1. Introduction

Together with the normalization of the idea that migration is irregular and that it should be managed and restricted (Jansen et al. 2015: xi), the conveying of information on migration across the Mediterranean in terms of emergency, disaster, flows and numbers has become standard. Particularly in the European spring, the image of ‘swelling masses of desperate Africans fleeing poverty and war at home are trying to enter Europe illegally’ (IOM 2008: 11) is drawn upon. In April of this year for example, President of the European Council Donald Tusk warned the Members of the European Parliament that, concerning ‘the Central Mediterranean route ... the numbers of would-be migrants in Libya are alarming’ (European Council 2016). The UNHCR estimates that in Libya ‘at least 100,000 migrants’ are ‘packed into towns and cities along its western coast’ (Stephen 2016) waiting for the weather to clear and to cross the sea to Europe. Military advisor for UN Libya envoy Martin Kobler claims this number to be ‘a million of potential migrants’ (DW 2016).

Similarly, in May 2014 Secretary of State Fred Teeven - a Dutch politician of the liberal VVD party who until March 2015 retained the portfolio Safety and Justice – evoked a dramatized image of migration across the Mediterranean. In the television show Eén op Eén, in which he was interviewed by journalist and talk show host Sven Kockelmann, the Secretary of State deliberately ‘rang the alarm bell’ (Eén op Eén 2014). Supposedly ‘thousands of migrants’ were to enter the Netherlands every month in 2014, ‘leading up to 65,000 people yearly’ (idem). Apart from the ‘alarming figures,’ the Secretary of State spoke of his fear of ‘organized human trafficking,’ particularly of Eritreans, although ‘it might very well be that there are are people from Ethiopia amongst them’ (idem). As a solution, the Secretary of State made an appeal to ‘people working in logistics, people working in trains, in public transport, or international transportation’ to ‘open their eyes and ears’ to ‘any suspicious behaviour’ and ‘inform the police and military police’ (idem). What was to be noted for example is ‘how people are dressed’ and ‘their looks’ (idem). When the interviewer summarized Teeven’s position by rhetorically asking ‘So you are summoning all Dutch people on the road to keep their eyes open to anything that may point to human trafficking or to asylum-seekers from Africa?’ - thus suggesting that all citizens (and not only specific professions) were required to attend to visual aspects of those people now tainted with suspicion – the Secretary of State did not correct him (idem). In a Parliamentary Debate the following day, the Secretary of State furthermore foregrounded ‘a certain modus operandi concerning the behaviour of aliens, the way in which they are transported, or the way that is being communicated during the transportation’ (House of Representatives 2014a) as relevant factors to keep an eye on. ‘Information from society can improve visibility’ (House of Representatives 2014b), he later clarified in a letter to Parliament.

The call upon citizens to help the government in controlling unwanted migration is not an isolated anecdote. Individual citizens increasingly take part in mobility regulation, without being required to do so by their profession or affiliation. In the United States for example, citizens contribute to the surveillance and detection of migrants and to the enforcement of migration laws by calling anonymous tip lines, watching live streams of cameras monitoring border areas and reporting on suspicious
behaviour, and joining border vigilantes or immigration posses (Walsh 2014). Although in Europe such citizens’ initiatives have received little scholarly attention, in several Member States it does happen that citizens are invited to report on migrants. In the UK, ‘if you think someone is living or working in the UK illegally, or is employing someone who isn’t allowed to work in the UK,’ such an ‘immigration crime’ can be reported through contacting the Home Office (Home Office 2015). In Hungary, in the summer of 2015, the mayor of the village of Asotthalom ordered village auxiliaries to trace and catch migrants and hand them over to the police (Toth 2015). In Sweden, the Migration Authority in 1999 launched the project Argus, an initiative that invited citizens to inform the Authority of ‘dubious immigrants’ – i.e. those ‘suspected of fraud (housing, employment, and social allowance), and/or assuming a false identity, giving fake asylum claims, and bogus family affiliations’ (Tesfahuney and Dahlstedt 2008).

