

Broadening Humanitarianism: shifting perspectives, realities, and theorizations

Online Symposium

10-11 June 2021

Organizers:

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Timetable

Thursday, June 10 (English)

UTC +1 (UK time)

10:00 – 10:15: Opening remarks

10:15 – 12:00: Panels 1 and 2

12:00 – 13:15: *Lunch*

13:15 – 15:00: Panels 3 and 4

15:00 – 15:30: *Coffee break*

15:30 – 17:00: Keynote speech:

- **Conflicts of accountability and the slow violence of humanitarianism in Israel-Palestine**
Dr. Julie Billaud (Graduate Institute, Switzerland)

17:00 – 18:00: *Dinner*

18:00 – 19:30: Workshop:

- **Doing Social Science in Humanitarian Settings: a Workshop on Ethics, Methods and Challenges**
Dr. Darryl Stellmach (Médecins Sans Frontières MSF – UK) booked out¹

Friday, June 11 (Spanish)

UTC +1 (UK time)

10:30 – 12:00: Panel 5

12:00 – 13:00: *Lunch*

13:00 – 14:30: Panel 6

14:30 – 15:00: *Coffee break*

15:00 – 16:30: Keynote speech

- **Humanitarismo, movilidad y género: reflexiones antropológicas y contextos migratorios**
Dra. Almudena Cortés Maisonave (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

¹ Papers presenters were given preference when registering for the workshop, as this interactive session is meant for a small number of participants. If you wish to be added to the waiting list, please e-mail the organizers.

Panel 1: Loss, ruins, and the aftermath of humanitarianism

Political Issue or Domestic Matter? Politics of Life and Death in Minas Gerais, Brazil

Theresa Mentrup (University of Mainz, Germany)

Refining Foucault's thoughts on the management and distribution of "life and death", anthropologists Didier Fassin and João Biehl have developed the concept of "*politics of life and death*". This concept not only invites to critically reflect on the geopolitical motivations and implicit hierarchical valorizations behind international humanitarian interventions (e.g., Fassin 2007a; 2007b; 2009; 2011; 2018; Fassin & Pandolfi 2010), but also allows to address neoliberal shifts of national state care towards individual obligations and private provisions – as, for instance, in Brazil (Biehl 2013 [2005]: 52). Against the background of two different crises in Minas Gerais, Brazil, that were or still are framed as "humanitarian" – namely, the collapse of the tailings dam of an iron ore mine in January 2019 as well as the rampage of the coronavirus pandemic since March 2020 – this paper sets out to enquire into different facets of the relation between the political and the material. By drawing on the concept of "*politics of life and death*", this primarily concerns the affective management of loss, ruin(ation)s and (social) suffering and its actual effects on the specific "*regime of living*" (Collier & Lakoff 2005) in Brazil. Thus, this paper aims not only at empirically retracing to what extent, for instance, affects and affectual expressions – such as (inter)national protests, movements and acts of solidarity – determine the political negotiation of responsibilities regarding both crises, but, in doing so, also at theoretically scrutinizing the possibilities and limits of coupling "humanitarianism" with other concepts, such as "(state) care", "affect", "mourning", or "memory".

Ruins of the humanitarian imaginary: A harmful or helpful theoretical framework in the field?

Hanna Berg (Graduate Institute, Switzerland)

As a pre-fieldwork think piece, this contribution explores how lived realities in prolonged refuge can be studied through the notion of ruination - an ongoing process that continues to "bind human potentials to degraded environments, and degraded personhoods" (Stoler, 2008, p. 195). For my PhD research I will conduct ethnographic fieldwork focusing on Syrian refugees living in urban, semi-urban and official camp spaces in northern Jordan in order to investigate how the humanitarian imaginary – the forces, sentiments and moral imperatives that drive modern humanitarianism and the organizing principles that sustain it as a systematic substitution of politics (Fassin, 2012; Ticktin, 2014; Watenpaugh, 2015) – produces specific subjects, spaces and temporalities, and how people participate in and resist against it. Along recent developments in anthropological scholarship to de-exceptionalise the lives and experiences of refugees and migrants, ruination as a theoretical framework allows me to explore how the production of refugees' lives as exceptional, but also of humanitarianism as a temporary solution to that exceptionality, sustains the permanent temporariness of life lived in refuge. Taking in particular the legal refugee status, the documents verifying it and the spatiotemporal precarities it generates as objects of ruination that force people's engagement in various directions, and engender sentiments of many kinds, this paper discusses the potentials and risks of bringing such a theoretical lens to the field. Doing so, it seeks to stimulate a discussion of how theoretical frameworks best can help us better understand the political as well as everyday processes at play in humanitarianism.

