CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

THE PARADOX OF HUMANITARIAN RECOGNITION: Blackness, Predation, and Non-Statist Solidarities in the Migration of Eritreans to Europe

FIORI SARA BERHANE
University of Southern California
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0403-1918

In June 2019, Medhanie Tesfamariam Berhe was released from a Palermo jail after serving three years in prison in a case of mistaken identity. Berhe, an Eritrean refugee and dairy farmer residing in Sudan at the time of his arrest, had been extradited to Italy as part of a joint British-Italian-Sudanese operation to track down the alleged human trafficker Medhanie Yehedgo Mered. A genetic test and voice recognition software finally exonerated Berhe, after which Italy granted him political asylum. Berhe's transformation from alleged criminal trafficker to political asylee hinged not only on technology but on his national identity. As an Eritrean, he was eligible for asylum because the European Union (EU) recognized the conditions that led to the mass flight of young Eritreans: mandatory mass military conscription; threats of arbitrary detention, disappearance, and political violence; and retributive state violence toward family members (UNHCR 2015, 2016). Even as an asylee, however, Berhe found himself convicted by Italy for aiding and abetting illegal migration under the Bossi Fini laws because he had paid for his cousin's passage through Libya.[1] If no longer a purported human trafficker, in the eyes of the Italian state, Berhe remained a criminal, even as he was at the same time a recognized political refugee—all for actions taken outside of Italy's jurisdiction. Berhe's case illustrates that the Italian state and the EU have responded to the arrival

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, Vol. 39, Issue 3, pp. 374–399, ISSN 0886-7356, online ISSN 1548-1360. Cultural Anthropology *is the journal of the Society of Cultural Anthropology, a section of the American Anthropological Association.* Cultural Anthropology *journal content published since 2014 is freely available to download, save, reproduce, and transmit for noncommercial, scholarly, and educational purposes under the Creative Commons BY-NC 4.0 license. Reproduction and transmission of journal content for the above purposes should credit the author and original source. DOI: 10.14506/ca39.3.03*

of Eritreans by instituting a range of repressive measures—some transnational in scope—alongside their recognition of the political crisis in Eritrea. The case of Berhe and of Eritreans' migration to Italy more generally exemplify what I call the *paradox of humanitarian recognition*: 1) Eritreans continue to enjoy some of the highest protection rates among asylum seekers in the global North;[2] yet 2) they are targets of preemptive detention and blocking within Africa and, once they arrive in Europe, of surveillance and even criminalization as purported perpetrators of human smuggling and trafficking.[3] Altogether, the experience of Eritreans migrating to Europe reveals the contradictions between the moral economy of asylum in contemporary Europe (Fassin 2005, 2011; Ticktin 2006, 2011) and the geopolitical and political-economic realities of clandestine migration that propels people to European shores (Andersson 2014).

The EU has partnered with the nominal authorities in Libya to intercept and return clandestine migrant boats, as well as with the governments of the Horn of Africa to stop the supposed trafficking of Eritreans, more specifically. Berhe's prosecution and extradition were made possible by one such repressive measure: the EU–Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative—or the Khartoum Process—a joint EU and African Union project to stem human trafficking from the Horn of Africa that began in 2014.

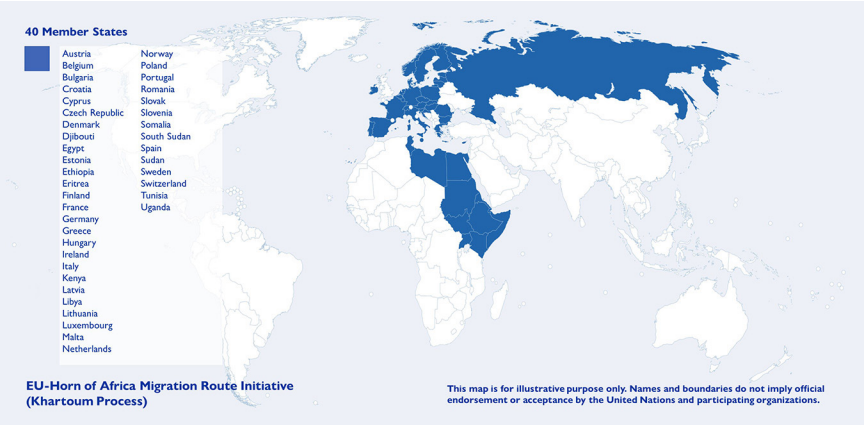

Figure 1. Map of member states participating in the Khartoum Process.

The Khartoum Process forms part of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), the EU's framework for the externalization of migration controls, which involves the outsourcing of border policing to third-party states or entities. The program partners with governments in the Horn of Africa to "assist in improving national capacity building in the field of migration management" (IOM

2024). Since then, most of the money earmarked for the initiative has gone toward law enforcement and border security (Oette and Babiker 2017). These efforts have largely proven successful at reducing the number of Eritrean arrivals to the EU. In 2015, arrivals to the EU numbered over 60,000; in 2021, that number had dwindled to 7,000. Yet these repressive mechanisms have not considerably lowered recognition rates from a high of 91 percent in 2015 to 81 percent in 2021.[4] Rather than EU policies toward Eritreans oscillating between what Didier Fassin (2005) described as "compassion and repression," which would move from blocking/rejection to facilitation of movement/recognition, Eritreans experience compassion *through* repression. They remain beneficiaries of international protection not despite but rather through the extralegal violence of contemporary bordering regimes. In other words, Eritreans survive the border complex the EU has created to claim refuge only to become subject to criminalization should they arrive in Europe. Rather than a rejection of legal recognition, or "illegalization" (De Genova 2001; Willens 2007; Andersson 2014), humanitarian recognition entraps Eritreans under refugee policies that have shifted from "human rights to border enforcement and then to organized crime" (Morrison 2001, 74). For Berhe and others, legal recognition did not accord protection from state violence, as is commonly assumed. Instead, recognition entraps Eritreans by transforming their mobility into de facto criminal action.

Berhe's case represented a newly normal part of daily life for my interlocutors. Over the course of nineteen months together, from 2015 to 2018, we witnessed dramatic transformations in Italian law and policies around refugee mobility that routinized the kind of legal entrapment Berhe experienced. Indeed, the Italian context itself changed dramatically with the beginning of the migration crisis,[5] in which one million refugees from Africa and the Middle East arrived in Europe; the election of the first far-right governing coalition in postwar Western European history; as well as a marked increase in racially motivated hate crimes targeting Black Africans. While my research project initially focused on intergenerational conflict among diasporic Eritreans in Emilia Romagna, it became difficult to ignore the reverberations of new border policies in the context of this pronounced rightward shift. Externalization policies displaced the violence of bordering from Europe to the Saharan Desert and to the borderlands of North Africa, and in doing so preserved the privileges of asylum for those who manage to get to Europe (Morrison 2001; Besteman 2016, 2020). Eritreans have been the beneficiaries of this international protection since the 1980s, when more than one-third of Eritrea's population was exiled during the thirty-year nationalist war between

Eritrean guerillas and successive Ethiopian regimes, and for decades there have been large settled Eritrean communities in much of Northern Europe. For Eritreans in Europe with family members trapped in Libya, the reverberations of these policies were intimate in nature—the violence contained elsewhere was never entirely elsewhere. The same also held true for me. Throughout my fieldwork, I listened to stories of predation and extreme violence in casual conversations at bars and homes. My interlocutors shared images and videos of torture and killings in Libya via Facebook Live in hopes of garnering media attention to what were, at the time, Europe's secret deals. They often posted these videos onto my own timeline, hoping that my position at an elite American institution would also bring visibility to occluded violence. In solidarity, I translated the testimonies of those entrapped in Libya from Tigrinya to English for a prospective case at the European Court of Human Rights, which at the time of writing has yet to transpire. The violence I documented took an enormous emotional and physical toll on me, as did the deep hostility I felt daily as a Black woman and non-native Italian speaker at a time when anti-Black violence was marked, visible, and publicly accepted.

