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Interrogating Euro-Mediterranean Migration

Edited by
Fabio Amato and Luca Paolo Cirillo

Collana **MoMi**
Volume 1

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UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI L'ORIENTALE
Dipartimento di Scienze Umane e Sociali

Centro di elaborazione culturale MoMI (Mobilità Migrazioni Internazionali)
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La Collana MoMi si prefigge l'obiettivo non solo di raccogliere i lavori delle attività del Centro di elaborazione culturale Mobilità, Migrazioni Internazionali (MoMI), ma anche di essere la sede editoriale di linee di ricerca innovative e di dibattiti scientifici sui temi della mobilità e delle migrazioni, di proposte di ricerca di giovani ricercatori e inoltre di traduzioni in italiano di lavori fondativi apparsi in altre lingue. Come il Centro MoMI, anche questa collana ha come missione principale la valorizzazione delle potenzialità della tradizione dell'Orientale, che si fonda sul confronto con diversi mondi culturali. In particolare, in maniera significativamente crescente, in diversi ambiti disciplinari si è sviluppata una particolare sensibilità ai temi legati alla mobilità e alle migrazioni umane, tanto in rifermento alla storia delle emigrazioni italiane e alle mobilità interne, quanto ai processi migratori che hanno interessato l'Italia come luogo di arrivo, guardando con interesse al tema anche in altri contesti mondiali.

Le migrazioni e i loro effetti (spaziali, economici, sociali, culturali) rappresentano un fenomeno plurale, mutevole eppure di estrema centralità rispetto all'interpretazione della contemporaneità, pertanto la conoscenza del loro funzionamento e delle conseguenze sui luoghi di arrivo, di partenza e di transito non può prescindere da un approccio multidisciplinare che coinvolga i diversi saperi presenti nell'ateneo, come dimostrato dalla ricca produzione sul tema degli ultimi anni, raramente messa in dialogo.

In particolare, il Dipartimento di Scienze Umane e Sociali (Dsus) è dotato di una solida tradizione di studi in ambito storico, economico, socio-antropologico, giuridico, filosofico artistico e geografico e gli studi relativi ai processi culturali (nelle loro diverse declinazioni). Nel contempo, gli altri due Dipartimenti dell'Ateneo (Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo; Studi Letterari, Linguistici e Comparati), oltre alle competenze linguistiche e culturali relative alle diverse aree di provenienza dei flussi migratori, offrono molteplici attività e ricerche sul tema della multiculturalità e dell'apprendimento linguistico. Far convergere le tracce di questa potenziale ricchezza in questa collana è una delle sfide più importanti da realizzare.

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For an introduction. Beyond the crisis: inland rural areas, border externalization, and the failure of EU asylum policies and migrant reception system

Fabio Amato
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This book gathers the insights of the participants in the first MoMI summer school entitled *Interrogating Euro-Mediterranean Migration: Cities, Environment, Asylum and Borders as Terrains of Conflict* held in Procida from June 7th to 11th, 2022. The objective of the initiative was to promote an open and inclusive forum for reflection and debate, engaging students and early-career researchers with new conceptual and methodological tools for investigating migration in the contemporary Euro-Mediterranean space. The suggested themes focused on the relationships between migration and the city, migration and the environmental crisis, a focus on asylum seekers and refugees, and a topic on contemporary EU-driven bordering processes. Drawing on trans-disciplinary and multi-perspective approaches, the summer school offered an important opportunity to collectively make sense of emerging forms of mobility and to critically engage with current research and public discourses on migration and the Mediterranean.

The group participating in the summer school consisted of four keynote speakers, ten organisers facilitating the discussion, and fifteen migration students and early career researchers. Thanks to the contribution of all participants, in a four-day program we were able to collectively debate a variety of relevant topics in contemporary migration and border studies research, and to identify some of the research priorities of this study field. We would like to thank the keynote speakers, namely Giovanni Bettini (Lancaster University), Rodrigo Bueno Lacy (Nijmegen Centre for Border Research), Paolo Novak (SOAS University), and Timothy Raeymaekers (University of Bologna) for helping us create an environment of fruitful exchange. As well, we sincerely thank all the members of the scientific committee, namely Anna Casaglia (University of Trento), Viola Carofalo (University of Naples L'Orientale), Nick Dines (University of Venice Ca' Foscari), Chiara Giubilaro (University of Palermo), Adelina Miranda (University of Poiters), Miguel Mellino (University of Naples L'Orientale) and Nadia Matarazzo (University of Naples Federico II), for sharing their thoughts and attentive critiques during the works.

Finally, a special thanks to Enrica Rigo (University of Rome) who presented for the first time her new book – *La straniera* (2022) – during the summer school works.

Overall, this book addresses the transformations of the migratory processes in the Euro-Mediterranean space and examines at what has been happening from 2010 onwards with different methods and perspectives, to better capture the multidimensional nature of contemporary migratory phenomena. Going beyond the so-called refugee crisis, it pays attention to less spectacular migration discourses and forms, giving space to what in the last decades has been overwhelmed by the emergency rethoric. Three main research segments emerge in the articles that follow: a focus on (Italian) rural areas in the international migration routes, a critique of contemporary border externalization practices implemented by European Union (EU) countries, and an empirical showcase of the failure of the EU reception system and migration policies. Going further, it includes a focus on migration cartography and a class-based review of contemporary EU citizenship market. With no claim to be exhaustive, it provides some interpretative keys to understand the complexity of contemporary migration processes in the Euro-Mediterranean space, bringing the focus from the latest click-bite news to a series to transformation processes sedimented over time.

1. Italian inland rural areas in the international migration routes

In recent years, Italy has seen a growing concentration of refugees and asylum seekers in reception centres located in inland and rural areas, i.e. in territories far from basic services. Italian rural areas count almost 4200 municipalities, covering 60% of the Italian territorial surface. Especially after 2018, these territories have been strongly involved in the decentralization of the migrant reception system with controversial results, as evidenced by the three articles composing the first section of this book.

Indeed, large urban centres are usually characterised by better job placement opportunities, as well as a greater availability of services. Notwithstanding, in recent years, a growing number of scholars have evidenced how rural areas could ensure easier inclusion paths and, at the same time, benefit from the arrival of foreigners to fight against the demographic desertification that affects them. This type of interpretation is not entirely acceptable, as Timothy Raeymaeckers (University of Bologna) remarks in his case-study on Basilicata rural areas. According to him, the choice to locate migrants reception centres in Italian inland rural areas mostly responds to a "logic of separation" and constitutes a "complex compartmentalised system of spatial exclusion" in which the instrumentalization of race is determinant. Raeymaeckers highlights how bordering processes in the Euro-Mediterranean space tend to produce a "hierarchical segregation" of the people and insists that hosting migrants in rural areas, i.e. "in a space that is

classified at the same time as non-modern, uncivilised and threatening", is yet another evidence of how the process of marginalization of migrants develop along racial lines.

In the second article of this section Chiara Davino (University of Bologna) investigates the impacts of international migration routes on the inland rural areas of two southern Italian regions, namely Basilicata and Calabria. Through the interviewing of migrants and asylum seekers, Davino not only allows a reflection driven by less-represented voices and peripheral view-points, highlighting a series of territorial and social marginalization dynamics, but also raises questions about the category of "inland areas" itself, and how it contributes to the disconnection between socio-territorial and reception policies.

The third and last article working on this research segment illustrates the findings of a collaborative research project on human corridors in Italian inland rural areas. Through visual methodologies and the analysis of the data gathered in one-year field research, Giulia Oddi (Università Roma Tre), Daniele Pasqualetti (Università Roma Tre), Martino Haver Longo (Università Roma Tre), and Wolfram Kuck (Istituto Italiano Studi Germanici) focus on a human-corridor project implemented in Italy by the Federation of Evangelical Churches, Mediterranean Hope and the Community of Sant'Egidio, interviewing beneficiaries and workers, and disclosing some of the vantages and the critical issues of this migration policy tool, together with series of observation and analysis on its impacts on Italian inland rural areas.

2. On EU-driven border externalization practices

Since 1992, and even more aggressively since 2005, the EU has developed a policy of externalizing European border controls so as to reduce the number of people on the move reaching European shores in the first place. These policies involve agreements with Europe's neighbouring countries to accept deportees and adopt the same policies of border control, enhanced tracking of people and stratified EU-driven bordering practices. In other words, through border externalization processes, the EU has made its neighbours the new border guards. And because they are so far from European shores and media, the impacts are almost completely invisible to EU citizens.

The significant growth of border externalization measures and agreements have seen a massive acceleration at the Europe-Africa Summit in Valletta in November 2015, when the so-called deterrence paradigm has shifted the burden of immigration to third countries (so-called burden-shifting). Using a plethora of new instruments, in particular the EU Emergency Trust Fund For Africa (EUTF), the Migration Partnership Framework and the Refugee Facility in Turkey, the EU and individual member states are now providing millions of euros for a series of projects aimed at preventing migration of certain people to take place on or through European territory. This includes collaboration with third countries in terms

of acceptance of deportees, training of their police and border officers, development of extensive biometric systems and donations of equipment including helicopters, patrol boats and vehicles, monitoring and control equipment. While many projects are delivered through the European Commission, a number of member states, such as Spain, Italy and Germany, are also taking the lead in funding and training through bilateral agreements with non-EU countries. The EU, in all its policies, makes great rhetoric about the importance of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, but there seems to be no limit to its will to arm dictatorial regimes as long as they commit to prevent unwanted migrants from reaching European shores. As a result, EU funding was given to such infamous regimes as Chad, Niger, Belarus, Libya and Sudan. The growth in border security spending has benefited a wide range of businesses, particularly weapons manufacturers and biometric security companies. French arms giant Thales, also a major arms exporter in the region, is a leading player, supplying military and security equipment for border security and biometric systems and equipment. Among the main suppliers of biometric security companies are Veridos, OT Morpho and Gemalto (here will soon be taken over by Thales). Meanwhile, Italy is funding its own arms companies Leonardo and Intermarine to support border security work in a number of MENA countries, particularly Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. In Turkey, major border security contracts have been won by Turkish defence companies, particularly Aselsan and Otokar, who use the resources to subsidise their own defence efforts which also underpin Turkey's controversial attacks on Kurdish communities.

The agreement that has most attracted media attention is the one the one established between the European Union and Turkey: Maria Vittoria Forte (University of Naples Federico II) explores it in her paper on the EU's external migration policy evolution, focusing on the contentious EU-Turkey deal from a legal perspective. Forte explains how the inherent lack of transparency and the multiplicity of actors involved in the deal raise various jurisdictional issues. The EU-Turkey deal, conceived as an instrument through which the EU basically sells its responsibility to provide international protection and become complicit in several human rights violations, is the most emblematic image of the paradoxes and challenges of EU externalization policies. In another article, Agnese Pacciardi (Lund University) contributes to the discourse on externalization practices through a pointed critique of its its Eurocentric, state-centric, and androcentric predominant viewpoint. In particular, Pacciardi invites border scholars to rethink externalization practices through the prism of intersectionality and adopting a perspective from below.

3. The failure of EU asylum policies and migrant reception system

The book includes a focus on asylum seekers' daily struggles against the functional dysfunctions of the EU asylum policies and migrant reception system. It sheds light

on living, homing and working in three big Italian cities – Bologna, Rome and Naples –, highlighting a chain of institutional racism, urban segregation, and humanitarian exploitation that ties together different aspects of the failure of EU asylum policies and migrant reception system.

As explained by Francesco Marchi (University of Naples L'Orientale), in the aftermath of the 2015 so-called refugees crisis, EU asylum policies have increasingly favoured a strong racialization of labour and, in particular, the " reproduction and management of surplus racialised labour". In his ethnographic research project, Marchi investigates the "asylum-logistics nexus" at Interporto Bologna (Bologna, Italy), showing through empirical findings how asylum seekers' labour conditions at Interporto are designed to benefit at best contemporary neoliberal capitalism, favouring human exploitation.

Fabiola Midulla (University of Naples L'Orientale) focuses on migrants' residency discrimination in Italy, showing how institutional racism works at micro level. In her case-study on migrant housing in Rome, she explores how contemporary racialised hierarchization of citizenship creates a variety of differential inclusion practices which highlight the dysfunctionalism of EU asylum policies and migrant reception system. In particular, Midulla evidences how the Italian residency permit is a tool designed to subordinate, discriminate, and segment part of the population, keeping part of the population in a state of social and material differential inclusion and stigmatised as non-citizens.

The last article working on this research segment discloses the finding of an ethnographic fieldwork study carried out in Naples. The author, Andrea Ruben Pomella (University of Naples L'Orientale), sheds light on the deep relation between the production of urban space and the process of racialization, focusing on the neighbourhood surrounding the central station of Piazza Garibaldi and the different practices of self-ghettoisation practised by some African communities dwelling the space as a self-defence mechanism.

4. Outliers

To conclude, the last two articles of the book are outliers. Laura Lo Presti (University of Padua) focuses her attention on the agency of mapping as an enabler of the visualization of injustices and abuses and as a logistic platform that helps migrants in their convoluted and deferred journeys toward the European Union. As Lo Presti explains, within migratory struggles, it is fundamental to consider both the agency of migrants — how they get organised — and that of activists and social organisations offering them support without living in the same vulnerable conditions. Lo Presti emphasizes the role of migrant's agency, posing the question of whether it is possible to consider activist networks and social organisations assisting migrants in their daily crossing of

Fortress Europe as infrastructure of commons, a mutual-support network for migrant passage. Again Lo Presti, referring to the role of maps as possible tools for creating common goods, asks what are the spaces and subjects that maps stage and connect within the migratory sphere.

Finally, the last article in the book is a reflection on the status of contemporary border and migration studies through an analysis of VISA policies from a class perspective. Luca Paolo Cirillo (University of Naples L'Orientale) and Fabiana Piretti (University of Turin), focusing their attention of the so-called golden visa market, i.e. the world-wide-share flourishing of Citizenship-by-Investments and Residency-by-Investments programs, argue that, notwithstanding critical border studies are often associated with Marxist or post-Marxist theory, critical border scholars are paradoxically overlooking a fundamental analytical spectrum: class, being the mobility divide purely rooted in economic wealth.

Overall, the three sections of the text serve as a logical framework that helped us organise the authors' insights along a discursive trajectory. In truth, the themes are open to sensible overlaps, all of which create new viewpoints and perspectives for interpreting the ever-evolving migration processes.

1.
Italian inland rural areas in the international migration routes

Racializing borders. The migrant ghetto as anti-urban 'black space'

Timothy Raeymaekers
(University of Bologna)

Abstract

This chapter promotes an analysis of bordering as infrastructuring. It arises from the observation that the bordering processes are not only enacted by multiple institutions and actors, but they also actively construct a three-dimensional and interconnected geographic bordered space. The essay thus builds on a topological understanding of space, which starts from the presupposition that bordered geographies are shaped, stretched, and (re)folded based on the scope and intensity of the relations between the elements that support it. In addition, infrastructures are also socio-material entanglements that actively write social difference in space. The adoption of an infrastructural lens, therefore, allows us to foreground what I call a political ecology of bordering processes, which foregrounds the way borders are naturalized through their stratifying and racializing dynamics.

Riassunto

Questo capitolo promuove un'analisi del confine come infrastrutturazione. Nasce dall'osservazione che i processi di confine non sono solo attuati da molteplici istituzioni e attori, ma essi costruiscono anche attivamente uno spazio geografico tridimensionale e interconnesso. Il saggio si basa quindi su una comprensione topologica dello spazio, che parte dal presupposto che le geografie del confine siano modellate, allungate e (ri)piegate in base all'ambito e all'intensità delle relazioni tra gli elementi che le supportano. Inoltre, le infrastrutture sono anche intrecci socio-materiali che scrivono attivamente la differenza sociale nello spazio. L'adozione di una lente infrastrutturale, quindi, ci consente di mettere in primo piano quella che chiamo un'ecologia politica dei processi di confine, che mette in primo piano il modo in cui i confini vengono naturalizzati attraverso le loro dinamiche stratificanti e razzializzanti.

1. Introduction: the border as operational landscape

For some years now, I have found myself promoting a topological rather than a topographic analysis of territorial borders. The theoretical agenda underpinning my research follows a "processual shift" in the study of territorial borders as "social practices of spatial differentiation and racialization" (van Houtum and Naerssen 2002: 134), and as devices of separation and territorial distinction. More specifically, I tend to think of bordering processes in terms of complex and multidimensional power assemblies, rather than along predefined Cartesian axes of surfaces and geographical scales. In short, this perspective refuses to start from the idea that power can simply be distributed across extended spaces in a hierarchical or horizontal way. Instead, I call attention to the ways in which a more transversal set of political interactions and practices tends to

configure and reconfigure these hierarchies and separations from a broader point of view (see also Allen 2011, Allen and Cochrane 2010, Del Biaggio 2016).

