

Reform is Not Enough:

Radical Ethical Frameworks to Transform Gender and Race Injustice in the Deportation Regime

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Introduction

Since 1996, the paradigm of immigration enforcement has been one of mass deportation,¹ more specifically a gendered and racialized deportation regime.² Removal operations, including deportations from the country and exclusions at the border, increased steadily between 1991-2014, and have remained over 225,000 removals per year since 2015.³ Specifically, the United States immigration enforcement system criminalizes and targets migrant communities of color, disproportionately men, to detain and deport.⁴ The immigration control and enforcement regime threatens violence for communities at our international borders and in the interior of the country in order to control the movement of people and profit, and instill fear for a compliant workforce.⁵ As a result, rapid response networks of support have grown in localities all over the US to provide material relief, reduce harm, address individual family crises, and meet community needs. These networks consist of formal, incorporated organizations, informal grassroots networks, and individuals working collaboratively or in parallel to create environments of care and disrupt the hierarchies of value placed on human beings by the immigration enforcement regime. The collective work of these ecosystems is necessarily interconnected to respond quickly and proactively to needs and requests from individuals and the community. In this paper, I examine the ethical frameworks of two migrant support networks to

¹ Tanya M. Golash-Boza, *Deported: Immigrant Policing, Disposable Labor, and Global Capitalism* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2015), 6-7.

² Tanya Golash-Boza and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, "Latino Immigrant Men and the Deportation Crisis: A Gendered Racial Removal Program," *Latino Studies* 11, no. 3 (2013): 282.

³ *Ibid.*, 276; Tanya M. Golash-Boza, *Deported: Immigrant Policing, Disposable Labor, and Global Capitalism* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2015), 6-7; "ICE Statistics," US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, last modified December 14, 2018, <https://www.ice.gov/statistics>.

⁴ Tanya Golash-Boza and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, "Latino Immigrant Men and the Deportation Crisis: A Gendered Racial Removal Program," *Latino Studies* 11, no. 3 (2013): 282.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 275-281; Tanya M. Golash-Boza, *Deported: Immigrant Policing, Disposable Labor, and Global Capitalism* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2015), 18.

determine the theoretical approach to their work, and analyze how the work of these organizations are gendered and criminalized by the immigration enforcement and deportation regime.

Implementing material relief is the radical act of providing basic necessities for survival such as food, water, shelter, or clothing. Also referred to as direct support work, mutual aid, survival work, and harm reduction, material relief is “simple but crucial”⁶ aid provided for people to survive systems of oppression, confront political systems, develop new interdependent ways of relating to one another that challenge hierarchies of value, and build movements for change.⁷ Often we think of this work in terms of direct support, such as providing first aid and water stations along dangerous migrant trails in the Sonoran Desert. Sometimes this support is indirect, such as a community fundraising for a family to pay rent when a primary wage earner is detained. In other cases, relief is provided during the logistical process of immigration enforcement proceedings, such as providing families with rides to visit loved ones in immigration detention or accompanying a community member to their immigration hearing. However it is demonstrated, these grassroots alleviative strategies meet basic human needs of “those whose rights are being violated regardless of the victim’s ideological position or political usefulness.”⁸ For this case study, I examine two organizations each with a unique approach to

⁶ China Medel, “Abolitionist Care in the Militarized Borderlands,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 4 (2017): 874.

⁷ See China Medel, “Abolitionist Care in the Militarized Borderlands,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 4 (2017): 874; Dean Spade, “When We Win We Lose: Mainstreaming and the Redistribution of Respectability,” in *2016 Kessler Award Lecture* (New York City: CLAGS Center for LGBTQ Studies, 2016), accessed December 11, 2018, youtu.be/PXYNWb9cLrE?t=2001; Harsha Walia, *Undoing Border Imperialism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2013) 19-20; “Ways to Help,” Beyond Bond & Legal Defense Fund, accessed February 22, 2019, <https://beyondbondboston.org/>; and “What is Mutual Aid?” Big Door Brigade, accessed December 11, 2018, <http://bigdoorbrigade.com/what-is-mutual-aid/>.

