

The Performative Effects of the European War on Migrants: Masculinities and Femininities at the Moroccan-Spanish Border

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Abstract: This article ethnographically explores how Central and West African masculinities and femininities are shaped and reshaped at the Moroccan-Spanish border in the context of the increased securitisation and politicisation of migrations from the global South to the global North. Apart from the migration regime at the outer border of the European Union, it also examines the role of the humanitarian regime in policing black migrants' gender identities. It aims to address an important aspect of the mobility experiences and bordering effects that tends to go under-researched. Drawing on long-term fieldwork, which was carried out between 2015 and 2017, it presents detailed ethnographic examples of the construction of masculinities and femininities at the border and asks how these work to help or prevent mobility. Analysis of the intersections of the gender regime and the racialised migratory regime reveals the coloniality of security migration policies.

Keywords: borders, femininities, masculinities, migration policies, violence

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Investigating the gender effects of the war on migrants

'Warriors', 'soldiers', and 'barrier shockers' are some of the names that migrant men from Central and West Africa give themselves in the camps located in the forests of northern Morocco, near the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. *'I'm willing to risk my life, I know it's war there, but I'm determined'*, said one young Guinean

I met in Rabat in 2015. Based on a total of 30 months of field research in Morocco, this paper focuses on the production site of masculinities and femininities at the border, (re)shaped by the war against black migrants taking place there, and the role individuals (have to) play in it. I argue that migrants are affected differently by their experience at the Moroccan-Spanish border on the basis of their particular social location. The securitisation of the border tends to exacerbate the vulnerable femininities of black migrant women and the virilist masculinities of black migrant men. The ethnographic approach adds greater nuance and complexity to this analysis and provides insight into how gender-based norms shape migratory experiences and modes of crossing borders.

I chose to analyse the Moroccan-Spanish border from the perspective of border imperialism as conceptualised by Harsha Walia (2013), which calls attention to:

the ways that borders are operationalized, as well as interrogates the inextricable links they have to colonialism and intensifying neoliberal practices of exploitation and abandonment. To speak of borders, thus, is to speak of colonization and capitalism, as well as their heteropatriarchal, race-oriented, Other-generating, and symbiotic forms, functions, and foundations. (...) another key element to understanding border imperialism is that, like modernity, the nation-state, the Westphalian order, and capitalist social relations—borders are neither natural, nor apolitical. Rather, borders are artificial constructions unjustifiably inscribed upon land and bodies through violence. (Gahman, Hjalmarson 2019: 111–112)

Embracing this conceptualisation, the article analyses the social relations that are at play in Moroccan-Spanish border situations from the perspective of the colonality (Quijano 1992) of the European migration regime (Rodriguez 2018) governed by ethnic, racial, and gender differentiation and giving rise to a western war on migrants from the global South.

The war on migrants is not a metaphor to break the silence surrounding violence and violations of the rights of exiles, but the reality of a coordinated policy to prevent the contact points between North and South from becoming places of passage for those assigned today where the prospects for the future are the most limited. While the general staffs of this battle against the right to emigration are numerous - the European Union, States on both sides of the Mediterranean, international organisations - and do not obey a single command, their decisions do indeed lead to a set of consequences characteristic of a situation of belligerency. (Migreurop 2007: 8, translation ET)

Twelve years after the publication of 'War on Migrants. The Black Book of Ceuta and Melilla' (translation ET), the belligerent circumstances are still there, with armed soldiers employed, on both sides, to block the border to 'undesirable' people seeking mobility, while ignoring their fundamental rights and sometimes killing them.

The analysis of the Moroccan-Spanish border and of the associated political repression against so-called sub-Saharan migrants is thus not a new topic (e.g. Ferrer-Gallardo 2008; Pian 2009; Andersson 2014; Gabrielli 2015; Kobelinsky 2017). However, the way the border affects gender relations in their intersections with race relations (but also those of age, class, and nationality) remains understudied. Examining the intersections of social relations of gender,²³ 'race',²⁴ and class²⁵ (Combahee River Collective 1979; Crenshaw 1991; Collins 2000; Kergoat 2009) is particularly enlightening for analysing the border experience of people attempting to reach Europe, including their irregularised migrant condition,²⁶ as an experience of power and the relations of domination affecting them. At the border, the re-shaping – between transformation and continuity – of gender norms and roles by a plurality of agents at different levels, gives birth to a variety of male and female figures, all anchored in the context of blockage and passage. The over-visibilisation of migrant men makes women present at the border invisible, creating a monolithic imaginary of the 'migrants' at this border-space, and homogenising the plural effects of repressive policies. It also hides the different forms and means of resistance and resilience deployed by these men and women²⁷ in search of exile and mobility. The visibilisation of women at the border remains partial: the issue of combating human trafficking – especially in the name of women migrants – has become an alibi that the Spanish and Moroccan governments use systematically to maintain violence and illegal practices in order to defend the border (Tyszler 2019). To my knowledge, little work has been done on the issue of masculinities and femininities 'in transit'

23 The concept of gender helps to denaturalise the binary categories of sex and highlights the relationships of power and domination that have historically underpinned them (Scott, 2012) and that have established and maintain, even today, a heteropatriarchal order. Feminist and queer struggles try to destabilise this gender order.

24 I understand the term 'race' as social, historical, and political relations of appropriation (Guillaumin 1972). It refers to 'a category used for critical analysis to designate and analyse racialisation processes, that is to say differentiation systems that are stigmatising or discriminating' (Dorlin 2009: 15).

25 In the case of the border, it is the immediate economic power that will determine more than the social class.

26 Following Howard Becker's perspective on deviant practices and seeing them primarily as the result of social reaction (Becker 1973), I reckon that security migration policies and the practices that result from them produce the irregularisation of traveller mobility (Crosby, Réa 2016, among many others), above all on those coming from the lower social classes, which have a lesser chance of getting a visa.

27 In this article I focus on those two binary gender categories. Knowing that the analysis could go deeper, questioning for instance the experiences of LGBTQI* people.

in border areas; rather, research focuses, for instance, on the destination countries in Europe (Blanchard 2008; Fidolini 2015). A recent ethnographic study of Rohingya refugees living in Malaysia has shown how gendered violence is embedded in the complex, processual construction and performances of refugees' masculinities (Voisin 2018). In connection with this last work, this article focuses on an analysis of the (re)construction of masculinities and femininities at a militarised border and how these (re)constructions work to help or prevent mobility.