In this article, I delve further into this perspective in what some have called the "ordinary topologies", or the lived practices of the border in the context of planetary urbanization (taken from Harker 2014; see also Merrifield 2013, Brenner 2013, Brenner and Katsikis 2013). A key contribution to this discussion is that of Eyal Weizman, who, in his work, describes the deployment of the Israeli state and military power in the occupied Palestinian territories in a way that can be defined as both fragmented and stratifying. His investigation tends to go beyond a simple mapping of walls, barriers, and checkpoints to reveal instead the 'logic of separation' that characterizes bordering processes today through the production of a "complex compartmentalized system of spatial exclusion" that geographically distributes state power at every scale (Weizman 2007: 24; see also Weizman 2002, Weizman and Sheikh 2015, Braverman 2011).

The invocation of Israel-Palestine and South Africa in this context is not accidental, as I will explain further, because the operational landscape of border infrastructures in the Mediterranean tends to produce increasingly militarized landscapes of weaponized border control and migration management (see also Heller and Pezzani 2015; Garelli and Tazzioli 2018). In my opinion, daily border practices in the Mediterranean tend to produce a form of anti-urbanity: a hierarchical segregation of segments of humanity deemed 'not quite', 'not yet' or 'totally unsuitable' for the 'normal' governance of populations, in a space that is classified at the same time as non-modern, uncivilized and threatening. In this sense, I consider border infrastructures as a sort of oscillating space, a central margin that is at the same time constitutive of power relations due to its central role in conveying living labor and in inscribing social difference in space. I choose the term anti-urban, or *eschatopolis* - from the Greek *polis* (city, state, city-state), and *eschatia* (border, border, border) - to indicate this gray space that can be located both on the edges and inside the territorial nation-state (see also Yiftachel 2009). A key aspect of this dynamic, I argue, concerns the instrumentalization of race as a central determinant of this logic – and which, in my view, has not sufficiently been highlighted in this scholarship so far (see also Pallister-Wilkins 2021).

In this short essay, I will try to raise the question of the border as a political and ecological dividing line through the example of migrant ghettos, defined as 'black spaces', in the Mediterranean.

2. Naturalizing the migrant space

In 2014-15, while preparing a longer stay in Basilicata, Southern Italy, on informal migrant dwellings, I was struck by the spatial coincidence between what Doctors Without

Borders, in its 2016 study, called the informalization of refugee settlements in Italy on the one hand, and the broader transformations of the rural landscape in this region on the other. With the help of MIC|C (which stands for 'the Margin is the Center-of-Change), a small anonymous collective, I began to comb the countryside of this vast region in search of remnants of what seemed like a not-too-distant past. Many of today's migrant *ghettos*, in fact, are nothing more than a repurposing and a current adaptation of what had been the nodal infrastructures of the agricultural reform of the region of the 1950s and 1960s. Such was the case of many of the former villages near Venosa, Palazzo San Gervasio and Lavello, in the northern Bradano. During an artistic-political intervention in Matera, which in 2019 hosted the festival of the European Capital of Culture, MIC|C provocatively used the main square of the city to document what we called the "space of impermanent life on the margins". By contrasting a pile of rubble, we had collected from one of the agrarian reform villages destroyed in those years, with the construction of a temporary ghetto at the other end of the square, we wanted to highlight the acute tension that exists between the commodification of bodies and landscape and their active ruination. By emphasizing the direct connection between this rubble and the materiality of exploitation, the aim of our intervention was to highlight the paradox of the production system that transforms the earth and bodies into goods to be exploited but simultaneously destroys the life that sustains them. The temporary exhibition, called #RUINS, thus became proof of a momentary presence and a testimony of the impermanence of life as it had existed. Two assistants – young residents of the internal towns of Basilicata - distributed packages of rubble to visitors to recall the physical expressions of this impermanence, which resembled the ashes of a fire, or the remains of a camp just after its departure.

In the context of my research, MIC|C's operation could be interpreted as a spontaneous and playful entry into the field of study, similar to the interventions of the jinx group in the New York underground, or the Stalker project in Rome (see Deyo and Leibowitz 2003; Wiley 2010, Elden 2013). What initially seemed playful and innocent, however, was intended to raise a rather more serious question about how the contested aesthetics of Basilicata's rural infrastructure coincide with a process of stratification, separation, and segregation. Following Hicks and Mallet, it could be said that MIC|C's attempt was to highlight how the boundary between displaced persons and residents, between discarded and rescued humans, actively articulated in the landscape. Their ethnographic and participatory research method, which uses archaeology as one of the many study tools, makes it possible to read the identity landscape through its limits that are posed both horizontally and vertically: layer by layer, it becomes clear how various identities are mapped into the landscape and how the limits and protection of one depend on the limits and protection of the other (Hicks and Mallet 2019: 19).

Three elements emerge as particularly salient in this context. One concerns the stratification of humanity on the border between 'informal' and 'formal' places of refuge.

The dynamic map on the MIC|C website shows how, over the past eight years, the fluctuation of official temporary labor camps (so-called centers for seasonal workers) accompanies the cyclical construction of migrant worker *ghettos* that continue to play a central role in the commodification of labor and agricultural production. As the seasonal labor camps invariably open very late in the region, most workers prefer to squat in *ghettos* or on countryside to be able to socialize with peers and have access to job opportunities. Except that since 2014, squatting has been a criminal offense. As a result, many workers, an increasing proportion of whom are refugees and asylum seekers, are caught between hammer and anvil. Given the scarce assistance offered by the privatized reception system for asylum seekers in Italy and given the growing refusal rate of residence renewal (which increased from 60 to 80 percent in 2015-2019), thousands of refugees and asylum, mainly originating from sub-Saharan Africa, poured into Italy's agricultural fields in search of means of subsistence in a period of acute uncertainty and the sheer impossibility of crossing European borders.

A central tool that is used to stratify migratory flows in this context is clearly that of the territorial residence. Although refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to territorial residence, they need an official address to be able to renew their documents. This is why in the context of the multiplication of borders, it is precisely around this right to the territory that the struggle for the current right of migrant workers is fought: alongside the popular consensus that the exclusion of migrant workers is generating in Italian public opinion, this differentiated statute also works for the benefit of agro-capitalists who subsequently exploit the difference between different subjects who cannot claim full residence rights (more precisely, one could distinguish here between those who 'not yet' enjoy this right, as in the case of asylum applicants, or 'not entirely' enjoy this right, as in the case of refugees, or do not enjoy this right, such as 'irregular' migrants). The granting of a residence card, which is a prerequisite for an employment contract, emerges as the blackmail *par excellence* of contemporary migration and border management in this context.

The second element concerns the progressive "naturalization" of the living space of African migrants as a "black space" that is both discursively and materially constructed as uncivilized and threatening. The result of the state's destructive intervention against migrant *ghettos* since 2014 has been a gradual criminalization of the informal homes of migrants, a dynamic which, moreover, demonstrates a disconcerting parallelism with the developments on the other side of the Mediterranean in Libya in the exact same period. In 2014-2019 the Basilicata Region, through its Task Force on Migration, promoted the evacuation and demolition of migrant ghettos in the Alto Bradano area with the exception of a site which, ironically, has remained intact; coincidentally or not, this is also the site that continued to host the main stronghold of the local gangmaster known as 'the yellow house' - before the site was definitively seized in 2019. Despite the prevailing rhetoric against the gangmaster mafia in the South, the policy of conserving

areas of criminal labor intermediation in Basilicata is no exception: in the north of Puglia, the Gran Ghetto di San Severo continued to be accessible even after the official eviction and judicial confiscation. And in Calabria, Puglia, Campania and Piedmont, the informal homes of migrant workers re-emerge every year in anticipation of the harvest season (see also Raeymaekers 2021, Ippolito et al. 2021).

Contrary to prevailing public opinion in Italy, therefore, the main objective of these forced evictions does not seem to be the uprooting of the informal settlements of migrant workers per se, but rather to make their living space increasingly unlivable, dangerous, and inaccessible. During consecutive evictions in Basilicata, security forces deliberately destroyed the roofs of the vacated buildings while blocking access to former agricultural reform hamlets with stones and wires. In one case, the authorities blocked access to a water pump that was also used by local farmers. What emerges as a result of these public interventions, therefore, is not a clear dividing line between the 'civilized' society of rural cities and agro-capitalist operations on the one hand, and the 'uncivil' hinterland of marginalized migrants on the other. To quote Eyal Weizman, the combination of formal and informal bordering practices reproduces "a complex compartmentalized system of spatial exclusion" (Weizman 2007: 24) that places the separation between what is considered legal, formal and civil, and what is its opposite at each scale in this shattered and fragmented landscape.

A third element concerns the strong connectivity between human and more than human forms in the context of this fluid boundary. In my view, two types of events characterize this dynamic in the context of Mediterranean agro-capitalism: so-called 'man hunts' and land reclamation. After the Italian friendship agreement with Libya in 2008, and always in close parallel with what is happening on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, African migrants in Southern Italy have increasingly been subjected to active persecution. The most (im)famous episode in this regard concerns the municipality of Rosarno in 2010. In a revolt lasting several days, African workers who remained in Calabria for the orange harvest expressed their frustration after one of their comrades had been shot by a local resident, shouting: "We are not animals!" While this incident and the government's reaction created general outrage (for a discussion see Perrotta 2022), subsequent lynchings and killings of migrants in the same intensively farmed areas have received far less attention. In the spring of 2021, for example, three African workers were shot for reporting a theft in the Gran Ghetto near Foggia. In the last two years, similar manhunts continue to be reported in the southern agricultural enclaves not only in Puglia, but also in Campania, Calabria, and the rest of Italy. Rather than the animalization of migrant lives, I see in these events the gradual naturalization of their living space, which makes racial violence both possible and justifiable in the current climate. The material and discursive connection between the reclaiming of the 'natural' environment with the racialization of those life worlds that keep being associated with such environment as

non-human provides for the historical and geographic context in which such violence is being actively reproduced. The ontological counterpoint to this' animalization 'of Black migrant workers' lives in the agrarian frontier of the Mediterranean has been in fact that of *bonifica* (literally: sanitation, or land reclamation) - a widely used terminology in the context of deliberate migrant dispossession. The term *bonifica* refers to the historical attempts of the fascist and post-war Italian governments to "repopulate and reclaim" the Apulian and Lucanian lands following the completion of the complete reclamation of the Lazio Pontine Marshes by Benito Mussolini. Without entering into the details of this historical process, which I have no time to develop here, it seems significant to me that the same logic of separation that has guided the planning of Italian rural development in the South and in the colonies for much of the twentieth century occupies such a central place in the current political discourse on the subject. of migration. Ironically, the modernist farms built for rural settlers are now illegally occupied by those migrant laborers who thus become yet another example of the same "problem" of the unruly and uncivilized peasantry (Peano 2021: np). The term *bonifica* is widely used in the context of the expropriation of migrant ghettos today. In an interview with me in August 2016, the regional councillor for migration of Basilicata told me about one of the largest ghettos in the area: "it is a laless zone that must be reclaimed (*bonificata*)." Not long before the interview, the Boreano ghetto, near Venosa, had been razed to the ground under the surveillance of the national security forces, the local municipality and the labour union CGIL. Another administrator from the same area told me in 2017: "We are dealing with people who are a hundred years behind us. ... concentrated in a place without rules ... And, therefore, we must impose the rules, where there is no public force."

As I hope I have made clear, however, it is precisely on the fringes of these "reclaimed" spaces that certain segments of humanity are geographically separated and made socially distinct, so that they can be "interconnected in terms that feed capital." (Melamed 2015: 79) As places that are both materially and discursively identified as "outside" the perimeters of civilization, they tend to reproduce migrant workers as "misplaced bodies" in a political ecology that is significantly traced along the lines of racial lines (see also Pallister-Wilkins 2021). The "black spaces" that emerge in this context must therefore be understood as a direct consequence, a desired outcome of the separation policy carried out through the current infrastructures of the territorial border. In my opinion, therefore, these marginalized spaces are examples of a "slow" and incremental violence that gradually permeates the life of the marginalized through the dynamic spaces of rural infrastructures, bodies, ecosystems and the productive system of current agro-capitalism. Quoting Nixon, slow violence can be understood as a debilitating mechanism that ultimately distorts the spatial characteristics that make a place livable, as it leaves people stuck in ecosystems deprived of the ability to subsist (Nixon 2011; see also Schindel 2022, Amir 2021).

A fourth and final element concerns the deep enmeshment of the spaces of informal African migrant settlement in an active politics of belonging and non-belonging. Here, I draw back to Camilla Hawthorne's (2022) observation that the complex geography of bordering citizenship in the Mediterranean today betrays a much deeper antagonism over collective identification and over who does and does not belong to the citizen-human space called the European nation-state. Reframed like this, 'Black spaces' in fact acquire a wider significance as those spaces in which these antagonisms literally come to matter. Once again, I like to think of this enmeshment in socio-material terms. As we hoped to highlight with MIC|C, Black migrant ghettos are also layered places where memories of belonging and non-belonging overlap, and where boundaries are constantly redrawn, re-narrated and re-envisioned. Next to their close - but often deliberately invisibilized and marginalized - connectivity with rural society, the infrastructures that are simultaneously repurposed as sites of active bordering and reconnection are also poetic places in a sense that they contain the traces of these narrated memories and narrations. Building on MIC|C's work (but see also De Silvey and Edensor 2012) I'd like to think, therefore, that infrastructures are also sites where the human and the more-than-human are embroiled in a mutually constitutive relationship. The broader impact of these convergences in today's bordering infrastructures - which, I repeat, bring together state and non-state actors, human and more-than-human elements in specific times and locales - sustain a racializing hierarchy that singles out mobile bodies as' not yet '(in the case of asylum seekers),' not quite '(in the case of refugees) and' non-humans '(in the case of' illegal migrants 'casted into the' natural sphere of the ghetto). But they also involve another kind of layerdness that is both material and social, palpable and graspable in a sense that is not accounted for enough in current scholarship on borders and migration. This layerdness is important to take into consideration, I feel, because it forces us to consider the meaning of contemporary and historical bordering infrastructures not as deriving from any pure or pre-existing conception of 'the human' but as an outcome of concrete socio- material entanglements. Let me try to draw some general conclusions from this specific observation.

3. Conclusions: bordering infrastructures

What would a 'critical' geography of borders be like if, in addition to the horizontal terri-graphy of walls, checkpoints and border posts, it also included a vertical strati-graphy of the infrastructures that literally cut through the territory and our movements? As I have observed, such a research program would be critical only to the extent that it takes seriously the multiplicity and pluri-scalarity of the border as a device of separation and territorial distinction. For sure, it would bring a more topological perspective and meth-

odology to the fore. Such a perspective refuses to accept that state power somehow radiates outward from an alleged central or stands "above us" to direct our lives top-down. Rather, it draws attention to the ways in which the close interplay of socio-material processes that govern our lives in space keeps certain institutional hierarchies 'in place'.

In this article, I have tried to exemplify how such a boundary topology can elucidate the types of layered interconnectivity that bordering devices tend to generate in the broader geographical context of the Mediterranean. The main function of territorial borders is not to block or stop the flows of goods, knowledge, and human beings, but to filter and channel them through stratified and stringent spaces. The terminology and method proposed here can help us untangle such spaces by highlighting the relational networks that facilitate the flow of goods, people or ideas and allow their exchange in space (Larkin 2013: 328-329). As I hope to have clarified, this approach potentially opens up a new direction of research that takes seriously even the apparently marginal and informal spaces of migrants' dwelling that increasingly tend to become central nodes in the stratification of humanity along racial lines. Paraphrasing the Stalkers Manifesto that served my initial intervention with by MIC|C in Basilicata's agrarian borderlands, the goal is in fact to open the interstitial and marginal spaces that are at the same time abandoned and in the process of transformation. These can be the places of repressed memory, the unconscious becoming of urban systems, the spaces of confrontation and contamination between the organic and the inorganic, and between nature and the human (Wiley 2010: 14). This infrastructural perspective on territories and borders requires us to adopt a less state-centric perspective and to consider more broadly the power brokers and actants who are able to open bargaining spaces away from traditional political sites, including non-state agents operating on the fringes of the territorial system of the nation-state.

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The margin of the margin, the South of the South. The villages involved in the reception system

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Abstract

In line with a strand of sociological studies investigating the relationship between migration and inland areas, the research focuses on the under-represented regions of Basilicata and Calabria. Through a qualitative approach, two experiences of reception of migrants and asylum seekers in San Severino Lucano and Camini are explored. The political and narrative frameworks involving the two areas of investigation are combined with the data collected in the field. By applying the processes of bordering, ordering and othering perspective to the analyzed contexts, the mechanics of power and differential inclusion between territories and between social groups, on and within the internal areas, are investigated.

Riassunto

In linea con un filone di studi sociologici che indaga il rapporto tra migrazioni e aree interne, la ricerca si concentra sulle regioni sotto-rappresentate della Basilicata e della Calabria. Attraverso un approccio qualitativo, vengono indagate due esperienze di accoglienza di migranti e richiedenti asilo a San Severino Lucano e a Camini. Il quadro politico e quello narrativo che coinvolgono i due ambiti di indagine vengono uniti ai dati raccolti sul campo. Mediante l'applicazione della prospettiva dei processi di bordering, ordering e othering ai contesti analizzati, vengono analizzati i meccanismi di potere e di inclusione differenziale socio-territoriali operati sulle aree interne e all'interno di esse.