Though recognition under asylum law is predicated on exceptional political violence directed at an individual, for many of my interlocutors, asylum was not coterminous with or delimited to the singular event of legal recognition, nor was it a highly individuated experience (Cohen 2012). Rather, I argue that asylum seeking is processual and takes place within a wider social and geographic field that implicates state and non-state actors alike: EU migration officials; the Eritrean state and its diaspora; those who facilitated/blocked movement across international borders; and, finally, the refugees themselves. Importantly, their experiences reveal the complicated and contradictory place of Eritrean migrants as abjected Black Africans, former colonial subjects, and as relatively privileged refugees. Some historical context is necessary here. Italy's system of migration control has roots in its colonial occupation of Libya, Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia, as Stephanie Malia Hom (2019) has argued. More recently, in 2008, Italy signed the Friendship Accords with Libya, giving Italian companies exclusive rights to oil exploration in the country, the profits of which the country then reinvested to build migrant detention facilities (Ronzitti 2009). In sum, the example of Eritreans migrating to Europe elucidates the racial and colonial politics of migration policing in Europe more widely. This migration regime implicates and targets not only individual migrants across vast territories but entire communities for racialized surveillance and punishment—collective punishment of the colonial kind.

BLACKNESS AND THE REFUGEE REGIME

The category of *refugee* is a privileged one that accords legal protection, worth, and care (Martin 1988; Fassin 2005); it is constituted vis-à-vis the exclusion of its corollary, the expendable and deportable *economic migrant*. Under the auspices of the 1951 Refugee Convention, refugees are those whose claims of persecution are recognized by a receiving state. However, the label *economic migrant* does not constitute a legal category but rather a discursive one, which emerged in the 1980s, differentiating between "deserving" refugees, who are fleeing violence, from "undeserving" economic migrants, who leave their countries for opportunities elsewhere (Chimni 1998). This discourse is tied to the "non-entrée" regime: policies that warehouse and contain refugees from the Global South in camps (Malkki 1996; Besteman 2016, 2020; Agier 2008). These policies make reaching countries of the Global North almost impossible. Indeed, many have argued that the binary between refugees and economic migrants is a false one, designed to exclude the significant number of people who would qualify for legal protection under the auspices of the 1951 Refugee Convention (Holmes and Castaneda 2017; Mayblin 2017). A large body of literature has documented the lengths to which Global North states will go to restrict migrants' access to political protection: from setting up extensive documentary regimes that aim to adduce the "truth" of their suffering (Fassin 2013; Ticktin 2011), to the strengthening of deportation and detention regimes once those claims are denied (De Genova and Peutz 2010; Kahn 2019; Haas 2023), to militarizing and increasing the lethality of land and sea borders as forms of "deterrence" (De Leon 2015; Kahn 2019), to, finally, establishing border-externalization mechanisms in countries of transit (Frelick, Kysel, and Podkul 2016). Yet to qualify as a refugee, one must cross an international border, and Article 31 of the convention recognizes that those facing persecution often cannot cross borders legally. By further criminalizing unauthorized movement, Europe also criminalizes refugees.

This violence acts as a form of subjectivation, as those denied authorized channels of movement come to embody the labels attached to them (Andersson 2014, 2018; Willens 2007). Migrants become "illegalized" and live a clandestine existence under regimes of legal exclusion. Nevertheless, in the literature, race and colonialism are, to borrow a useful phrase from Adia Benton (2016, 269), "epigraphic" or "epigrammatic"—"situated in a space peripheral or marginal to the main text, hovering over it in ways that make it easy to deny its centrality and significance," mentioning race solely in passing. In contrast, by taking a perspective that emphasizes the raced and colonial roots of migration and humanitarian

policy (Achiume 2019; Mayblin 2017), I demonstrate how legal recognition entraps migrants in the name of protection—both spatially, cordoning migrants in "spaces of exception," and legally, as when governments induce a crime by forcing refugees and their families to pay smugglers, as with Berhe. Here, the work of Black feminist thinkers is instructive. Saidiya Hartman (1997) demonstrates how for those newly emancipated from chattel slavery, emancipation entailed legal inscription within a system of liberal governance that accorded criminality rather than rights to Black subjects. Hartman (1997, 82) writes that "the slave was recognized as a reasoning subject who possessed intent and rationality solely in the context of criminality." Even after abolition, freedom entailed new forms of subjectivation that departed from slavery but never fully transcended it. Simply put, legal recognition did not accord freedom, but rather inscription within a different system of containment. Anti-Black racism marks Black people as criminals from the outset.

However, anti-Black racism is situated within specific historical and geographic contexts. In much of Europe, the supposedly illegal migrant is metonymically linked to "African" (Andersson 2014), and in Italy, the "racial criminalization of migration" (Palidda 2011) focuses largely on African migrants (Angel-Ajani 2002). Further, refugee recognition rates register the differential worth accorded to Black lives, bolstering this racialized hierarchy: African migrants have some of the lowest recognition rates, endure lengthier detention, and are deported in greater numbers relative to their representation in the wider population in countries of the Global North (Ghabra 2022). For Eritreans, recognition as refugees marked the beginning of their problems. The inescapable fact of Blackness (Fanon 2008) meant that legal recognition accorded them provisional rights alongside criminal liability. Recognition absolved the architects of border-externalization policies of responsibility for border deaths by blaming those deaths on the Eritrean community itself.

In many ways, this apportionment of responsibility follows from the discourse that has recently emerged in the EU—that of the "war on migrant smuggling." Inspired by the writings of Carl Schmitt (2005), many have argued that the discourse of war allows governments to suspend the ordinary mechanisms of the rule of law within a "state of exception" (Agamben 2004; Foucault 1978). Indeed, the state of exception has become the overarching analytical framework by which scholars make sense of the increasingly structured and extraordinary exclusion of nonwhite migrants. In other words, the literature frames the EU's border-externalization deals as "abnormal" and in contravention of much of refugee law, even though their architects themselves view them as part of the overwhelming

need to manage migration and to maintain asylum as an institution (V. Cochetel, personal communication, April 2018). A different picture emerges when we pivot our attention to the "coloniality" of asylum (Mayblin 2017, 39)—we can see that asylum is implicated in an epistemic order "inseparably bound to the European colonial project"—as well as the range of concrete and material practices that frame coloniality. Here, my analysis is indebted to Laleh Khalili's (2012, 22) work on colonial counterinsurgency—a form of asymmetric warfare, or "colonial policing," that targets an insurgent population for detention and confinement. It includes practices such as indefinite detention in sites outside the legal borders of the liberal state, often executed by client or proxy states. Khalili argues that these illiberal practices, undertaken in the name of protection and underpinned by discourses of racial hierarchy, are constitutive of the liberal democratic order itself. Likewise, a war on migrant smuggling is an asymmetric war that involves the use of extraordinary measures to "save" the institution of asylum from undeserving masses. By framing Eritreans' migration—and migration from the Third World to the First World, more broadly—as smuggling/trafficking, this discourse, and the practices it authorizes, enables the collective surveillance, containment, and punishment of restive populations.