Apart from appeals to individual citizens, Lahav and Giraudon (2000; 2006) have signalled an international trend in which states seek to control migration by delegating authority to private and societal actors. Hospitals, schools, welfare officers, employers, and airline carriers are being included in these implementation processes (Lahav and Guiraudon 2000: 184-188) and thus provide input to policies that aim towards migration management (Lahav and Guiraudon 2006: 211).

These outward delegations of responsibility for migration policies to citizens as well as to private and societal actors do not imply that governments fully transfer the responsibility to control migrant illegality to civil society. In the Dutch case, the government aims at preventing and managing ‘illegal’ migration, for example through pre-entry measures in ‘countries of origin’, border controls by the Border Management Renewal Program (Programma Vernieuwing Grensmanagement’, VGM), countering ‘illegal residency’ through controls by Mobile Security Monitoring (‘Mobiel Toezicht Veiligheid’, MTV), and facilitating return through programs by the Return and Departure Agency (Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek’, DT&V). The observation here is rather that, in addition to these formal instruments, the Dutch government appeals to citizens and to private and societal actors in managing what they consider to be ‘illegal residency’ and ‘illegal migration’. ‘Government,’ then, refers not only to the state but rather to the set of practices and technologies of governing which operate across distinctions of state and non-state actors (Barry 2001: 175).

Using the qualification of ‘unwanted’ when referring to migrant ‘illegality’ over the course of this article – instead of ‘illegal’ or ‘irregular’ - emphasizes the constructed character of certain forms of migrant illegality as being problematic. Illegality is ‘a juridical status that entails a social relation to the state,’ as such being ‘a preeminently political identity’ (De Genova 2002: 422). The widely-used adjectives ‘illegal’ and ‘irregular’ would obscure this social, political and legal construction by suggesting the observation of a given social phenomenon (Düvell 2011: 276). Moreover, not all migrant ‘illegality’ or ‘irregularity’ is considered problematic in practice. For example, the American student working off the books in a London pub does not appear on the radar screens (Walters 2010: 85).

This article aims at analysing which forms of border-crossing and residency are considered problematic. Moreover, images of migrant ‘illegality’ as evoked as well as images promoting outwardly delegated forms of governing migration are put under scrutiny. Apart from problematizing the image of the unwanted migrant as called upon in mobilizing civil society, this article redescribes how ‘responsibilization’ of non-state actors redistributes power by using Foucault’s analysis of governmentality as a conceptual framework. Furthermore, the appeal made by former Secretary of State Teeven will be contextualized by Dutch migration policies aimed at countering migrant illegality since the 1990s as well the promotion of active citizenship since the 1970s; the assumption is that both developments shape the conditions surrounding the possibility of ‘responsibilization’ as a tactic of governance in the Netherlands. By doing so, the forms of thought, conduct and subjectivity that
constitute responsibilization of non-state actors in the field of controlling unwanted migration will be evaluated.

2. Governmentality, biopolitics and biopower

Governmentality, characteristic of the final work of Foucault (1976 – 1984), is as much a historical notion referring to a particular regime of power functioning as constitutive for the modern state (Foucault 2007: 108), as well as a more general concept referring to the ‘strategic field of power relations in their mobility, transformability and reversibility’ (Foucault 2005: 252). Most relevant for the purposes of this article is the latter conceptualization: governmentality as a set of power instruments that is characterized by its fluidity and aimed at the population (Foucault 2007: 105). Power instruments, here, are not one-directional, top-down law-like instruments of government, but rather an assemblage of diverse tactics that aim to control the people as a whole. ‘Diverse’ here means that there is a number of different ways in which these ‘tactics’ operate (Foucault 2007: 99). As such, governmental power does not only operate through institutions, but also through procedures, analyses, reflections and calculations (Foucault 2007: 144). Governmentality thus ‘cuts out’ a very specific domain of power relations (Senellart 2007: 502), branching itself throughout the whole of civil society.

