939 and 1975 (Rogozen-Soltar 2016:881; 2012:633). The experiences and memories of emigration have fundamentally shaped the Andalusian identity and influence how local people come to terms with the new immigration to the region (Rogozen-Soltar 2016, 2020). With southern Spain's transformation from an emigration to an immigration region, Andalusia left the "economic, social, racial, and political margins of Europe", and consequently the region's marginalisation within Spain ceased (Rogozen-Soltar 2016:881). The economic crisis in 2008 and increased youth unemployment, however, led to a new Spanish emigration to central and northern European countries. As a side note, Spaniards also went to northern Morocco, and in 2014 more than 5,000 undocumented Spanish migrants were living in Tangier.[10]

In response to the crisis, EU officials and economic experts have evoked old stereotypes by describing the southern European population as "irresponsible" and "lazy". Spain, and especially Andalusia, have once again been relegated to the sidelines, which shows that Spain's membership in the imagined European community is unstable and the country has to secure its position time and again. In the 1980s and 1990s, part of "becoming European" was to be a key player in monitoring EU's southern borders, and ever since Spain has proven its European belonging with rigorous border and migration policies, and thus a rigorous exercise of racial governmentality.

Conclusion

In this article, I followed this Special Issue's aim to "rethink Mediterranean connectivities" by studying how racial governmentality and colonial legacies play out in the micro-region of the Strait of Gibraltar. Therefore, I used the term "illicit lives" to index current processes of migrant illegalisation and criminalisation on the one hand, and to address the postcolonial dynamics that render certain kinds of bodies out of place on the other. I explored how migrants' bodies are racialised depending on the regional context, how the racialisation of their bodies shifts across time and space, and how migrants navigate their lives within racist dynamics in postcolonial societies. Exploring the production of illicit lives across the Strait of Gibraltar, I showed how a micro-region is spatialised by historically developed categories of difference that produce a hierarchy of mobility and lives.

10 https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2014/05/131263/more-than-5000-irregular-spanish-immigrants-live-in-tangier-2/ [last accessed: June 3, 2021].

Exploring emergences and subtle shifts of othering across the Strait, I argued that although border and race are mutually constitutive, categories of difference do not remain uncontested.

In Morocco, the after-effects of pre-colonial slavery enhance the contemporary racialisation and othering of the "African" body that stem from the colonial divide between Black and *white*. These legacies are translated into the vernacular top-down humiliation practice of *al-hogra* that structures everyday interactions. In addition, Europe's displacement of racism to the North African country further fosters the exclusion of the racialised sub-Saharan body from the social, political, and cultural space. In Spain, racialised hierarchies of humanity are tightly interwoven with the colonial fabrication of the Moroccan body and with the distinct stereotyping of Moroccan and sub-Saharan migrants. Spain's increasing identification with Europe and as European in the second half of the twentieth century led to an illegalisation of migration that resulted in the militarisation of the border, which prevents migrants from moving north to "Europe".

Placing race at the centre of the study of the border regime allows a deeper understanding of the EU's multi-layered processes that produce illicit lives. It further shows that racial violence is not exceptional, rather, it forms an intrinsic part of the contemporary EU border regime.

Acknowledgements

For critical and careful comments, I thank Kiri Santer and the anonymous reviewers, for copy-editing Julene Knox. The study was funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

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