By analyzing asylum seeking as a social and political process, we can see how the paradox—-that legal recognition entraps rather than protects—is at work not only in the migration of Eritreans to Europe but also in large-scale transformations in the refugee regime more generally. In the case of Eritreans, who represent an exception in terms of their high recognition rates, EU measures to supposedly save refugees from trafficking focus on blocking their movements, making it almost impossible for Eritreans to reach the protection and refuge they seek. On a policy level, humanitarian recognition transforms asylum from a privileged form of political protection to a mere technicality. Because refugee mobility is framed as a war on smuggling and trafficking, the suspension of even basic norms governing the 1951 convention become conceivable. Examples include the fact that countries once deemed unsafe—such as Libya, which is not a signatory to the convention—are transformed into safe third countries. In the case of Libya, militias come to work closely with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) officials to maintain a fiction of minimum standards for refugees entrapped in detention. Nevertheless, some of the older forms of economic exploitation associated with illegality endure for those who do manage to reach the Global North, where even those with legal recognition are conscripted to labor either in illicit

economies or in government-backed exploitative labor arrangements under poorly regulated private-sponsorship schemes.

Second, the externalization policies harden the borders of African countries (Landau 2019) as part of a broader strategy of what Loren Landau (2019, 171) describes as "development containment," an enforced sedentarization in the name of preventing migrants from drowning in the sea that actually "reflect[s] a fearful contempt of poor Africans shared by collaborative leaders in Africa and Europe." Measures by the EU to "break the business model of human smuggling" focus on strengthening the capacities of transit states to police borders and establish the presumed rule of law in bordering processes.[6] These efforts to contain and immobilize Eritreans, however, spur the very onward migration the EU is attempting to arrest and, in the process, create new forms of harm: Eritreans are targeted for preemptive detention by state actors and for kidnap, extortion, and ransom by non-state actors (Kuschminder and Triandafyllidou 2020).

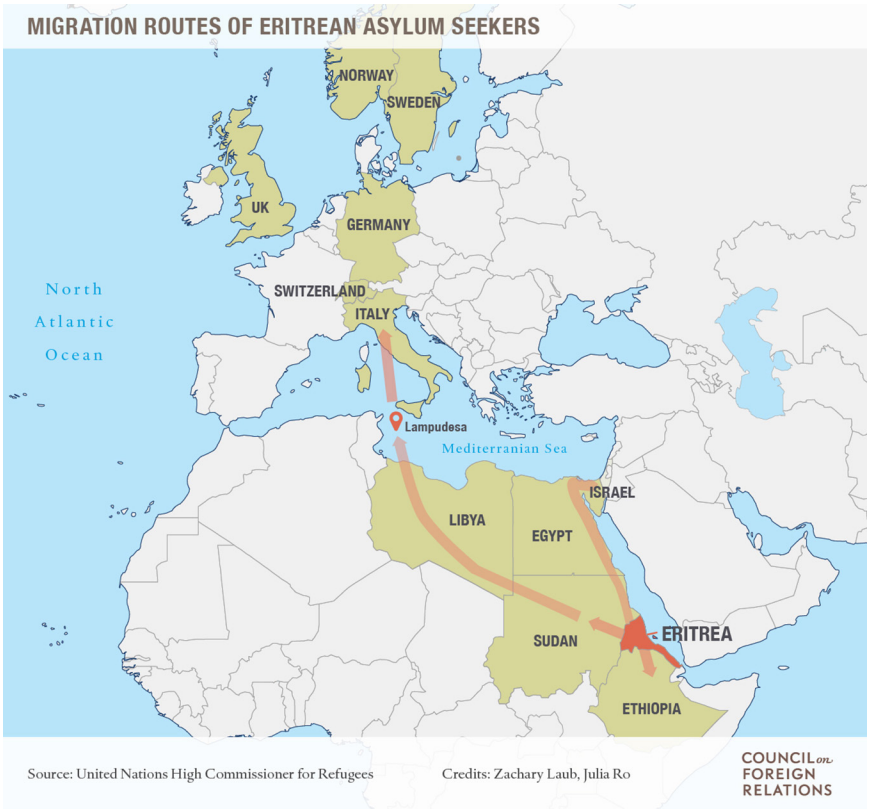

Figure 2. A map of the migration routes of Eritrean asylum seekers from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Photo by Zachary Laub and Julia Ro.

In Sudan, rights groups have documented targeted mass roundups of Eritreans by Sudanese authorities following the introduction of the Khartoum Process (Oette and Babiker 2017). There, the state has assigned migration policing to former Janjaweed fighters, incorporating them into the paramilitary apparatus of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). These groups at times extort and immobilize Eritreans, while at other times they facilitate their movement into eastern Libya (Oette and Babiker 2017). Prior to the agreement, Eritreans had resided in Sudan in large numbers since the 1960s. Troublingly, the Eritrean regime—the state which Eritreans are abandoning en masse—chaired the Khartoum process in 2019. Not only is movement heavily circumscribed in transit; a system of passes and random checks in Eritrean cities (Bozzini 2011) also serves to curtail Eritreans' movement within their own country, while *gifa*, or military roundups, track down would-be or potential military service evaders. Between these severe curtailments of mobility in Eritrea, a shoot-to-kill policy at the Eritrean border, and detention and bordering regimes that extend into countries of refuge, Eritreans encounter at every turn contradictory policies that criminalize and immobilize them and yet, paradoxically, encourage further migration. Beyond these, the Eritrean state spurs onward migration in what Munyaradzi Maware and Mirjam Van Reisen (2017) term the "eviction strategy" (see also Poole 2013), policies that make life untenable for young people, so that their only remaining option is to leave the country. Put simply, the Khartoum Process racializes Eritrean migrants as potential illegal migrants within the Horn of Africa region. In Libya, which has no singular state authority, "Eritreans . . . are highly vulnerable to an established, systematic, and highly organized criminal network of exploitation, which defies the conceptual and policy boundaries of both migrant smuggling and human trafficking" (Kuschminder and Triandafyllidou 2020, 211). Both the Khartoum Process and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Libya push Eritreans to migrate, as they export hostile immigration policies to African countries. These repressive mechanisms are undertaken under the guise of humanitarian concern and care, of saving lives in the Mediterranean while—as my interlocutors reminded me—"we [Eritreans] die elsewhere."

Finally, should Eritreans reach Europe, they experience racialized abandonment—the lack of adequate integration into systems of housing, basic social welfare, and language training—endemic to refugee reception in Italy (D'Angelo 2019; Hung 2019). They are also subject to surveillance and criminalization for aiding other refugees as private individuals and as public figures. Even while recognized and legal, Eritreans still face racially targeted surveillance and

criminalization. Indeed, some of the most high-profile cases of prosecutions related to "crimes of solidarity" (Tazzioli and Waters 2019) have involved Eritreans: This includes the five-year investigation of the former Nobel Peace Prize nominee Father Musei Zerai.

Eritreans' mobility is prosecuted under laws that interpret and collapse migrant smuggling and trafficking capaciously. Arrival to Italy, therefore, guarantees neither care nor a reprieve from targeted surveillance and criminalization that begins the moment many choose to migrate, as the opening vignette establishes.

TRANSIT THROUGH LIBYA: Blackness, Refugeehood, and the Value of Kinship

Segen and Gebreyesus invited me to their home for what would be a long lunch. Their cramped two-bedroom apartment in a *casa popolari*, or public housing, was filled with basketball and other sports gear, shoes, and clothing for their two adolescent sons. I had met Gebreyesus at a public commemoration for the Lampedusa dead—the 368 migrants, most of them Eritrean, who had drowned on October 3, 2013. At the event, Gebreyesus told me that he had to identify the remains of his younger brother shortly following the shipwreck. He came to learn that I was an anthropologist—"someone who could tell his story," as he put it to me when we first met. Now, over lunch, Gebreyesus went into extraordinary detail about the circumstances that brought them to this small town in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy.