⁸ “Civil Initiative,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/about-no-more-deaths/civil-initiative/>.

material relief work in the migrant justice movement. The first, No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, is a direct-aid humanitarian organization working at the US-México border. The second, the Boston Immigrant Justice Accompaniment Network, or BIJAN (pronounced *Beyond*), is a harm-reduction network working with immigrant communities in Boston, Massachusetts. The ethical and moral frameworks of these migrant support networks challenge the paradigm of global feminized care work make them targets of immigration enforcement agencies that devalue and criminalize this humanitarian survival work in order to continue to gender, criminalize, and control migration.

Ethical and Moral Frameworks

No More Deaths

No More Deaths was founded in 2004 as “a coalition of community and faith groups, dedicated to stepping up efforts to stop the deaths of migrants in the desert.”⁹ Now a ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson, No More Deaths embraces five Faith-Based Principles for Immigration Reform and adheres to the principles of civil initiative, which have their foundations in the original Sanctuary Movement of the 1980’s.¹⁰ No More Deaths volunteers consider themselves “people of conscience working openly and in community to uphold fundamental human rights.”¹¹ They provide humanitarian aid to migrants crossing the deadliest areas of the southwestern Arizona deserts,¹² an increasing crisis resulting from US Border Patrol’s prevention through deterrence, or PTD, strategy implemented since 1994 that

⁹ “About No More Deaths,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/about-no-more-deaths/>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “About No More Deaths,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/en/>.

aims to deter undocumented migration through “funneling migration routes away from urban areas in California and Texas and into the deserts and mountains of southern Arizona.”¹³ Since the implementation of PTD the number of recorded deaths resulting from crossing this area of the border has increased from an average of 14 per year to an average of over 132 annually.¹⁴ No More Deaths’ humanitarian aid work is a direct response to this crisis. Primarily, their work includes hiking into “the remote corridors into which migration has been pushed” to leave “water, food, socks, blankets, and other supplies,” and providing “emergency first-aid treatment to individuals in distress.”¹⁵ At base camp, volunteers are said to take care of migrants, one another, and the camp itself, and acknowledge and honor each migrant’s agency and choices.¹⁶ No More Deaths’ material relief work also includes providing “phone calls and first aid to deportees and northbound migrants” in northern Mexico, offering regular legal clinics, providing sanctuary, and responding to emergency calls to mobilize search teams for missing migrants.¹⁷ Additionally, between 2008-2018 No More Deaths published six reports and accompanying videos documenting in detail the abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of migrants in short-term holding with Border Patrol and in immigration detention, and the destruction of aid stations in the desert by Border Patrol officers.¹⁸

¹³ Jill M. Williams, “From Humanitarian Exceptionalism to Contingent Care: Care and Enforcement at the Humanitarian Border,” *Political Geography* 47 (2015): 12-13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13; “[Southwest Border Deaths by Fiscal Year](#),” United States Border Patrol, accessed 12 May 2019.

¹⁵ Jill M. Williams, “From Humanitarian Exceptionalism to Contingent Care: Care and Enforcement at the Humanitarian Border,” *Political Geography* 47 (2015): 12-13.

¹⁶ China Medel, “Abolitionist Care in the Militarized Borderlands,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 4 (2017): 875-76.

¹⁷ “About No More Deaths,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/en/>.

¹⁸ “Abuse Documentation,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/abuse-documentation/>.

No More Deaths' work is strongly rooted in its faith background. The principles that set the foundation for their ideological framework are borne out of a shared faith and "moral imperative that transcends borders, celebrates the contributions immigrant peoples bring, and compels [them] to build relationships that are grounded in justice and love."¹⁹ This higher moral imperative is a religious belief in the existence of a greater moral being whose will, "God's law,"²⁰ would prevail over any local, state, or national law. They believe in universal human rights regardless of faith or political position, and in community-centered, socially sustained, and congregationally coherent strategy that will outlast "individual acts of conscience."²¹ It is clear through their online blog that one of these universal rights is the right to life. In their posts, No More Deaths volunteers speak often of the "sanctity of human life" as their deepest motivation for their work that informs their decision to continue to provide material relief as compelled by their faith until there are no more migrant deaths in the borderlands.²² Extending the reach of their collective faith to ensure their work is also recognized as legal, No More Deaths also bases these beliefs in universal human rights on both the International Red Cross Code of Conduct and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²³

¹⁹ "Faith-Based Principles for Immigration Reform," No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/about-no-more-deaths/faith-based-principles-for-immigration-reform/>.