Masculinity and femininity cannot be defined separately, as gender construction is deeply relational (Broqua, Doquet 2013). They are always constructed within a given time and social context: they pertain to all the elements that are socially recognised as being specific to men and women within the frame of interwoven social orders (such as gender, race, class, age). They are therefore not universal notions but are rather socially and historically situated. Talking about masculinities and femininities (in plural) makes it possible to consider relationships of power and subordination within both the 'men's' group and the 'women's' group. While I identify the first hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) as that of the Spanish Guardia Civil, violently 'defending' this European border and asserting the masculinist image of the Spanish state, it is also important to underline the contagion of military values among migrant men, who are brought into sometimes lethal interactions with the Moroccan and Spanish forces along the fences surrounding Ceuta and Melilla. These dynamics are also embedded within the space of the border as structured by the business of border crossing and blockage. But gender assignments and the production of legitimate or illegitimate masculinities or femininities also arise from the humanitarian regime at the border. The impact of the NGOisation of the 'migrant cause' on people is rarely questioned. This conclusion emerges from ethnographic research on a humanitarian-religious organisation during which I observed the daily work of its members/workers and how it allowed certain gendered norms and values and banned others, showing the nexus between migration control and humanitarian interventions.

The first part of the text describes the processes of racialisation of people from Central and West Africa at the Moroccan-Spanish border. The parts that follow analyse several figures of migrant men in this specific space while showing the articulation of 'border masculinities and femininities'. The last part shows how a humanitarian-religious intervention can interfere in the production of a racialised, gendered, and sexual order, reinforcing a continuum of violence against black women seeking mobility.

Methodological note

This article is based on fieldwork that was carried out in Morocco and in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla for 30 months between 2015 and 2017. The length of the fieldwork allowed me to conduct multi-sited research and to follow, over several years, the (im)mobility of a certain number of people trying to reach Europe in the hotly contested political context around the Morocco-Spain border. I lived in Rabat, a base for many people heading to Europe, and I also conducted regular visits to and ethnographic observation, both within and outside the framework of NGO missions, in the border cities of Tangier, Ceuta, Nador, and Melilla and in cities connected to the border, such as Oujda, Fès, and Meknès, where groups of people attempting to cross into the North are located. I used participant observation, as a qualitative sociological method, through positions I held in several NGOs in Morocco working with migrants from Central and West Africa. Being seen as a member of a Morocco-based NGO helped me to gain access to the border area on the Moroccan side that is highly monitored by the authorities, and where European researchers, journalists, and activists working on migration topics are clearly not welcome. I conducted a hundred interviews with multiple actors present (directly or indirectly) around the border: people in migration, activists, NGOs staff, public servants, Spanish police, and military personnel. The data used for this article are the ethnographic observations I made during my fieldwork in Nador and the interviews and conversations I conducted in other cities with people who spent time at the border, as well as observations on social networks (mainly on Facebook), which are important spaces for dialogue and the exchange of information for migrants and activists. For ethical reasons, some information is not disclosed in this article, even if it corresponds to the subject, because it would reveal certain tools of resistance used by subaltern people struggling for their freedom of movement. Lastly, it is useful to present some specific details relating to my positionality as a young European white²⁸ woman and a feminist.²⁹ Even if I am trying to de-eurocentrise and to de-colonise my

28 Here 'white' refers to a social position rather than to an 'objective' chromatic observation, as Elsa Dorlin (2009: 13) explains: "'White'" refers more to the fact of enjoying what could be called a certain "social transparency". This social transparency implies that one does not have to endorse any infamous brand, whatever it may be (colour, veil, accent, surname...)'.

29 My feminist approach in the research is inspired by francophone materialists (such as Colette Guillaumin, Nicole-Claude Mathieu, Paola Tabet, Jules Falquet, among others) who worked (and some of whom still work) on showing that the definition of gender is a political issue, de-naturalising sex differences. They articulate their conceptualisation of gender as social relations of sex that intersect with other social relations of power and domination such as race and class, thereby following the analysis of the pioneer thinkers of intersectionality, a paradigm born from Black feminists in the US (quoted in the text). I am also inspired – without pretending to be part of it – by decolonial feminists from different

analysis, I know my point of view remains situated and that my whiteness had certain effects on my field research. Political commitment was the sine qua non condition for my access to the subaltern migrants, but also a personal and ethical necessity in view of the temporality of the Moroccan-Spanish border and the necropolitics surrounding it (Mbembe 2003). In Morocco, I was aware of my dominant status in relations of race and social class, and of the asymmetry of power in the investigator and respondent relations that I instituted, whether I like it or not. My French and white privileges allowed me access to the border-field without physical risk when others were at risk of violent repression at any time. My female gender was also an asset for staying in a highly monitored field, as it was associated with less suspicion and considered non-threatening, both by local authorities and by the various actors at the border. Throughout the research, I tried to maintain high ethical standards in order to gather as many different viewpoints as possible on the situation at the border – and without harming my respondents – in order to develop the most accurate analysis possible.

The repression of black migration at the Moroccan-Spanish border

Border imperialism illuminates how colonial anxieties about identity and inclusion within Western borders are linked to the racist justifications for imperialist missions beyond Western borders that generate cycles of mass displacement. (Walia 2013: 6)

Every border is anchored in a unique context and the repression and sorting of migrants are carried out according to the local dynamics of the social relations of power and domination and according to the different levels of political and economic logic, all of which is anchored in a certain historicity and in globalised neoliberal capitalism. The Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, remnants of the Spanish colonial empire, are located on the northern coast of Morocco. They materialise the only land borders between Africa and Europe. Because South-North migration issues have been engulfed by the security prism (Bigo 2008), European states' policies have focused on preventing the arrival of migrants from the global South in order to 'secure' European territory. On the one hand, legislation on the conditions of entry and residence on European territory and physical border control measures have been strengthened. On the other hand, some border control missions have been delegated to so-called third countries (of origin of immigration or transit, such as Morocco) and to the external agency

places in the world who point out the many problems and incoherence of western feminisms, above all in the way they invisibilise the importance of colonial history and thus the performativity of racialisation processes in today's western world.

Frontex to prevent the departure of putative irregular migratory movements to Europe, which is part of a more global process of ‘externalising’ migration policies.³⁰ Since Spain became part of the Schengen Area (1995), there have always been irregularised attempts to cross the borders of Ceuta and Melilla. As these crossings were considered a matter of concern by Spain and its European counterparts, the Spanish authorities have sought to make these border areas more impermeable by erecting increasingly high barriers, while increasing control and surveillance measures. At the same time, Morocco has been encouraged to take on tasks as an EU border guard so that it can actively collaborate – between constraints and opportunities (El Qadim 2010) – in the fight against so-called illegal immigration, in particular by mobilising its military personnel and building walls to protect the Spanish borders. The securing of this external border of the EU therefore requires, on both sides, the use of military and security means and devices (Gadem et al. 2015).