Indeed, Gebreyesus had lived an incredibly difficult life: Abandoned by his mother, who moved to Sweden, he was conscripted to fight in the Eritrean army during the 1998–2000 border war with Ethiopia. Gebreyesus then left Eritrea for Italy, arriving in 2004. He and Segen met and married on the clandestine migrant trail but were apprehended by Tunisian authorities who then deported them to Libya. In Libya, they were held in detention for two months. Segen first described the conditions of her imprisonment:

> There are spaces in which there's lice and urine; they feed you like dogs. One by one, he [prison warden] asks us what we had done while holding a stick; he also had a gun. One [prisoner] said he fought with a Libyan, and the warden would hit them. I was the only Eritrean. We told him that we were trying to leave illegally, and he left us alone. He treated the Nigerian with disdain; the Nigerian didn't speak Arabic, and the warden beat the Nigerian until he was bloody and destroyed. In the meanwhile, we were so frightened.

> I regretted not telling him that I was Eritrean. . . . That prison we were in was legal; it was detention before seeing a judge. We were lucky because we couldn't be deported because there was no Ethiopian embassy; neither the Egyptian nor the Sudanese authorities would take us.

Eventually they were moved around to other sites that were also effectively prisons:

> We were first in Zuwara—we stayed there for two weeks . . . then to Surmana; from Surmana after two weeks, we were transferred to Juwaza; that's in Tripoli. This was the immigration office. We didn't stay there longer than one week. When the Libyan authorities knew that the United Nations representatives were there, they cleaned up the prison, stocked Coca-Cola, but as soon as the authorities left, things went back to what they were. One morning they called us. We were two children, two women, and four young men in a small car, without knowing where we were going. We were taken to Mahali Jhededa, another prison. There were seven Habesha arrested there.[7] They transferred us to the court in containers. People would die along the way to the court.

They were then released and took a clandestine boat to Sicily.

> We had to pay 120,000 dinar (approximately 92,000 USD) to leave the prison, for punishment for entering and staying in the country illegally. We were able to leave because of these Muslim Ethiopian women who were in the country legally and had contacted a lawyer.

Segen's narrative illustrates how Blackness and refugeehood stood in dynamic tension with one another in the transit of Eritreans through Libya—the extreme anti-Black racism that sub-Saharan migrants continued (and still continue) to face in Libya and the paradoxical position of Eritreans as subjects both abject as Black people yet neither simply deportable nor killable. Indeed, from Segen's recollection, Eritreans had some forms of legal recourse and due process, as at that time Libya was a functioning state: They were allowed to see a judge and were eventually released through the aid of the "Muslim Ethiopian women." But we can assume that this relative privilege was predicated on Eritreans' mobility, their propensity for moving on, rather than on a nominal notion of the "rule of law" or respect for the

human rights of refugees. Eritreans made for a lucrative population for smugglers, extortionists, and other state and non-state actors whose livelihoods depended on regulating and facilitating illicit movement. These reasons frame Segen's regret at not revealing that she was Eritrean sooner, mobilizing an understanding of the place of Eritreans in this racialized economy of bordering (Andersson 2018; Achtnich 2022). Eritreans' mobility produced value for illicit actors that the Nigerians imprisoned alongside them did not. In 2004, when Segen and Gebreyesus transited through Libya, this "value" simultaneously exposed Eritreans to violence and allowed for their eventual passage to Europe.

Segen and Gebreyesus's narratives of imprisonment and mobility, moreover, draw attention to the importance of kinship to migrating Eritreans and to illicit actors alike. Because Eritreans have been the beneficiaries of international protection since the 1980s, when more one-third of Eritrea's population was exiled during the thirty-year nationalist war between Eritrean guerillas and successive Ethiopian regimes, families have significant knowledge and other resources to navigate Western asylum systems. Outside of Sudan, the largest Eritrean communities are in the United States and Germany, and while they are largely working class, Eritreans also occupy professional fields (Bernal 2014). Kidnappers and extortionists target Eritreans because of these significant kinship ties in Global North nations, demanding ransoms of up to $35,000 (Maware and Van Reisen 2017). In the southeast region of Libya, where most Eritreans transit, Eritreans cannot evade this system of kidnap, extortion, and torture. Indeed, kidnapping and ransoming affects Eritreans almost exclusively, and once families pay ransoms, those kidnapped are released—another aspect of Eritrean exceptionalism (Kuschminder and Triandafyllidou 2020). The practice is unlike smuggling and trafficking—although, like smuggling, it is transactional and transitory, and like trafficking, it is based on coercion and duress. Eritrean migrants know that they will be kidnapped, tortured, and ransomed; their willful submission to the practice, however, does not negate their vulnerability. Instead, it reflects refugees' calculation between distinct realms of protection, as Jatin Dua (2019) identifies in his ethnography of Somali piracy—in this example the legal protection of asylum that can only be secured by arrival to Europe and the protection racket of illicit actors who demand ransom. Considering the extreme violence and remarkable risks Eritrean migrants face, their decision to migrate may appear irrational. Yet they face impossibly constrained choices: arbitrary violence and forced labor should they remain in Eritrea, versus kidnapping in the refugee camps in Sudan and Ethiopia. For many, the only

real choice is to try to make it to Europe, where they can reunite with family and win legal recognition.

Asylum seeking is sedimented within longer histories of Eritrean mobility and implicates illicit actors in a dialectical relationship with families. Put another way, illicit actors instrumentalize the knowledge of these diasporic ties to shore up the "bioeconomy" of bordering (Andersson 2018). Zooming outward, the experience of Eritreans demonstrates that contradictions between border regimes and humanitarian recognition create novel forms of anti-Black violence. Despite being international refugees, Eritreans experience predation and cruelty because they are Black and because Eritrea is peripheral in the global imagination of nationhood. Indeed, Father Musei Zerai, the Eritrean-Swiss priest and former Nobel Peace Prize nominee, once related to an audience at a progressive news festival an anecdote in which he was told at an EU migration meeting that Eritreans were "sacrificeable" to the project of securing Europe's external borders. Beyond the indignation that members of the audience expressed at the comment, it also highlighted a more pressing question around the notion of "sacrifice," namely, *who* can be sacrificed. *Sacrifice* denotes value in a way that *expendability*, which describes undocumented people, does not. Yet the question of sacrifice is imbricated in notions of race and place, and reinforces the differential worth attached to Black people and to refugees. These categories form a contradiction, referring to, at times, mutually exclusive regimes of human value (Berhane, unpublished manuscript, 2024). Thus, the discourse of sacrifice itself indicates the paradoxical position of Eritreans, recognized by EU authorities but remaining unprotected and exposed to violence.

Blackness and refugeehood were in dynamic tension with one another: Eritreans proved valuable to their families in diaspora who were willing to pay ransoms; refugee status accorded them value and permanence should they arrive in Europe, yet they weren't exempt from the cruelty and devaluation with which Black people are treated in the Euro-African Mediterranean. In a warped sense, Eritreans' bodies held enormous value for kidnappers and extortionists who extracted value from the surfeit of sociality that defines Eritreans' diasporic forms of belonging (Redeker-Hepner 2009; Bernal 2014)—unlike the Agambenian notion that refugees, stripped of their social ties, represent "bare life" (Agamben 1995). Crucially, this relative "privilege" depended on having the means to pay: if one could not pay one's ransom, one was killable.