1. Territorial and social margins

2014 represents a key year for initiating two processes that involved the so-called «inland areas» – that 60% of the Italian territory, «places that don't matter» (Rodríguez-Pose 2017), which are subject to physical, political, social, and cultural «remotization» (Membretti 2021; Membretti *et al.*, 2022) and therefore characterized by processes of deanthropization, demographic aging, and absence of services and job opportunities (Accordo di Partenariato, 2014).

Indeed, in 2014, these areas were made subject of the National Strategy for Inner Areas («SNAI»), a place-based (Barca, 2015), experimental, and method-oriented policy that fits within a broader framework of territorial strategies directly or indirectly targeting these areas (Fig.1). SNAI aimed at fostering inland areas transition from a condition of marginality – social and symbolic as well as physical – to a new political and economic centrality in order to redevelop and counter the decades-long processes of abandonment and depopulation.

Furthermore, in the same year, following the Unified Conference State-Regions-Local Authorities, reception centers were opened in many inland areas' municipalities to address what since 2011 was experienced as a migratory emergency that required the intervention of as many territories as possible in the phenomenon's management.

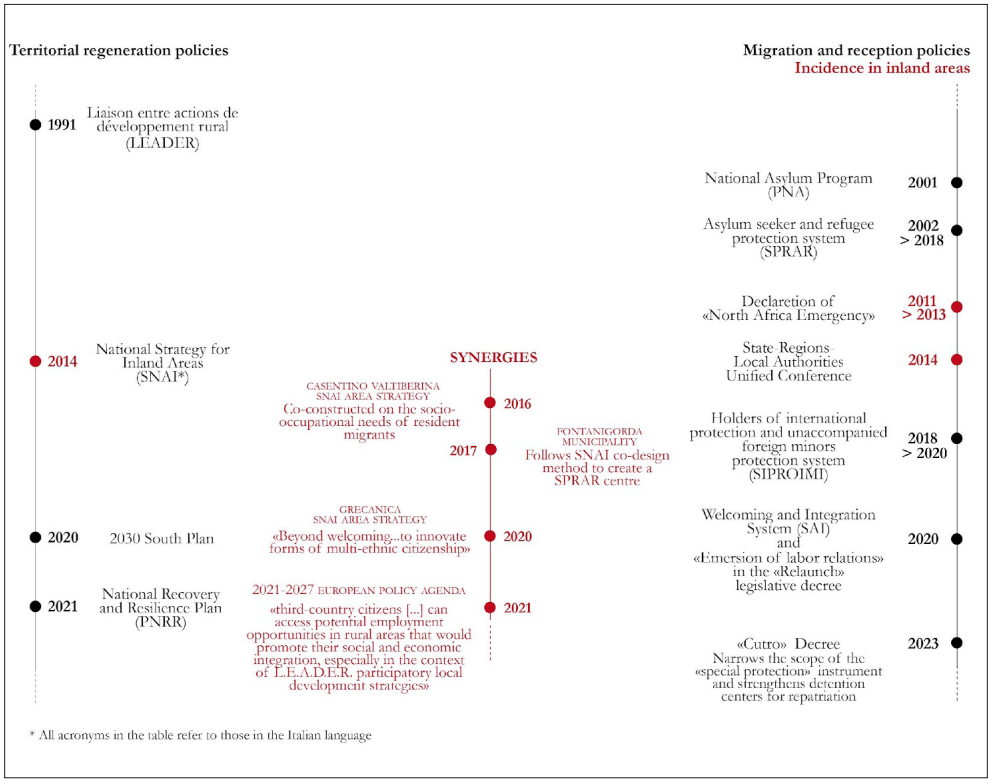

Fig.1. Timelines of major land regeneration policies and migration and reception policies (highlighting in the latter the incidence in inland areas). Synergies between the two policy areas are indicated in the center. Author's elaboration.

The establishment of reception centers in the inland areas can be seen in the following two perspectives: on the one side, it has made these areas the object of the «geographic dispersion» of migrants and asylum seekers desired by policies that, far from the intentions of creating a new socio-demographic balance in the country, have placed newcomers in electorally unattractive territories, thus removing the «problem» from large urban centers (Membretti and Ravazzoli, 2018; Membretti, 2020); on the other, it

has largely favored, as figure 2 shows, the subsequent voluntary inclusion of small municipalities within the circuit of the second reception by glimpsing its possible benefits for counteract depopulation through creation of new jobs and acquisition of new inhabitants, as found during the field research.

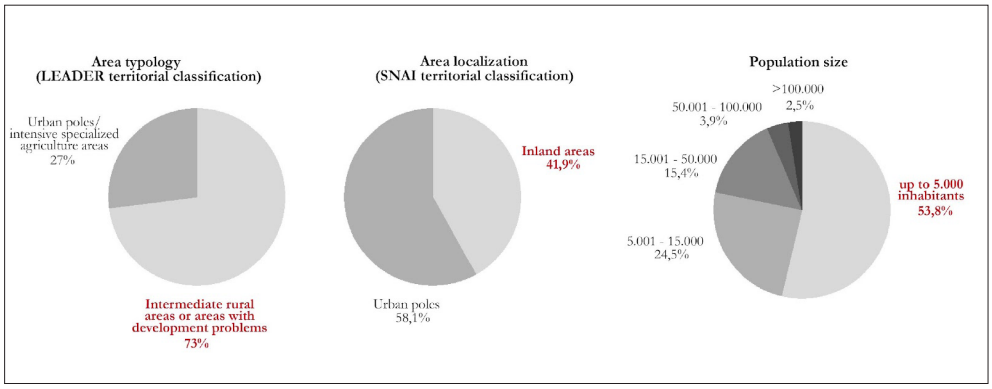

Fig. 2. Distribution of SAI centers by area type and location and by municipal population size. Source: Ministry of the Interior, 2020. Author's elaboration.

Despite the considerable incidence of reception centers in inland areas, interactions between territorial regeneration policies and migration and reception ones are such as completely absent. Indeed, the few synergies, shown in figure 1, appear occasional, almost always established at the local scale, although they demonstrate the relationship's potential between the two policy areas (in promoting co-planning between administrations and entities as an ordinary form of intervention at the local scale; in fostering forms of multi-ethnic citizenship, also starting from a more attentive consideration of the needs of each portion of the community; in pursuing dignified and sustainable working conditions for foreign workers in the agricultural field).

The political division thus highlights the framing of migration and reception policies within an emergency and securitarian scenario (Campesi, 2015) as also demonstrated by the phenomenon's management by the Ministry of the Interior. Furthermore, the latest strategic intervention plans aimed at the socio-economic revitalization of the country following the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic have shown a profound mismatch between the current policies: the social integration of migrants and foreigners still passes through labour insertion, as evidenced by, in line with all the forms of regularisation that have followed one another in the last two decades in Italy, the Relaunch Decree of 2020 (No.128, May 12, 2020). It binds the permanence of possible new inhabitants to utilitarian socio-economic needs, for which the labour requirement serves as the main jus-

tification for regularisation. The emergency management of the phenomenon is exacerbated by the limited space given both in the decrees and regularisation measures and in the major national strategic plans (e.g. in the PNRR) to resolving the housing issue, which is extremely problematic for those categories of irregular workers engaged in rural areas.

2. Narratives

2.1 On the margins. — Despite the social dynamism of the inland territories highlighted in the previous paragraph, the vision of these areas as temporally immobilized places, bulwark of the local and the traditional, remains in the national collective imaginary. This is the outcome of a process of «emptying» – not only demographic but also symbolic – that has affected the complexity and character proper to these areas in favor of a «filling» of sense which is designed to serve urban-centric needs and logics (Varotto, 2020). The post-World War II's industrial modernization and the perception and lifestyles' mutations transformed the territory into a pacified metropolis background (Renzoni, 2020), by confining in mountainous and rural areas «tradition to a compensatory function, electing the "local" to the realm of fixity and nostalgia, feeding at the same time the mythicization of rurality and the feeling of exclusion» (Varotto, 2017, p. 145 – author's translation). Such passivizing reduction of the territory to a generic countryside inhabited by plastified communities (Barbera et at., 2022) has permeated the view up to the present day, with the revival of the territorial dichotomy between hellish metropolises, on the one hand, and friendly villages, on the other, during the Pandemic period. An oppositional view fueled not only by mainstream media imaginary but also by political one. One need only think of the use of the term «hamlet» (borgo in Italian language) in the PNRR's funding line aimed at the revitalization of small villages with a high cultural value, which runs the risk of tying their revitalization to the consumerist vision of the hamlet as the out-of-town excursion's location, by leading villages' administrations and inhabitants to adapt more and more to the expectations of citizens through banalizing forms of territorial marketing. The spatial homogenization and social flattening operated on these areas are also outcomes of narrative approaches that do not consider either the aspirations of those living in these areas or the strong transformation of their social component as a function of the processes of return, of autonomous and forced migration (Membretti et al., 2017). Indeed, the media invisibilization of migrants and asylum seekers' reception in the inland territories is evident, as figure 3 shows, as well as that of citizens with migration backgrounds who have long been permanently embedded in the national social structure. Indeed, the double imaginary that frames migrants either as invaders or as victims still predominates (Musarò and Parmiggiani, 2022).

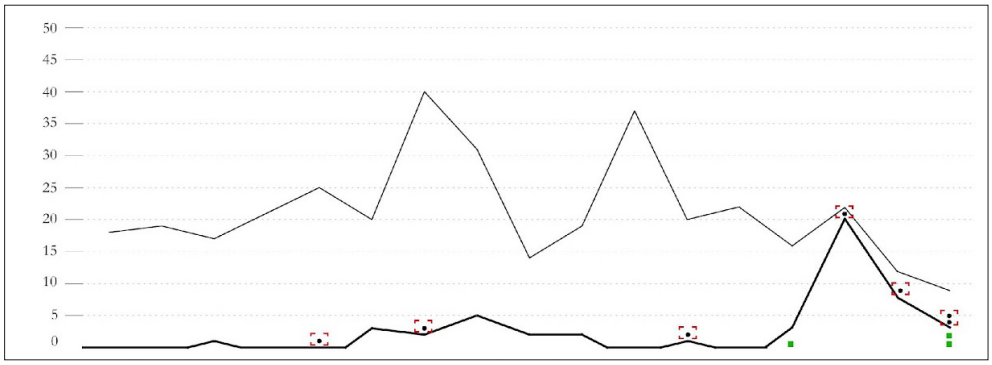

Fig. 3. Analysis of news stories on migration, reception, and reception in inland areas at the national scale in the Avvenire newspaper's online news archive. According to Carta di Roma Association, it is the main one to cover migration and reception with a focus on the human dimension (2021). Time frame: January 2021-May 2022. 285 total average number of articles per month in 2021; 209 total average number of articles per month in 2022. Author's elaboration.

2.2 From the margins. — In contrast to the dominant paradigm that considers migration and inland areas as «problems to be solved» (Avelino et al., 2017), since 2020 several European projects have been funded to investigate the potential relationship between migration and rurality as central socio-political areas to Europe Union's future (e.g. MATILDE, Share-Sira, Welcoming Spaces). Within the Italian context, a strand of sociological studies has emerged in the last decade focusing on the possible role of migration flows in marginalized territories (Membretti et al., 2017; Carrosio and Lo Presti, 2018; Dematteis et al., 2018; Ponzo, 2020), mostly targeting experiences gathered in the territories of Northern Italy and the Central Apennines.

The relative lack of focus on the South, however, results in the absence of representation at a regional and supra-regional scale of good reception practices in the southern inland territories. As «cathedrals in the desert» such realities would benefit from an effective representation in order to be known and recognized in the context of experience exchange between realities active throughout the country. We also believe that such an imbalance, fitting within an actual gap that still exists between the regions of the North and those of the South (Cersosimo et al., 2018; Debernardi, 2018; Mininni et al., 2021) may exacerbate actual and/or imaginary dichotomies – which even the concept of «inland area» itself aimed to unhinge by showing how marginal territories, long superimposed on the concept of the South (Cassano, 2009; Faeta, 2009; Petrusewicz, 2009; Teti, 2013; Conelli, 2022), were actually present throughout the national territory. In this context, the previously discussed mismatch between territorial regeneration policies and reception one appears even more problematic precisely because it is potentially damag-

ing to areas that are severely affected by social marginalization, declining population size, and the resulting closure of services.

The aim of the research is therefore to investigate the dichotomous processes that have particularly affected the southern regions in the context of territorial oppositions between centers and peripheries and then focus attention on the reception experiences of migrants and asylum seekers in the less-represented inland areas of the South, giving resonance to the voices less considered (those of the reception system' beneficiaries and those of the villages' long-time inhabitants). The ultimate goal is to bring out the social and territorial differences that lie beyond the conceptual flattening conveyed by the wide category of «inland areas» and those among inland areas involved in reception in order to provide insights for future research.

Making use of the ethnographic method, the research frames two experiences located in the regions of Basilicata and Calabria, along the Southern Lucano Apennine and the Calabrian hills; areas little analyzed in academic and public debate although Calabria is the third region in terms of active reception projects (Sistema Accoglienza Integrazione, 2022) and Basilicata is the ninth in terms of Local Authorities holding reception (Sistema Accoglienza Integrazione, 2022) with almost all of its municipalities classified as «inland area» (126 municipalities out of a total of 131). The fieldwork period was conducted in March and November 2022 in the Camini municipality, province of Reggio Calabria, and from September to December 2022 in the San Severino Lucano municipality, province of Potenza. According to the national territorial classification adopted by SNAI, Camini and San Severino Lucano are respectively a peripheral and an ultraperipheral municipality. In the former, there has been an ordinary SAI center since 2011, run by Jungi Mundu, a local cooperative in turn founded by a group of citizens in 1999, and which to date welcomes 118 beneficiaries; in the latter, there has been an ordinary reception center for 30 beneficiaries since 2014 and a center for unaccompanied minors for 25 beneficiaries since 2019.

3. Bordering, ordering, othering in south' inland areas

«In Germany there is little warmth between people, but I felt more integrated there, with my rights. Here I don't know who I am...»

Henk van Houtum and Ton van Naerssen frame the border space in the continuously transformative action of «bordering», «ordering» and «othering» process (2002). Each of these moments refers, respectively, to the dynamics of physical, legal, social and symbolic demarcation that separate a «here» from a «there»; to the construction of an identity of «us» defined in opposition to that of «others»; and to the mechanisms of othering that are expressed through chronopolitical, biopolitical

and geopolitical forms of power (van Houtum, 2022). Analyzing inland areas through this perspective is particularly useful in bringing out the dynamics of territorial and social remotization acted «on» inland areas through the urban-centric idea of "marginality" and that have led to the current dichotomy between cities, understood as full spaces, and the margins, understood as voids to be filled – on both a symbolic and material level. But the triad also allows us to read the mechanisms reproduced «in» inland areas on newcomers with migration backgrounds and framed in the idea of integration.

Marginality and integration are read in this argument as two extremely connected devices of power (Foucault, 1976; Agamben, 2006), the latter used to buffer the effects of the former, in a chain of production and reproduction of the dynamics of bordering, ordering and othering. Thereby the double problem of integration emerges, both territorial and social, and the forms of power it conceals. Indeed, marginality is understood in urban studies as a space yet to be included (integrated) in a formal context and, in the perspective of the nation-state, as a peripheral space yet unoccupied (yet unintegrated) (Raeymaekers, 2019). This subtraction perspective reads marginality as a negative condition when compared to an urban-centric parameter to aspire to. In parallel, the inclusion of migrants in society is presumed to take place through a process of conformity of the «part» in relation to the «whole» (dispensed, however, from the process of integration itself), in accordance with a strongly neoliberal conceptual basis. It initially attributes integration to individual responsibility and then, actually, deindividualizes it as people are brought back to generic ethnic groups that are more or less integrated compared to the monolithic society of reference (Schinkel, 2018).

The borderland perspective (Anderlini et al., 2022) deduced from the findings of ethnographic research conducted in San Severino Lucano and Camini, thus allows to pay attention to the agencies and multiple experiences of those who define and constitute the border itself (Brambilla 2021).

On inland areas: territorial scale	Bordering	Ordering	Othering
Basilicata	Transformation of national (inland) margin into national border: province-based distribution of CAS centres (first/extraordinary reception centres activated by prefectures without the consent of municipalities) in inland areas: Matera: 80,08%; Potenza: 60,35%	Spatial typologization based on an urban-centric perspective. Between the 1960s and 1970s, two projects were proposed to build ski resorts, villages, and roads at high altitudes to boost a consumerist tourism of Pollino area (between the two regions) – based on the «snow town» of the Alpine model (Formica and Niola, 1997).	Matera understood as the «shame of Italy» (taken as a symbol of Basilicata and Southern Italy in general) in several political speeches in the 1950s.
Calabria	Cosenza: 61,14%; Catanzaro: 87,82%; Vibo Valentia: 100%; Crotone: 0%; Reggio Calabria: 14,78 % (Openpolis. 2021)		Lombroso (*In Calabria*, 1862) and Niceforo (*Italiani del Nord e Italiani del Sud*, 1901) ethnicize idleness, violence, and superstition, establishing the cornerstones of the anti-Southern racist paradigm.