Key to the set of governmental power instruments is biopolitics, concerning the regulation of the population in terms of a species i.e. the biological elements of population. Intertwined with the capillary character of power as it operates in governmentality, the power at work in biopolitics consists of a ‘multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate,’ meaning that power is not some sort of an externality, but rather an ‘infiltrated’ force that is interwoven with its very object – the population (Foucault 1990: 92). Thus, as power resides inside the system itself, it comes from ‘everywhere’ (Foucault 1990: 93): ‘power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations. [...] Power comes from below’ (Foucault 1990: 94). This definition of power makes clear that power is not only capillary (Walters 2012: 9) but also actively (re)produced by (non-state) actors. In Society must be defended, Foucault emphasises this point by stating that ‘Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise power. They are never the inert or consenting targets of power; they are always its relays’ (Foucault 2003: 29). People are thus not only the object of power; they also practice it.

Although governmentality and biopolitics were only introduced in Foucault’s later work, it does not exclude the workings of disciplinary power – the latter being central to Foucault’s middle-period work (1970-1976). Disciplinary power refers to a broad a set of techniques of surveillance (i.e. what Foucault coins the microphysics of power), aimed at the normalization of individuals. Whereas biopolitical power targets the population, disciplinary power targets the individual body (Foucault 2003: 249). Surveillance objectifies individuals through (permanent and invisible) registration. The crux of disciplinary power, then, is that the person it is practiced on internalizes the discipline; as such, power automatically functions (Foucault 1973: 201). Disciplinary power is therefore individualizing: it encapsulates and isolates individuals. Indeed, disciplinary power and biopolitical power do not operate at the same level and are historically established at different times (Foucault 2003: 249), but ‘they are not mutually exclusive and can be articulated with each other’ (ibid.: 250). This is emphasized by Foucault’s introduction of the concept of biopower as a type of power that emerges at the intersection of the individualizing effects of disciplinary power and the massifying effects of biopolitical power (Rasmussen 211: 36-37).

As political power is ‘capillary,’ meaning that multiple agencies and techniques all relay and as such exercise force, the researcher’s focus should not be limited to the
'immediate' actions of the state. Instead, (s)he should trace how power branches and 'sway[s] throughout society by means of a ramifying apparatus of control' (Miller and Rose 2008: 26-27). Presupposing that the population belongs to a space of governance, the concept of governmentality is then an analytic lens that may reveal the ways in which political power is located outside of institutional politics.

3. Calling for citizens to report on 'illegal' migrants: the tactic of responsibilization

What makes the empirical starting point of this article particularly interesting is that citizens are deliberately requested to engage in the surveillance of 'illegal' migrants, and that private and societal actors are professionally required to implement policies that aim to restrict the 'illegal' entry and residence of migrants. In addition to the concept 'governmentality', which provides an ontology of governmental power and as such describes the distribution and effects of power in relations between state and non-state actors, the concept of 'responsibilization' (O'Malley and Palmer 1996; Rose 1999; Garland 2001; Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010; 2013) refers to explicit and administrative appeals to individuals, private sector and semi-public sector, to bear responsibility for public tasks (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010: 699). However, both concepts are related: responsibilization is a tactic (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2013: 11) whose dynamic concerning power distribution and effects - can be analysed with governmentality as an analytical framework.

According to Schinkel and Van Houdt, a leading concept that is drawn on in responsibilization as a tactic is citizenship (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2013: 11). Through invoking images of what is considered to be good citizenship, the governmental state influences the behaviour of its citizens, and positions them in such a way that they serve the ends of government. Thus, what is promoted is not citizenship as juridical status that defines membership of a territory, but rather a normative judgment concerning what citizenship should entail (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010). Characteristic of images of good citizenship since the '70s in neoliberal policies in Western Welfare states is the 'ethical principle of active citizenship' (Rose 2006: 159-160; Verhoeven and Tonkens 2013: 25). Through the 'inculcation and shaping of 'private' responsibility,' responsibilization assigns the community with a portion of the responsibility for resolving society's needs for order, security, health and productivity (Rose 1999: 174). Importantly, this invoked image of the community is not a given; rather, it is itself produced by the mechanism of responsibilization. Responsibilization presupposes the distinction between those mature enough to enact active citizenship and those who fail to do so (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2013: 14). The figure of community then only represents the former group as it is imagined; a collective of self-entrepreneurs who attach themselves to the value of individual responsibility.