When I returned for long-term fieldwork in 2017, Italy's MOU with Libya instantiated a humanitarian regime of indefinite detention: Eritreans became eligible for evacuation to Rwanda, if they could reach one of the recognized detention

centers in war-torn Libya. Rights groups and investigative journalists have documented torture, killings, and routinized abjection—starvation and neglect that has led to the proliferation of communicable diseases like tuberculosis—in these detention centers. In the name of protection, those "privileged" refugees entrapped in sites of indefinite detention die waiting to be relocated. As many of my interlocutors emphasized, what was going on in Libya was a "game" in which borders opened and closed based on the complex interplay of conflicting material and political interests both in sites of transit, such as Libya, and in destination countries, such as Italy. This paradoxical position of being both privileged and exposed to violence only continued for those who reached Europe. Italy, with which Eritreans have a long colonial connection, has helmed anti-migrant policies in the EU, especially following the ascension of the far-right government there.

TO BE "DUBLINATED": Countering Epidermal Surveillance

The Italian government's sequestration of the *Diciotti* coast guard ship in Sicily elicited fraught moral and political responses—a moment of "vital conflictual intensity" (Kapferer 2015, 3)—during the summer of 2018. In focusing on these debates, I privilege the centrality of Black speech over the spectacle of Black suffering, foregrounding the analyses of these systems within the kinds of vernacular and embodied and experiential knowledge that my interlocutors claim as survivors of the Central Mediterranean crossing (Harrison 2016). Under policies that criminalized non-governmental organizations' (NGO) search-and-rescue missions in the Mediterranean, then minister of the interior Matteo Salvini denied entry to an Italian coast guard ship carrying 170 unauthorized migrants, of whom 130 were Eritrean. For nearly two weeks, refugees were not allowed to disembark from the ship. This sequestration made for a highly charged media event, and it exemplified the right-leaning governing coalition's promises to stop "human smuggling" by any means necessary. Yet Salvini went so far as to criminalize the state itself, as the coast guard is an arm of the state. This event and reactions to it demonstrated the incommensurability of the asylum regime and bordering practices. Eritreans' debates elucidate the politics and differential investments among those in the diaspora in the European asylum system and in Italian migration policies, more specifically, that reflect the paradox of humanitarian recognition.

"These exiles see Italy the same as Libya," Tedros began. "They use smugglers. They wonder is this Europe? Shouldn't refugees have their rights?" Tedros was the head of Eritrea Democratica, an NGO and small collection of individuals dedicated to enacting a "peaceful democratic transition" in Eritrea and to helping

recent refugees access legal assistance after arriving in Italy. Based in Bologna, the group mainly comprised Eritrean men in their thirties who had made the Mediterranean crossing; the group also included Italian academics and journalists sympathetic to the experiences of Eritrean refugees. That day, ten members of the group sat together to craft a media response to the minister's criticism of fifty Eritrean refugees who had disembarked from the *Diciotti* but promptly "disappeared" from the Italian reception system. Disappearance often meant that refugees left the official reception centers that housed them. The presumptive disappearance, as it was reported in media outlets, prompted Salvini to write on Facebook that "this is the umpteenth confirmation that those who arrive in Italy are not skeletons fleeing war and famine," and that he would "work even harder to change wrong laws and [aim for] zero arrivals" (Chung 2018). For Salvini and others, any evidence of migrants' agency undermined their claims of political repression, marking them as undeserving economic migrants, rather than as politically innocent and deserving refugees.

The group had assembled that day to write a response to Salvini's Facebook post, to point out that sentiments like his not only misrepresented the lives and aspirations of migrants but were also part of why many Eritreans did not imagine Italy as a destination and chose to leave rather than stay and apply for asylum there. In 2015, of the 39,000 Eritreans who arrived in Italy, only 730 remained and applied for asylum (Belloni 2018, 291); many sought asylum elsewhere, primarily in Germany or one of the Nordic countries that have hosted large settled Eritrean refugee communities since the 1980s and that have more robust social welfare and refugee-reception systems. Through the course of my research, Eritreans would routinely describe life in Italy as "imprisonment by law," offering no path "for moving forward," and they attributed hostile treatment at the hands of neighbors to *cattiva coscienza*, a bad conscience stemming from guilt for an unaddressed colonial past. Economic and racial marginalization led to feelings of stuckedness and immobilization (Hage 2009) that fed their aspirations for something and somewhere else. For Tedros, "Europe" represented orderliness and respect for rights. As a naturalized Italian citizen and as someone who described himself as a conscientious objector to military service, Tedros often emphasized the importance of the rule of law as an aspiration for both the future of Eritrea and for the migration system that entrapped Eritreans. Tedros's query, however, signaled his frustration with the refugees themselves, who he thought wrongly equated Libya with Europe.

Yosef, another member of the group, was unlike Tedros in many ways. He had fled Eritrea as a teenager. A Gramscian "organic intellectual," Yosef drew on his experiences as a working-class refugee to become both a source for investigative

journalists exposing the workings of the Italy-Libya deal and an activist and thinker in his own right. Indeed, in 2018 he served as a witness in European parliamentary discussions about reforming the Dublin Regulations. Like other exiles, he arrived in Italy and left for Switzerland when he found that there was "no work in Italy." Despite having refugee status, he was returned from Switzerland to Italy under humiliating circumstances; he worked a series of manual jobs while pursuing a university degree. "I understand that things need to be done within the law," Yosef said, hoping to cool Tedros's growing frustration. Tedros responded: "But if you are struggling, struggle needs to be through the law." Tedros then emphasized that refugees needed to enter Europe through "lawful or legal pathways," or *higawi mengedi*. This term signified the humanitarian corridor program, a state and civil society partnership that selects refugees from the camps of Lebanon and Ethiopia for evacuation to Italy and provides full integration services, the result of efforts of Eritrean European activists like Tedros. The "lawful path" also signified a greater global migration system and a larger struggle for freedom of movement. The question of how the "lawful path" would be achieved—whether through Eritrean activists' strategic investments in the humanitarian system, though it immobilized refugees, or through their refusal and rejection of that system—remained up for debate.

Yosef began to grow increasingly frustrated in turn: "So what about people who leave Eritrea illegally? There is no freedom of movement here or in Eritrea." Tedros shot back, "There is no rule of law in Eritrea!" Yosef's impatience kept increasing; Tedros could not understand the dilemma of people like him, who had transited through Libya and made it to countries in Northern Europe, only to then be deported back to Italy. "Siamo dublinati [We are "the Dublinated]." This is a play on words, referring to the Dublin Accords, which stipulate that asylum seekers enter their asylum claims at the country of first entry—often Spain, Italy, or Greece. Once their fingerprints are recorded, refugees must remain in that country, often indefinitely. To evade these controls, many people, and especially Eritreans, burn their fingerprints off to remain inscrutable to state actors and to be able to apply for asylum elsewhere. The *dublinati* were those who had secured state recognition and some abbreviated rights but who remained subjected to racialized surveillance. To be dublinated, therefore, meant to be marked as a literal and figurative subject of epidermal surveillance—efforts by state actors to "read" bodies through biometric data collected for bordering regimes. In what Frantz Fanon (2008) described as the "epidermalization" of anti-Black racism, this surveillance reads bodies in racialized terms: It reads Black skin as illegality/criminality from

the outset. Finally, *dublinati* referred to migrants who felt stuck in Italy: those who were returned to Italy from other European countries and those who wished to move around Europe and the world with the same ease as other immigrants or Europeans. Thus, *dublinati* exemplified the enduring forms of inequality inscribed in the privileged category of refugee, in contrast to the deportable economic migrant. However, to be dublinated meant being trapped by recognition, rather than by exclusion. Ergo, to call oneself *dublinati* demonstrated the contradictions within humanitarian recognition—a recognition based on an exceptionalism (Ticktin 2011) that imaginatively, discursively, and physically circumscribed freedom and justice.