In inland areas: local scale				
	San Severino Lucano	Establishment of a SAI centre (second reception centres activated by the municipality in collaboration with third sector entities) in large, no longer in use/ abandoned hotel facilities located outside the urban centre/on its margins.	Demarcation between «locals» and «migrants» as a function of cultural differences deemed by the former as irreconcilable (however, the situation was different when longtime residents were more involved in managing activities for the beneficiaries). Only unaccompanied minors "break" this mechanism in function of the sense of sorrow felt toward them.	Utilitarian approach to migration for repopulation /to make a quick fix at the depopulation of long-term residents by offering jobs in SAI centers. Lack of long-term vision for the whole community, especially in relation to new inhabitants with migration background' emplacement. Labour integration of former beneficiaries of the center is facilitated by the administration, even outside the village, but with the "constraint" to dwell in the village.
	Camini	Limited. Widespread reception is privileged to avoid large numbers in one single building and to favor meeting opportunities between old and new residents.	The socio-labour integration of beneficiaries and new residents with migratorion background is mainly framed in the revival of traditional local crafts.	Utilitarian approach to migration for repopulation/to curb depopulation of long-term residents and those of neighboring municipalities by offering jobs in SAI center.

Tab. 1. How the bordering, ordering and othering logics act on inland areas (in Basilicata and Calabria regions) and within inland areas (in San Severino Lucano and Camini municipalities). All data presented (except those related to the processes of bordering and othering on inland areas) were collected during the participant observation conducted by the author. Author's elaboration.

The production and reproduction of bordering, ordering and othering processes on and within inland areas of the South involves different social groups, spatial reference scales and times – from the Unification of the Italian Kingdom to the present (Tab.1). Within these processes a differential and selective pattern of inclusion acts (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012), in the past as today, whose evident effects are manifested in the possibility or not of pursuing equal rights of citizenship for different groups from time to time othered (Conelli, 2022).

Since 1861, the biopolitical, chronopolitical and geopolitical othering mechanisms on inland territories led to the definition by the Italian elites of an «interior other» inferior by race according to the dictates of positivist anthropology (which became ideological cornerstones of Lega Nord's political program in the 1990s). It coincids with the remote territories of the South, foreign to the modern attitudes to be pursued and therefore imagined and represented for a long time as gangrene and plague of the new nation (Teti, 2013; Conelli, 2022) in accordance with elites' perception of their national backwardness measured in relation to Central and Northern Europe. An «other» then mixed and overlapped over the years with the idea of an «external other» inferior and represented by the populations colonized by Italy (Giuliani, 2013), reproduced today in the idea of «immigrant other» (Musarò, 2017). Over the years, the process of ordering between a full-here and an empty-there (the latter «to be integrated», «to be improved», «to be completed») has declined in the Pollino, now a National Park, in the attempt to transform the area into a snow village on the model of the Alpine village. The project never began for environmental protection reasons but continues, 50 years later, to represent a missed opportunity for many of the interviewed inhabitants. This demonstrates how the process of ordering in inland areas (along with bordering politics and economic non-investments) has gradually

evolved into forms of self-ordering, which apply territorial organization models foreign to the area's peculiar characteristics. The remotization outcome of the previously mentioned policies, have prompted several inhabitants of the two regions to define themselves as the «margin of the margin», «South of the South», a «borderland». A bordering process that seems to turn the inner national margins into real borders, with the dislocation of the «immigrant other» in unpopulated territories as shown by the data in Table 1.

At the local scale, some differences emerge between the two different contexts. Regarding the housing bordering process, it is accentuated in San Severino Lucano and absent in Camini, where widespread reception has been favored (Tab.1). The spatial polarization that occurs in San Severino Lucano, between the village center and the reception centers, is thus declined in a social ordering process, with «locals» on one side and «migrants» on the other. In Camini, the desire to respond for tourism purposes to the hamlet's image that rediscovers its traditions means that part of beneficiaries' inclusion in the reception system passes through the revival of old local trades (a further declination of urban-centric ordering into forms of self-ordering that echo stereotypes). While this form of inclusion is positive for some beneficiaries interviewed, for others it emerges as severely limiting, making it difficult to imagine how one can remain in the village beyond the reception. Above all, however, it is the othering process that reveals the relationship between integration and marginality used as power devices. The first device is in fact used on migrants to counterbalance the use of the second device, that of marginality, used by urban centers on territorial peripheries. This process also demonstrates the effects of the lack of synergies between seemingly distant political spheres. It is declined in both contexts in utilitarian forms of inclusion of the «others» in order to counter depopulation by offering job opportunities to the «us». However, in contrast to Camini, where the reception's operational management is entrusted to a local cooperative with strong roots in the village, which has been able to strongly diversify the reception project itself by creating many services for the entire community (a café, a toy library, courses), San Severino Lucano inscribes the presence of the reception centers in a logic of emergency, as much in the management of the centers as in the administrative management of the territory. From the interviews collected in both contexts, othering is thus manifested in the biopolitical conditions of waiting and immobility, partly readable as outcomes of a utilitarian approach to migration, and made doubly frustrating by the incapacity to glimpse employment and study possibilities in the village (interview with A., asylum seeker in Camini). A perception also present in the maps drawn by A. and S., in unaccompanied minors center in San Severino Lucano, and aimed at graphically rendering experiences and spatial perceptions of the village. They depict how an entire village's space is limited to that of the reception facility and how the days are marked by the intervals between meals spent on the chairs just outside the center's front door. If possessing a clear spatial image guarantees emotional security and

a harmonious relationship with the world, as opposed to bewilderment (Lynch, 1960), the village appears as a monotonous backdrop devoid of interest and in which is consumed the wait for the identity card and the turning of 18 both perceived as milestones on the path to finally becoming «free» to escape from the small village.

4. (Beyond) the union of two lonelinesses

The research conducted expands the area of investigation to two under-investigated and under-represented contexts and shows how similar territories in terms of social, economic, and physical conditions have different experiences of reception. Although in both of them for longtime inhabitants and reception system beneficiaries there is a strong perception of the context as a borderland, a greater resignation about the future occurs when the operational management of the centers is entrusted to large cooperatives outside the centers themselves resulting in less involvement of both longtime inhabitants within the reception and inclusion process and the beneficiaries themselves within the social and labor tissue of the village.

For effective interaction to occur between longtime inhabitants and people with migratory backgrounds and asylum seekers, thus beyond simple "accommodation," a clear intentionality in pursuing reception projects, co-designed among the different institutional and third sector actors involved, is indispensable. The possibility for all to inhabit may then evolves into a right to citizenship and to planning for those who decide to stay and live in their country but also for those who will decide to stay in a new welcoming place.

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Humanitarian corridors in Italy: scenarios and perspectives of civil society reception

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Abstract

Humanitarian corridors (HC) are a new migration policy tool, of which there are few examples in Europe, but which can provide a solution to the problem of managing reception flows. This study aims to analyse the characteristics and peculiarities of HC in the Italian context and is based on field research conducted between 2020 and 2021 in seven locations of the country, interviewing beneficiaries and operators of the HC implemented by FCEI and Sant'Egidio. The study shows that the HC reception model, born thanks to the commitment of civil society, now tends to demand a public commitment and a full integration within the national policies, configuring a possible agreement between local level, represented by the Third Sector, national state level and European community level.

Riassunto

I Corridoi umanitari (CU) sono un nuovo strumento di politica migratoria, di cui esistono pochi esempi in Europa, ma che può fornire una soluzione al problema della gestione dei flussi di accoglienza. Questo studio si propone di analizzare le caratteristiche e le peculiarità dei CU nel contesto italiano e si basa su una ricerca sul campo condotta tra il 2020 e il 2021 in sette località del Paese, intervistando beneficiari e operatori dei CU realizzati da FCEI e Sant'Egidio. Lo studio evidenzia come il modello di accoglienza CU, nato grazie all'impegno della società civile, tenda oggi a richiedere un impegno pubblico e una piena integrazione all'interno delle politiche nazionali, configurando un possibile accordo tra livello locale, rappresentato dal Terzo Settore, livello statale nazionale e livello comunitario europeo.

1. Introduction

In contemporary society profoundly marked by global economic liberalization that erodes the sovereignty of nation-states and increasingly enters the spaces of everyday life, we are witnessing a reassertion of the national territory, foremost among the cornerstones of the modern state. Borders are not only being strengthened, but are taking on increasingly sophisticated, pervasive and spatially dislocated dimensions and forms (Garelli, Sciurba and Tazzioli, 2018).

Over the past decade in Europe, the migrant crisis has contributed to the narrative of the Mediterranean space as a fragile outpost of the European Union, leading to the need for increased border control to prevent illegal passage, smuggling of human lives and recurring tragedies. This spatial fragility has therefore provided the opportunity to link migration and asylum claims with the need for border security (Casaglia, 2020). Agreements have been reached with non-EU countries, such as Turkey and Libya, to mitigate the migratory flow by delegating the work of containment to them, as collaboration has simultaneously increased to better guard land and sea borders through EU agencies such as Frontex. Despite these actions, initiatives and political agreements for unified and coherent reception programmes are struggling to take off.

The need for an alternative model to the illegal migration dictated by criminal organisations, and for an inclusive reception system was recognised internationally by the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, unanimously signed by UN members in 2016 (Ricci, 2020). Additionally, a number of initiatives, often promoted by civil society, like humanitarian corridors which this article will discuss, have sprung up on the Old Continent with the aim of ensuring safe migration and promoting agency-conscious forms of reception for migrants.

Humanitarian corridors (HC) are an initiative promoted and financed by private and third sector entities to implement policies to resettle migrants. The United Nations has also supported the emergence of these measures to reduce inequalities and promote rebalancing in the reception of refugees (Gois and Falchi, 2017; Schnyder and Sedmak, 2019; Ambrosini, 2022).

2. Method and objectives

How do Humanitarian corridors (HC) work? What is the process one must follow in order to leave from a country and how does «widespread reception» work? These are some of the questions and issues that prompted us to choose to investigate the social and cultural impact on Italian territory of the «widespread reception» promoted by HC[1] and in doing so, giving a voice to the people directly involved in the initiative: beneficiaries of HC, operators of associations and people who have taken in refugees in their own homes and neighbourhoods.

[1] We chose to submit our idea, to explore this issue in depth, to the call for proposals for the allocation of the 8 per mille of the Waldensian Church. The project was funded in November 2020 and was carried out by a research group belonging to the Social Office of the Italian Geographical Society (group composed of Martino Longo, Daniele Pasqualetti, Giulia Oddi and Wolfram Kuck) and the Valdese Cultural Centre Foundation.

The final product of the research is neither a classic essay nor a book chapter but rather a documentary, entitled «Periferie Meticce. Reforming the spirit of reception»[2]. We have chosen to experiment with this innovative form of research restitution, using audiovisual tools and techniques, in an attempt to reach a wider (Lancione, 2017) and as heterogeneous an audience as possible that can confront complex issues through a simple and immediate language (Manifesto for a Public Geography, 2018). The research, conducted during a two-year period, included several work phases. A preliminary on-desk phase was necessary to set up the network of contacts. In this phase, national associations were contacted, appointments for cognitive interviews were set, and the reference bibliography was consulted. Only in the second phase was it possible to enter the field to carry out the video interviews necessary for the making of the documentary. Each video interview was carried out by at least one member of the research team and a filmmaker who was responsible for setting up the environment for the filming.

The project implementation had to be adapted as a result of Coronavirus Pandemia, particularly concerning field research: initially, the intention was to have field interviews take place solely at their host sites, but travel restrictions prompted our team to adopt a hybrid methodology. Operators and volunteers working in the HC system were interviewed online, while the beneficiaries were interviewed in person in seven different Italian regions: Latium, Sicily, Marche, Liguria, Piedmont, Veneto and Emilia Romagna.

The alternation between online and live filming, which made the material collected uneven, created quite a few problems in the third phase of the research work, the one that concerned the analysis of the interviews conducted and the direction of the documentary. In order to make the work of analysis immediate and to enable a comparison between different cases, some of the questions asked to the interviewees were repeated identically (particularly those concerning life experiences and motivations for the trip). Thirty were the semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries, mainly from Syria, and operators coordinated by both FCEI and the Community of Sant'Egidio.

[2] The documentary was presented in October 2022 and made public through the multimedia channels of the Italian Geographic Society. It can be viewed free of charge at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_OjSiFQ3zg&ab_channel=Societ%C3%A0GeograficaItalianaETS.

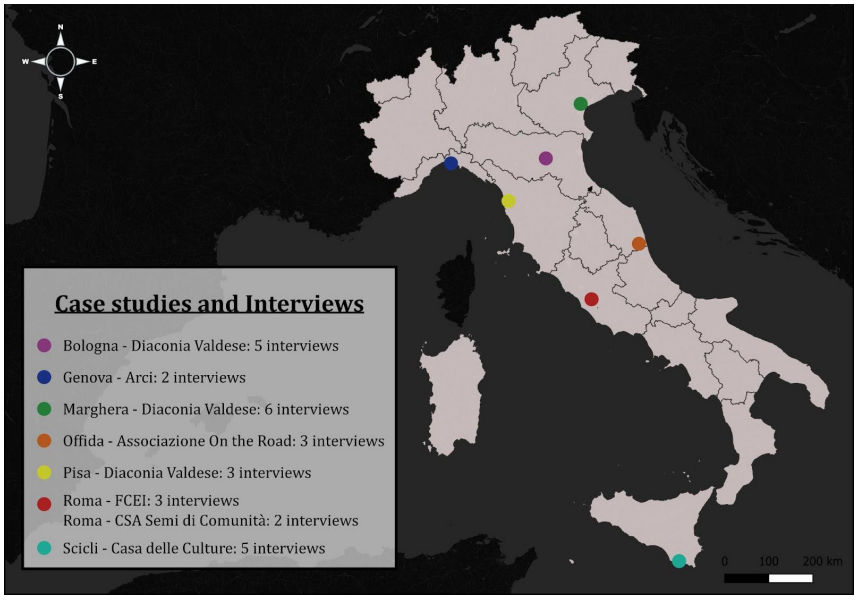

Fig. 1. - Case studies and intervierws of the researchSource - Daniele Pasqualetti Qgis elaboration (basemap Dark Matter [no labels]).

The methodology of the research presented some problematic issues. The camera represents a «cumbersome» object that inevitably influences the conversation and the posture of the interviewee, who may not feel free to express himself truthfully. In fact, some interviewees asked not to appear on video. Another critical issue concerned the construction of the network of contacts, which always had to respect the hierarchies of the project promoters: prior to speaking with the beneficiaries, it was necessary to meet the FCEI coordinators and those of the Sant'Egidio community.

Only after numerous meetings was it possible to attain the names of the people to be interviewed for a testimony. The choice of the beneficiaries to be interviewed was therefore always made by the representatives of the religious bodies, who knew the specific cases very well: it was never spontaneous, random, but always pondered and carefully studied. This work of the FCEI and Sant'Egidio on one hand facilitated our work, allowing us to quickly attain the names of potential interviewees, on the other hand it altered the results of the research since it only provided us with the names of the positive and successful cases, distorting the sampling (Amato, 2010).

In addition to methodological difficulties, the field research highlighted that the humanitarian corridors model proposed by the Community of Sant'Egidio and FCEI has many critical points concerning both the process for selecting beneficiaries, in

their country of origin, and the reception system in the country of destination. This contribution aims to present the positive aspects and critical aspects of this reception system.

3. Humanitarian corridors in Italy

The HC project, devised and implemented by the Federation of Evangelical Churches (FCEI), through the Mediterranean Hope (MH) project and the Community of Sant'Egidio, was born in Italy 2015 when the Italian political debate reached one of the highest levels of polarisation on the issue of international migration. The legal basis for this private sponsorship initiative is provided by Article 25 of EC Regulation 810/2009, which grants Schengen countries the ability to issue humanitarian visas valid in their territory by refugee status under the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol which added the characteristic of «vulnerable condition». With a Memorandum signed by FCEI, Sant'Egidio and the Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs, the first HC, valid for two years, was launched on 15 December 2015, allowing the arrival of one thousand Syrian refugees to Italy by way of Lebanon. According to data from March 2023, the HC, financed entirely by the Waldensian church's 8xMille, has guaranteed the arrival and issuance of humanitarian visas for over 4,400 people (3,900 in Italy) including Syrians fleeing war through Lebanon, refugees from the Horn of Africa, Greece and Afghanistan (Sant'Egidio, 2023). The initiative, in addition to ensuring legal migration that hones in on the risks of the migratory journey, aims to welcome and guide migrant people through an integration process that considers the beneficiaries' migration plans. The process for the recognition of international protection status is then referred to the Territorial Commission, but in contrast to other applications it is guaranteed to be a faster process given the continuous stream of dialogue between the promoting associations and the Ministry of the Interior (Sossai, 2017).