In the Netherlands, the move towards an 'activating welfare state' can be traced back in the political discourse from the '70s onwards (Kampen et al. 2013: 11). Van Houdt (2014) demonstrates in his dissertation how, in Dutch safety politics, citizens are increasingly asked to get involved with policy implementation. The developments in this branch of politics are relevant to the current purposes, both administratively - because asylum and immigration policies in the Netherlands are dealt with by the Ministry of Safety and Justice - and theoretically - because of the increasing criminalization of migrants (e.g. Commissioner for Human Rights 2010) and the emerging migration-security complex (e.g. Bigo 2002; Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002; Huysmans 2000; Walters 2008; Walters 2010). Starting his analysis with the 1985 report Society and Crime, Van Houdt shows how citizens are asked to contribute to 'fighting the mass manifestation of crime' (House of Representatives 1985), how cooperation between state and non-state actors is cultivated (House of Representatives 1990), how citizens’ participation and social controls are encouraged (Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations 2002) and how...
neighbourhoods and individual citizens are required to engage in 'preventive partnerships' (Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations 2007).

In the episode of Eén op Eén, Secretary of State Teeven in effect mobilizes society (Donzelot 1991) to 'make visible the criminality linked with ['illegal' migration] (Eén op Eén 2014). Immediately reporting these signals to the police 'really helps [the Ministry of Safety and Justice] forward' (idem). From a governmentality perspective, then, this call for control, in which those working in logistics are being 'responsibilized', can be considered to be among the tactics that are used by the governmental state to try to manage 'illegal' migrants from the capillaries of society via an information flow from below. Through the request to report on 'illegal' migrants to the police, 'a newly conceptualized contractual relationship between citizen and state' is established in which the citizen 'cooperates with the state' (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010: 699-700). Interestingly, in parliamentary debates that followed the television broadcast, it became clear that the Secretary of State had at the time of broadcast not yet informed the Members of Parliament of the supposedly new dynamics of 'illegal' migration or his intended reaction. The Secretary of State thus first informed civil society (by mobilizing them through the media); a day later, he informed Parliament. Clearly, thus informing society and appealing to it in terms of surveillance is considered valuable as a strategy – as the temporal order indicates. By installing citizens – particularly those working in logistics – as agents that actively serve the ends of government, the government creates a capillary structure throughout civil society that encompasses a multiplicity of spatially distant actors.

As it is still the state that initiates the ramification of power distribution and prescribes the desired actions to be taken in line with policy goals, the citizens’ actions do not compromise the sovereignty of the state. As Mezzadra and Neilson note, although sovereignty is subjected to the rationality of governmentality, it is transcendent to its devices because it retains its autonomy (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 203–204). At the same time citizens may or may not be willing to engage in activities of surveillance and detection, or instead they may carry the activity of surveillance beyond its intended scope. How citizens act in practice when they encounter ‘illegal’ migrants is not a given, as they may cushion or counteract the government’s interests. The state, however, remains central in the establishment of its capillary power structure. To Ong (2006) sovereign power ‘depends on a network of regulatory entities that channel, correct, and scale human activities in order to produce effects of social order’ (Ong 2006: 100). In this sense, the appeal to citizens to get involved with the implementation of migration policies disaggregates and decentralizes state power, but at the same time reconfigures it (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 192).

4. The context of responsibilization in migrant management in the Netherlands: the Linking Act and the Foreigner Administration System

The presentation of ‘illegal immigration’ as a highly disturbing fact of such severance that citizens are being alerted on national television fits with De Genova’s observation that “migrant ‘illegality’ has risen to unprecedented prominence as a ‘problem’ in policy debates and as an object of border policing strategies for states around the world” (De Genova 2002: 419). In northern European states, Broeders and Engbersen observe an ‘avalanche’ of policy measures aimed at controlling and countering the presence of ‘irregular migrants’ (Broeders and Engbersen 2007: 1592). The presuppositions of such a magnitude of policies seems to be that unwanted migration is in fact governable through migration policies and that the ‘turbulence’ of ‘unwanted migration’ can be ‘managed’ (Bojadžijev and Karakayalı 2010; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 179). Similarly, the call made by the Secretary of State is not an isolated episode concerning the delegation of control to civil-society actors. In the
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Netherlands, part of the discouragement policy launched at the beginning of the 1990s aimed at curbing illegal residence and combatting illegal employment (Van der Leun and Kloosterman 2006: 67), was to move the implementation of migration policies to Human Service Organisations (Hasenfeld 1983) such as providers of social benefits, health care, housing and education – all of which can be crucial for illegal migrants (Van der Leun 2006: 315). The appeal made to citizens in the Eén op Eén episode could then be understood in this broader context of outward delegation in the policy area of migration.