²⁰ Mariana Lorena Cook, "'Humanitarian Aid is Never a Crime': Humanitarianism and Illegality in Migrant Advocacy," *Law and Society Review*, 45 (2011): 571.

²¹ "Civil Initiative," No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/about-no-more-deaths/civil-initiative/>.

²² See "Trial Date Set for the Cabeza Prieta 9," No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 26 October 2019, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/trial-date-set-for-the-cabeza-prieta-nine/> and other posts in the No More Deaths blog including, "Border Patrol Raids Humanitarian Aid Camp in Targeted Attack" 16 June 2017, and "Faith Floods The Desert: Interfaith Leaders Unite to Assert that Humanitarian Aid is a Moral Imperative," 1 August 2018.

²³ See Mariana Lorena Cook, "'Humanitarian Aid is Never a Crime': Humanitarianism and Illegality in Migrant Advocacy," *Law and Society Review*, 45 (2011): 571; "Community Members Confront Border Patrol on Abuses," No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 16 February 2018, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/community-members-confront-border-patrol-on-abuses/>; "The Status of Our Work in the Desert," No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 5 July 2017, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/the-status-of-our-work-in-the-desert/>; and "Border Patrol Raids Humanitarian-Aid Camp in Targeted Attack" No More

However, there appears to be an ideological divide between the formal ethical framework of the organization and some of the individual volunteers with No More Deaths. Specifically, two former volunteers wrote about their experiences through a framework of radical hospitality. Medel examines the abolitionist values and guiding principles that are the foundation for the work of No More Deaths. The direct action of care engaged in by No More Deaths challenges racialized logics and revalues and respects migrant lives and agency by starting from the ideal that every single human life is valuable, not just those that are white US citizens. The relational practices of interdependency engaged in by No More Deaths directly opposes the logics of hierarchy and value created by the gendered racial removal program by building alternative community-centered models of human relations with an inclusive recognition of the value of human life.²⁴ In *No Wall They Can Build*, one ex-desert-aid-worker describes the work of No More Deaths in terms of solidarity and human interdependency, and of unquestioned giving of water and resources beyond one's human capacity even when putting one's own life at risk.²⁵ In his view, the "mutuality of sharing" is justice, even if he must give up some of the comfort and privilege he was accustomed to.²⁶ Both volunteers speak about the work of No More Deaths as challenging the artificial binary between *host* and *guest*, *welcomer* and *welcomed*, and *us* and *other*. They transcend this dichotomy through their work toward a paradigm of co-host and

Deaths/No Más Muertas, 16 June 2017, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/border-patrol-raids-humanitarian-aid-camp-in-targeted-attack/>.

²⁴ China Medel, "Abolitionist Care in the Militarized Borderlands," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 4 (2017): 878-81; Choi Hee An, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean Immigrant Theology and the Church* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 141-43.

²⁵ An Ex-Desert-Aid-Worker, *No Wall They Can Build: A Guide to Borders & Migration Across North America* (Salem: CrimethInc Workers' Collective, 2017), 197-99.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 197-99; Choi Hee An, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean Immigrant Theology and the Church* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 151.

co-guest in a society that expects those with citizenship to play the role of host or deporter to those without citizenship, residency, or documentation.²⁷

This framework is in stark contrast to the white savior complex framework that emerges when reading the official website, blog, newsletters, and testimony from the No More Deaths organization. Firstly, No More Deaths constructs a monolithic and separate *other* that their volunteers need to literally save.²⁸ Throughout their texts, the organization refers to the people they encounter in the borderland as “migrants,” “border crossers,” and even sometimes “human remains” rather than inclusively as community members or neighbors, or individually by their name or unique identity.²⁹ Furthermore, the organization emphasizes and perpetuates a victim narrative by repeating that their work is intended to “save lives”³⁰ of migrants facing life-threatening conditions and a “crisis at the border.”³¹ The texts consistently emphasize the differences between “migrants” that need saving and the “volunteers” that perform life saving

²⁷ China Medel, “Abolitionist Care in the Militarized Borderlands,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 4 (2017): 878-81; Choi Hee An, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean Immigrant Theology and the Church* (Albany: State University

of New York Press, 2015), 138 and 151; An Ex-Desert-Aid-Worker, *No Wall They Can Build: A Guide to Borders & Migration Across North America* (Salem: CrimethInc Workers’ Collective, 2017), 197-99.