The *dublinati* emerge as figures "reveal[ing] subject positions that manifest and comment upon a particular historical moment in the complex articulation of large-scale processes" (Barker, Harms, and Lindquist 2013, 2)—the tenuous position of asylum in much of Europe. Ostensibly respected via nonbinding agreements, the refugee regime and refugees have experienced a significant erosion in entitlement and rights. This erosion has been enacted both by legal means such as the Dublin Accords and by extralegal mechanisms like pushbacks, illegal expulsions, and refoulement—in contravention of the principle that no one should be returned to a country in which they would face torture, cruel and inhumane punishment, or irreparable harm (UNHCR 2021). Even though no European country has publicly reneged on the 1951 Refugee Convention, in practice, asylum has come under attack. This attack is partly fueled by a shift in the public imagination over the past thirty years, one that metonymically links refugees with smugglers, figures invoked by powerful actors to criminalize refugees and evade responsibility for border deaths. The *dublinati* emerge as the converse of the refugees-as-smugglers: an organic and counter-hegemonic appropriation that illuminates the violence of the state on the bodies of racially marked others. In Yosef's invocation of the *dublinati*, it is the state that creates the need for smugglers by curtailing authorized channels of movement. Thus, the *dublinati* demonstrate two things: the desire on the part of refugees for full political and social rights that legal mechanisms circumscribe and the problem of the accretion of the logic of bordering, which seeks to make racialized bodies themselves into mobile borders (Mbembe 2019), despite moves toward innocence that humanitarian recognition avails.

"Every time we ask for asylum, we are criticizing the extreme crisis affecting Eritrea," Yosef continued. In Yosef's perspective, the *Dicioti* incident could never be disentangled from what was happening in Libya. "As a representative of Eritrea Democratica, should I help these people who have been abandoned by smugglers?"

he asked. As the debate continued, we returned to the subject of the group's response to the minister's Facebook criticism of the "disappearing" passengers from the ship and of migration as a whole. "So, what we're going to say is that the Italian system doesn't work?" Yosef asked. He continued, exasperated: "If you start dividing things between legal and illegal, we will all be following Salvini. Because there is no lawful freedom of movement; the fault lies not with those who make the decision to use traffickers. It is the fault of the system." The activists of Eritrea Democratica found themselves at an impasse. At the end of the meeting, they still had not drafted a response to distribute to media outlets in Italy. I often wondered why they even had to.

Yet their discussions demonstrate the kind of critical intellectual labor required to unpack and make clear the contradictory sentiments, discourses, policies, and laws that frame paradoxical recognition. This work made possible more concrete efforts. To address the violence Eritrean refugees face, the activists of the NGO petitioned state actors; they worked to shift public sentiments as producers of media and provided on-the-ground care for refugees experiencing state and community abandonment. Activists like Yosef, however, faced a constricted field of potential political action. Despite their efforts to cultivate solidarity among Eritreans abroad, they were outmatched by state and non-state actors that had deep resources to block, surveil, and criminalize refugees. As a refugee and a Black man in Italy, and as someone called the "voice of his generation" by pro-refugee activists like Father Musei Zerai, Yosef had drawn an enormous amount of attention—good and bad. Yet like the other members of the NGO, his legal status was tenuous at best, and he experienced the same protracted economic precarity that other members of the NGO, and many other Eritreans, did. Despite having international protection, they were often homeless or living in *case occupate*, or squat houses, at the periphery of the city, working odd jobs or, at best, for the postal service. Others found employment in the refugee reception system itself as cultural mediators, although these positions were eliminated as the number of Eritrean arrivals declined following the deals with Libya. This precarity meant that many would never be eligible for Italian citizenship.

Nonetheless, activists gave an enormous amount of time and resources to refugees who had recently arrived from Libya—throwing Christmas parties for those housed in the local reception center, visiting sick people in hospitals, and shuttling others between appointments across the city and among diverse agencies. This caring labor, notable as it was undertaken mostly by men, enacted a prefigurative politics that countered the state's racialized abandonment and the callous cruelty

and predation many experienced in transit. That is, the paradox of humanitarian recognition did not foreclose intersubjective recognition among activists and recent arrivals. Activists sought to cultivate social ties with those transiting, as they understood these contingent and ephemeral social bonds as important not only to the survival of individual refugees but also to a potential future Eritrean nation. Hagos, a member of the NGO, describes the stakes of activism below during an interview conducted in 2015. At the time, he was unemployed and unhoused, yet he provided food and other essential needs for refugees in transit.

> The stakes for activism in Italy are high because of the context of how difficult it is to survive as an immigrant in Italy. People are secretly helping recent arrivals, but for me, I hope to help new people leave Italy because I don't want them to live that life that I have here, without papers and without work. I've been imprisoned by law, and if another Eritrean meets that same fate, I want to help them escape it. So, my goal is that they have somewhere to sleep, a life to live in a place like Sweden, or Switzerland, a job, and then they can build an opposition movement. The reason I do this is to emphasize the fact that people no longer help one another in Eritrea, and if we can rebuild trust and mutual assistance, then I think to myself that that Eritrean who goes to wherever country will begin to help others as well.

Hagos acknowledges intracommunal fragmentation by mentioning the fact that "people are secretly helping recent arrivals," emphasizing that individuals' public face and private actions can often be at odds with one another under long-distance authoritarianism.

More importantly, Hagos's understanding of asylum as a "life to live" and as linked to building an "opposition movement," pragmatically speaking, demonstrates a conception of asylum as a social and political process. Indeed, for the earlier generation of Eritrean refugees, securing asylum proved instrumental to the project of nation building from afar (Redeker-Hepner 2009). Despite having been refugees themselves, many in the older generation deny outright the basis of recent arrivals' claims to asylum (Arnone 2008). In contrast, Hagos sees that asylum must extend beyond the moment of legal recognition—as his own embodied experience of having been "imprisoned by law" demonstrates. Hagos envisions asylum broadly as a politically potent and contested means of forging social connections under racialized state abandonment and within a politically fragmented diaspora. And much like Yosef's understanding of asylum as political critique, Hagos understands

asylum seeking as an agentive exercise, a form of politics from below that creates the possibility of an alternative Eritrean demos.

CONCLUSION

When Medhanie Tesfamariam Berhe was finally released in 2019, journalists described his prosecution as "absurd" and an "embarrassment." The actual Medhanie Yehdego Mered, who currently resides in Uganda, was quoted in a *New Yorker* profile as feeling sorry for Berhe, the wrongly accused man, but has refused to turn himself in (Taub 2019). To date, no extradition order has been executed for Mered, and the chief prosecutor on the case refused to apologize to Berhe for wrongfully imprisoning him. The prosecutor surveilled the Eritreans who came forward to defend Berhe, wiretapping their phones and opening investigations against them. The extraordinary prosecutorial powers of the state were trained on a community that has borne the brunt of border deaths in Italy. In the public eye, Berhe's imprisonment resulted from prosecutorial ineptitude; rather, his treatment at the hands of the Italian, British, and Sudanese states made for a border "spectacle" (De Genova 2001) that imputed collective criminal liability to the Eritrean community. In the imagination of the Italian state, Eritreans formed part of a vast conspiracy of criminal traffickers responsible for the deaths of their co-nationals. Moreover, the extradition demonstrated that the powers of the Italian state extended beyond its geographical borders. Migration policing has since continued this process of extra-territorialization. In 2020 and again in 2023, the Italian parliament voted to formalize the MOU with Libya, and the EU established externalization agreements with Algeria, Tunisia, and other North African countries. Clearly, political recognition counts for little in a geopolitical context in which white Europeans perceive African mobility as a threat to the very existence of Europe.