In 1991, social-fiscal numbers were tied to residence status (Van der Leun 2006: 313), meaning that employers could no longer accept ‘irregular’ migrants to legally work (Düvell 2011, 289). In 1995, the digital database VAS, meaning ‘Foreigner Administration System’ (‘Vreemdelingen Administratie Systeem’), was launched. In this system, data on ‘all foreigners residing in the Netherlands’ was contained (Leerkes 2006: 26). Importantly, the database enabled welfare departments to verify whether their clients are lawful residents and as such eligible to their services (Van der Leun 2003: 18). Moreover, it enabled housing corporations to check whether their clients had a residence permit and hence entitled to rent their apartments (Leerkes 2006: 26). In 1998 the Linking Act (‘Koppelingswet’) was enacted which allowed immigration service registration files, census bureau data, tax data and social security data to be cross-checked (Leerkes 2006: 26). As a consequence, a whole range of Human Service Organisations got access to an infrastructure that was installed to make their provisions – such as social benefits, housing, health care and education - conditional on residential status (Van der Leun 2006: 312).

Van der Leun explicitly characterizes the Linking Act as a tactic of remote control (Zolberg 1999: 75), by which she refers to the manoeuvre in which ‘immigration policy moves to organizations that allocate social services’ (Van der Leun 2006: 315). As a side note, Leerkes observes that the Foreigner Administration System is illustrative of responsibilization, without however elaborating on this point and only referring to Garland (2001). The ways in which the Linking Act and the Foreigner Administration System as instances of responsibilization redistribute power and transform governance are not attended to. Importantly, by charging non-state actors such as house owners and those working in social welfare departments with the implementation of their policy goals, they are put in the position of executing the ends of government. As such, the state governs through community actors: throughout civil society the whole network of force-relaying entities is being put in place, that are themselves thus located in the very field in which they operate – i.e. the community as a whole. In the societal domain, ‘illegal’ migrants are thus being controlled from below through a network of Human Service Organisations in which power can come from everywhere. This multiplicity and diversity of power practitioners is exemplary for biopolitical power as it operates.

The practice of citizens’ actions in response to the appeal made by the Secretary of State does not yield a set outcome – for they may cushion or counteract the government’s interests – and the same holds for actors working in Human Service Organisations. Based on interviews with human service workers before and after the enactment of the Linking Act, Van der Leun concludes that ‘norms, values and ideologies of implementers with a high degree of discretion and professional autonomy sometimes result in outcomes that run counter to the official policy goals’ and that ‘interests of the national government and local authorities do not always coincide’ (Van der Leun 2006: 323). However, Van der Leun’s argument seems to primarily lean on instances of support (Van der Leun 2006: 331) that outreaches official injunctions – i.e. human service workers not living up to the government’s mandate to exclude ‘illegal immigrants’ from public services. Inversely, the discretionary room may similarly allow for actions that otherwise depart from the national policy goals, including for example exclusion that is uncalled-for – e.g. doctors refusing to offer ‘essential medical care’ albeit being professionally required to do so. In any case, when policy practice exceeds the government’s intentions, the
national government may attempt to blame it on the respective non-state organization instead of being held accountable for failure, as their responsibility is delegated outwards.

5. Racially representing unwanted migrants: massification and individualization

Non-state actors are thus part of the capillary power network that relays governmental power, the object of power being the unwanted migrant. However, the unwanted migrant also becomes a subject by virtue of these power relations, for power, as Foucault shows, works constitutively (Foucault 2003: 30). What does the rhetorical figure of the migrant refer to, and to what extent does this rhetorical image overlap with migrants as human beings?