²⁸ Kwok Pui-Lan, “Unbinding Our Feet: Saving Brown Women and Feminist Religious Discourse,” in *Postcolonial Feminism and Religious Discourse* edited by Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-Lan, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 66-67.

²⁹ With the exception of one single blog entry in the three years of primary material I examined that in other ways perpetrates the white savior complex ideology: Carlotta Wray, “Remembering ‘Miguel,’” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 7 May 2017.

³⁰ Parker Deighan, “I’m Being Prosecuted for Trying to Save the Lives of Three Migrants,” No More Deaths/No/Mas Muertas, 6 February 2019,

“Migrant Deaths and the Right to Provide Humanitarian Aid Without Fear of Prosecution,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 24 December 2018, “Trial Date Set for the Cabeza Prieta Nine,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 26 October 2018, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/trial-date-set-for-the-cabeza-prieta-nine/>.

³¹ Dorothy Chao, “In Nogales, More Deported US Residents,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 5 November 2017, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/in-nogales-more-deported-us-residents/>; “End the Crisis of Death and Disappearance at the Border!” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 7 December 2016, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/end-the-crisis-of-death-and-disappearance-at-the-border/>; “Faith Floods the Desert,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 1 August 2018; <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/faith-floods-the-desert-interfaith-leaders-unite-to-assert-that-humanitarian-aid-is-a-moral-imperative/>

actions.³² This also perpetuates the white savior colonial framework that reifies oppression of racialized migrants.³³ They characterize the people they encounter as fleeing extreme violence in their home countries and forced into the degrading act of crossing the most dangerous areas of the Sonoran desert—brown people suffering barbaric violence at the hands of other brown people. More empathy and compassion is expressed toward women and families traveling with infants and the ideal of family reunification³⁴ than toward individual people, especially men. Female migrants become the object of the white savior colonial ideology of “white men saving brown women from brown men,”³⁵ while male migrants’ and their stories get co-opted into white heteronormative family narratives or valued for only their economic contributions.³⁶ No More Deaths does provide aid during every encounter possible when requested, but the language used in these primary sources implies this “masculine-imperialist ideological”³⁷ framework. Secondly, the voice of the people No More Deaths purports to save is not uplifted anywhere in their communications or narratives. They often talk about people or situations, but migrants are treated as the subaltern without their own voice that need to be spoken for.³⁸ Similarly, in *No*

³² “[About No More Deaths](#),” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019,

³³ Kwok Pui-Lan, “Unbinding Our Feet: Saving Brown Women and Feminist Religious Discourse,” in

Postcolonial Feminism and Religious Discourse, edited by Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-Lan, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 63-64.

³⁴ “Faith-Based Principles for Immigration Reform,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/about-no-more-deaths/faith-based-principles-for-immigration-reform/>.

³⁵ Kwok Pui-Lan, “Unbinding Our Feet: Saving Brown Women and Feminist Religious Discourse,” in

Postcolonial Feminism and Religious Discourse, edited by Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-Lan, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 64.

³⁶ Ibid.; “Stepped-Up Efforts to Fight Disappearance,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 14 October 2017, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/stepped-up-efforts-to-fight-disappearance/>.

³⁷ Kwok Pui-Lan, “Unbinding Our Feet: Saving Brown Women and Feminist Religious Discourse,” in

Postcolonial Feminism and Religious Discourse, edited by Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-Lan, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 64.

³⁸ Kwok Pui-Lan, “Unbinding Our Feet: Saving Brown Women and Feminist Religious Discourse,” in

Postcolonial Feminism and Religious Discourse, edited by Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-Lan, (New York:

Wall They Can Build, the author weaves in conversations, stories, and testimonies from the individuals he encounters in his work with No More Deaths, but simultaneously speaks their joy and their pain through his own words.³⁹ These choices may serve to protect the identities and confidentiality of the migrants the volunteers encounter, but also serve to further silence and marginalize them.