As a consequence, a double-sorting process is taking place at the Moroccan-Spanish border. Double, because in the north of Morocco the military tracks the migrants Europe rejects, and because the hunt continues on the Spanish side. Double also because racist social orders are in place on both sides: they are not the same since each has its own historical and topical background, that of the Rif region and Morocco on the one hand and that of the enclaves of Ceuta, Melilla, and Spain on the other hand. While there are differences in the racialisation processes given that the dominant reference point differs on either side of the border, in both cases it is the same group that is most radically affected by the given social relations: the so-called Sub-Saharan, i.e. black Africans, who are considered the most undesirable of migrants and are dehumanised by the migratory regimes at the border.

‘Hunting men, hunting them, often implies having them hunted, expelled or excluded from a common order beforehand. Every hunt is accompanied by a theory of its prey’, writes Grégoire Chamayou in his book on manhunts (2010: 8, translation ET). The philosopher thus emphasises the contradictory movement that constitutes the hunting of man: the recognition of the humanity of the prey and the practice of its negation. In the Nador area, close to the Melilla enclave, the tracking of people who want to go to Europe has become a ‘*black man hunt*’,³¹ against the so-called sub-Saharan migrants, who in fact come from Central and Western Africa, formerly colonised countries. ‘*It’s not good to have black skin here. The border is a racist system*’, explains a Guinean I interviewed in 2016. ‘*Regularised or not, student or not, people with tourist visa, arrests even inside homes are made on a single criterion: the black colour of the skin*’, denounces a Moroccan activist in September 2018 about the mass arrests

30 See the different editions of the Atlas of Migrants in Europe created by Migreurop (2017).

31 Excerpt from an interview with a Nigerian man in Nador, June 2015.

in the north of the country. In Nador, since the end of the 1990s this policy has led to the encampment (Agier 2008) of these people in the surrounding forests, because they are obliged to hide until they (attempt to) cross the border, which constitutes a form of containment of black persons in search of mobility. As the years pass and repression continues, migrant camps experience regular destruction, dispersion, and moving away from the border, making conditions for survival and organisation ever more difficult.³² Black men and women constitute the group of 'undesirables' who must be prevented from crossing the border, the 'tracked bodies' (Dorlin 2017). But the practices of the Moroccan soldiers are also gendered. The repression inflicted by the soldiers is usually different depending on whether it concerns people they categorise as men or women.

For migrant men, repression can be extremely violent. Moroccan soldiers' violence has very often been described in the narratives of those arrested while trying to cross the border but also during and after the illegal 'hot returns' (*devoluciones en caliente*) to the Moroccan side operated by the Guardia Civil in collaboration with the Moroccan auxiliary forces.³³ The goal always seems to be to inflict lasting physical damage, to break the bodies of the fence jumpers.

They were six against me, they have beaten me, beaten with wood, even on my head, I lost consciousness. When I woke up my legs were held straight and others were beating my knees. This is torture. Why do they do this to us? We are human beings.

They take wood and they beat you. They beat everybody, even the kids. They treat us like animals. One day they will end up killing us.

OK, they can arrest us, we understand it is their job, but why do they torture us like that, it is not normal. They broke many limbs that day, and many heads. Even the kids, everybody.

(Excerpts from interviews with young men age 16-24 from Guinea, Ivory Coast and Cameroon, Casablanca, 2017)

32 The increasing militarisation of the land border has made barrier crossings so difficult that it has led to an increase in attempts to cross by sea or to some people departing for other routes into Europe, such as the one through Libya. For more details, see the report of Gadem et al. 2015.

33 The 'hot returns' from the borders of Ceuta and Melilla practised by the Guardia Civil, in collaboration with their Moroccan counterparts, violate the European Convention on Human Rights and the Geneva Convention in that they constitute collective deportations. Spain has been condemned for this practice by the European Court of Human Rights (see: CEDH, 3 October 2017, *N.D. et N.T. c. Espagne*, req. n° 8675/15 et 8697/15) as well as by the UN.

It is important to emphasise that a disproportionate use of force is made on both sides of the fence, by the Moroccan soldiers but also by the Guardia civil. Some men have died after being subject to violent repression:

Sometimes, you look for friends, you think that they have been arrested and you find them two weeks later, dead, close to the fence.

Close to the fence, if there were inquiries, many bodies would be found buried.

(Excerpts from interviews with a Nigerian man and a statutory refugee from Cameroon, Nador and Rabat in 2015)

The repression against women is more invisible, hidden behind apparent social respect for the essentialised figure of the 'vulnerable woman' and most of all the figure of the woman-as-mother. Generally, women are not targeted with physical blows and violence like the men are. But during my research, a staggering number of women told me they had been sexually assaulted or raped on the road or while they were blocked at the border by 'men in uniform' (soldiers) or civilians (locals and migrants), claims that have also been corroborated in previous work (Laacher 2010) and NGO reports (MSF 2010). The frequency of this indicates that sexual abuse of migrant women is neither residual nor occasional, but is in fact systemic, and that controlling mobilities can notably reinforce the control over women's bodies (Tyszler 2019).

On both sides, the border serves as both an institution and a demarcation line. The modes of passage and blockage vary, and violence intensifies according to the skin colour of the candidates for Europe. The border, as a social and political construct, thus embodies a place of racialised identity assignment, distinction, production of differentiated migratory movements and experiences, it (re)establishes a hierarchical social order and gradation of legitimate violence by the state and its representatives. The vulnerability produced by the securitisation of the border is therefore racialised and gendered, and it induces also different responses and resistances on the part of men and women, performed through their masculinities and femininities.

Modes of crossing

Young black men screaming together 'Boza! Boza! Boza!'³⁴ after passing through the fence at Ceuta or Melilla. This is the image that most frequently comes to mind

³⁴ 'Boza' means victory for those who succeed in crossing the border. According to different explanations, this expression may come from the Wolof or Bambara languages.

when mentioning the Moroccan-Spanish border. Or is it the image of soldiers, the rows of 4x4s, the batons, the blows, the blood flowing from the bodies wounded by the blades of the barbed wire, beaten up and driven back by Spanish-Moroccan security cooperation? In short, a lot of testosterone emerges from these recurring anti-migrant war scenes. It is important to note that the border-space is composed of a plurality of micro-spaces where social rules are not all the same.