Anthropology as a tool to support social restructuring for building peaceful post-humanitarian intervention context

Edoardo Occa (University of Milano Bicocca, Italy)

In the province of Cabo Delgado, northern Mozambique, the crisis situation due to the attacks that began in 2017 but exploded in 2020 by Non State Armed Groups have to date generated a humanitarian crisis with about 700,000,000 internally displaced persons. Doctors with Africa CUAMM NGO has been present on the territory for several years dealing with strengthening the health system with public health interventions. Since the intensification of the attacks we have been engaged in support interventions for the local population where attention to the cultural specificity of the victim populations represents a key

element, therefore aimed not only at alleviating daily suffering but framing the intervention in a perspective of social and medical anthropology. Active collaboration and support for the formal and informal structures existing in the area, such as health committees, community courts, traditional leaders become a necessary measure for the prevention of potential conflicts between internally displaced persons and host communities, populations speaking four different dialects often not united by the colonial language – Portuguese. Weaving relationships and building a shared social grammar through the prism of an anthropological perspective allows a careful reading and an effective response to trauma and the need for primary services as well as negotiating models of social recomposition to begin to define the cultural and health context in a scenario of post-humanitarian intervention. The humanitarian as a condition for the possibility of peace and cohesion.

Enhancing elder's participation in the modern social architecture

Veronica Oancea (University of Bucharest, Romania)

It has been one year since Covid-19 polarized the public discourse on many aspects, the elders' situation being one of the points of contention. In societies where the economic crisis has emerged because of lockdowns and pandemic restrictions, justified especially through risks which are differentiated by generation, ageist discourses have re-surfaced and intensified. My intention is to bring into discussion the need to re-think the modern society social architecture through a new interpretation of humanitarianism. More precisely, as the number of elders is growing with improved life expectancy, there appears this need to rethink the way they are referred to and included in the social architecture, not as passive, but as active citizens and contributors to the societal order. Elderly people with relevant skills & experience can be attracted in debates and projects aiming to support elders' problematics into public institutions, NGOs, and also with the support of private sector as co-interested part. The outcome would be that the results on solving elders' problematics would increase in relevance and would be designed to engage a good part of elder population into active implication, degreasing the violence and discrimination against this population exercised by keeping them passive and excluded from social life. Recent pandemic-fueled discourses in all over the world highlight an imputed guilt of the elders for being so many and for being so fragile in front of the virus, realities that cost the society money especially in health sector. My analysis will document how to start readjusting the society by incorporating an increasing aging population starting with the most affected sector, the health sector, both public & private. The idea is to build a self-sustaining health sector that will actually encourage education in prevention & home treatment infrastructure for the aging population, with the aim of preserving this segment of population in as good health and social implication as possible.

Panel 2: Professionalism, professions, and transactions

Reciprocity mediated by the “tender trap”: livelihood, social debt and professionalism”

Lieke van der Veer (Radboud University, The Netherlands)

This contribution studies grassroots organizers with a forced migration background who support “refugee status holders” in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Based on a year of ethnographic fieldwork, it discusses how these organizers try to boost their “professionalism” and adhere to municipal preferences. These preferences include the requirement to stay away from interventions that assume ethno-racial differences. This process, in which organizers adhere to these preferences, is motivated by the organizers' desire to enhance their organization's eligibility to funding. Advisors that act as brokers to these organizations refer to this economic stimulus as “tender trap” – a financial infrastructure that mediates the normative value of ‘groups’ along ethno-racial lines. In this contribution, I analytically forward two related claims. The first claim concerns reciprocity and social debt. I propose that the grassroots organizers studied, by “participating,” hope to reciprocate their “social debt”. This hope, I show, is set in motion by the desire to rework the ontology of indebtedness that typically underpins humanitarian dialectics between giver and receiver. Crucial in this regard is the fact that the grassroots

organizers studied are people with a refugee background themselves. For them, starting an organization is an anticipated pathway to enter into relations of reciprocity – where debt does not sediment, and solidarity flows. The second claim concerns practices of securing a livelihood: the process of giving in to funding preferences, I propose, should be understood as attempt by grassroots organizers to reduce precariousness, secure a livelihood, and turn affective labor into a life-sustaining practice.