The paradoxical recognition of Eritreans as refugees did not preclude some of them from articulating an alternative and counter-hegemonic notion of asylum. As the example Eritrea Democratica demonstrates, the paradox itself pushed members of the NGO to conceptualize asylum beyond simple recognition, as it revealed to them the limits of the liberal humanist conception of rights during a time of naked anti-Black violence that marked the ascension of the political right. For these activists, paradoxical recognition made clearer still the racialized and anti-Black entailments of the asylum system, a system that could not protect refugees from racist violence in transit or on arrival. Conceptually, paradoxical recognition upends assumptions around the refugee-versus-economic-migrant binary

that posits refugee exceptionalism. Legal recognition in practice enabled containment, criminalization, and extreme violence that should take place elsewhere. By discursively casting refugees as smugglers, European governments waged a war on migrant smuggling that entrapped refugees in Libya and made accomplices of those who would aid refugees in transit. In this way, the racializing logics of the state superseded the conventions of international law—the frameworks of which emerge in colonial modernity (Achiume 2019). Much of the literature on migration in anthropology has focused on how legal *exclusion* acts as a form of subjectivation that denies rights and humanity to those who experience the state's sovereign right to exclude. Such liberal humanist political paradigms posit recognition as the precondition for political subjecthood and rights. In turn, visibility, or becoming visible to the state and to those who would accord rights, forms the basis for political recognition and entry into the political community. The right to have rights, as Hannah Arendt famously put it (1973), involves first becoming intelligible or seen as a political subject, one recognized by an accepting state. Instead, I focus on the kinds of violence that *recognition* makes permissible, as states extend migration policing beyond their borders. This orientation troubles the liberal humanist paradigm at the heart of recognition politics. As Black people, who occupy the "nadir" of the category of the human (Wynter 2003), Eritrean migrants did not gain rights from political recognition. Recognition came at grave material costs.

ABSTRACT

Eritreans experience what I call the paradox of humanitarian recognition. Beneficiaries of some of the highest refugee-recognition rates in Global North countries, Eritreans nevertheless experience kidnap, ransoming, extortion, and pre-emptive detention in countries of transit like Sudan and Libya. Efforts by the European Union to address these abuses under multilateral anti-trafficking agreements—as well as broader efforts to externalize European borders and asylum—have further contained and criminalized networks of solidarity that extend beyond countries of transit into countries of settlement such as Italy. Based on twenty months of participant observation and interviews with Eritreans in northern Italy, this article analyzes Eritrean migrants' experiences of violence in Libya, a country of transit, and efforts of Eritrean activists to both bring this violence to light and to aid recent refugees. Eritreans' experiences of seeking asylum upend the binaries between legal inclusion and exclusion on which refugee exceptionalism is predicated. [Blackness; refugees; Eritrea; Italy; recognition; migration]

NOTES

Acknowledgments Funding for this research was generously provided by the Wenner-Gren foundation and the Fulbright Institute for International Education fellowship. I thank the activists and everyday people who spoke with me and entrusted me with their insights during a difficult time. I am also grateful to my colleague Peter Redfield who read and commented on the first and subsequent drafts of this work, as well as the three anonymous reviewers who provided generative feedback during the revision process. I am also immensely grateful to Laura Helper who helps bring together the threads of my many ideas. Finally, I am thankful to the *Cultural Anthropology* editorial collective who believed in this essay when it was in its incipience, and to Julia Elyachar in particular who helped shepherd the final version to publication.

1. Bossi Fini laws are a set of legal precedents that criminalize unauthorized entry and allow for the immediate expulsion of migrants without proper documentation, lengthened detention times, and tied legal status to employment.
2. This article does not analyze why Eritreans are favored over other nationals with regard to their asylum claims. For the better part of two decades the United Nations has recognized Eritreans as a temporary protection group, giving blanket protection against refoulement to all Eritreans while their asylum cases are heard. This reflects the UN rapporteur's assessment in 2015, 2016, and again in 2018 that the Eritrean regime may have committed crimes against humanity. The gravity of the charge only partly explains why Eritreans continue to have such high protection rates. In the United States in 2022, 93.15 percent of Eritrean applications for asylum were recognized. In the same year, 83.3 percent of applications succeeded in Canada, and 100 percent in Australia. See https://www.worlddata.info/africa/eritrea/asylum.php
3. Smuggling and trafficking are distinct from one another: Smuggling refers to the facilitation of the unauthorized crossing of international borders and is conceptualized as a crime against the state; trafficking, on the other hand, involves deception and coercion, as a person is taken against their will across international borders for exploitation. It is a crime against an individual. However, within an individual's journey, a smuggling relationship can turn into an exploitative one—Eritreans experience smuggling, trafficking, as well as kidnapping and ransoming.
4. Data comes from the 2016 EU Annual Report for Asylum (https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Annual-Report-2016.pdf); the 2021 Mixed Migration Centre Report (https://mixedmigration.org/articles/whats-new-analysing-the-latest-trends-on-the-central-mediterranean-mixed-migration-route-to-italy/); the UNHCR (https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5205); and the EU 2021 Annual Overview on Asylum Trends (https://euaa.europa.eu/latest-asylum-trends-annual-overview-2021).
5. Here, I refer to the European migration crisis as a Foucauldian "discursive event" (Foucault 1982, 270).
6. "Break the business model of smuggling" refers to a common phrase used by European and Australian politicians to legitimize border externalization policies. See Frelick, Kysel, and Podkul 2016.
7. Habesha is a form of self-identification that refers to Eritrean and Ethiopian highland Orthodox Christians. Nevertheless, it is a contested term that does not qualify as an ethnic identity; many have argued that the term has exclusionary valences.

REFERENCES

Achiume, E. Tendayi
2019 "Migration as Decolonization." *Stanford Law Review* 71, no. 6: 1509–74.

Achtnich, Marthe
2022 "Accumulation by Immobilization: Migration, Mobility, and Money in Libya." *Economy and Society* 51, no. 1: 95–115. http://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2022.1987751

Agamben, Giorgio
1995 *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
2004 *State of Exception*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Agier, Michel
2008 *On the Margins of the World: The Refugee Experience Today*. Translated by David Fernbach. Cambridge: Polity.

Andersson, Ruben
2014 *Illegality, Inc.: Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
2018 "Profit and Predation in the Human Bioeconomy." *Public Culture*. 30, no. 3: 413–39. http://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-6912115

Angel-Ajani, Asale
2002 "Diasporic Conditions: Mapping the Discourses of Race and Criminality in Italy." *Transforming Anthropology* 11, no 1: 36–46. http://doi.org/10.1525/tran.2002.11.1.36

Arendt, Hannah
[1951] 1973 *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt.

Arnone, Anna
2008 "Journeys to Exile: The Constitution of Eritrean Identity through Narrative and Experiences." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 34, no 2: 325–40. http://doi.org/10.1080/13691830701823814

Barker, Joshua, Erik Harms, and Johan A. Lindquist
2013 Introduction to *Figures of Southeast Asian Modernity*, edited by Joshua Barker, Erik Harms, and Johan A. Lindquist, 1–18. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Belloni, Milena
2018 "'Why Don't You Move Onwards?' The Influence of Transnational Ties and Kinship Obligations on Eritrean Refugees' Feelings of Being Stuck in Italy." In *Postliberation Eritrea*, edited by Tekle Mariam Woldemikael, 290–317. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Benton, Adia
2016 "African Expatriates and Race in the Anthropology of Humanitarianism." *Critical African Studies* 8, no 3: 266–77. http://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2016.1244956

Berhane, Fiori
2024 "Integration is a Gift from God: Blackness, Externalization, and the Figure of the Refugee." Unpublished manuscript, May 22.