Researchers have already pointed out that 'the detailed observation of experiences and social relations shows that men do not form a single category of power that is by definition superior. Depending on their properties or affiliations, whether geographical, ethnic, class, age, etc., men's relationship to gender norms and their positions towards women vary greatly. The masculine no longer appears dominant in essence, but as a category whose definition is based on an intersections of power relations in which many factors other than gender are involved' (Broqua, Doquet 2013: 8, translation ET). At the border, different models of masculinity coexist and clash.

In order to achieve their freedom of movement, despite the border being closed to them, three main tactics are used by people from Central and West Africa living on northern Moroccan soil. On a terrestrial level there are two: numerically, the most commonly used technique is the attempt to cross the Ceuta and Melilla barriers. 'Getting boza' through the barriers is a physical feat: run for several hours from the forest where you are, cross the Moroccan barrier covered with sharp barbed wire, a ditch, then the triple Spanish barriers, the highest of which is seven metres, then run again towards the centre for immigrants (*Centro de estancia temporal para inmigrantes*) located in the enclave, and all this without being spotted by the Moroccan and Spanish forces, despite sophisticated surveillance means (helicopter, radars, infra-red cameras, etc.). If people are caught by the military before, on, or after the fence, they are exposed to severe physical violence and a 'hot return' to Morocco as explained earlier. Another land-crossing technique is to enter the enclaves through a border crossing point by hiding in a vehicle. At the maritime level, it is to attempt to cross by boat, more or less precariously, either into one of the enclaves or directly onto the Spanish peninsula. In the region of Nador (near Melilla), depending on the way people want/are able to cross, they will live in different camps in the forest of Nador. Economic power also shapes the attempt of black people wanting to enter Europe. Crossing the barrier is the means of entry used by the poorest of migrants since it is free of charge (even if 'ghetto fees'³⁵ are paid to stay in the camps near the border).

35 In all the camps I visited, also called 'ghettos' by the migrants there, some 'fees' are required in order to have the 'right to stay' and to get the benefit of a 'bunker', as the self-made tents are called. Those fees can vary from one camp to another and generally amount to between ten and several dozen euros.

If a person has money,³⁶ s/he will prefer to pay for an attempt to cross by sea – by boarding a zodiac with other people – or, even better, to cross the land border by hiding in the double bottom of a car. In general, a person who can pay a large amount of money will spend much less time waiting in the forest for his or her turn to pass, will be able to leave faster, and will therefore suffer less (or no) repression from the military/police.

During the fieldwork, I was able to distinguish two main types of migrant camps in the forests at the border: the ones where people wait to cross by sea, where the population is rather mixed in terms of gender; and the ones where people (almost all men) wait to jump the fence. Even if their social organisation is close, with chiefs and relations of power between them and the rest of the people waiting to cross the border, the lived experience in the two types of camps is structured differently by the mode of crossing considered and the way people can negotiate their attempt.

Those who jump the fence: a masculinity of forced self-endangerment

The camps of ‘fence jumpers’ are often described by men who have spent time there as characterised by a military-like discipline and organisation. The militarisation of the border seems to rub off on the migrants’ praxis (Andersson 2014). In each camp, the chief is surrounded by his ‘soldiers’, who apply the rules he dictates to the rest of the people staying in the camp:³⁷ this is the ‘government of the forest’, as it is called by the people themselves. The chief’s authority in these camps derives from the seniority of his presence at the border. In this sense, seniority in terms of a person’s presence at the border can define the masculinity of a position of power at the border. The chief generally collects the ‘ghetto fees’ from people remaining in his camp. He is also the one who authorises collective attempts at passing through the fence.

36 In June 2017, for example, the price of a zodiac crossing in Nador varied between 1200 and 3500 euros depending on the mode and destination (Melilla or the peninsula). The price of a hidden passage in a vehicle to enter an enclave can cost twice or even three times the price of a zodiac space, since the attempt is much less risky (for the passengers) and much shorter.

37 The camps of people trying to jump the fence are organised more along the lines of nationality, even if sometimes various nationalities are mixed together. But depending on a person’s country of origin, he or she will refer to the chief of his/her same nationality. The camps may also be organised according to differences within the countries of origin or ethnic groups of the people present at the border. In the interviews, some groups are described or judged as more violent than others. For instance, the Cameroonians and the Nigerians are often depicted, by other West or Central African migrants, as particularly violent men, including in their relation with women. But it is beyond the scope of this research to respond to these allegations.

My ethnographic fieldwork among migrant men wanting to jump the fence reveals that when confronted with very violent repression from the Spanish and Moroccan forces many of them take refuge in a performance, in which they are 'brave soldiers' risking their life on the front line, in a border space that has become a place of war against them. *'We are the soldiers of a war we did not choose'*, some of them declare in interviews. The 'warriors' who 'strike'³⁸ at the barriers of Ceuta and Melilla are overwhelmingly male. In Melilla, in ten years of 'boza', there have been only two cases of women passing through the barriers. In addition, one of them took advantage of a broken barrier to pass through, a *'facilitated boza'*, so I was told. Many of the people I interviewed said: *'The barriers are too difficult for women'; 'It's too physical and too dangerous for them'*. The war that is fought at the level of barriers immediately excludes women from the struggle. Only men (even minors) go to the 'front'. 'Psychoanalytic feminists have remarked that the masculine positions are effectively built through a denial of their own vulnerability. (...) Such a mechanism of disavowal operates within the scene of power. In fact, it can work to exacerbate vulnerability (as a way of achieving power) or to disavow it (also as a way of achieving power).' (Butler, Gambetti, Sabsay 2016: 4) It is interesting to analyse the lexical field that defines the ways in which the border is crossed, such as the expression *'to shock the barrier'*, allegedly invented by Cameroonians, as several of my interlocutors told me during discussions. This action of *'shock[ing] the barrier'* and the masculine figure linked to it – 'the barrier shocker' – indicate that that physical force is required to cross the border using this method, which is consistent with the logic of the prerequisite of physical strength. This idea is confirmed by the appellation 'the Lions' that is very often used to refer to the fence jumpers, and which reflects the supposedly natural masculine force that is required to cross the border this way. Furthermore, a form of pious masculinity is also widespread among barrier jumpers. It is often intertwined with the warrior masculinity mentioned above. Sayings that are heard among men at the border include: *'It is God the force'; 'God is in control'*. Religious fervour can also serve to reinforce the self-esteem of delegitimised masculinities, such as those of black migrants in Morocco (Timera 2011) and particularly at the northern borders. In some camps in the forest, I observed self-made places of worship and times of collective prayer.