Cracking the systems of abuse: Precarious work in the heart of child protection

Anastasia Karagianni (Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Greece)

The present paper focuses on the field of humanitarian labour and, in particular, on humanitarian workers who, as a mandate, provide support to unaccompanied refugee and migrant minors in Greece. My research interest emphasizes on the ways these workers deal with the restraints and the ambiguities they constantly face in their daily working lives, through their encounters with the rather abusive child protection system (Sarantou & Theodoropoulou, 2019). My ultimate goal here is to comprehend how these actors actually come to create “frictions” (Tsing, 2005) to the existing system of neoliberal governmentality (Ferguson & Gupta, 2005), in their desire to help (Malkki, 2015) the children that the state fails to protect or even purposely exposes to further harm. As previous research has shown, the kind of work performed by these actors in this context is inherently political; effects of this work, though, seem to both compromise and empower the state sovereignty (Hoffmann, 2016; Ticktin, 2011; 2016). In order to set the wider frame of this ethnographic study, I first unpack and historicise the circumstances under which humanitarian governance has been established in Greece as part and parcel of a transnational “graduated sovereignty” (Ong, 2006). I then discuss the ways in which the “unaccompanied minor” has been constructed and construed as a recipient of aid at the intersection of humanitarian logic, migration policies and the child protection system. Finally, based on the aforementioned research framework, I proceed to analyse selected interviews of child protection professionals and frontline workers of local non-governmental organisations and I also critically reflect on aspects of my five-year field experience as a humanitarian worker (Khosravi, 2016).

Fieldwork ethics and positionality in humanitarian contexts: pre-fieldwork thoughts on working in refugee contexts.

Phoebe Shambaugh (University of Manchester, UK)

This paper will reflect on my current project of drafting the methodology and working to finalize negotiations for fieldwork access for PhD research, on education, temporality and futurity in experiences of protracted displacement - in this case refugee settlements in the West Nile region of Uganda. In a recent conversation about logistics, one of my contacts foregrounded questions of ethics, positionality and reciprocity very squarely - the WFP has recently substantially cut food distributions to the settlements in question, and she warned me that individuals would likely seek compensation to cover this gap in exchange for research participation. The tensions this raises, between institutional expectations of ethics and the relations and reciprocity demanded in ethical long term research relations, is not new, but may be particularly challenging in humanitarian contexts in which the researcher is often affiliated, directly or perceptively, with aid institutions. My project is intended as relational ethnography, working with both humanitarians and displaced, and my access (both to the field and logistically to the settlements) will be brokered by humanitarian professionals. As a white American, my position within the dynamics of power and resource distribution in the settlement will be compounded by the University’s risk policies which demand certain logistical arrangements. This paper will outline my methodology and ethical concerns, as well as how I hope to navigate them in practice. I hope it will contribute to a discussion among participants on methodological / ethical issues in these contexts and from which I can learn as I prepare for fieldwork.

Interrogating the “anti-political” designation: Ethnographic reflections on human rights and humanitarian bureaucracies

Dalton Price (University of Oxford, UK)

The starting point for this research is James Ferguson’s “anti-politics machine,” particularly the social life of this concept as it is applied to various human rights, humanitarian, and development contexts. Whether or not intended by Ferguson, anti-politics has frequently been used as a quick, easy, and oft-essentializing designation for these bureaucracies. I suggest that such an assumption, focusing less on Ferguson’s original text and more on its application, may obscure more than it reveals. Drawing upon two institutional ethnographies with the World Health Organization’s Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office in Egypt and Partners In Health’s office in Peru, and approaching these two sites comparatively, I show the more explicit role that politics plays within the walls of these institutions—not as something merely ignored but rather a daily talking point. By centering my work on political engagements, not aversions, I highlight an opportunity to better understand the diverse experiences, histories, and subjectivities of the “technocrats” or “bureaucrats” that inhabit these spaces. Interrogating the boundary between political and a/anti-political, both empirically in these bureaucracies and conceptually in the academy, remains an important task for anthropologists.

[Panel 3: Questioning categories of vulnerability](#)

Women, Empowerment and Papers—A Glimpse of Different Categories of Women in Conflict

Rohi Jehan (University of Manchester, UK)