Lastly, I would categorize the literature from No More Deaths as ascribing to the white savior complex framework because it fails to challenge the legitimacy of the militarized border enforcement regime. A key feature of the colonial white savior framework is maintaining and reinforcing colonial conditions without questioning or disrupting the oppressive structures of power imbalance and dominance.⁴⁰ No More Deaths is complicit in the immigration enforcement regime because they do not challenge its legitimacy and instead affirm the right of the United States to secure its borders while requesting that it do so in a humane way that does not lead to death or environmental destruction.⁴¹ Their faith-based principles of immigration reform do acknowledge that the “root causes of migration lie in environmental, economic, and trade inequities,” but rather than challenging US imperialism and upending these colonial relationships, they encourage the capitalist framework and assume that trade relationships can be renegotiated “in ways that build mutual and just relationships.”⁴² Another instance of their complicity in the colonial white savior framework is in their defense strategy against the federal

³⁹ An Ex-Desert-Aid-Worker, *No Wall! They Can Build: A Guide to Borders & Migration Across North America* (Salem: CrimethInc Workers' Collective, 2017), 21-22.

⁴⁰ Kwok Pui-Lan, “Unbinding Our Feet: Saving Brown Women and Feminist Religious Discourse,” in *Postcolonial Feminism and Religious Discourse*, edited by Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-Lan, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 64-66.

⁴¹ “Faith-Based Principles for Immigration Reform.” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/about-no-more-deaths/faith-based-principles-for-immigration-reform/>.

⁴² Ibid.

prosecution of the volunteers arrested conducting humanitarian aid work in the Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge. The cornerstone of one defense is to appeal to the conservative Religious Freedoms Restoration Act (RFRA), which in many ways further marginalizes groups that are already oppressed by the white cis-hetero-patriarchy.⁴³ This defense centers the volunteer and his faith beliefs rather than naming and challenging the legitimacy of the militarized border enforcement regime that has caused the deaths of thousands of individuals crossing the desert to the US. Conversely, several of the defendants arrested concurrently released a statement that declares the targeting of humanitarian aid workers as parallel to the PTD strategy against border crossers as “classic example[s] of the ramping up of an authoritarian regime.”⁴⁴ They acknowledge and challenge the power imbalance, refusing to cease their resistance. Unfortunately, their framework also assumes that continuing to address one symptom of the problem of imperialist colonial violence will bring an end to the crisis,⁴⁵ rather than radically challenging the role that humanitarian aid may be playing in perpetuating these same hierarchies of power. Therefore, at best No More Deaths’ ethical framework is faith-based but inconsistent, and at its most harmful it reproduces the white savior complex and the masculine-imperialist power imbalances used to maintain the violence and exploitation of colonialism.

Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network (BIJAN)

BIJAN is an accompaniment and harm-reduction network working with immigrant communities dealing directly with the immigration court and detention system in Boston,

⁴³ “#Cabeza9 Trial Daily Updates,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 6 May 2019, “Pressure Mounts to Drop Charges Against Humanitarian-Aid Workers,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 16 August 2018, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/pressure-mounts-to-drop-charges-against-humanitarian-aid-workers/>.

⁴⁴ “Statement by #Cabeza9 Defendants,” No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 1 March 2019,

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Massachusetts.⁴⁶ It is a “a network of faith communities, individuals and other activist groups” as well as “volunteers,” that identify as “mostly allies” working in solidarity and community with immigrant-led organizations and communities.⁴⁷ BIJAN’s primary role is to “provide” or “offer” accompaniment to individuals and families navigating the immigration detention and court systems while honoring “people’s dignity and choices in a system that denies dignity and choice.”⁴⁸ Additionally, BIJAN provides other support as requested and as able to those most directly impacted by the deportation regime, such as fundraising for families, carpools to court or detention, or public campaigns to attempt to stop deportations. The network formed organically in response to community-identified needs following an escalation and evolution of immigration enforcement activity that rendered previous community strategies to disrupt and stop ICE arrests and migrant deportations ineffective. BIJAN is also connected to a national network of accompaniment providers that share best practices, challenge one another’s praxis, and imagine new ideas and solutions.⁴⁹ BIJAN is not affiliated with a specific ministry, but is fiscally sponsored by Episcopal City Mission, who holds the bond fund on their behalf.⁵⁰

BIJAN’s values and principles—decidedly different from that of No More Deaths—are based in a liberation framework that aligns with that of radical hospitality. The language used by BIJAN when speaking about the people they support is humanizing and inclusive. Throughout

⁴⁶ “Beyond Bond & Legal Defense Fund,” Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, accessed 22 February 2019, <https://beyondbondboston.org/>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.; “Ways to Help,” Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, accessed 22 February 2019,

⁴⁸ “Beyond Bond & Legal Defense Fund,” Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, accessed 22 February 2019, <https://beyondbondboston.org/>.