During the research, while some forms of classism could be observed and heard among those who could pay for zodiac crossings in reference to fence jumpers – seen as poor and less civilised people in how they have to use their bodies to cross the border – I also witnessed scenes where others praised the fence jumpers' courage. One day in June 2017 in Nador, an Ivorian man (who was planning a zodiac crossing)

38 According to the terms used by the persons in the interviews and during informal discussions.

told a Malian comrade who was severely injured from the fence: *'It's going to be alright commando, you are a strong man.'* The masculinity of barrier jumpers can also be praised by non-migrant actors. Following a recent collective crossing at the Melilla border, a group of Moroccan activists wrote on their Facebook page: *'Boza this October 21. Between 250 and 300 people managed to cross the damn barrier. Without a smuggler, without anything, this is the real boza, congratulations to the fighters.'* This statement is surprising in that it expresses a kind of meritocracy attached to border crossing: crossing barriers should be a 'pure' act, greeted and achieved with the strength of one's arms and one's determination. In this way, it also values a particular form of masculinity at the border, while depreciating others, particularly the masculinity of men who rely on smugglers to cross the border (by sea or by car). It is also common on social networks to read comments like: *'Congratulations to the Lions'* or *'That's what lions do'*, written by Spanish activists who use this expression (and others like 'Boza'), adopted by the migrants themselves to encourage the fence jumpers and celebrate their physical prowess and their masterful collective action. We can therefore see how NGOs and activists – with varying degrees of paternalism – can also be the 'judges' of what migrant masculinities should be encouraged at the border.

It is important to underline that in the asymmetrical war between black migrant men and Spanish and Moroccan soldiers the former are forbidden from defending themselves. Elsa Dorlin (2017), in the chapter titled 'The Disarmed Body Factory' in her book, writes about who has the right to defend him/herself by having a weapon, and who, on the contrary, is excluded from this privilege. For example, she recalls how in the colonies the French Black Code of 1685 prohibited slaves from carrying an offensive weapon, even a large stick, under penalty of the whip; and the same for the Spanish Black Code of 1768 in Santo Domingo. She argues that 'this ban on carrying and circulating in possession of weapons reveals a permanent concern of the settlers, which attests to the effectiveness of slave resistance practices', and that 'during the whole period of slavery, the disarmament of slaves was coupled with a real discipline of their bodies to keep them defenceless, which required punishing the slightest act of self-defence' (Dorlin 2017: 24, 26, translation ET). These analyses are helpful to study the political management of undesirable black migration at the Spanish-Moroccan border anchored in the colonality of power (Quijano 1992), pointing to the link between the treatment of black slaves yesterday and the treatment of black migrants today. This analogy is regularly mobilised by the migrants themselves in interviews and discussions. A notable difference being that the economic profit made on black migrants is not publicly acknowledged, but the business around the securitisation of the European borders is increasingly well documented (Rodier 2012; PorCausa 2017; Transnational Institute, Stop Wapenhande 2018) as well as the

exploitation of racialised and irregularised foreign workers in Europe, for instance.³⁹ Dorlin also points out that, at the time, the criminalisation of slaves' actions required costly monitoring. This is also the case today with border control, which is not only costly in financial terms but also in terms of lives. Even if they risk their lives, migrant men at the borders of Ceuta and Melilla are not expected to show signs of aggression towards the security forces. If they do, they will be considered even more criminal and dangerous than they were when they tried to cross the border 'irregularly'. Recent examples have shown that migrant men who dared to defend themselves – in front of armed forces – by using stones or other objects (handmade hooks used to climb the fence, for example) were immediately put in prison with the charge of 'criminal organisation'.⁴⁰ The collective passages organised by migrant men at the barriers, if they constitute a means of reversing the balance of power with the military, are also seen as the symbol of 'mafia organisation' according to the Spanish authorities interviewed. In other words, any act of resistance to the established order is seen as a crime. Self-defence is not permitted for the subaltern African migrant men. Only the military controlling the border is granted the right to carry and use weapons, and sometimes even a right to kill migrants at the border⁴¹ as a form of necropolitics (Mbembe 2003). This recalls what Elsa Dorlin conceptualised as the 'imperial economy of violence', which 'maintains the legitimacy of certain subjects to use physical force, confers on them a power of conservation and jurisdiction (of self-justice), grants them a license to kill' (Dorlin 2017: 15, translation ET). The Spanish-European migratory regime makes the racialised men at the fence violable and killable bodies, in continuity with the colonial regimes. The coloniality of the migration regime is striking here. But the analysis must be made more complex by taking into account the different levels of violent interaction: while some violence against the fence jumpers comes from the Moroccan side as described above, violence can also be experienced within the social organisation of migrants at the border and from humanitarian entities.

In the camps, violence can occur between migrant men if disagreements break out or if the rules imposed by the chief are not respected. During interviews or discussions, some told me about the severe physical punishments inflicted on men accused of spying for the Spanish or Moroccan authorities. In this sense, the figure of the

39 See, for instance, the issue of the review *Plein Droit*, titled 'Exploitations', 2017. Available from: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-plein-droit-2017-2.htm>.

40 See, for instance, *El País*, 2018. 'Detenidos por "organización criminal" 10 inmigrantes que saltaron la valla de Ceuta en julio'. Available from: https://elpais.com/politica/2018/08/28/actualidad/1535444604_886727.html.

41 The case of Tarajal in 2014, where at least 15 peoples were killed by the Spanish Guardia civil, is an example of the impunity that reigns at this border when it comes to protecting the border. See for instance: <http://www.migreurop.org/article2856.html>.

chief in these camps can be linked, in certain cases, to a position of power that can give way to physical violence against other men. For Mohammed Z., an Ivorian man who was one of my main informants, ‘violence inside the camps is correlated with external violence: the more political repression there is against migrants, the more violence there is internally, between migrants, because everyone is scared’.

During the fieldwork, I also identified another social position occupied by some men in the ‘government of the forest’ in fence jumpers’ camps: the ‘targeters’. This role could be defined as ‘border crossing technicians’. For ethical reasons, because I reckon that everything I have seen or heard from the people who agreed to be part of my research is not to be revealed, I will not go in depth into details here. But this other male figure is interesting, even if only mentioned in passing, because it places ‘technicality’, ‘precision’ – and not only physical force or authority – as recognised male skills at the border, and so it draws on another possible masculinity at the border. This ‘alternative’ masculinity differs from the stereotypical image of the bestialised men, who are reduced to their bodies, which is constantly reflected in the media and the political discourse relating to the people who jump the barriers at Ceuta and Melilla, and it is anchored in colonial imaginaries and the dichotomy between ‘non-white barbarians’ and ‘civilised whites’. But as with the ‘fence jumper’ group, ‘targeters’ exclude women, as demonstrated in this extract of an interview with a Cameroonian, a former targeter, in Rabat in 2015:

The targeters are made up just of men, you’ll never see a female targeter. It’s difficult because targeting is even more dangerous than crossing. So it’s a little difficult for the woman to integrate this kind of movement. Not that she’s incapable, but at this level it’s a little too difficult and risky. It is good when they are accompanied by protectors and there they have more access to attempts to cross the border.