India's claim to give equal rights to the people of Jammu and Kashmir irrespective of gender disempowers certain women whose legal status of marriage is uncertain. The lack of "proper documentation" makes them vulnerable at multiple levels, like not having land rights, government benefits or getting a government job. Rather than putting all women in a general category for a gendered analysis of humanitarianism in conflict, a separate category should be created for those who do not exist in legal and social institutions. In Kashmir, Half-widows are those women whose husbands have disappeared since 1989 when an armed resistance against the Indian occupation in Jammu and Kashmir began. According to the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS), a federation of human rights organisations and individuals, there are 1500 half-widows in Kashmir (APDP, 2011). In a patriarchal society where women are categorised as married, unmarried, divorced and widow, half-widows lose their existence when they cannot prove if their husbands are dead or alive. In a traditional gendered humanitarianism, half-widows find their place as the victims of conflict and patriarchy. While taking the case study of half-widows, the paper explores the status of half-widows in the humanitarian system. In the absence of proving the legal status, half-widows end up being in a perpetual cycle of vulnerability with neither getting support from the internal patriarchy nor the state. In such cases, humanitarian systems can play an important role in reaching out to them by breaking the boundaries of the traditional categories. The paper explores why humanitarianism must go beyond the gender categories and focus on the local categorisation in conflict. By doing so, the most vulnerable people, whose existence is held between their husbands' life and death, would have a firm status in the humanitarian system, therefore an assurance of financial aid and empowerment.

Turning a self-organized school into an international NGO: The role of social networks and humanitarian governance in the ‘Afghan school’ in Moria camp, Lesbos, Greece

Tsiligkiridou Rafailia Maria (University of the Aegean, Greece)

This ethnographic study examines a bottom-up educational initiative that took place between July 2019 and February 2020 in the “jungle” area of the Reception and Identification Centre of Moria, Lesbos in Greece. The non-formal courses, called the ‘school’ from now on, were organized and implemented by Afghan asylum seekers and addressed to asylum seekers, residents of Moria camp or the nearby area. Key partners (*hamkaran*) to this initiative are asylum seekers who teach or support the school from administrative positions. Most of them are young boys and girls, sometimes even minors, who speak English and have some experience on volunteering for international NGOs, usually as interpreters. Occasionally, other people, the so-called friends (*dustan*) of the school, are involved. Most of them are volunteers and solidarians from European countries or, less often, from the local community of Mytilene. They mainly provide material and financial support. Sometimes, when they have a background on social sciences they organize and implement some educational activities in collaboration with the school. I would argue that the main goal of the asylum seekers has been the institutionalization and professionalization of their initiative. To achieve this goal they use two types of relationships. On the one hand, they use their personal and social networks. On the other hand, they rely on their social ties with humanitarian agents. Through these relationships they try to promote not only their work but also themselves, in order to start a “career in Europe” and to upgrade the school to an international NGO.

Beyond vernacularization of children’s rights, humanitarian child protection as a transaction

Dr. Sylvie Bodineau (York University, Toronto, Canada)

In 1996, Machel’s report to the United Nations presented the phenomenon of child soldiering as “one of the most alarming trends”. A few years later, it was considered as a war crime by the Rome Statute (1998) and a worst form of child labour by the ILO Convention 182 (1999). Since then, child soldiers have become emblematic victims to protect in situations of armed conflicts, embedded in two highly moral frameworks, that is the child rights’ regime figuring “the child” as an ontologically vulnerable entity, and the humanitarian imperative calling for alleviating “distant suffering” (Boltanski 1993). Thus, at the time of researching on the articulations between the global and the local in the case of humanitarian protection of child soldiers, I decided to use an anthropology of human rights approach. More particularly, I drew on Merry’s concept of vernacularization of rights (1996) to follow the path of the protagonists of a program implemented in the DRC between 2005 and 2011. This ethnography shows how former child soldiers refused to occupy a victim position vis-à-vis the programs meant to protect them, and rather used the humanitarian space to claim what they considered as “their due” as ex-combatants. Beyond a vernacularisation of children’s rights, I argue that this can be considered as a humanitarian transaction (of benefits, status, services). It opens a reflection on the limits and possibilities offered by the concepts of vernacularization and transaction applied to children’s rights in practice or to any human rights contested by its supposed holders.

The Resilience Paradox: Humanitarian Ethics in the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Dr. Malay Firoz (Arizona State University, United States)

Humanitarianism is generally framed as a moral project par excellence, because it is concerned not with the political ‘improvement’ of the human condition, but with the limited goal of alleviating immediate suffering. With over 1.5 million Syrian refugees having fled to Jordan and Lebanon, Western humanitarian actors have conceded that their traditional mandate of short-term emergency relief is no longer sustainable. Since 2015, they have advocated for a “resilience-based approach” to humanitarian aid called the Resilience Agenda, defined as an integrated long-term developmental response that strengthens the ability of refugees and host communities to sustain themselves. Formulated under UN auspices, resilience humanitarianism channels large-scale international assistance to bolster state

services and public infrastructure on which refugees and vulnerable citizens depend. I argue that the Resilience Agenda is founded on the flawed assumption that host states in the global South can be financially incentivised to integrate refugees, even as the Jordanian and Lebanese governments have taken harsh measures to undermine the resilience of Syrian refugees. This clash of contradictory mandates—between aid programs designed to sustain refugees and host states anxious to deport them—precipitates an ethical quandary for humanitarianism that I call the “resilience paradox,” and risks absorbing humanitarian aid into the political prerogatives of host states. Based on 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Jordan and Lebanon, my paper examines how humanitarian organizations navigate this paradox on the ground, and analyzes the implications of this program for the moral values undergirding the humanitarian project.