⁴⁹ Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, “BIJAN Court Accompaniment Guide & Resources,” (Excel Spreadsheet, in the author’s possession, 2018).

⁵⁰ “Donate,” Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, accessed 22 February 2019, <https://beyondbondboston.org/donate>.

their website, BIJAN refers to the people seeking their support through mostly people-first language, including, “neighbors,” “our community,” “people,” “family,” “those impacted by our racist immigration system,” “people released on bond,” “those in need of support,” “people detained by ICE,” “people facing deportation,” and “folks in immigration jail.”⁵¹ They are also referred to as those “who have no other resources in the community,” which ties an individual’s need to a specific space and time amongst community rather than to their inherent state of being with the term *migrants in need*. When referring on social media to a person that has reached out to them for support, they use the first initial of their name, which has the impact of acknowledging individual people while respecting their privacy. They emphasize that the people they support are members of “our own communities, neighbors, friends and family.”⁵² Their newsletters and calls to action center the choices, decisions, and requests of the people most impacted by the “racist immigration system” by requesting volunteers respond to “requests” for support or asking volunteers to “offer” accompaniment. To emphasize that their work is in fact not just their work, they label each effort to support someone as that person’s campaign, such as “Julio’s campaign for due process and release from ICE custody.” The emphasis is on “taking action by ensuring members of our communities have the resources they need to fight their deportations and stay connected to their families.” BIJAN’s newsletter reminds us that people in ICE jail are also fighting for and with one another and that we must “learn from each other” and “resist together” with “our neighbors to fight the injustices.” BIJAN acknowledges the pain and suffering of their community members while also recognizing the “persistence and endurance

⁵¹ “Beyond Bond & Legal Defense Fund,” Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, accessed 22 February 2019, <https://beyondbondboston.org/>; BIJAN, weekly email messages to author, July 11, 2018-April 27, 2019.

⁵² “Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network,” BIJAN, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://www.facebook.com/BeyondBondBoston>.

and hope and determination” of the people they work with and their families.⁵³ When speaking about the situation at the border, BIJAN describes what’s happening as “horrifying,” but also acknowledges that these horrifying conditions exist here in Massachusetts too, even if they look different operationally.⁵⁴ Their language transcends the paradigm of the colonial host/guest dichotomy and creates a collective identity of community and family that includes everyone in their network regardless of immigration status or time in the country. Their emphasis on following the leadership of the folks most directly impacted by these systems also transcends this binary by demonstrating the expectation that individuals in immigration detention are also supporting one another and leading the resistance, while free-world allies are also learning from and relying on the hospitality of directly impacted folks to connect with more community members.⁵⁵

Lastly, BIJAN’s framework is one of radical hospitality because of its focus on abolition and challenging rather than legitimizing oppressive and harmful systems. Throughout BIJAN’s communications, they refer to their radical stance against systems of oppression. They discuss the act of posting bond for individuals in ICE detention as “an act of radical defiance” and a “direct challenge to the government’s agenda of caging and deporting people.” They specifically oppose laws and policies that “actively turn people over to ICE,” object to the presence of ICE in Massachusetts courts, and include in their conception of people deserving of sanctuary those “subjected to criminal proceedings,” which is often a trigger to initiating the process of entering

⁵³ BIJAN, weekly email messages to author, July 11, 2018-April 27, 2019.

⁵⁴ “Beyond Bond & Legal Defense Fund,” Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, accessed 22 February 2019, <https://beyondbondboston.org/>.

⁵⁵ Choi Hee An, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean Immigrant Theology and the Church* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 139-44.