These remarks reveal how the construction of roles in the governance and the organisation of migrant camps at the border is always done by means of evoking the dangerousness of the context, especially for women. It also shows how the sexual and technical division of labour is shaped by militarised logic – this ex-targeter being also an ex-military in Cameroon. Men always position themselves as the (necessary) protectors (Enloe 2000), but this protection logic often conceals relations of domination over women (Young 2003).

In the same region, but in other camps, where women and men wait to cross by sea, another chief male figure in the social organisation at the border has emerged because of the obstacles placed at the borders. Talking about this figure provides insight into another form of masculinity among a few migrant men, while revealing

the social production of certain femininities and of the conditions of particular vulnerability of migrant women at the border. As researchers have already shown, 'the norms of masculinity differ not only according to the context, but also, within each context, through the more or less visible negotiations undertaken by individuals or groups around their definitions. Beyond hegemonic forms, the masculine is shaped by a plurality of norms or values that coexist or clash' (Broqua, Doquet 2013: 7, translation ET).

The figure of the Chairman and the control of women at the border

The camps of people waiting to cross the border by sea – camps in which numerous women can be found, unlike in the fence-jumper camps – is generally organised along patriarchal lines, with authority still held by migrant men, who are labelled 'chairmen'. As in the other camps described above, they establish the rules of life of the camp, but they also organise attempts to cross by sea or by car, in close collaboration with Moroccan (or Spanish) partners who manage the departures of the zodiacs.⁴² *'Moroccans tell the chairmen how many people can get on each convoy, and then it is the chairmen who decide who will leave'*, explained one Cameroonian woman who had made several unsuccessful crossing attempts. The spatial organisation of these camps, that I could observe, reflects social control, since the shelters where the women sleep are very often located near the chairman's tent. Even though many (men) consider women unable to cope with this life, their presence is in reality desirable, above all for certain men in positions of power in the camps.

Because the *'barriers are for men'*, many of my interlocutors explained at the border that women are generally assigned to the sea route, to attempt to cross by zodiac. During my fieldwork, some women explained that they were encouraged by chairmen to cross the border while pregnant because it would help them, once in Spain or Europe in general, to obtain papers or social assistance. To increase the chances of passing by sea, the use of pregnancy is also a developed tactic. This is the result of expertise accumulated by migrant people after finding that the Spanish rescue authorities are more likely to intervene (and then take them to Spain) if pregnant women (or women with children) are present on board. Thus, some migrant

42 In this context, the 'chairman' or 'thiaman' appoints a camp leader in the surrounding forests of the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, where candidates to cross the border by sea are gathered. The figure of the chairman in the forest is linked to the chairman in the city, described in Pian's works (2009). At the border, the chairmen are a direct link in the border crossing system. Chairmen are often 'former migrants' who tried the passage themselves. They often end up doing it again, when their business goes bad or when they become tired of it and want to go to Europe.



women come pregnant, or are 'invited' to do so under varying degrees of coercion, in order to have a better chance of getting into a zodiac. In this configuration, the female presence is therefore beneficial to other men. On the other hand, female menstruation is prohibited during the crossing:

You have to control your cycle, really. On the day of the attempt, you must not find your period in the zodiac. So you have to be sure of yourself, that your period will fall on such and such days. It has to be far away. If you have not controlled your cycle and you have your period in the zodiac, it is dangerous for you. With the sharks there, you're going to kill a lot of people.

(Excerpt from an interview with G. K, a Congolese (DRC) woman, 34 years old, Melilla, June 2017)

If the chairman knows, he never puts you in the convoy, because he doesn't know how it works, he thinks you cannot control it.

(Excerpt from an interview with D. T, a Senegalese woman, 21 years old, Rabat, March 2017)

This prohibition forces them to adopt strategies to avoid menstruation, such as swallowing birth control pills, often without respecting the prescribed doses, as several told me. The border crossing procedures are thus completely gendered and women find themselves even more constrained in their bodies, which they must control at all costs or must bend to the strategies of other men in hopes of being able to cross (Tyszler 2019).

In the camps, women use sex work as a financial resource or a bargaining chip to survive in the forest and pay for the crossing to Europe. Other women are forced to have sex to obtain the protection of a man who will shield them from other men and/or allow them to satisfy their basic daily needs while waiting in the forest. Still others are prevented from attempting the crossing if they do not give in to the sexual blackmail of the chairman on whom their trip depends, as some women from Congo and Liberia I met at the border explained:

There are chairmen who only seek to sleep with women. So if you're there, you're a woman, you're going to go through him first, then you travel... it's like that. If you don't want to give in, he doesn't want to put you in a zodiac either.

(Excerpt from an interview with G. K, a Congolese (DRC) woman, 34 years old, Melilla, June 2017)

When I first came to Nador, I was pregnant and I had the money. It's because I refused the chairman that he didn't let me travel and blocked my 2500 euros. It is impossible for a woman, even if she is pregnant or has a child, to go without sleeping with the chairmen.

(Excerpt from an interview with J. B, a Liberian woman, 28 years old, Rabat, July 2017)

The explanations developed by these women describe the control exercised by some chairmen over women's attempts to cross the border. The various interviews indicate that not all chairmen do this, but sexual blackmail is experienced by the majority of women who have spent time in these camps. Some chairmen are accused – by migrant women and sometimes also by other migrant men – of having made several dozen women pregnant. This outlines a possible masculinity of the chairmen at the border that is based on sexual virility and is aimed at accumulating sexual conquests. Inseparable from gender, sexuality constitutes a space of practices where power relations are expressed and negotiated, especially between men and women. This shows what gender production, and masculinity in particular, owes to sexuality (Broqua, Eboko 2009). The situations of women at the border mirror a system of economic-sexual exchange (Tabet 2005) in which sexuality is a service provided by women, pending compensation from men. This model adds more layers to economic-sexual exchange beyond the exclusive concept of the prostitute, showing that many women can be engaged in this system – a 'continuum' – which views sexuality as a bargaining chip between two partners. But sex work can also be a way for women to assert themselves as subjects and to own their labour force (Pheterson 2001; Tabet 2005). Numerous studies on the logic of economic and sexual exchanges in various African countries have revealed the strong intertwining of sexuality, gender and economic status (Newell 2009; Castro 2012; Groes-Green 2013; Broqua et al. 2014). In Morocco, some research showed that children and sex can be used by migrant women to improve their economic survival and thus increase their mobility opportunities (Pian 2010; Stock 2011). We thus see in the relations between chairmen and women, a non-symmetrical co-production of masculinities and femininities that emerges in the context of constrained mobility.