[Panel 4: Rethinking the context and impetus of humanitarian action](#)

Compassionate Transformation: Intimacy & the Possibility of Kenotic Encounter in Greek Orthodox Humanitarianism

Hannah Grace Howard (Boston University, United States)

Since Didier Fassin’s landmark contributions in *Humanitarian Reason* (2012), compassion has been identified as the primary emotion and motivator of humanitarian work. While I do not dispute its importance, this paper claims that compassion has been flattened in much of this literature. By complicating the notion typically put forth in considerations of humanitarian aid that there is a straightforward uptake of compassion as moral edict into aid as political project, I ask us to step outside the traditional theoretical constraints of the anthropology of humanitarianism. This paper instead suggests that we frame people’s professions of “compassion” not as moral posturing and an insulation of existing hierarchical structures, but as accounts of both internal impetuses and intersubjective emotional realities. Further, I place this in the direct context of deeper theological tenets, not merely religious examples such as the Good Samaritan, that ground alternative understandings of compassion, aid, and relationality between selves and others. Inspired by my early fieldwork with the aid workers of the Orthodox Church of Greece, I particularly attend to the notion of *kenosis*, or self-emptying as grounds for salvation, that enables us to conceive of humanitarian work, and the compassion that often drives it, not only as a political project, but also as an exceedingly intimate kenotic encounter. In short, this paper argues that an anthropology of compassion must also be a theology of compassion.

A managerial humanitarianism: The International Committee of the Red Cross and the creation of state structures to protect lives in Greater Rio de Janeiro

Pedro Silva Rocha Lima (University of Manchester, UK)

This paper investigates a humanitarian initiative that responds to ongoing, everyday armed violence in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas. Based primarily on long-term ethnographic fieldwork, it analyzes an International Committee of the Red Cross program that instructs public service workers on how to assess and mitigate risks related to armed violence in their daily work. I argue that this constitutes a form of managerial humanitarianism concerned with the creation of state structures and self-disciplined subjects capable of protecting lives. In this process, armed violence is turned into an object of (risk) management, something to be addressed through risk assessments, behavioral protocols, and reporting mechanisms. This study contributes to discussions about transnational humanitarianism by analyzing how humanitarian work happens amid functioning public services, where state actors become the primary targets of intervention.

Everyday Crises: Confronting Crisis in Non-Emergency, Humanitarian Settings

Jacqueline Wagner (Washington University in St. Louis, United States)

Humanitarian organizations operating in non-emergency settings face a different set of challenges when it comes to assisting beneficiaries. Rather than merely addressing emerging crises and securing a modicum of stability for the individuals in their care, these organizations must help their beneficiaries learn how to adapt to a new environment, while also contending with state institutions that fund and regulate their operations. However, although the immediate threat of violence and insecurity may be reduced in these settings, crisis still exists in the form of precarity, uncertainty, and elevated levels of stress, particularly for asylum seekers who are awaiting decisions on their asylum cases. In this paper, I examine these dynamics within an international NGO that serves as an official refugee and asylum seeker reception site in Madrid, Spain—a country that has seen dramatic increases in asylum applications over the past five years along with rising far-right nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiment. To help asylum seekers become gradually more autonomous, NGO workers offer a wide range of services, such as legal help, language instruction, mental health therapy, employment counseling, and social education. At the same time, they must deal with a variety of emotional, interpersonal, and other issues as they arise. Thus, even in a non-crisis situation, crisis still emerges. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has added an additional layer of stress and uncertainty, further complicating humanitarian work and reducing opportunities for interpersonal connections that are valued both by NGO workers and by asylum seekers.