Besteman, Catherine
2016 *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press.
2020 *Militarized Global Apartheid*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Bernal, Victoria
2014 *Nation as Network: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and Citizenship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bozzini, David M.
2011 "Low-Tech Surveillance and the Despotic State in Eritrea." *Surveillance & Society* 9, no. 1/2: 93–113. http://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v9i1/2.4102

Chimni, B. S.
1998 "The Geopolitics of Refugee Studies: A View from the South." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 11, no 4: 350–74. http://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/11.4.350-a

Chung, Amy
2018 "50 Migrants from the Diciotti Ship 'Disappear' in Italy." *EuroNews*, June 9.

Cohen, Daniel Gerard
2012 *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

D'Angelo, Alessio
2019 "Italy: The 'Illegality Factory?' Theory and Practice of Refugees' Reception in Sicily." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 45, no 12: 2213–26. http://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1468361

De Genova, Nicholas P.
2001 "Migrant Illegality and Deportability in Everyday Life." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 419–47. http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.31.040402.085432

De Genova, Nicholas, and Nathalie Peutz, eds.
2010 *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

De Leon, Jason
2015 *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dua, Jatin
2019 *Captured at Sea: Piracy and Protection in the Indian Ocean*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fanon, Frantz
[1963] 2008 *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press.

Fassin, Didier
2005 "Compassion and Repression: The Moral Economy of Immigration Policies in France." *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no 3: 362–87. http://doi.org/10.1525/can.2005.20.3.362
2011 *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
2013 "The Precarious Truth of Asylum." *Public Culture* 25, no 1: 39–63. http://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-1890459

Foucault, Michel
1982 *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*. New York: Pantheon Books.
[1978] 2007 *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78*. Translated by Graham Burchell. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Frelick, Bill, Ian M. Kysel, and Jennifer Podkul
2016 "The Impact of Externalization of Migration Controls on the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants." *Journal on Migration and Human Security*. 4, no 4: 190–220. http://doi.org/10.1177/233150241600400402

Ghabra, Reema
2022 "Black Immigrants Face Unique Challenges." *Human Rights First*, February 17.

Haas, Bridget M.
2023 *Suspended Lives: Navigating Everyday Violence in the US Asylum System*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hage, Ghassan
2009 "Waiting Out the Crisis: On Stuckedness and Governmentality." In *Waiting*, 74–79. Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing.

Harrison, Faye V.
2016 "Theorizing in Ex-Centric Sites." *Anthropological Theory* 16, no. 2-3: 160–76. http://doi.org/10.1177/1463499616652516

Hartman, Saidiya
1997 *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hepner, Tricia Redeker
2009 *Soldiers, Martyrs, Traitors, and Exiles: Political Conflict in Eritrea and the Diaspora*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Holmes, Seth, and Heidi Castaneda
2017 "Representing the 'European Refugee Crisis' in Germany and Beyond." *American Ethnologist* 43, no 1: 12–24. http://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12259

Hom, Stephanie Malia
2019 *Empire's Mobius Strip: Historical Echoes in Italy's Crisis of Migration and Detention*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Hung, Carla
2019 "Sanctuary Squats: The Political Contestations of Piazza Indipendenza Refugee Occupiers." *Radical History Review* 135: 119–37. http://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-7607872

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
2024 "EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (Khartoum Process)." https://www.iom.int/eu-horn-africa-migration-route-initiative-khartoum-process

Kahn, Jeffrey
2019 *Islands of Sovereignty: Haitian Migration and the Borders of Empire*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kapferer, Bruce
2015 "In the Event: Toward an Anthropology of Generic Moments." In *In the Event: Toward an Anthropology of Generic Moments*, edited by Lotte Meinart and Bruce Kapferer, 1–28. New York: Berghahn Books.

Khalili, Laleh
2012 *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Kuschminder, Katie, and Anna Triandafyllidou
2020 "Smuggling, Trafficking, and Extortion: New Conceptual and Policy Challenges on the Libyan Route to Europe." *Antipode* 52, no 1: 206–26. http://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12579

Landau, Loren B.
2019 "A Chronotope of Containment Development: Europe's Migrant Crisis and Africa's Reterritorialisation." *Antipode* 51, no 1: 169–86. http://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12420

Malkki, Lisa
1996 "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization." *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 3: 377–404. http://doi.org/10.1525/can.1996.11.3.02a00050

Martin, David A.
1988 Introduction to *The New Asylum Seekers: Refugee Law in the 1980s; The Ninth Sokol Colloquium on International Law*, edited by David Martin, 1–20. New York: Springer.

Maware, Munyaradzi, and Van Reisen, Mirjam
2017 *Human Trafficking and Trauma in the Digital Era: The Ongoing Tragedy of the Trade in Refugees from Eritrea*. Bamenda: Langaa Research and Publishing CIG.

Mayblin, Lucy
2017 *Asylum after Empire: Colonial Legacies in the Politics of Asylum Seeking*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Mbembe, Achille
2019 "Bodies as Borders." *From the European South* 4: 5–18.

Morrison, John
2001 "'The Dark Side of Globalisation:' The Criminalisation of Refugees." *Race & Class* 43, no 1: 71–81. http://doi.org/10.1177/0306396801431005

Oette, Lutz, and Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker
2017 "Migration Control à la Khartoum: EU External Engagement and Human Rights Protection in the Horn of Africa." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 36, no. 4: 64–89. http://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdx013

Palidda, Salvatore, ed.
2011 *Racial Criminalization of Migrants in the 21st Century*. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate.
Poole, Amanda
2013 "Ransoms, Remittances, and Refugees: The Gatekeeper State in Eritrea." *Africa Today* 60, no 2: 67–82. http://doi.org/10.2979/africatoday.60.2.67
Ronzitti, Natalino
2009 "The Treaty on Friendship, Partnership, and Cooperation between Italy and Libya: New Prospects for Cooperation in the Mediterranean?" *Bulletin of Italian Politics* 1, no 1: 125–33.
Schmitt, Carl
[1920] 2005 *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Translated by George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Taub, Ben
2019 "An Absurd Case of Mistaken Identity Draws to a Close." *New Yorker*, July 13. https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/an-absurd-case-of-mistaken-identity-draws-to-a-close
Tazzioli, Martina, and William Walters
2019 "Migration, Solidarity, and the Limits of Europe." *Global Discourse* 9, no 1: 175–90. https://doi.org/10.1332/204378918X15453934506030
Ticktin, Miriam
2006 "Where Ethics and Politics Meet: The Violence of Humanitarianism in France." *American Ethnologist* 33, no 1: 33–49. http://doi.org/10.1525/ae.2006.33.1.33
2011 *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)
2015 "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea, Sheila B. Keetharuth." June 23.
2016 "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea, Sheila B. Keetharuth." June 8.
2021 "UNHCR Warns Asylum under Attack at Europe's Borders, Urges End to Pushbacks and Violence against Refugees." January 28.
Willens, Sarah S.
2007 "Toward a Critical Phenomenology of 'Illegality:' State Power, Criminalization, and Abjectivity among Undocumented Migrant Workers in Tel Aviv, Israel." *International Migration* 45, no 3: 8–38. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2007.00409.x
Wynter, Sylvia
2003 "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument." *The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3: 257–337. http://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2004.0015