Social relations between migrant men and women at the border are thus multifaceted and complex and situations vary from one camp and one group to the others. Some chairmen are appreciated and considered reliable and helpful. It is important to maintain a nuanced vision. Stories point to sibling-like relationships and solidarity between women and men. Some men do not fit into the patterns of domination over women described above and even adopt new roles usually considered more feminine, such as cooking: *'Guys who have lost their money to cross over, since they still want*

to leave, the chairmen asks them to cook and so they earn a little. In our camp it was guys like that who cooked for everyone', said one Senegalese woman in a discussion in 2017. Authors have written about the effect of men's impoverishment as reducing their dominance over women (Silberschmidt 2001; Perry 2005) and sometimes forcing them to assume professional roles traditionally attributed to the opposite sex (Agadjanian 2002). Furthermore, some men admit a certain vulnerability, as expressed by one Senegalese man in a discussion in 2016: *'We are boxed migrants (...). Boxed means frustrated, unhappy, angry, paranoid, disappointed. Many are depressed and feel all this.'* It is noteworthy that men are more likely to share a sense of vulnerability related to their mental or psychological state, but rarely to their physical state (except in the case of illness). On the contrary, women point out the vulnerability induced by their female bodies, as explained by a Congolese woman I met in Rabat in 2017: *'On the road you are always vulnerable (...) Men don't get raped like that, women always, it's unavoidable. (...) Women always suffer, always.'*

The border space does not seem to induce a disruption or a reorganisation of the social relations of sex. If some transformations occur in this specific context, the analysis of the modalities of crossing and surviving/living in the forest suggests that gender orders and male domination resist change, and that border security reinforces a continuum of violence against women at all levels (Tyszler 2019).

During the research, I did not ask the chairmen about sexual violence/blackmail against women at the border, but some hypotheses can be put forward to analyse it. According to Broqua and Doquet (2013: 3), 'in most African countries, the history of masculinities is directly marked by the effects of colonial conquests that have caused the transformation of its forms (Hodgson 1999), particularly through the destabilization of existing power systems and the weakening of the weight of the elderly (Rich 2009; McCullers 2011), or even more broadly by the inferiorization of black men'.⁴³ While we can see, in the case of chairmen at the border, a link between sexual violence and the affirmation of power – and without denying the existence of sexist social orders in the countries of origin that are anchored in specific historical and social contexts – it is crucial to understand the reactivation or reinforcement of this violence, in the specific context of the Spanish-Moroccan border, as one of the effects of the closure of borders and the business that has emerged more broadly around the EU external borders. Jane Freedman (2012), using the example of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, shows that the inability to live up to

43 The establishment of apartheid in South Africa and its subsequent abolition may be among the most striking examples of this process, which explains the abundance of literature on masculinities in that country (Morrell 2002; Reid, Walker 2005) showing the link between political transformation or nation-building and the evolution of the masculine form (Broqua, Doquet 2013).

the perceived expectations of masculinity may be offset by the exaggeration of other forms of behaviour perceived as male, such as aggression or violence. Sexual violence has a crucial role in building a certain form of masculinity in the face of failure or the mere suspicion of failure to fulfil a perceived male role. She identifies a gap between 'ideal masculinity' and 'lived masculinities', a gap that in turn can fuel violence against women as a means of strengthening male identities. Chairmen at the Moroccan-Spanish border are often migrants who also originally came to cross but did not succeed and grew tired of trying. By becoming chairman, they can then earn a lot of money and significantly improve their situation. Often, chairmen end up leaving, either because they are tired of living in the forest and want to leave for Europe, or because they have problems (with unsatisfied passengers) and want to flee.

Nevertheless, the hegemonic masculinity of the chairmen in these camps is no longer hegemonic once outside, and that these men immediately become subject to the racialisation processes prevailing at national level. The masculinities that could be described as hegemonic in a certain context are likely to no longer be hegemonic from one moment to the next – for instance, in the case of detention as putative 'illegal' migrants. But in some cases, hegemonic masculinities support each other and coexist – as illustrated by the financial benefits that allow some chairmen to support themselves at the border for a very long time because they collaborate with Moroccan (and sometimes Spanish) locals⁴⁴ to maintain the crossing business. These categories of masculinities in power are therefore extremely volatile and subject to the dynamics of other power relations, particularly race and class in the case of the border. These categories are fluctuating, they are 'configurations of practices' (Connell 1995) depending on the contexts in which they are used. Moreover, it is necessary to note that preserving the chairmen's hegemonic masculinity and the vulnerable femininity of women can be reinforced by humanitarian interventions at the border.

The 'vice police' at the border: the humanitarian-security nexus

Part of the field research closely followed, for one month, the work of a humanitarian-religious organisation, which carries out, among other activities, visits and the distribution of food and clothing in the migrant camps of the Nador region. The visits are made by 4x4 cars to the campsites in the forest. During each visit, the members of the organisation always go first to the camp chairman – either they already know him or ask the residents who the chairman is. This practice thus reinforces the established hierarchy and makes it impossible to establish closer contacts with people in the camps, particularly with women. *'It is impossible to do activities with*

44 Civilians, members of the security forces and sometimes politicians.

women only in the forest. There are always men coming to control what's going on', explained one Spanish humanitarian worker employed by the organisation. Beyond, as they put it, 'respecting' the social order that prevails in the camps (that I analyse as part of the folklorisation of migrant camps), the members of the organisation apply their gendered norms and produce gendered instructions, as illustrated in these excerpts from my field notebook:

Today, at the team meeting, Almudena⁴⁵ reported on the people she visited in the hospital yesterday. She told us that one of the pregnant migrant women who were brought to the hospital to give birth has HIV and her child probably has it too. I asked her if she had already told Sira, the woman in question, to whom I had already paid several visits. She answered: 'Of course I told her. I told her: "What did you expect if you prostitute yourself in the forest?"' A few days later, we learned that the hospital had made a mistake in the results and that another woman was infected with HIV, not Sira. Nador, June 2017