Access, Ownership, and Politics on a Humanitarian Two-Way Radio Network in D.R. Congo

Scott Ross (George Washington University, United States)

In northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), two separate non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have for the last decade built out a network of two-way radios as both humanitarian early warning network amidst ongoing low-level conflict and quotidian communication infrastructure to ameliorate rural isolation. The idea behind the network already pushes the spatial and temporal bounds of humanitarianism, as it retools technology to intervene in spaces of conflict and promises connections that outlast emergency. Once stations of the network are built, however, new questions emerge about who best benefits from uneven connections. This paper explores how the radio network has become the site of struggles over access to communication, to communities, and to narrativization of insecurity in northeastern DRC at different scales. Within communities, customary chiefs and religious leaders dispute how accessible the radio is or should be, while everyday would-be users are reliant on a select few radio operators to send messages. Across the network, the two NGOs involved struggle to reconcile competing interests, access to resources, and relations with local communities, a tension that is felt in villages that have lost radios and yearn for reconnection. All the while, NGOs and communities negotiate state refusal and state violence, respectively, as the humanitarian network encounters political obstacles. The paper argues that these various tensions and conflicts emerge from humanitarianism's afterlives and excesses—that humanitarian actors encounter new obstacles as they move beyond crisis.

[Keynote Speech](#)

Conflicts of accountability and the slow violence of humanitarianism in Israel-Palestine

Dr. Julie Billaud (Graduate Institute, Switzerland)

Since the 2000s, as a result of the increasing encroachment of the managerial culture of 'audit' (Strathern 2000) in the humanitarian sector, accountability has become a central organizing principle of humanitarian action. As an organization endowed with an international mandate, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is primarily accountable to affected populations. Its main task is to provide protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. However, the ICRC is also bound to its donors through the principles of evidence-based programming, cost effectiveness and good governance. Finally, it is in charge of holding states accountable by monitoring their performance in implementing the rules of war and offering advisory services, notably to national governments and Red Cross societies. In this presentation, I take the example of one of the longest and most emblematic programs of the ICRC, namely the Family Visit Program (FVP)

established in 1968 after the Six Day war, as an empirical entry point into the tensions and contradictions that emerge as a result of the triple ‘accountability’ imperative of (1) servicing populations affected by conflict (in this case, Palestinian prisoners and their families), (2) persuading ‘authorities’ (in this case Israeli authorities) to comply with their International Humanitarian Law obligations and (3) ensuring that its operations respond to objective needs. I further analyze forms of slow violence triggered by the implementation of the principles of ‘transparency’ and ‘neutrality’, especially when humanitarianism is enmeshed within the political logic of an occupation that effectively serves to govern populations by keeping them apart.

Panel 5: Humanitarismo y Fronteras

Pensando la colonialidad del humanitarismo fronterizo. El caso de la frontera hispano-marroquí

Dra. Elsa Tyszler (Centre de estudios sociológicos y políticos de Paris (CRESPPA) – CNRS, Francia)

A través de un enfoque etnográfico, esta contribución aborda la cuestión de la violencia experimentada en la frontera marroquí-española por las personas de África Central y del Oeste que emana de actores/actrices del humanitarismo. Basándose en 30 meses de investigación de campo en Marruecos y en Ceuta y Melilla, con una atención especial a las experiencias encarnadas de la frontera, esta contribución muestra que el humanitarismo practicado en una ciudad fronteriza del Norte de Marruecos es también un espacio de actualización de las relaciones de raza y de género, que puede, contrariamente a sus pretensiones, conducir a limitaciones aún mayores de la movilidad de las personas, especialmente de las mujeres, que son “ayudadas”, y reproducir un orden racializado y de género en la frontera. Ciertas actividades humanitarias pueden pensarse como parte de los “desechos imperiales” (Stoler 2008) que obstruyan el presente, y que necesitan más atención para poder comprender las situaciones fronterizas actuales y la construcción plural de “cuerpos fronterizos” (Guénif-Souilamas 2010). Así se propone reconectar esta violencia contemporánea con la historia y pensar la colonialidad de dicho humanitarismo, más allá de este caso de estudio. Al mismo tiempo, y a pesar de un régimen fronterizo multinivel muy violento, la agencia de las personas subalternizadas se manifiesta a través de una miriada de prácticas de resistencia.

La economía política de la migración forzada, más allá de la “crisis humanitaria” de la frontera entre EE.UU. y México