The Linking Act and the Foreigner Administration system problematize migrant illegality in the broad sense, i.e. ‘the presence in the Netherlands of foreign nationals who are not in possession of a valid residence permit and are therefore obliged to leave the country of unlawful stay’ (Düvell 2011: 284). Some migrants are considered ‘illegal’ because they crossed the border ‘illegally,’ whereas others arrived on tourist visas and overstayed or became ‘illegal’ when they were refused refugee status (Leerkes 2009: 16). However, on television, the Secretary of State evokes a very specific image of migrant ‘illegality’ by linking it with ‘organised human trafficking’ and representing migrant illegality with observable or audible characteristics of migrants – dress, looks, behaviour and speech which citizens are required to carefully attend to and report on.

This figure of migrant ‘illegality,’ brought up as pointers and clues concerning what citizens should administer to, reinforces a massification of unwanted migrants. The *Eén op Eén* episode can be interpreted in terms of creating ‘caesura within a population’ (Foucault 2003: 255). In this particular case, the caesura is based on visible and audible observables of a presupposed group, establishing a distinctive criterion of which people should be met with suspicion and which people should not. In any case, establishing unwanted migrants as a group assumes homogeneity, under-communicates diversity and does not allow for self-identifications other than that of political movement. The fragmenting power that subdivides groups, however, does not only abstract from migrants as human beings; it creates divides based on the category of race (Foucault 2003: 254-263) which is presented as identifiable through physical characteristics of a supposed group.

Crucially, it is thus not migrant ‘illegality’ per se that is targeted: instead, the Secretary of State plays on a stereotypically racialized figure of migrant ‘illegality’, repeatedly played out on television, i.e. Africans ferried across the Mediterranean (Walters 2010: 85). Citizens are then asked to operationalize these racial assumptions. These characteristics are moreover formulated in a rather vague manner – ‘*any* suspicious behaviour’ suffices for calling the military police – and that seeing any group of dark-skinned people potentially justifies making a call. And as civil society actors themselves are required to look for people who meet these distinctive criteria – as opposed to ‘normal’ citizens, who pass the test as being not-suspicious – these actors produce and relay these racial assumptions throughout civil society, which has, through responsibilization, become the field from which governmental power is exercised.

Apart from massifying migrant ‘illegality’ based on a reified image of a racialized group, by evoking a securitized image of human trafficking – i.e. a representation visible on political agendas that treats human trafficking as part of a security continuum (Aradau 2004: 252-253) – migrant ‘illegality’ becomes tainted with suspicion and lumped together with drug trafficking, terrorism, and organised crime (Aradau 2004: 252-253). Moreover, because it is the police and the military police – whose mission is the protection of internal security (Huysmans 2000: 756) – that citizens are required to report to, migrant illegally becomes similarly associated with
the bulk of security issues and as such meets with risk management and crime control.

Intertwined with the racialized and securitized massification of the unwanted migrant, the rhetorical image appealed to is similarly individualizing. Although governmental power is not always disciplinary, disciplinary power and biopolitical power are ‘not mutually exclusive and can be articulated with each other’ (Foucault 2003: 250), allowing the governmentalized state to use disciplinary power as a ‘figure of political technology’ (Foucault 1973: 205).

It is through disciplinary power - a broad set of techniques of surveillance considered as a microphysics of power - that the body is constituted as something individual (Foucault 2003b: 30). The figure of the ‘illegal’ migrant in this sense emerges as a subject to be governed by virtue of juridical and political distinctions that, dependent on particular political ends (Fassin 2001), categorize some people as ‘illegal.’ By virtue of the Linking Act and the Foreigner Administration problematizing certain aspects of some migrants’ existence in relation to the state’s political interests, (s)he becomes a ‘matter of concern’ (Brown 2015: 15). This ‘body of knowledge’ about ‘illegal’ migrants – which these databases in fact are - ‘insidiously objectifies those on whom it is applied’ (Foucault 1973: 220). A substantive set of personal information about the ‘illegal’ migrant is made visible to multiple actors – i.e. every actor that can access the Foreigner Administration System, including several civil society actors.