ICE detention.⁵⁶ Additionally, they acknowledge their participation in the prison industrial complex through funding phone calls with people in “immigration jail” through the Securus phone service provider, the sole option for communicating over the phone with individuals in state prisons. However, they also offer a critique of the company and its immoral practices, and share information about the current lawsuit against the company’s “kickbacks” to the Bristol County Sheriff.⁵⁷ By challenging this power imbalance, BIJAN refuses the colonial binary framework of *savior* and *saved*, *civilized* and *uncivilized*, and *powerful* and *subjugated*, working together as immigrants and white allies strive to co-create an “In-Beyond” space of “co-hosts” and “co-guests” that is the cornerstone of a radical hospitality framework.⁵⁸

There are also limitations to BIJAN’s framework and practices that do not align with an ideology of radical hospitality. For example, BIJAN also ascribes to the narrative that values and empathizes with primarily families and children. They highlight families throughout their communications, and continuously restate that “families” and “children” need to be reunited and not “separated from their families.”⁵⁹ While keeping families together and not behind bars is an important value, highlighting this narrative without critique of the heteronormative family structure and the feminized care role assigned to women in the family reinforces the patterns of a gendered racial removal program that targets working-class Latino and Caribbean men for deportation while leaving immigrant women with children behind in the US to fulfill neoliberal

⁵⁶ “Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network,” BIJAN, accessed 6 May 2019, <http://www.facebook.com/BeyondBondBoston>.

⁵⁷ “Donate,” Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, accessed 22 February 2019, <https://beyondbondboston.org/donate>.

⁵⁸ Choi Hee An, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean Immigrant Theology and the Church* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 139-52.

⁵⁹ “Beyond Bond & Legal Defense Fund,” Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network, accessed 22 February 2019, <https://beyondbondboston.org/>.

economic needs.⁶⁰ This lack of critique therefore reinforces the deportation regime's tactic of family separation on a larger scale that is invisibilized by white savior colonialism. A radical hospitality framework would necessarily emphasize the reunification and strengthening of communities as a complete, interdependent collective, with every individual person valued despite their membership in or connection to a biological family, and allow for the potentiality of imagining new ways of forming and building human relationships and communities.

Material Relief and Feminized Care Work

It is important to examine material relief work alongside the theories of feminized care work to understand why it is a threat to the immigration enforcement regime and the white hegemony. Material relief work in the frame of radical hospitality is emotional care work that challenges the paradigm of global feminized care work. Material relief is not necessarily a gendered role, but the work itself is considered feminine work. As with feminized emotional care work, material relief efforts of rapid response networks are devalued as not real labor by the patriarchal neoliberal global capitalist system.⁶¹ As a result, these roles in the migrant justice movement are performed by extra-governmental volunteers rather than as a funded function of the federal immigration bureaucracy. The increased demand for material relief work simultaneously results from the struggle for survival caused by neoliberal economic practices that force and require dangerous acts of migration across an unforgiving desert.⁶² Additionally, similar to feminized emotional care work, material relief efforts reproduce the social hierarchies

⁶⁰ Tanya Golash-Boza and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, "Latino Immigrant Men and the Deportation Crisis: A Gendered Racial Removal Program," *Latino Studies* 11, no. 3 (2013): 282.

⁶¹ Marta Kolářová, "Gender and Globalisation: Labour Changes in the Global Economy," *Czech Sociological Review* 42, (2006): 1251.

⁶² Marta Kolářová, "Gender and Globalisation: Labour Changes in the Global Economy," *Czech Sociological Review* 42, (2006): 1251; Zuhail Yesilyurt Gündüz, "The Feminization of Migration: Care and the New Emotional Imperialism," *Monthly Review* 65.7 (2013): 40.

or lack thereof of the community that practices it, and bears the burden of imagining and creating new human relations in the vacancy of social strata. Material relief work radically challenges the immigration enforcement and deportation regime when conducted in a framework of radical hospitality that values each human life and works to transform hierarchies of social value by flattening them. Reproducing and growing this transformative ideology through material relief makes it a threat to white hegemony that relies on these hierarchies to maintain power. Lastly, the paradigm of feminized care work is challenged by these material relief organizations by including white allies together with migrants, and people of all genders simultaneously in material relief work together. This challenges the gendered and racialized power imbalance of care work in the current globalized neoliberal economy,⁶³ and de-legitimizes the neoliberal gendered racial removal program by disrupting operations and adding emotional and community value to the work. These threats activate retaliation from the immigration enforcement regime in the form of targeted criminalization of individuals engaging in various forms of material relief support for the immigrant community.