Mara Tissera Luna – Consultora independiente en protección de menores

Los abusos a los derechos humanos en contra de los niños y niñas no acompañados que huyen de los países del Triángulo Norte (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala) y México hacia EE.UU. han atraído la atención de los medios de comunicación, y se convirtieron en una problemática clave de la agenda humanitaria regional desde la “ola” de 2014. Todos los años, la incapacidad de estos Estados para abordar las causas subyacentes de la migración forzada y para implementar políticas públicas efectivas de protección para los niños y las niñas que intentan cruzar la frontera entre EE.UU. y México se convierte en una (así llamada) “crisis humanitaria” de gran escala. Esta presentación retoma el trabajo de campo de la autora en la temática de los niños y las niñas no acompañados que son deportados tras haber intentado ingresar o solicitar protección internacional en este país EE.UU. (2014) y una investigación sobre las políticas de protección para los niños y las niñas no acompañados centroamericanos en México (2016-2018). Desde el marco teórico de la economía política de la gobernanza global (Kaul, 2003), aquí se intenta explicar el fenómeno de la migración forzada de los niños y las niñas no acompañados en la frontera entre EE.UU. y México más allá de la perspectiva hegemónica que la describe exclusivamente como una “crisis humanitaria”. De este modo, intenta ofrecer una reflexión sobre las limitaciones de las narrativas humanitarias para dar cuenta de las problemáticas económicas y políticas estructurales que impulsan a los niños y las niñas a migrar en esta

región.

Género y Fronteras Humanitarias: la migración centroamericana en Puebla, México como problema humanitario

Valentina Benincasa (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, España)

En la presente ponencia, se presentará la propuesta teórico-metodológica para la realización del trabajo de tesis doctoral sobre el proceso de humanitarización de la migración centroamericana en Puebla, México desde una perspectiva de género. La propuesta ubica objeto de estudio en los debates del humanitarismo contemporáneos desde una perspectiva antropológica y su relación con la migración como objeto de intervención en cruce con la antropología feminista. Con el propósito de poner en dialogo y en tensión las lógicas globales del humanitarismo con sus prácticas y narrativas situadas, el objeto de estudio del presente proyecto se inserta en dinámicas globales de construcción y gestión de la migración como problema humanitario, situando el caso de estudio en el régimen de movilidad Centroamérica – México – Estados Unidos (Cortés, 2018). Esta ponencia quiere reflexionar sobre el proceso de cambio ocurrido en la región a raíz de coyunturas políticas regionales e internacionales que han reconfigurado el debate sobre migración en México y, especialmente, en el Estado de Puebla. Para ello, se presentará un marco analítico funcional al estudio de la construcción de la migración centroamericana como problema humanitario regional y de sus implicaciones sociales y culturales. Esta reflexión plantea un análisis desde la categoría del género, que nos permitirá poner en luz los imaginarios, mandatos y límites de género que se encuentran arraigados en las prácticas y narrativas de la intervención humanitaria que, a la vez, participa de su construcción dinámica y reproducción, así como de su transgresión.

Panel 6: Humanitarismo y Refugio

Género y Refugio entre la Acogida y la Hospitalidad. Prácticas humanitarias y relaciones de poder

Dr. Alessandro Forina (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, España)

Lugares tradicionales de investigación etnográfica, los campos de refugiados se han colocado a menudo en una tensión dialéctica con respecto a la ciudad en relación a la generación de diferentes subjetividades, o vistos como espacios de emergencia y excepcionalidad. Sin embargo, cada vez más desplazados son “acogidos” en áreas urbanas en lugar de campamentos y es aquí (generalmente en zonas marginales y periféricas) que se encuentran algunos de los principales espacios de acogida. En este contexto se mueven nuevos actores que intervienen en la “acogida” y el “hospitalidad”, estableciendo “nuevos” tipos de relaciones y asistencia, a menudo en línea con las prácticas propias del humanitarismo. Estas relaciones están marcadas por un orden de género y a través de los actos de hospitalidad y acogida mantienen y reproducen asimetrías de poder. Históricamente se ha prestado poca atención a las dimensiones de género de la acogida y de la hospitalidad, ya sea en contextos domésticos o en el sentido más amplio de hospitalidad “política”, como es el caso de las solicitantes de asilo y refugiadas. La investigación, realizada con metodologías antropológicas cualitativas, ha seguido un planteamiento etnográfico a través del uso de técnicas etnográficas basadas en la realización de entrevistas en profundidad y en la observación participante llevada a cabo durante cuatro años (2015-2019) en el colectivo ciudadano denominado Red Solidaria de Acogida (RSA) en Madrid (España) en apoyo a solicitantes de asilo, refugiados y población migrante.