The private Humanitarian Corridors initiative thus fits into a European context in which it has become increasingly necessary to find a sustainable and lasting solution to then migration phenomenon. The program, which is complementary to the official Italian and European channels proposed by the two entities, has taken advantage not only of a favourable context that in the past decade has seen full papal support and the openness of other Christian and non-Christian realities on the issue of reception, see for example the international prayer meeting for peace held in Antwerp in November 2014 at whose table exponents of different religious communities gathered, but it stems from the strong focus that both Christian realities have turned in producing an improvement in life for the excluded, the marginalised of society. In fact, for decades they have been engaged in the world of welcoming and caring in the service of migrant people (Morozzo della Rocca, 2017).

The Community of Sant'Egidio, which was founded in Rome in 1968 as a result of the Second Vatican Council on the initiative of Andrea Riccardi, has as one of its founding cornerstones putting itself at the service of those who are excluded from society (Riccardi, 1998). This gave rise to numerous initiatives aimed at the elderly and the non-self-sufficient and then particularly since the 1990s also at migrants, for example with the «People of Peace» initiative. Over the years the community took root in various Italian cities and then in Europe, Africa, America and Asia. Together with prayer and evangelization, the Sant'Egidio community has turned its commitment to supporting human rights and dignity and promoting cultures of peace, with specific attention directed toward the realization of a social space of coexistence between cultures and religions (Balas, 2008).

The Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy brings together most of the historic denominations of Italian Protestantism and some of the churches of the Pentecostal-Charismatic area. The FCEI was founded in Milan on 5 November 1967. Among its founding members are the Evangelical Baptist Christian Union (UCEBI), the Waldensian Church, the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church and the Ecumenical Community of Ispra-Varese. Among the federation's statutory objectives is to carry out solidarity, charitable, social and health care activities and the protection of civil rights in favour of disadvantaged people, with particular reference to refugees and migrants. Following these principles and driven by the need to act and remedy the migration crisis at the beginning of the last decade, the Mediterranean Hope (MH) project was born in early 2014. Among MH's initiatives, in addition to the HC, is the Lampedusa Migration Observatory, which permanently analyses, interprets and communicates the evolution of migration processes on the island, so symbolically and geopolitically relevant. In addition, it carries out primary reception, mediation, information and research work (Naso, 2016). Another initiative on the Sicilian territory is the House of Cultures in Scicli, in the province of Ragusa, active since December 2014. In this facility, located in the town's historic centre, people who have suffered traumatic events during migration are welcomed and accompanied on a path of rehabilitation and care (Costantini, 2016). In addition, since 2019 In Calabria in Rosarno Mediterranean Hope has been actively involved in supporting, mediating and supporting migrants employed as labourers in the fields in the area.

Therefore, the humanitarian corridors project was drawn up in a fertile context in which both entities had accumulated experience in the field of reception over the years and could boast a network of associations and volunteers ready to take up and implement this proposal. The HC initiative also represented an ecumenical effort of considerable complexity, which helped influence Italian society and public opinion towards a strong rethinking of the paradigms associated with the management of flows and the integration of migrants.

4. Reception in Italy

Over time, Italy has witnessed the emergence of a multitude of reception methods, culminating in an intricate and disparate system. The normative evolution of migration policies in Italy, as succinctly outlined by Silvia Aru (Aru, 2019), has followed a trajectory spanning several decades. In 1948, Article 10 of the Constitution marked the initial theoretical recognition and safeguarding of the right to asylum, yet it would take another half-century for specific reference legislation to materialise. The late 1980s saw the approval of Law Decree 416/1989, subsequently transformed into the «Martelli Law», which ultimately established refugee status.

The Turco-Napolitano Law (Legislative Decree 186/1998) introduced the concept of temporary protection within dedicated spaces, known as Temporary Residence Centres (CPT), marking a significant development. In the 2000s, the intensifying political discourse surrounding migration crises, coupled with rising arrivals and tragic maritime incidents, prompted the enactment of the Bossi-Fini law (l 89/2002). This law ushered in the Identification and Expulsion Centres (CIEs) and the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR), albeit with restrictions on asylum claims.

Subsequently, the Minniti Law (l 46/2017) and subsequent security decrees further refined the legislative landscape, and while later amendments like the Lamorgese Decree (l 173/2020) altered aspects of this framework, they did not abolish it, instead introducing more stringent barriers to accessing the reception system.

In Italy the reception and deportation system emerges structured on two levels: the first reception is entrusted primarily to the hotspots (European centres established by the Migration Agenda in 2015), then to the Reception Centres for Asylum Seekers (CARA) and to the Extraordinary Reception Centres (CAS). The second reception handles much smaller numbers than the first and is entrusted to the network of local authorities of the Reception and Integration System (SAI), reserved for asylum seekers who manage to access the legal process, while those who are not assessed as suitable receive a removal order or, while waiting, are detained in Return Centres (CPR) without trial due to administrative detention.

Today the Italian administrative geography of reception, detention and expulsion, barely described, is not just unable to manage migratory flows, but it's recognized as in crisis (Carbone et al., 2018). There is a need to foster new geographies of welcome. HC express some of this dissatisfaction and pulsion, advocating European law to find new local alternatives by the civil society they build a primedial alliance between local and international levels against the failure of the national level. The field analysis conducted on HC reveal this urgency and goal, but at the same time the main challenge remains to include HC and new forms of reception inside the national administrative geography, that is meant to transform the private and caritative system of the HC into a public one. Anyway, beside the administrative levels of competence, the

problem for the transformative pulsion of reception is to face the lack of political changing perspective.

5. Widespread reception

The heterogeneous set of reception spaces is hard to gather into a single category and eludes complete mapping. However, their defining characteristic lies in the fact that, in the overwhelming majority of instances, these facilities remain distinct from the broader territory. They serve as temporary spaces of exception and laboratories for biopolitical experimentation. Within these delimited and fortified encampments, the state, motivated by security imperatives, enforces a suspension of the normal rule of law (Minca, 2015; Katz, 2017).

The first fundamental characteristic of the HC is that it does not fall into the camp mechanism, as is the case with the reception system in Italy. HC beneficiaries are hosted by civil society in facilities of religious organizations or third-sector entities. In the second case, they are accommodated either as guests, or as tenants, in ordinary flats and private houses. The HC model shares significant similarities with the SAI model, where the hosting of migrants is managed by a broad network of associations, individual volunteers, and civil society entities. However, in the SAI model, coordination is overseen by a public body, the Central Service, which operates in collaboration with the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI).

The second, equally important and consequent characteristic of the HC model is its rootedness in the territory, instead of the camp or the heterotopia (Cattedra and Memoli, 2013) we have seen on the ground the existence of a widespread reception network, made up of people, civil and religious associations and, as in the case of the municipality of Offida, local authorities. Once in Italy, the HC beneficiaries are taken care of by the project promoters (FCEI and Sant'Egidio) in collaboration with other partners, including the Synodal Commission for Diakonia (CSD), the Casa delle Culture-MH in Scicli, the Centro diaconale «La Noce» in Palermo, the Network of Municipalities in Solidarity (RECOSOL), and Oxfam Italy, which provide accommodation in facilities and flats throughout the country. This form of widespread reception does not nourish the entrepreneurial spirit, which is instead present in the management of large flows of immigrants in Italy (Atzeni, 2021), because it is entirely dependent on the limited availability of civil society and its possibilities of finding funding, such as the Otto per mille. There is, however, a substantial difference between the widespread reception network implemented by FCEI, which relies mainly on the support of local associations and Sant'Egidio, which, thanks to its relations with the Catholic world, has an extensive network of parishes, families willing to provide hospitality and church congregations.

The limitation of the widespread reception model of the HC is the restricted spending capacity of the private social sector. To make this model feasible on a large scale and over time - the reception of beneficiaries lasts only two years - a public commitment is indispensable, as the promoters of the HC themselves demand, because scaling up entrusted to private initiative alone would be difficult to escape from the entrepreneurial approach.

Finally, the paramount significance of widespread reception lies in its rootedness within the local community. The existence of a solidarity network, set up by civil society, ready to welcome thousands of people has been the real key to the success of the HC; this network, spread all over Italy, has allowed project beneficiaries access not only to the physical territory but also to its human, social, economic and labour resources. Although those resources are limited and contested even for Italian natives, it is extremely rare for migrants to be able to access them directly upon arrival and with a solidarity network already in place. Territorial roots and networks are present not only in the country of arrival but also in the country of departure, where the first contact and the selection of beneficiaries, together with the Italian embassy of reference, take place. Thus, the HC diffused reception model is based on a dual territorial rooting.

6. Conclusions

Assessing the whole of the work and activity performed by the HCs, there are undeniably positive results that are achieved. These results can be divided into two groups: the positive aspects achieved by the HCs in the place of departure/travel and those achieved in the place of arrival, in Italy. Regarding the first group, first of all, the important objective of making migrants travel in safe conditions must be underlined (Barbanotti, 2020), avoiding dangerous journeys whose possible terrible consequences are unfortunately well known (from shipwrecks in the Mediterranean to people crammed without air in lorries to crossing the Balkans or the Alps in the middle of winter without adequate equipment). The safe journey coordinated by the HC also obviously makes it possible to avoid the criminal organisations of traffickers. This frees migrants from suffering cruel practices that violate every basic human right and removes the aforementioned organisations from their «source of income», as well as avoiding bilateral and multilateral emergency agreements such as those with Turkey and Libya (Amato and Iocchi, 2019).

Moving on to the second strand of positive aspects, upon arrival in Italy, the activities of the CICs make it possible to realise two objectives: widespread reception and a path followed for the acquisition of documents. The diffused reception method based on small numbers allows for an integration and social insertion of the migrant person with results that are greater than those of large reception centres with hundreds or even thousands of guests (Naso, 2016). Finally, the research highlighted how through the

HC's a fundamental process in the migratory path was facilitated, i.e. the acquisition of documents for legal residence in Italy. This facilitation is due both to the peculiarity of the diffused reception method, which, being based on small numbers, allows each individual case of request for documents to be properly followed up by specialised personnel, and to the process coordinated from the very beginning of the journey in the country of departure with the relevant Italian authorities, which allows the migrant to jump over various bureaucratic hurdles that would otherwise be customary.

However, there are also some criticalities to be highlighted in the evaluation of the results produced by the HC. Criticalities that are related to the HC's but mostly not directly attributable to them. In fact, since HC is an activity linked to the authorisations granted by the competent state bodies, its performance is profoundly influenced by them. In fact, authorisations are granted according to a very rigid system and the overall number of migrants who manage to take advantage of the CICs' guarantees turns out to be absolutely insufficient to represent a valid response to the general numbers of the migratory flow; «A drop in the ocean», to quote a definition used by several professionals working in the CICs' circuit in the interviews collected for this research. This imposition «for reasons of force majeure» of reduced numbers generates two critical situations in the HC system, one in the departure country and the other in the arrival country. In the country of departure, the criticality consists in a rigid selection of persons who are included in the protected HC system. This rigidity inevitably produces mechanisms of exclusion from the selection of people who would instead have every right to do so.

In the country of arrival, Italy, on the other hand, the small numbers risk creating a kind of «fast track» for HC beneficiaries, especially regarding the central issue of issuing documents for legal residence as discussed above. In this case, the risk is that a form of unintentional discrimination is created towards all other migrants who do not fall within the CIC circuit and who instead find themselves fighting against punitive regulations, explicit ostracism on the part of the officials in charge, and bureaucratic obstacles. Finally, as a final critical point to note, the fact that only those migrants who fall within the definition of a refugee, i.e. fleeing a conflict zone or political repression, are admitted to the CICs. On the other hand, the migration phenomenon is more complex and articulated than this definition, and in order to be able to aspire to take on the role of an alternative model for the management of migration flows, HC must be able to envisage solutions in a global manner, so as to address the phenomenon in its entirety. Here too, however, it is clear that the restriction on the refugee definition is an imposition of state actors on the HC. Drawing a conclusive balance, thus trying to weigh up in the right balance all the aspects that emerged in the research, the strong points as well as the critical elements, the HC's certainly represent an existing, active, practical and not only theoretical way of overcoming the current approach of European states to tackle the migration phenomenon with an apparatus of measures and forces aimed mainly at con-

tainment and repression and putting the issue of respect for fundamental human rights in the background.

In order to make the leap from a niche model, functioning but limited in numbers, to a mass application model, and also to see what other possible criticalities would emerge if this were the case, HC should be taken as a paradigm for state policies in the management of migration flows. It is impossible to predict the practical applicability of HC on a mass scale with the data collected in this research to date. Out of doubt, however, would be the approximation to the European founding values elaborated by anti-fascist internees in Ventotene (Spinelli and Rossi, 1994).

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2.
On EU-driven border externalization practices

The paradox of EU migration policy: balancing security and solidarity in the external dimension

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Abstract

Since the end of World War II, more and more people from conflict-ridden and less developed regions sought refuge in more stable regions like Europe. However, destination countries increasingly relied on containment strategies, triggering their protection obligations as well. The European Union, faced with the challenges of internal migration management, strengthened the external dimension of its migration policy, especially after the «refugee crisis». This paper explores the EU's external migration policy evolution, focusing on the contentious EU-Turkey Deal. The aim was to assess the impact of externalization practices on the coherence of EU migration management with core EU principles such as solidarity and fundamental rights standards. Are EU's «stem the flows» measures in line with EU's principles and legal framework?

Riassunto

A seguito delle crescenti pressioni migratorie, l'Unione Europea ha fatto sempre più frequentemente ricorso a pratiche di esternalizzazione dei confini e della gestione della migrazione, con l'obiettivo di fermare e prevenire i flussi in entrata. Un'analisi attenta di queste strategie di contenimento ed esternalizzazione manifesta, tuttavia, rilevanti criticità in merito all'allineamento delle stesse con i valori fondamentali dell'UE, tra cui i diritti umani e la solidarietà. Il presente articolo, dunque, mira ad analizzare l'evoluzione della dimensione esterna della politica migratoria e d'asilo europea e, anche grazie all'analisi specifica dell'accordo UE-Turchia, a mettere in luce le potenziali problematiche di cui sopra relative alla compatibilità di dette pratiche con i principi e la normativa UE.

1. Introduction

Recently, migratory pressures on Europe have strained the resilience of both the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ) and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Although the CEAS was conceived as a «common area of protection and solidarity», it has fallen short in providing safe conditions for asylum seekers and solidarity-based measures. Asymmetries between member states (MS) have worsened, hindering a collective and concerted European Union (EU) response to the so-called refugee crisis.

In 2015, due to the incessant rise in arrivals and deaths on Mediterranean shores, EU institutions schizophrenically began to adopt various legal and administrative initiatives to address the «refugee crisis», with a focus on combating smugglers and illegal immigration. Direct measures included the expansion of Frontex's role and the implementa-

tion of action plans on return and anti-smuggling. Indirect procedures linked instruments normally adopted for humanitarian and protection reasons with security reasons, as was the case with conjunctural measures avowedly aimed at stemming the loss of life at sea and then used to curb departures (such as the «enhanced» cooperation with Turkey and expanded Frontex maritime operations in the Mediterranean). Lacking consensus and political will to manage the crisis internally, the EU opted to strengthen already existing mechanisms such as cooperation and «comprehensive partnerships» with third countries (like the EU-Turkey Deal) to outsource the management of mass inflows and advance a defensive strategy.

The external dimension of European migration and asylum policy has become the linchpin of European migration governance. Since 2015, the Union's main strategy has been to establish a «security cordon» at its borders by extraterritorializing controls and responsibilities and cooperating with strategic non-EU countries through more informal and flexible procedures.

How should this approach to the external profile of European migration and asylum policy be interpreted? What are its potential implications for coherence, and sustainability in terms of the principle of solidarity and fundamental rights standards at the core of the Lisbon Treaty, and the CEAS?

2. The external dimension of European immigration and asylum policy before, during and after the «crisis»

The external dimension of EU migration policy has a much longer history than the 2015's one.

Since the mid-1980s, when the Schengen area was institutionalized and internal borders between Schengen countries were abolished, the EU, and Schengen officials, strengthened police and judicial cooperation in combating human smuggling, trafficking, and irregular migration. In 1999, Schengen Agreement was incorporated into EU law, the CEAS was established, and migration and asylum issues were given a supranational character. MS and EU recognized the inadequacy of domestic border controls in managing migration and, in October 1999, the so-called «external dimension» of EU immigration and asylum policy was officially introduced, aimed at limiting and preventing migration *into* the EU.

The two main strategies to limit and prevent arrivals here were: a) «externalizing» migration control by exporting European migration control instruments to sending or transit countries outside the EU and facilitating immigrants' returns and b) preventing migration flows by influencing factors that encourage emigration from third countries. In this sense, the 2002 Seville Summit of the European Council called for a comprehensive

approach to migration, reaffirming the need for a balance between control and migration prevention, and introduced mechanisms for monitoring activities to combat irregular migration in the EU's relations with migrants' countries of origin and/or transit.

Since then, the external dimension of the EU migration policy has become an important and integral part of the already existing EU-third country relations, based on reciprocity and protection of mutual benefits.