As the Secretary of State then publicly represents unwanted migrants as bearers of visible and audible bodily characteristics, the individual body transforms into an object in which the alleged racial observables of migrant ‘illegality’ are inscribed. When responding to his call, citizens then reproduce the individualizing effect of power that sustains migrant illegality as an observable phenomenon. Notably, it is the immediate bodily activity and characteristics that people are required to attend to in recognizing and acting on ‘illegal’ migrants as targeted – i.e. to focus what can be seen and heard. The installed disciplinary power encapsulates the individual ‘illegal’ migrant in the face of surveillance. In a public space, the unwanted migrant does not know whether the person (s)he bumps into intends to issue a report. The unwanted migrant is visible for surveillance, in the face of the potential, invisible non-state actors relaying power. Based on bodily characteristics, (s)he might be considered suspicious.

At the intersection of the biopolitical massification, that targets the unwanted migrant as belonging to racialized and securitized groups, and the disciplinary individualization targeting the unwanted migrant as body, biopower emerges (Rasmussen 2001: 36–37), a notion of power Foucault particular discusses in the context of racism. For Foucault, racism is a basic mechanism of power as exercised by modern States – which can ‘scarcely function without becoming involved with racism at some point’ (Foucault 2003: 254) – that separates what must live, and what must die (Foucault 2003: 254). Whereas Rasmussen in his article starkly contrasts Foucault’s notion of racism with what he considers as ‘the common idea that racism, fundamentally, is a form of irrational prejudice, social discrimination, or political ideology’ (Rasmussen 2001: 35), this contrast seems to underexpose the fact that racism is not at all limited to state genealogies and discourses but rather to be observed in everyday governance. The racialized and securitized figure of the ‘illegal’ migrant, moreover, is not only sustained as a top-down representation. Rather, exactly because governmentality as an analytic framework may reveal that individual people are not only the objects of power but also its relays (Foucault 2003: 29), the tactic of responsibilization exploits this ontology of power. The figure of the ‘illegal’ migrant – which in the case in point does in fact seem to be constructed through prejudice, discrimination and ideology – is sustained by non-state actors. Clearly, the representation of unwanted migrants through an image of migrant ‘illegality’ that draws on race and security does not attend to any self-understanding of migrants other than their juridical and political status. This identity is ‘superimposed on daily
life’ (De Genova 2002: 422), is what De Genova calls the ‘everyday production of ‘illegality” (De Genova 2002: 423) and is enacted from within the responsibilized community.

6. Disregarding migrant agency: the unwanted migrant represented as threat to active citizenship

Civil society actors thus reinforce the massification as well as individualization of unwanted migrants: both as part of the population that is isolated through listing a set of differentiating racial criteria in the face of ‘normal citizens’, and as reduced to a bodily inscribed political-juridical categorization. This image clearly omits the agency of migrants (Bojadžijev and Karakayalı 2010; Mezzadra 2010; 2015). Decisions to migrate, processes of migration itself and agency at the border are not attended to in the image of migrant ‘illegality’ as it stands, which confirms the tendency to neglect subjective stakes of contemporary migration experiences (Mezzadra 2015: 121).

Moreover, the unwanted migrant is likely to internalize the discipline and as such to inscribe the power relation (Foucault 1973, 202). Several authors have hypothesized on the causal relation between restrictive policies aimed at migrant ‘illegality’ and targeted migrants increasingly going into hiding. In her book, the Unknown City, a research project on ‘illegal’ migrants in the Netherlands in which she participated, Van der Leun notes that ‘it is a fact of life’ that ‘illegal’ migrants need to remain unseen by state officials and public organisations (Van der Leun 2003: 115). Moreover, she assumes that the stricter the enforcement regime, the more ‘illegal’ migrants will be pushed towards an underground existence (Van der Leun and Kloosterman 2006: 62). Engbersen and Broeders – the former author being involved in the same research project – also note that ‘illegal’ migrants are increasingly likely to go even deeper underground as a consequence of measures that exclude ‘illegal’ migrants from public services (Engbersen and Broeders 2007: 1606). Similarly, now that - in addition to those working in Human Service Organizations - citizens are invited to contribute to surveillance, this assumption probably grows in likeliness. As there are more ears and eyes implementing restrictive policies to hide from, the multiplicity of persons that may subject the unwanted migrant to the threat of being uncovered extends throughout the responsibilized community.