During a visit to the hospital today, a migrant woman seemed lost. As a volunteer I asked her if she needed help. She was holding a baby in her arms. One of the members of the organisation saw me and made me understand that this woman should not be helped. Later, I was told that this woman had tried to have an abortion and that her baby was born with 1% of its brain because of the substances she had ingested to try to have an abortion. I learned that this woman had been 'blacklisted' by the sisters. The logic in the organisation was therefore as follows: a woman who has attempted to have an abortion⁴⁶ equals a woman who will no longer be helped. However, the organisation pretends it operates on 'vulnerability' criteria to provide humanitarian aid to migrants. Nador, June 2017

These examples show how humanitarian and religious organisations can help to produce women's vulnerability and define the contours of shameful femininity among migrant women. The members of the organisation in question constitute a 'vice police' aimed at preserving exemplary moral standards of femininity. These various examples also confirm that 'vulnerability' is not naturally reserved for women but is distributed in a differentiated way because of the multiple mechanisms of instructions, oppression, and dispossession (Butler 2016). This illustrates the humanitarian-security nexus at the borders of Europe (Andersson 2017), and it must be pointed out that

45 All names have been changed.

46 Note: Abortion is forbidden in Morocco, but some women abort 'secretly' and abortion pills can be found on the 'black market'. In addition, the members of the organisation in question are Catholics and against abortion.

this organisation, like most NGOs in Morocco working with migrants, is financed by European cooperation agencies involved in the struggle against immigration. In the frame of the research, qualitative interviews with women were always conducted outside the camps and outside the NGOs' activities, because they were both environments that were too constrained and were governed by social, moral, and religious norms and values.

Moreover, in the eyes of the communities of origin, women travelling on the roads to Europe are rarely seen as heroines, unlike the men: 'Just as the figure of the male adventurer could, despite its fundamental devaluation, be the source or object of heroism, that of the female adventurer ambivalently reflected the image of the wrong woman and that of the autonomous and entrepreneurial woman.' (Timera 2009: 190, translation ET)

Facing multilevel, multidimensional, and continuous control of their bodies, women at the border mobilise daily resistance in different ways (Tyszler 2019). Sometimes, they also collectively face the regimes that want to maintain them as subordinated:

Last time, they arrested us, we did 24 hours in the gendarmerie, we didn't eat. There were pregnant women that were not doing well (...). We asked the gendarmes to give them food, but they refused. So we protested. We girls got up and said we're going to get out of here, that if they don't want to feed the women, we're going to get out. They said, 'Okay, let's see how you get out of here, do you think we're having fun?'. We took the road but they stopped us, they said 'it's okay, if they come with me', I say 'no they don't come with you, we all go together', 'you give them [food] in front of us'. It's because we made a disturbance there, we yelled at them, they saw that we were going to leave, so they couldn't do anything. That's why they went there to get the bread.

(Excerpt from an interview with D.T, a Senegalese woman, 21 years old, Rabat, March 2017)

Conclusion

The constructions of 'border femininities and masculinities', in their plurality, are the product of the multiple regimes that simultaneously constrain the bodies of people attempting to migrate. Two types of masculinity appear more clearly to be generated by the militarised context of the border. The most widespread is the 'warrior-like masculinity' of men trying to jump the fence based on a forced self-endangerment. There is also the masculinity of the chairmen situated within the business of the sea crossing of the closed border. But these categories are not fixed, a former 'warrior' may one day become chairman, for example. Concerning the first type of masculinity

mentioned, men are rendered vulnerable by the repressive context against them, but also because they do not (completely) acknowledge their vulnerability at the border, portraying themselves as strong and courageous men – in a binary contrast to supposedly weak women in need of protection. Thus, they take high risks in their quest for freedom of movement. Concerning the second type of masculinity, the chairmen elevate themselves above others, and they subjugate others, mainly women, by exercising gender and sexual relations of domination over them,⁴⁷ thus generating sexually abused and controlled femininities at the border.

Furthermore, the research showed how a plurality of external actors legitimise/delegitimise and value/depreciate certain forms of migrant masculinities and femininities at the border. NGOs and activists sometimes reinforce a moral and gender order. As Andersson (2017) argues, it is necessary to understand some humanitarian measures within the frame of a larger assemblage of migration controls. In addition, the reactivation of colonial imaginaries in political discourses serves to legitimise the violence of states against migrants at the border and restores a racist social order. Emmanuel Blanchard (2008) writes that the prevalence of colonial representations of sexuality is partly at the root of political demands for police intervention and the social acceptance of violence by the police against those considered ‘undesirable’ Algerian immigrants in France after World War II. In the context of the Moroccan-Spanish border, the security and militaristic discourse similarly refers to the dangerousness of black men, mentioning their ‘illegal behaviours’, but also referring to their sexual practices towards women. Claiming as their excuse their effort to combat the trafficking of migrant women, the authorities on both sides of the border claim that their policies are ‘pro-women’; however, they do not really protect women but are instead trying to justify political violence at the border (Tyszler 2019). This reveals the coloniality of the gendered regime (Lugones 2010) that overlaps with the racialised migration regime which orchestrates war against black migrants.

The ‘forced soldiers’ who are the migrant men trying to cross the barriers of Ceuta and Melilla survive by staging their hyper-virility and also their organisational abilities. Their physical prowess and collective mobilisation succeed in temporarily disrupting the established order, even if they will eventually be crushed again once the border is crossed or as they are returned back to Morocco. Women, even more constrained by the intertwining of racist, sexist, and sexual orders that crystallise at the border, usually

47 It should be noted that the ‘warrior masculinity’ concerns a large number of migrant men and is performed collectively, while the ‘chairman masculinity’ only concerns a limited number of men involved in the business of the passage, which has emerged owing to the border’s closure to undesirable migrants into Europe. It would be useful to be able to conduct interviews with several chairmen to better understand the contours of this hegemonic masculinity, which is mainly described in the stories of the women who were abused by them at the border.

do not act in force and en masse, the way barrier jumpers do. While their survival and mobility tactics and resistance are much more invisible, they are nonetheless real.

These border femininities and masculinities, anchored in their previous lived experience and constantly remodelled according to the always violent and shifting context, are the product of the forms of power and the relations of domination that migrants face at the border, as well as being a reflection of their resistance to these situations. Studying the conditions in which these (more or less) ephemeral gendered social positions are produced and performed helps to provide a much more detailed understanding of the current consequences of migration policies resulting from the European obsession with security and (white) identity. This study sheds light on the State masculinism of European Union members and their allies, as manifested in their militarised approach to dealing with certain migrations, and on what this generates in terms of gender, sexual, and racist violence.

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