In 2004, when the first EU's historic enlargement resulted in new EU external borders, the European Neighbourhood Policy (revised in 2011) was launched to deepen political and economic integration with the EU's 16 eastern and southern neighbours, and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) was established. In 2005, the Global Approach to Migration (GAM, also revised in 2011 and transformed into GAMM) was implemented and cooperation with third countries to prevent irregular immigration into the EU was further promoted. As part of these efforts, the EU engaged in several regional dialogues and Mobility Partnerships (MobP) with strategic countries to secure their cooperation in managing migration, offering economic and political support in return. As migration pressures continued to intensify by 2008, the EU responded by signing the EU Return Directive. Simultaneously, readmission agreements, visa facilitation, and visa waiver agreements gained prominence as essential instruments of EU migration policy. Then, the year 2011, brought about significant geopolitical changes. The Arab Spring and the Syrian civil war accelerated migration flows into Europe, straining EU border countries and revealing shortcomings in EU migration and asylum policies. Consequently, the external dimension of the policy was reinforced, with bilateralism playing a crucial role in defining it.

Thus, by 2014, the external dimension of EU migration and asylum policy had already established a structured framework. However, since 2015, when the number of migrants arriving in Europe reached its peak, it underwent a transformative shift, largely influenced by the increasing importance of some security-based externalization practices, such as controversial forms of cooperation with some contested states (as in the case of the EU-Turkey Deal in 2016 - which will be analysed in the following section - and the agreement between Italy and Libya in 2017). In the years of the «crisis», the external dimension assumed an even more pivotal role in EU migration and asylum policy.

In 2015, the European Commission adopted the European Agenda on Migration, a set of various EU remote control measures aimed at reducing irregular transit, strengthening border controls, and creating a common asylum policy. However, the focus of EU «refugee crisis» management was centered on «stemming the flow», and this approach led to an expansion of readmission agreements; the initiation of Frontex operations in international waters; the reinforcement of the EU's return policy, which incentivizes transit countries to prevent entry into the EU; the approval of Joint Action Plans with buffer states located at Europe's gateways; and, more broadly, an emphasis on co-

operation with strategically important non-EU countries along migration routes, particularly in the Western Balkans and Central Mediterranean, defined usually through questionable soft laws instruments.

In brief, the EU's response to the «refugee crisis» confirmed the EU's ongoing asylum paradox: the European «commitment to international protection for refugees and [desire] to keep them away from EU territory» (Ruhrmann e Fitzgerald, 2017, p.7). The EU's two conflicting goals were reflected: on the one hand, providing international protection to refugees, on the other, keeping them outside its borders. The Union and its MS mostly negotiated «cooperative deterrence» initiatives with countries along migration routes, which were otherwise often implemented through bilateral, informal, and soft law acts such as memoranda, declarations, and working agreements. Its approach became progressively focused on security, with the main strategies being to prevent migrants from reaching EU borders and returning them to other countries.

Today, the main EU migration management techniques still consist of preventing migrants' «contact with the European Union» and thus limiting their ability to apply for international protection (the so-called «contactless control» strategies).

The EU's external migration policy, as outlined in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, probably the first major declaration of the post-European «refugee crisis» era, remains centered on maintaining a «security cordon» on Europe's peripheries. By improving return procedures, helping non-EU countries design their national reintegration strategies, and seeking a «balanced, comprehensive and mutually beneficial partnership» with third countries, EU institutions confirmed the «conspicuous place» migration management has had in the EU's external relations with strategic third countries since 2015.

The scenario of a militarized European border and crisis management decisions, protocols, and practices persist, and the concerns arising from containment policies cannot be ignored. First, it poses risks for the Union itself, which has become significantly dependent on often unreliable «gatekeeper» states that use migrants as «weapons» to put pressure on the EU (as evidenced by tensions on the Moroccan-Spanish border in the spring of 2021 and on the Greek-Turkish border five years after the adoption of the EU-Turkey Statement). Second, it raises concerns among academics and nongovernmental organizations in relation to its accordance with the rule of law and basic human rights standards in the EU.

3. EU-Turkey cooperation: the forerunner of controversial practices

As noted above, the EU has been managing immigration at its borders since 2015 through a «deterrence paradigm» that shifts the burden of immigration to developing countries (so-called burden-shifting). Using financial incentives in return for accepting

the European «protection elsewhere» paradigm as well as «offshore processing» programs, the EU and its MS have agreed to recognize cooperation with strategic states as a crucial dimension of their migration governance.

The pioneer was the cooperation with Turkey, which was launched at the height of the «crisis» and later became a «model» for the Union's future partnership frameworks with strategic countries, especially those on the African continent. After a series of preliminary talks since November 2015, the European Council and Turkey agreed on the so-called EU-Turkey Statement on March 18, 2016.

The content of the controversial Statement is well known, as is the extensive financial plan that supports it. All new irregular migrants, including asylum seekers (and thus including Syrians, who are usually granted international protection in the EU), arriving in the Greek islands from Turkey as of March 2015 will be returned to Turkey as rapidly as possible. In the case of Syrians, for every Syrian returned from Greece to Turkey, another Syrian (even if already in Turkey) will be resettled in the EU, (the so-called 1:1 mechanism).

This Deal - which the Commission initially described as «temporary, (and) extraordinary», but which nevertheless operates permanently - essentially established for the first time a system for the return of asylum seekers based on Turkey's designation as a «safe» first country of asylum or «safe» third country under Directive 2013/32/EU. A return system that, despite the «safeguards» mentioned by the Commission, inevitably risks violating international and European law and is likely to disregard the principle of non-refoulement and the obligation to provide each person with the best possible protection. A return system that qualifies a country that is not a «safe» country of origin as a «safe» country for asylum seekers, paradoxically, and thus assumes that a state commits human rights violations only at the expense of its own population and not at the expense of foreigners. Finally, a return system based on an atypical Statement, concluded by the EU outside the procedures established in its treaties for signing international agreements and never formally recognized as such, even if it entails legal obligations for the parties and modifies EU rules (such as the classification of Turkey as a safe third country or the commitment to a financial plan).

Essentially, the EU-Turkey Deal is a trade-off: repatriate and block migrants, including those eligible for international protection, in exchange for substantial funding and acceleration of visa liberalization for Turkish nationals in the Schengen zone and accession negotiations. Migrants have become a commodity and a Turkish bargaining chip against Europe. As a result, the actual costs of this compromise and its overall effectiveness should be analysed by examining the various dimensions and actors involved.

Considering the main objective of the agreement – to stem irregular flows to Europe – the Statement should be considered effective, mostly due to the drastic decrease in the number of migrants arriving in Greece (and not due to readmissions). Since the EU-Turkey Statement came into force, the number of daily crossings has dropped from 10,000

people in October 2015 to an average of 105 people per day in 2020, and the number of deaths in the Aegean Sea from 1,175 in the 20 months before the declaration to 439.

On the other hand, looking at basic human rights standards and fundamental principles of refugee protection (such as the right to asylum and the principle of non-refoulement), the Statement does not appear to pass the effectiveness test considering the above, authoritative legal literature, and NGO reports

In the EU, reports from NGOs indicate that reception conditions on the Greek islands were inadequate even before the EU-Turkey deal. Following the agreement, the camps on the islands were transformed into detention camps and the situation deteriorated dramatically. By March 31, 2017, there were already «5,337 people on the islands, mostly deprived of their liberty» (Amnesty International, 2017). The hotspots Moria and VIAL on Lesvos and Chios, respectively, were overcrowded and scarcely provided with food and hygiene.

Similarly, in 2015, Turkey was already hosting more migrants than most, if not all, countries. The Statement exacerbated migratory pressures on the country and led to extremely critical conditions for migrants living there, despite economic support from the EU. Amnesty reported that in 2020, only 1.5% of working-age Syrian refugees had work permits. Many Syrians were denied even the right to register and access basic services, and just as many were forced by Turkish authorities to return to Syria. Yet, EU-Turkey cooperation is cited as a model for future externalization practices. Is this development of the external dimension of EU migration policy compatible with EU standards and funding values?

4. Stemming the flows and «protecting migrants elsewhere». What happened to the EU's core values?

Historically, the roots of Europe's construction as a political union lie in its common democratic legal, political, and moral values, which include respect for fundamental rights. In legal terms, EU primary law confirms the pivotal role of this common value-based heritage and fundamental rights in the founding of the EU, as proved by the first articles of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the recognition of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union with the same legal force as treaties.

Article 2 TEU indeed states that «the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, […] », and article 3 TEU further emphasizes that the Community's objective is to promote peace, its values, the wellbeing of its peoples and solidarity between MS and beyond its borders.

The principles of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and solidarity are the cornerstones of European identity and should be the cornerstones of European action,

internally and externally, in all policy arenas, comprising initiatives on asylum and migration issues, thus the CEAS.

However, it should be strongly noted that the EU's strategies for managing migration and asylum, particularly in the wake of the «refugee crisis», have deviated from core EU principles. The crisis-oriented management of migration and asylum issues adopted by the EU, which focused mainly on limiting migration flows and establishing a security cordon at European borders, has had adverse effects on solidarity, the rule of law, and the protection of fundamental rights, including the right to asylum. Despite the EU discourse highlighting that externalization fosters solidarity between European states, third countries, and migrants, the practical implementation of externalization measures may, in practice, lead to a misalignment between the aspirational goal of safeguarding fundamental rights through solidarity with third countries and migrants. While it is arguable that externalization practices can effectively curtail irregular migration and prevent losses at sea, and that it can address the strained interstate solidarity within the EU's border system, which has witnessed growing disagreements among MS in recent years, it is worth stressing that some of these practices, providing financial aid or utilizing humanitarian channels for externalization, primarily serve as means to discharge EU's obligation to exhibit solidarity with third countries and migrants, but do not fosters solidarity. Notably, the so-called «strategic» third countries engaged in these agreements and partnerships often bear a disproportionate burden in receiving migrants, and paradoxically, some externalization practices may jeopardize rather than enhance migrant security and stability. Through these practices, the EU does not treat them or third countries with solidarity. When migrants are apprehended, detained, and deported within the EU border network, they are subject to a double displacement that can further undermine their fundamental human rights.

Migrants' fundamental rights likely to be violated by these migration-control externalization practices are indeed manifold, although they are formally spelled out in EU law in its Charter of Fundamental Rights. Consider, for example, the perilous journeys they make to cross increasingly militarized (and sometimes closed), which may expose them to violations of the right to life and the right to seek and enjoy asylum, in addition to often jeopardizing their rights as victims of crime and abuse (such as by human traffickers). Or also consider the frequent detention in third countries to which they are subjected in violation of the right to liberty and security of the person, and usually in violation of the right to torture and ill-treatment.

A more in-depth analysis of human rights compliance in the context of externalization and the responsibility of MS and the EU for these human rights violations will be deferred to another work; it might suffice to say here that, on the one hand, it is a violation of international law for states to directly support the actions of another State in violation of international law, and that, on the other hand, all implementing decisions

by MS «must comply with the rights and observe the principles provided for under the Charter» (Case C-571/10, Kamberaj, ECLI:EU:C:2012:233, para 78).

Finally, in addition to all the pitfalls briefly mentioned, it should be noted that the inherent lack of transparency and the multiplicity of actors involved gave rise to various jurisdictional issues, as in the case of the action for annulment of the EU-Turkey Statement, which was declared inadmissible by the Court of Justice for lack of jurisdiction. The EU-Turkey Deal, an instrument by which Europe basically sells its responsibility to provide international protection and is complicit in several human rights violations, is the most emblematic image of the paradoxes and challenges of EU migration and asylum policies.

In sum, the externalization and containment measures, as well as other coercive and deterrent strategies still employed by the EU and its MS to «stem the flows» raise significant questions about the coherence of EU migration and asylum policies with fundamental European values and laws, which need to be examined individually and in-depth.

The EU must formulate a migration policy, both in its internal and external dimensions, that is consistent with European values and principles. The Union's current migration policy, which is still guided by defensive and securitarian approaches, could be detrimental to the EU's «normative power», its fundamental rights standards, its adherence to the rule of law, and its credibility as a moral and political force.

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De-centering EU border externalization: some reflections and ways forward

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Abstract

In recent decades, border externalization, which involves delegating migration control from the Global North to the Global South, has attracted interdisciplinary attention. Despite a rich literature, this field predominantly favors Eurocentric, state-centric, and androcentric viewpoints. This article proposes three approaches to de-center the field and facilitate a deeper analysis of border externalization policies and practices: integrating preventive measures, embracing a grounded perspective prioritizing migrants' agency, and adopting an intersectional analysis incorporating gender, race, and other identities in the analysis of externalization processes. These shifts could enhance our comprehension of border externalization and broaden the field's scope.

Riassunto

Negli ultimi anni, l'esternalizzazione delle frontiere, che implica la delega del controllo migratorio dal Nord al Sud Globale, ha ricevuto grande attenzione da parte di varie discipline accademiche. Tuttavia, questo campo predilige prevalentemente prospettive eurocentriche, incentrate sullo stato e androcentriche. Questo articolo propone tre approcci per decentrarne lo studio e facilitare un'analisi più approfondita delle politiche e delle pratiche di esternalizzazione delle frontiere: l'integrazione di misure preventive, l'adozione di una prospettiva che privilegia la capacità di agire dei e delle migranti e l'adozione di un'analisi intersezionale che incorpora il genere, la razza e altre identità nell'analisi dei processi di esternalizzazione. L'adozione di queste tre prospettive potrebbe migliorare la comprensione del fenomeno e ampliare lo scopo della ricerca.

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, an interdisciplinary body of scholarship has investigated the various ways in which so-called migrant-receiving countries in the Global North have externalized and outsourced the control of migration to states in the Global South, with the goal of stopping and filtering some undesired forms of mobility. This phenomenon has interested primarily scholars of borders, migration and security, constituting the growing subfield of research now called *border externalization*. During the last 20 years, this field has been developing mostly along four lines: the overwhelming majority of scholars have analyzed the ways in which (mostly European) states outsource migration and border controls to a variety of non-state and third-states actors (Boswell, 2003; Zaiotti, 2007; Lavenex, 2008; Bigo and Guild, 2010); some have considered the ways in which non-EU countries negotiate these policies and practices (El Qadim, 2014) others have analyzed the plethora of non-state actors that constitute the so-called migration

industry (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Nyberg-Sørensen, 2013; Cuttitta, 2020; Pacciardi & Berndtsson, 2022); and more recently some have studied these policies from the perspective of people on the move (Stock et al., 2019; Savio-Vammen et al., 2021). Notwithstanding the variety and richness of these debates, the research agenda is still somewhat characterized by Eurocentrism, state-centrism and androcentrism in its epistemological, methodological and empirical approach. Indeed, with some notable exceptions, much research in the field either focuses on state-practices, is based on data collected in European countries or, when it engages with migrants, it largely considers them as universally male subjects. Furthermore, the understanding of mobility, borders and migration, is still largely based on a European episteme which is still assumed as the only objective and universally valid one. With this short contribution, I propose some reflections on how studies on border externalization could be de-centered by outlining some research priorities that should be included in the agenda: an attention to preventive externalization practices that might not be immediately recognized as such, a focus on the perspective of those that are normally considered as mere "recipients" of externalization through the prioritization of migrants' agency, and the inclusion of an intersectional perspective that goes beyond the simple tokenistic inclusion of female migrant into the picture. The paper proceeds in three separate sections that outline new possible directions for the study of border externalization.

2. Towards the inclusion of preventive practices

Since the 1990s, the externalization of borders has become the central policy framework of European migration management. In the majority of the cases, the use of this term refers to a securitarian and militaristic approach to the control of the border that comprises, among other things, joint maritime and terrestrial operations for the control of the border, financing to the border police of extra-EU states and financing for the construction of physical and technological barriers (i.e. fences, detention facilities, biometric systems etc.). However, especially in the last decade, this securitarian and militaristic approach was complemented by a more humanitarian and developmental one, which comprises projects of various nature that could be broadly classified as "development and cooperation" projects. Against this backdrop, border externalization now comprises two approaches: the externalization of traditional control tools (such as the financing of the border police of neighboring states), and preventive practices that shift control modalities to the socio-economic sphere by using socio-economic incentives to change the factors that influence people's decision to move (Boswell 2003). This "root causes" approach (Thorburn, 1996) stands at the basis of the 2015 EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) and its successor, the The Neighbourhood, Development and Interna-

tional Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), some of the key instruments of the European comprehensive border externalization strategy. The core idea is to create "territorially bound development opportunities aimed at preventing migration" (Zanker, 2019, p.13) promoting a narrative of sedentarism (Bakewell 2008) based on the "right to remain" (Hyndman and Mountz, 2008). The main common sense but scientifically flawed assumption of preventive externalization policies is that social and economic grievances are among the most significant drivers of migration and that by providing opportunities at home people will decide to stay or even return (see De Haas, 2007). This kind of preventive practices is based on a narrative that tends to discredit migration (by for instance portraying it as an individual and collective failure) and criminalize it, by instead promoting a discourse that praises those who decide to stay and "succeed at home". Crucially, control-oriented and development-oriented approaches to migration management are closely related, as they seek to reach the same objective (curbing migration flows) with different, yet complementary means. Indeed, while traditional state bordering practices are far from disappearing, we witness the proliferation of other non-coercive strategies that are embedded with economic and socio-cultural local practices.