Una jerarquía de refugiados: fijar la vulnerabilidad entre los desplazados malienses en Burkina Faso

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En la mayoría de los contextos humanitarios, la vulnerabilidad se utiliza como criterio para decidir quién está más necesitado. Cuando la vulnerabilidad se conceptualiza de manera fija, estereotipada y descontextualizada, como es el caso para los refugiados malienses que viven en una ciudad de Burkina Faso, esto tiene dos impactos negativos. En primer lugar, este concepto de vulnerabilidad reifica los tropos despolitizados de los refugiados como víctimas que sufren, tropos que los propios refugiados reproducen para ser percibidos como “refugiados legítimos y merecedores” a los ojos de los actores humanitarios. En segundo lugar, esta conceptualización de la vulnerabilidad crea jerarquías entre los desplazados. Estas jerarquías pueden parecer, en principio, operativas; sin embargo, también reproducen las desigualdades y las relaciones de poder existentes entre las poblaciones de refugiados, especialmente en relación con el género, la raza y el grupo étnico, y la clase socioeconómica. Finalmente, este papel analiza las continuidades y los vínculos entre las prácticas jerárquicas y discriminatorias observadas en la gobernanza humanitaria y las estructuras discriminatorias y excluyentes más amplias de nuestras sociedades.

El régimen temporal de la gobernanza humanitaria: sobre la violencia simbólica del mantenimiento de la paz en el Sáhara Occidental

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Tras el alto el fuego mediado de 1991 entre Marruecos y el Frente Polisario, los campamentos de refugiados saharauis comenzaron a recibir apoyo de la industria de ayuda humanitaria que ha expandido su presencia en todo el mundo desde el final de la Guerra Fría en adelante (Hyndman, 2001 xix). Influidos por Foucault (1991) y Agamben (1998), muchos académicos han argumentado que la gobernanza humanitaria, al haber sido confiada a un mandato biopolítico limitado de salvar vidas, reduce peligrosamente los cuerpos humanos a formas de vida desprovistas de "sociedad" (Agiers, 2008). Los refugiados, clasificados mediante una categoría carente de historia (Malkki, 1996), sobreviven gracias a una compasión global apolítica (Feldman & Ticktin, 2010). En contraste con estos análisis, el Frente Polisario ha eludido este modelo neocolonial de gobernanza humanitaria, utilizando la ayuda humanitaria que recibe para fortalecer sus propias capacidades gubernamentales y también su capacidad para reproducir la historia saharauí en el exilio. Sin embargo, 30 años después que se instalara en el Sáhara Occidental la misión humanitaria de mantenimiento de la paz MINURSO, aún no se ha llevado a cabo el referéndum para la autodeterminación del pueblo saharauí y, el 13 de noviembre de 2020, el movimiento de liberación nacional anticolonial reanudó su lucha armada contra Marruecos. Comprender el fracaso del mantenimiento de la paz humanitaria en el Sáhara Occidental requiere tomarse en serio la violencia simbólica que esta larga espera ha ejercido sobre las vidas de los saharauis. Basando en quince meses de trabajo de campo etnográfico en los campamentos de refugiados saharauis (2011-2015), en este artículo sostengo que dar cuenta de la violencia simbólica que es inherente a los regímenes humanitarios contemporáneos (Asad 2008), requiere ampliar nuestra noción de gobernanza humanitaria para entender como ejerce su poder a través de la gestión del tiempo (Ramsay 2017) y no solo a través de la gestión de los cuerpos y las subjetividades humanas (Foucault 1991).

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Humanitarismo, movilidad y género: reflexiones antropológicas y contextos migratorios

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La contención de la llegada de población migrante y refugiada a Europa, EE. UU. y México ha supuesto un desafío sin precedentes en el respeto de los Derechos Humanos y en la forma de construir *lo humanitario*. Miles de personas luchan por cruzar fronteras múltiples afrontando condiciones

extremadamente peligrosas debido al endurecimiento de las políticas migratorias que bloquean su movilidad en campamentos de refugiados, lo que ha conducido a calificar la situación de “emergencia humanitaria” y a construir la migración como problema *humanitario*. Introducir lo humanitario en la gestión migratoria y llevar la migración a lo humanitario implica abordar los problemas desde las respuestas rápidas y la urgencia al entender que son fenómenos aparentemente repentinos e impredecibles ubicados en el presente de forma ahistórica. Así, la intervención humanitaria está jugando un papel clave en la construcción de los regímenes de movilidad (Glick Schiller y Salazar, 2013; Cortés, 2018) en el que tienen lugar dinámicas migratorias complejas atravesadas por fronteras variadas y donde el orden de género desempeña un papel central en su configuración. Sin embargo, los trabajos dedicados a explorar el orden de género en relación con los regímenes de movilidad son todavía escasos. En concreto, la hipervisibilidad de la violencia criminal ha ocultado otras violencias como es el caso de la violencia de género y sexual entendida como una construcción histórica, política y cultural (Cortés, 2018). En este texto, por tanto, se analizan las articulaciones entre el humanitarismo, la violencia sexual y de género y los regímenes de movilidad.