Taken together with increased forcing of unwanted migrants into underground existence and as such living away from the public, the omitting of migrant agency hinders identifications with ‘illegal’ migrants in terms of autonomous and ‘responsible’ agents. In the face of the ideal of citizenship that responsibilization draws on, and which applauds active self-entrepreneurs enacting individual responsibility, the abstraction from the autonomy of migrants may invigorate the divide between responsibilized citizens and unwanted migrants. As responsibilization rests on the differentiating criteria of agentive versus passive, the disregard shown to migrant agency inhibits a perception of them being agentive actors and as such allows the unwanted migrant to represent a threat to the ideal of the self-reliant and active responsibilized citizen. In their empirical comparative research on the ways in which active citizenship is promoted, Verhoeven and Tonkens (2013) found that in the Netherlands harbouring negative feelings of weariness towards those incapable of self-reliancy is being appealed to as proper. In other words, the qualification of being a ‘sponger’ is cultivated towards those considered incapable of meeting up to the requirement of being agentive (Grin 2013: 238). The promoted figure of the ‘illegal’ migrant, in which the autonomy of migrants is not engaged with, then seems a threat to the ideal of a ‘society of participation’ consisting of agentive actors capable of self-care.
7. Conclusions

The representation of ‘illegal’ employed by the Secretary of State draws on a securitized image of human trafficking and observable or audible characteristics such as dress, looks, behaviour and speech. It is thus not migrant ‘illegality’ per se, but a figure based on racial assumptions, placed into a security continuum. Consequently, this evoked image of the unwanted migrant is massified on racial grounds and is at the same time individualized by transforming the body into an object in which the alleged racial observables of migrant ‘illegality’ are inscribed.

By inviting citizens to report on migrant ‘illegality’ through evoking this figure of unwanted migrants, the Dutch government places civil-society actors in a position where they serve the ends of the government and operationalize classifications of race and security. The appeal to citizens to contribute in surveillance is typically an act of responsibilization, which requires non-state actors to bear responsibility for public tasks by evoking a normative account of ‘active citizenship’.

In the wider context of migrant management in the Netherlands, control has similarly been delegated outwards. Notably through the implementation of the Foreigner Administration System and the Linking Act - that allow Human Service Organizations to check on and report irregular migrants - force is exercised throughout the responsibilized community. Governmentality as an analytic lens reveals that through responsibilization non-state actors become part of the capillary network from which governmental power is put into effect.

The representation of migrant ‘illegality’ undermines the subjectivity and agency of unwanted migrants. As the premise of ‘active citizenship’ that underlies responsibilization draws on a divide between those enacting agency and individual responsibility, disregarding the autonomy of migrants, articulations of their agentive experience are hindered. Given the apparent legitimacy of harbouring negative feelings towards those –considered to fail the requirements of active citizenship, the ‘illegal’ migrant, whose autonomy is abstracted from, then seems incompatible with the image of a responsibilized community.

Subsequent research is needed to further grasp the practice of responsibilization in the governance of migrant ‘illegality’ in the Netherlands. Given that apparatuses of security are the essential mechanism of governmental management (Foucault 2007, 108), knowing how security strategies inform responsibilization tactics would contribute to an understanding of how these appeals to citizens are to be positioned in the face of what the role of the contemporary state is in relation to citizens. Moreover, qualitative ethnographical research on migrants’ subjective practices is needed to articulate the autonomy of migrants and to understand experiences of being governed from within the community sphere itself.

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Lieke van der Veer holds a graduate honours degree in Conflict Resolution and Governance and an undergraduate honours degree in Philosophy, both from the University of Amsterdam. She conducted research on the penalization of illegal residence, focusing on the performativity of administrative categorizations, institutional responsibilities and political speech. As a research assistant, she consulted with several NGOs, legal experts and researchers on the topic of non-returnable asylum seekers. Currently she works on her master thesis in Philosophy, on refugee-support and protest on the ground.

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