However, because of the high visibility of control-oriented practices, preventive approaches that penetrate other aspects of social life have not received enough attention (Geiger and Pecoud, 2010, p.16) and have been addressed only sporadically (see for instance studies on IOM awareness campaigns by Van Dessel, 2023). Conversely, I maintain that studies on border externalization should focus equally on traditional control instrumental *and* preventive practices. The latter are easier and quicker to fund (Castillejo, 2016, p. 15), are broadly accepted by all sides (Zanker, 2019, p. 9) and are much less contested as they appeal to a humanitarian logic that is more easily disguised as neutral and apolitical. Nevertheless, the violence they exert on migrants, although less visible, is indeed systematic and structural, as it penetrates all aspects of their life, providing short term relief by leaving intact the status quo of racialized oppressions that underpin these policies. Besides, preventive practices mitigate the violence at the border and legitimize control-oriented ones, by feeding on a patronizing rhetoric that justifies border controls on the ground that they save people on the move from various threats (drowning at sea, smuggling, cultural backwardness etc.). For these reasons, it is important that studies on border externalization adopt a holistic approach that considers preventive practices part and parcel of the EU violent border regime.

Furthermore, whereas in the analysis of traditional border control, local agencies and subjectivities tend to be conceived mostly through a pietistic and victimizing framework, including preventive border control practices sets the ground to overcome these limitations. Indeed, by analyzing those forms of migration management practices that go beyond the realms of police and security, more space is given to people's agency and power to shape and transform the border. Furthermore, studying preventive practices

allows scholars to uncover the "making of migration" (Scheel and Tazzioli, 2022), by shedding light on how some subjects are defined as bodies to be controlled and stopped even before they move. In this sense, beyond direct control policies that stop migrants at sea or while crossing the fence, preventive policies expose the violence implicit in a pervasive border regime that borders subjects in each and every aspect of their everyday life. Naturally, this is not to say that the study of direct control practices should take a back seat, but rather than preventive practices should be studied along traditional control ones to uncover the ways in which they mutually support each other and equally contribute to the maintenance of a violent and racialized border regime.

3. Adopting a perspective "from below"

Despite the political relevance of externalization strategies and despite recent calls for decentralization (Cuttitta, 2020; Zardo and Wolff, 2022; Cobarrubias et al., 2023), most scholars have privileged a research perspective that is both Eurocentric and state-centric, largely disregarding the role of non-state actors beyond Europe. Conversely, bringing migrants and local communities at the center of the debate is crucial to go beyond the 'methodological Europeanism' tendency (Garelli and Tazzioli, 2013) that fails to grasp the complexity of externalization practices. In fact, they are not univocal and uniform, but are co-determined by several actors, including those that are targeted by these policies (Cuttitta, 2020).

Generally, migration studies have looked at the high-policy level of externalization practices, analyzing externalization at the European level (Lavenex, 2008; Chou and Riddervold, 2012; Reslow, 2012a; Trauner & Wolff, 2014) or looking at the relation between the EU or single MSs and third countries (Paoletti, 2010; Reslow, 2012; Wolff, 2014; Reslow and Vink, 2015; Chou and Gibert, 2017). Overall, these studies take the state as the focal point of externalization processes, privileging state-centric approaches that overlook how local communities and migrants are affected by and contribute to shaping these practices (but see Trauner and Deimel, 2013; Mouthaan, 2019, Adam et al., 2020). In this sense, some authors have brought the target country and its people at the center of the debate, exploring how actors from the South challenge dominance from the North (El Qadim, 2014, Gaibazzi et al., 2017; Karadag, 2019; Stock et al., 2019). However, they all privilege traditional control and rescue policies, disregarding those increasingly common preventive forms of steering analyzed above that use socio-economic incentives to influence people's decision to move.

Besides, scholars of border and security studies have adopted a top-down perspective pointing at the various ways in which externalization extends control from the European "center" to the "periphery", categorizing and ordering Europe's neighboring

countries and populations (Zaitotti, 2007; Bigo and Guild, 2010; Casas Cortes et al., 2011; Boedeltje and Van Houtum, 2011; Białasiewicz ,2012). While the critique of border externalization that emerges from this literature is laudable, as it exposes asymmetrical North-South power dynamics, these studies generally fail to challenge them by neglecting the "other" as a geopolitical subject and by reproducing the dichotomy of the EU as a rule-maker and local subjects as mere receivers. Against this backdrop, I call for a reconsideration of local actors (migrants and local communities) as active stakeholders in shaping migration management dynamics. In order to do so, research on border externalization can build on some recent and fruitful scholarly debates.

One of the most popular ways of theorizing migrants' agency is the one undertaken by scholars of the autonomy of migration (AoM) approach (Moulier-Boutang, 1998). Far from romanticizing the migratory experiences (Mitropoulos 2007), this approach has been a reaction to a mainstream narrative that sees migrants as both overwhelmed by structural forces (push/pull factors) and victims of state agency (Casas Cortes et al., 2011). In other words, AoM offers a different way to look at border externalization by looking at it through the eyes of migrants as a collective movement capable of shaping the neoliberal mode of mobility management through collective struggle (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015). Grounded in the AoM approach, a recent contribution by Scheel and Tazzioli (2021) proposes to rethink the category of "migrants" by embracing the perspective of mobility to challenge the naturalization of the nation-state world order, the ontologization of "migrants" as ready-available objects of research and the conceptualization of migration as an object to be governed. Also inspired by the AoM, Schmoll (2022:24) has coined the term "autonomy in tension" to account for the tension between migrants' autonomy and the constraining dynamics in which they are caught.

Other scholars have proposed the adoption of a migrant-centered perspective in terms that recognize and prioritize their actions as politically transformative. For instance, Franck and Vigneswaran (2021) talk about migrants' political agency in terms of "hacking state controls" by showing how people move between legality and illegality to achieve their goals. Others talk about migrants' resistance (King, 2017; Stierl, 2019; Squire et al., 2021) as a way to conceptualize migrants' border struggle in contemporary Europe. Moreover, a wealth of literature has taken inspiration from critical border studies to conceptualize migrant's agency in terms of borderwork (Rumford, 2006; Frowd, 2018) and borderscapes (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007). Concretely, thinking in terms of borderwork and borderscapes allows scholars to go beyond dominant landscapes of power (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007, p. xxviii) and uncover the daily experiences, discourses and practices of actors that have been neglected or analyzed as mere recipients of border externalization policies. Specifically, one of the most promising innovations of the borderscape concept is that, by going beyond the idea that borders are material lines of separation, this analytical lens uncovers the multiple social, economic

and political interactions that happen at the border and that are not necessarily emanating from the nation-state. On the other hand, adopting a borderwok lens means bringing the perspective of bordering actors directly into the picture allowing scholars to include ordinary people's political agencies in the study of borders, according to the idea that borders cannot be fully understood by adopting a univocal gaze, but must be interpreted from different, and sometimes marginalized, perspectives.

All in all, adopting a migrant centered approach in the study of border externalization means prioritizing perspectives from below, channeling people's demands and recognizing migration as a political act capable of transforming and shaping EU border policies. By going beyond the state-centered perspective and instead privileging the everyday practices of the people that live the border in various ways, research on border externalization can move away from a conception of power as a totalizing and repressive force emanating vertically from the state towards a relational and horizontal account of power.

4. Intersectionalizing border externalization

A study of border externalization that looks at borders from below cannot neglect the intersectional aspects inherent in all bordering processes. Indeed, borders are embedded with issues of gender, sexuality, race, class, age, dis/ability and citizenship. However, these aspects are often neglected when investigating the border from the perspective of the state. This is especially true for gender dynamics that are almost never analyzed in the debate on border externalization. In fact, most of the literature on border externalization, with few exceptions, is characterized either by an androcentric approach that completely disregards any gender perspective whatsoever, or by a reductive approach to gender that essentializes women's experience at the border in ways that produce and reproduce masculine and heteronormative biases.

For instance, even those works that have had the invaluable merit of exposing the violence inherent in extra territorial border regimes, bringing to the fore the racialized aspects of EU border regimes (Vaughan-Williams, 2009; Walters, 2011; Bialaziewicz, 2012; van Houtum, 2010; Casas-Cortes et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2017; Tazzioli, 2019) generally tend to disregard the positionality of migrants in terms of gender, and the ways border externalization affects differently gendered subjects. In this sense, most scholars seem to implicitly consider migrants as primarily male subjects. Furthermore, even studies that focus on local agencies and subjectivities (Andersson, 2014; Savio Vammen et al., 2021; Stock, 2012; Gaibazzi et al., 2017; Alpes, 2017) seem to either disregard gender dynamics or, at most, conflate gender with women by including female

subjects as tokenistic characters in the role of wives, mothers, daughters or victims. In this sense, they risk naturalizing gender inequalities and reproduce an infantilizing image of female subjects on the move as always dependent on someone else (the husband, the father, the smuggler), and never as conscious political actors. Furthermore, even scholars of the above cited AoM approach generally tend to consider migrants as a rather homogenous (masculine) category, obscuring gender, or including female subject mainly as living labor (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p. 103), thus risking to reinforce a neoliberal capitalist rhetoric that sees migration primarily as workforce.

Recently, some of the literature on border externalization has started to include gender through a feminist lens. These studies have the merit of addressing "the woman question" in border externalization studies by both shedding light on the ways in which gender (along with race) is a mechanism of border control (Stachowitsch and Sachseder, 2019; Welfens, 2019; Casaglia, 2020; Rigo, 2022), as well as focusing on female's experience of the border (Cortés, 2018; Tyszler, 2019, 2019a; Sanchez, 2016; Schmoll, 2020) in a way that privileges their agency, far from stereotypical representations of female migrants merely as victims of traffickers and a backward culture, or nurturing mothers, wives and sisters. However, the major shortcoming of these contributions is that they tend to conflate gender and women both conceptually and descriptively. In doing so, they both fail to include those feminized subjects that are not biologically female (i.e. LGBTQ+ migrants, disabled migrants), and uncritically posit who is a "woman" and who is not based on pre-made Euro-centric assumptions. Against this backdrop, I contend that scholars should rethink externalization through the prism of intersectionality by considering gender and race as both systems that shape border externalization practices, and as identities that deeply shape the way people are affected by and react to it. Indeed, when talking about migrants' movement from Africa to Europe, gender and race (along with other axes) cannot be thought of as separate but must be understood in their interrelation.

5. Conclusion

With this short contribution, I have tried to provide some useful points of departure to challenge the way we study border externalization and set out a way forward. All in all, these reflections can help reframing the academic debate in ways that can ultimately help scholars make sense of border externalization practices beyond Eurocentrism, state centrism and androcentrism. This implies a threefold, and somewhat connected, gaze-shifting. First, scholars should strive to consider preventive practices along with more visible control ones, as fully fledged mechanisms of the European border regime. This means

being attentive to all migration management projects promoted with the intention of eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development to curb migration flows (such as the newly adopted Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument). Second, to paraphrase James Scott (1991), scholars of border externalization should "see like a migrant", which implies both shifting the gaze from the state towards people on the move and towards the South. In fact, for all the strengths of studies on border externalization that go beyond state-centrism, with some exceptions, their accounts of the border are distinctly Euro-centered, with little voices from the South, where most migrants or people targeted by restrictive mobility policies are located. Conversely, looking at border externalization "from below", both metaphorically and geographically, means focusing on crucial non-dominant actors from the South not as passive recipients of migration policies, but as active social actors who seek to achieve better outcomes for themselves by renegotiating, adapting or contesting EU rules and narratives. This gaze-shifting will also offer a good chance to derive bottom-up knowledge on border externalization, prioritizing the small stories over the big nation-state ones. Moreover, investigating power dynamics triggered by preventive externalization processes will be crucial to critically rethink international power dynamics and to uncover alternative accounts of border externalization practices that must necessarily go through an inclusion of migrants' voices and political acts. Finally, the third move consists in intersectionalizing the gaze of border externalization studies by challenging the normative heteropatriarchal masculinity of the literature. This will allow scholars to shed light on hidden dynamics, unequal power relations and naturalized assumptions that are part and parcel of the EU border regime and ultimately study it from more emancipatory and radical standpoints.

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3.
The failure of EU asylum policies and migrant reception system

Asylum at work. Humanitarian exploitation, racial capitalism and productive reconfigurations in the aftermath of the 2015 "refugee crisis"

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Abstract

This contribution reflects on empirical findings gathered through an ethnographic project carried out in Bologna, the capital city of Emilia Romagna region, Northern Italy. By unveiling the "asylum-logistics" nexus at the Interporto Bologna, a critical intermodal centre within the European logistical infrastructure, I emphasise the role of asylum in reproducing surplus racialised labour, which is particularly befitting in meeting the "just-in-time" imperative characterizing contemporary neoliberal capitalism. Overall, this chapter excavates the role of asylum in favouring the racialization of labour.

Riassunto

Questo contributo riflette sui risultati empirici raccolti attraverso un progetto etnografico condotto a Bologna, capoluogo della regione Emilia Romagna, nel Nord Italia. Svelando il nesso "asilo-logistica" all'Interporto di Bologna, un centro intermodale fondamentale all'interno dell'infrastruttura logistica europea, sottolineo il ruolo dell'asilo nella riproduzione del surplus di manodopera razzializzata, che è particolarmente adatto per soddisfare la necessità del "just in time" imperativo che caratterizza il capitalismo neoliberista contemporaneo. Nel complesso, questo capitolo indaga il ruolo dell'asilo nel favorire la razzializzazione del lavoro.

1. Introduction. case study and methodology

Imagine you are driving with your car in the northern outskirts of Bologna, the capital city of Emilian Romagna region, Northern Italy. The urban landscape, made by boulevards and prestigious facades, new transport infrastructures and modern buildings, progressively turns into a repetitive pattern of cultivated lands and outdated small villages. Some ten kilometres north of the city, when you are already accustomed to this rural landscape, you bump into a vast expanse made by hundreds of warehouses, perpetually crossed by trucks, vans and trains, which transport goods of any kind. You are at the Interporto Bologna, a critical intermodal centre which acquired strategic importance since the logistical rationality has transformed the paradigm of production (Cowen 2014). While you are driving across the Interporto, you notice a wired combination of elements. On one hand, the landscape seems to remind to a dystopian and aseptic future. Streets have no names, but numbers (A1, A2, etc.), series of glossy vehicles are parked outside warehouses, you know thousands of workers are working but few traces

of human suffering are visible. On the other hand, you notice junks of old trucks, drivers who eat in run-down restaurants and workers who slowly reach the workplace with shabby bicycles or electric scooters. This combination of aseptic brightness and velocity, slowness and organised abandonment, is a glimpse of the constitutive heterogeneity of (racial) capitalism.

During my six months fieldwork, I slowly discovered that many workers, equipped with shabby bikes or electric scooters, crossing the aseptic streets of Interporto, were asylum seekers residing in some of the several reception centres scattered around the city of Bologna and Ferrara. Reception centres are no standard facilities. In Bologna, for instance, small former apartments, as well as former military barracks, like Centro Mattei, were converted into reception centres. As such, the quality of reception varies significantly from centre to centre, even if an extractive, punitive and disciplinary logic sits at the heart of asylum (Mellino 2019, Picozza 2021). Asylum seekers are entitled to work after sixty days they applied for asylum. While they are in the process, which might last several years, they are granted a temporary document, in jargon *cedolino*. The *cedolino* lasts from one to a maximum of six months, and it is renewed accordingly. As we will see below, the contingent legality of asylum is crucial in favouring the flexible capture of asylum labour, since job contracts cannot exceed the duration of *cedolino*.

Through in-depth interviews and participant observation I focused on asylum seekers' labour conditions at Interporto. Privileged observers (migrant activists, unionists, social workers, researchers) introduced me to the field and I slowly entered in contact with asylum seekers. Subsequently, I spent time with them during their chilling time before their night shifts, usually in a coffee place mainly attended by black people. I also interviewed privileged observers in order to acquire an organic picture on the complex nexus between asylum and labour in the area of Bologna. The category of asylum seeker includes a highly heterogeneous array of socio-cultural and ethnic groups. During my fieldwork I mostly met with sub-Saharian people (Gambia, Niger, Mali) who tended to self-identify with the term "blacks."

2. Asylum, labour and racial capitalism

In the wake of the 2015 "refugee crisis", critical studies on migration and critical humanitarian studies developed organic and substantive insights on the working of the humanitarian border (Walters 2011). In this regard, we can identify three main areas of inquiry. First, the humanitarian border has been extensively analysed in relation to the external boundaries of the European border regime (Albahari 2015; Cutitta 2018). Second, ethnographically informed studies focused on the socio-political antinomies of

humanitarian practice. Following Michel Agier's (2010) characterization of the humanitarian in terms of a "care and control" domain, various contributions reflected on the "disturbing ambiguities of humanitarianism" (Agier 2011: 4). While the official and institutional discourse of asylum is centred around moral tropes – hospitality, reception, integration – research brought to light a constitutive underside made by confinement and social abandonment (Campesi 2015; Pinelli 2018), bureaucratized crafting of social identity (Sorgoni 2011), as well as racial hierarchies integral to asylum (Picozza 2021). Third, informed by the literature on the migration industry (Gammeltoft-Hansen, Nyberg Sørensen 2013), scholars focused on the systemic and interlacing connections between asylum and neoliberal political economy. The concept of humanitarian industrial complex (Dadusc, Mudu 2020), for instance, and an attention to the "neoliberal location of asylum" (Novak 2019) well epitomized a broader tendency aimed at bringing the political economy back in the analysis of asylum.