An Ethical Critique of Policing and Criminalization of Migrant Support Work

The criminalization of humanitarian aid workers from No More Deaths is a postcolonial process within the power structure of the immigration enforcement regime that indirectly targets undocumented immigrants for colonization. The Border Patrol strategy of prevention through deterrence, PTD, devalues and dehumanizes the lives of individuals attempting to cross the border without the privilege of documentation that is justified and masked by a narrative of national security.⁶⁴ This surface narrative provides an ideological cover for a postcolonial

⁶³ Marta Kolářová, "Gender and Globalisation: Labour Changes in the Global Economy," *Czech Sociological Review* 42, (2006): 1251.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 281.

process.⁶⁵ The colonial control of the militarized border enforcement over migrants is invisibilized by manipulating white colonizers into believing that the process is one of self-preservation and not destruction of the colonized. No More Deaths volunteers are targeted by law enforcement because they disrupt the ideology of PTD. At its ideological best, by providing water and other material relief for survival in the desert crossing, No More Deaths subverts the colonial violence of the dehumanization of PTD by valuing the lives of border crossers as well as the colonial violence inflicted by the suffering of the desert journey itself. Disrupting this strategy challenges the colonizer/colonized paradigm, disrupts the colonization process, and challenges the authority and legitimization of border militarization. The border enforcement mechanism has no alternative than to target these volunteers in order to reassert their authority and continue the colonial process. Therefore, criminalizing No More Deaths and other similar humanitarian aid work at the border is a postcolonial process for migrants because it uses a narrative of national security and criminalization of immigration and humanitarian aid to end the disruption of the PTD strategy and justify the reassertion of ongoing colonialism of migrants beyond the southern US border.

BIJAN has not been publicly criminalized by ICE for their material relief activities, but the power-based interpersonal violence inflicted on BIJAN members furthers the deportation regime's racialized and gendered removal program. Most of BIJAN's work is done within the system of oppression and without directly confronting the authority of the enforcement regime. On the surface, their accompaniment efforts are complicit in the administrative immigration system because they pay bond, attend hearings, and pay for phone calls to detainees. These

⁶⁵ Choi Hee An, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean Immigrant Theology and the Church* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 2-3.

efforts, however, also build community capacity for resistance in the form of person-to-person interactions that challenge hegemonic norms of social relations, such as treating all people regardless of the social order with dignity and respect, honoring the agency and choices of directly impacted folks, and creating networks of radical hospitality and care within our neighborhoods and communities. However, when participating with BIJAN in their early stages of organizing, I did witness and experience intimidation and harassment by officers in the sheriff's department at the county detention center. While talking with families arriving and waiting to visit their loved ones in ICE detention I worked in a small team to provide resources of support and we were threatened with arrest if we did not leave, despite our right to be there. This harassment occurred when we attempted to distribute literature, collect contact information, or record details and information from the visitors, but not when we were just present and talking. BIJAN's network and activities are still relatively new—they have been organizing the accompaniment network for less than two years—and will likely be more intentionally and directly targeted for its work as the criminalization of material relief and harm reduction work continues to intensify.⁶⁶ However, the harassment and disruption that did occur has the impact of furthering the immigration enforcement regime's agenda of a gendered racial removal program. By preventing the visitors to Boston's ICE detention facility, who are mostly women and children, from receiving information and resources to organize and resist their loved one's deportation, they further enable the separation of immigrant communities, the deportation of working-class Black and Latino men, and the continued exploitation and controlled employment of immigrant women.

⁶⁶ "Update from the Summer Volunteer Program," No More Deaths/No Más Muertas, 1 August 2018, <http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/update-from-the-summer-volunteer-program/>.

Conclusion

The immigration enforcement and deportation regime is increasingly criminalizing migrant support networks because of their effective challenge to the paradigm of global feminized care work, and their ethical and moral frameworks that challenge the postcolonial destruction of border imperialism. Based on this analysis, I recommend a social change strategy that combines an ethical practice of radical hospitality alongside policy advocacy efforts that challenge neoliberal colonial power imbalances and our complicity with these systems of oppression. This strategy should be organized from the grassroots in order to address the particular manifestations of violence and power in each individual locality across the US, while attempting to coordinate on a national and global scale to build momentum. However, these efforts must exist as a social justice praxis in which we are accountable to an ongoing cycle of reflecting on the lived impact of our work, learning from community knowledges, implementing new or adjusted practices, and so forth. This praxis must be informed by the lived experiences and leadership of those most impacted by the violence of colonialism and systemic oppression, or we risk recreating, expanding, and legitimizing these systems of harm and injustice.

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