Within this third area of study, the role of asylum in shaping specific figures of labour (Mezzadra, Neilson 2013) and in contributing to the racialisation of labour more broadly has been partly overlooked. By joining recent interventions on the topic (Frydenlund, Cullen Dunn 2022; Rajaram 2018, Rigo, Dines 2017), this contribution aims to reflect on empirical findings gathered through an ethnographic project carried out in the area of Bologna, the capital city of Emilia Romagna region, Northern Italy. In particular, by unveiling the "asylum-logistics nexus" at the Interporto Bologna, I aim to emphasise that one of the pivotal functions of asylum concerns the reproduction and management of surplus racialised labour, which is particularly befitting in meeting the "just-in-time" imperative characterizing contemporary neoliberal capitalism (Andrijasevic 2021).

As such, I take as point of departure the concept of "humanitarian exploitation" proposed by Rigo and Dines (2017). Through this theoretical lens, the authors aim to emphasise that the humanitarian reconfiguration of migration, in which asylum became the pivotal technology for the management of the migrant population, needs to be carefully investigated in relation to productive processes. More specifically, Rigo and Dines stress that the humanitarian government produces "a peculiar *political economy* of management and exploitation of migrant workforce" (2017: 91, my translation; on this point see also Ramsay 2019). In this perspective, the figure of the asylum seeker, usually conceived in terms of biopolitical exclusion, assumes a decisive role within changing patterns of neoliberal political economy.

The analytical framework draws also from the literature on the relation between racial capitalism and surplus population. Scholars of racial capitalism contributed to a substantial decentring of an orthodox Marxist reading of capitalist development. By placing the plantation, racial slavery and colonial expansion at the heart of capitalist operations, they contributed to "stretch" – to paraphrasing Fanon famous dictum (1963:

40) – some Eurocentric limits of so-called "white Marxism" (Mellino, Pomella 2020). This scholarship elaborated on the racially differentiated yet enmeshed labour regimes constituting global processes of accumulation. This means, for instance, that "from 1492 onwards, racialised, coerced, and less-than-free migratory labour was central to the rise and development of capitalist modernity" (Danewid 2021: 150; see also Quijano 2000). The shadow of the plantation (Aider 2017) haunts the working of contemporary capitalism, with race embodying a postcolonial infrastructure (Nemser 2017) which unevenly distributes access to resources, as well as rates of exploitability, disposability and mortality within the social body.

Thinking through the lens of racial capitalism enables focusing on the complex and mutating modes of reproduction and valorisation of surplus racialised populations, which are simultaneously signified as redundant, *in surplus*, in regard to the space of citizenship and confined at the margins of the human, yet essential and generative to capital accumulation (Bhattacharyya 2018, Mbembe 2017). In this perspective, if critical humanitarian scholars extensively theorised humanitarian government as a technology of management of "wasted lives" (Agier 2010, Bauman 2004), it remains of crucial importance to investigate how these lives at the margins are absorbed and valorised by capital.

Marx (1990) famously talked about relative surplus population, or reserve army labour, to emphasise how capital, through various strategies (e.g., technological restructuring), tends to craft pools of unemployed workers with the aim to weaken class unity and increase productivity. As suggested by some studies (see, among other, McIntre, Nast 2011), the Marxian's framework requires to be partially re-elaborated. For instance, it is necessary to excavate the modalities through which race and gender hierarchically fragment the composition of the relative surplus population. In other words, not every unemployed worker in need for an occupation is equal in front of capital flexible accumulation. As we will see below, racial hierarchies structure the heterogenous pool of relative surplus population.

By proposing to read the humanitarian through the lens of racial capitalism and relative surplus population, I do not aim to develop a sort of all-encompassing and deterministic approach to the topic. In other words, my reading is complicit with those theories pointing at the fact that "many are dispossessed and displaced, but the route to absorption into capitalist formations remains unclear or, at least, unorthodox" (Bhattacharyya 2018: 177). Race and racial formations operate in order to fracture and decompose the human by reproducing a superfluous humanity which is afflicted and subjected to an array of racialising dynamics that go from the political economy of exploitation to processes of social and physical death and existential abandonment (Mbembe 2003, 2017, Patterson 1982). However, if the *subject of race* (Mbembe 2017) embodies these dynamics, it is nonetheless crucial to remind that they are not necessarily active and present at the same time for any negatively racialised subject.

Different combinations and nuances between these various dynamics invite us to avoid any deterministic and simplistic reading of how race intertwines with the working of capital and the making of surplus populations. Therefore, by approaching the humanitarian realm through this analytical framework, I do not want to suggest that *every* asylum seeker is necessarily absorbed by capital. I rather propose to see this issue the other way around. Roughly put, in nowadays Europe various "low skilled" industries (agriculture, gastronomy, logistics, services) would be simply inoperative without the decisive contribution of reception systems in reproducing and managing specific figures of disposable and fungible labour which is exploited according to the need of what we might call "just-in-time racial capitalism".

3. Migrant labour at Interporto? Asylum and the racial restructuring of labour

Every day, in most cases every night, hundreds of asylum seekers leave their reception facility to reach some of the several warehouses of Interporto to work as porters. Located 20 kilometres from Bologna and 42 from Ferrara, the commute might take more than two hours. Asylum seekers rely on public transportation or reach Interporto by bike or scooter, for a journey that turned up to be lethal in some dramatic cases. Given the scarcity of public routes, asylum seekers arrive amply in advance and wait up to two hours at the end of their shift to catch the first public vehicle to return to their reception centre.

The modality of recruitment is not homogeneous, since there are not formal agreements between reception cooperatives and companies. In many cases, by word-of-mouth asylum seekers contact employment agencies to get their short-term contract signed through WhatsApp. In other cases, reception cooperatives entertain an unofficial connection with employment agencies, with social workers being *de facto* informal intermediaries. Contracts can last a single day up to a couple of weeks and can be renewed accordingly to the need of the company. I did my fieldwork during the Christmas holidays and I could notice how subcontractors modulated their employment behaviour. Given the predictable peak of production during the Christmas time, agencies employed a higher number of asylum seekers with "exceptionally long" contracts (one or two moths). Being aware that after the vacation period many of them would not have been re-employed due to a physiological and significant production braking, they were involved into an internal competition. Who would have performed better might have had more chances to get a shorter contract afterwards. I was told that supervisors in the warehouse directly mentioned that the most devoted workers might have been re-employed, even if with shorter contracts.

The story of Ola wells epitomised the extreme flexibility and volatility characterizing contemporary logistics. Nigerian asylum seeker arrived in Italy in March 2020, Ola has

been working for months as a porter, with an on-call subcontracted contract. Every late morning, he receives a WhatsApp message from the agency advising him if he needs to go to work the coming night or not. This is how things works for hundreds of asylum seekers working at Interporto, being every day of the week (7/7) ready to reach the warehouse overnight in case they get a morning message from the agency. Despite his contract declares only 4 hours for single shift, he is required by his supervisor to overstay 4 or 5 hours every night. Most of the extra hours are not paid. To my question if he can decide to leave after the official end of the shift, he bitterly replied: "I can't refuse to do extra work, otherwise they call someone else." His shift starts around 9 p.m. and ends at 4/5 a.m. Afterwards, Ola takes a regional train that goes to Bologna central station, then a bus to his reception centre, for a more than two hours commute. He told me that in the warehouse where he works the night shifts are mainly covered by asylum seekers that live in the area of Bologna and Ferrara, defined as "black migrants" who are from sub-Saharan countries (Mali, Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, etc.).

Ola's bitter yet pragmatic assertion about the fact that he "can't refuse to do extra work, otherwise they call someone else" intriguingly reveals the role of reception in reproducing and managing a pool of a fungible and superfluous workforce. As anticipated above, Marx (1990) referred to this basin of temporary unemployed workers in terms of "relative surplus population." However, as suggested by some theoretical works on race, capital and labour, it is necessary to develop an analytical framework able to acknowledge the racial heterogeneity of the "relative surplus population". For instance, unemployed workers with a certain "racial status" might be able to obtain a certain working stability or job position over time, while others might remain at the bottom of the hierarchy.

In talking about his job, Ola told me that "black migrants" are subjected to racist control and discriminations by Italians and, in his own words, also by "Arab people", some of them being part of the rank-and-file union Si Cobas. In some warehouses supervisors (in Ola's words *bosses* or *capi*) exercise forms of control and pressure to those who work as porters, who are required to fill in giant trucks with parcels under constant supervision. If in many cases supervisors are Italians, also migrants from Northern Africa (Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia) with more stable working conditions occupy this position.

In order to dig deeper into this point raised by Ola, it is necessary to look back at the 2011–2014 period. During that time, widespread strikes in Northern Italy, from Bologna to Piacenza, from Milan to Verona, were carried out in the logistics sector, often organised and coordinated by migrants coming from Northern Africa in alliance with Si cobas (Cuppini et al. 2015, Roggero, Curcio 2017). Despite structural difficulties, this wave of struggle brought about significant improvements in the quality of labour for many of the workers employed in the factories at that time (Benvegnù et al. 2018). These migrant workers were in possession of different visa, such as working visa, study

or family reunification permit, while only a marginal and negligible percentage had an asylum document.

Since around 2015, the labour composition at Inteporto has started to change rapidly. In concomitance with the "refugee crisis", a new figure entered the productive organization of Interporto: the asylum seeker. Since then, employment agencies and logistics management have systematically relied on the reception system as a pool of contingent and racialised labour in order to fight back the strengthening of bargaining power Si Cobas migrant workers had gained in the previous wave of struggle. In some emblematic instances, asylum seekers were employed as subcontracted workers with a one-day contract in order to substitute Si Cobas migrants who were striking. An ethnographic view on the labour organisation at Interporto enables to come to terms with the centrality of race in fragmenting class composition, unity and solidarity, as well as in fostering new forms of capital's flexible accumulation (Piro, Sacchetto 2021). Despite socio-geographical variations, the racial ordering of labour represents a constant and structural aspect within patterns of capitalist development (Roediger 1991, Quijano 2000).

The labour racialisation at Interporto, most notably, seems to suggest that the blackness/whiteness spectrum, among the most recurrent and historical manifestation of racial formations, develops beyond a simple and rigid binarism. Blackness and whiteness embody a spectrum which can include various "intermediate positions." This spectrum, indeed, does not designate a monolithic and consistent partition; it implies an array of socio-cultural figures which are racialised along this black and white range. Thinking through the mobility and malleability of blackness, and conversely of whiteness, enables to acknowledge that specific social groups can be alternately classified as White and/or Blacks depending on historical contingencies and/or geographical settings (Merrill 2013). Moreover, it suggests that less-than-white populations can in turn reproduce an anti-black politics against other social groups. As showed, for instance, by Gross-Wyrtzen (2020), the Moroccan community, which occupies a less-than-white position within the (postcolonial) European imaginary, often reproduce a politics of anti-blackness against Sub-Saharan people who live in Morocco. And a similar tendency seems to be present at Interporto, where a series of factors (legal status, ethnicity, etc.) favoured the racial subjugation of black asylum seekers by Northern African Si Cobas workers, as well as by Italian workers.

Si Cobas migrants tend to blame "black" newcomers for the loss of bargaining power they have gone through over the last years. Other than signalling the limits of the Si Cobas union (Grappi 2021) in recomposing and relaunching the class struggle, this situation instantiates the racial strategy of capital, which always develop new and plastic ways for racially fragmenting labour. Even during the 2011-2014 wave of struggle, racial frictions were present among workers, with managerial figures trying to pit workers against one another and undermine the possibility of solidarity. As reported by Curcio,

at that time the racial discourses were spoken out mainly in terms of nationality, as denounced by a migrant workers interviewed by the author:

> In warehouses the "corporal" used to say to Moroccans that they are better than Tunisians, to Tunisians that they are better than Egyptians or Romanians. The objective is to split up workers, putting a group against the other: "if you behave well, I'll pay you more; do not join the struggles", etc. (Curcio 2018: 267).

Despite these frictions, migrant workers of/and Si Cobas were able to develop a certain degree of class unity and gain some important results (Cuppini et al. 2015, Curcio 2018, Curcio, Roggero 2018). During that period, racial discourses aimed at fragmenting workers solidarity have been the basis to relaunch the struggle led by the Si Cobas, with "ethnic networks serv[ing] as a strong-hold for building information and solidarity networks" (Benvegnù et al. 2018: 99). However, the horizontal and autonomous organization and tradition of Si Cobas, often praised for its capacity to involve those workers, mainly migrants, excluded by "traditional and white" unions (CGIL, CIS, UIL) (Benvegnù et al. 2018; Manicastri 2014), entered a *structural impasse*. As noted by Grappi: the strength acquired by unionized workers [Si Cobas], largely hired with permanent contracts through cooperatives, is in fact in danger of turning into a force contrary to the collective interests of workers. In their daily management, these unionized and stable workers find themselves in charge of commanding on colleagues who are weaker contractually, because they are temporaries, and administratively, because they are asylum seekers [in most of the cases these weaknesses are combined]. If we add to this the fact that there is a clear color division, with temporary workers largely Sub-Saharan African and cooperative employees largely North African or Asian, we understand how companies are building a trap from which we need to get out (Grappi 2021, my translation).

Within this mutating scenario, the 2015 "refugee crisis" can be seen as a moment of a *productive reconfiguration through racial means*. Since then, management of the Interporto Bologna found in the reception system an ideal basin of contingent and racialised labour employed to restructure the overall labour organisation.

4. Conclusive remark

Empirical data presented in this chapter suggest that the racialisation of labour in a moment of workers' counteroffensive occurred through asylum. Due to a series of factors, such as legal precarity and what Stuart Hall's called "black ethnicity" (2021), asylum seekers seem to embody the ideal workforce in a sector characterised by high degrees of volatility.

Moreover, it is crucial to note that the category of "migrant labour", commonly deployed to describe the centrality of non-native workers in the racial composition of labour, requires further specifications in order to grasp the labour heterogeneity at Interporto. In fact, this concept risks hiding the racial caesura that has fragmented and reconfigured migrant labour since around 2015. In light of the asylum-logistics nexus examined above, it is argued that concepts such as humanitarian exploitation (Rigo, Dines 2017) represent decisive theoretical tools for outlining the centrality of asylum in fostering specific regimes of exploitation and racialisation which affect processes of class (re)composition and labour organisation more broadly.

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Institutional Racism in migrants' residency discrimination in Italy

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Abstract

The present essay aims to analyse the forms in which, today, the process of racialization manifests itself in a structural, and structuring, differential inclusion of migrants living in Europe. Based on recent calls to racialize studies on migration by prioritizing race and racism as core concerns (Saenz e Douglas 2015; Erel, Murji e Nahaboo 2016), and, at the same time, to contribute expanding public and academic debate on institutional racism, the present essay aims to trace the forms and materialization of contemporary institutional racism along the EU multilevel governance of migration. Particularly, I will empirically adapt the concept to the case of migrants' discriminated access to "residency" in Italy.

Riassunto

Questo contributo si propone di analizzare le forme in cui, oggi, il processo di razzializzazione si manifesta in una strutturale, e strutturante, inclusione differenziale dei migranti che vivono in Europa. Sulla base dei recenti appelli a razzializzare gli studi sulla migrazione dando priorità alla razza e al razzismo come preoccupazioni centrali (Saenz e Douglas 2015; Erel, Murji e Nahaboo 2016), e, allo stesso tempo, a contribuire ad espandere il dibattito pubblico e accademico sul razzismo istituzionale, il Il presente saggio mira a tracciare le forme e la materializzazione del razzismo istituzionale contemporaneo lungo la governance multilivello della migrazione dell'UE. In particolare, adatterò empiricamente il concetto al caso dell'accesso discriminato dei migranti alla "residenza" in Italia.

1. Introduction

Even if dominant discourses on migration in Europe have systematically omitted race as a fundamental theoretical frame through which historicise and understand the effects of the phenomenon – what have been defined «postracial silences» (Lentin 2014) or even a «post-colonial cancer» (De Genova 2010) – the prism of racialization is indispensable to analyse and deconstruct the EU multilevel governance of migration, as claimed by Erel, Murji and Nahaboo (2016). Understanding how race and racism are linked and relate to migration has become fundamental for scholars and anti-racist activists: «recognition of racism as a structuring feature of European societies is needed to address how Europe's migration regimes articulate and are articulated by racialization and coloniality» (Erel, Murji, Nahaboo 2016:1341).

In order to understand the current ways in which the relations between race and migration are currently composed, the concept of racialization helps for a better understand-

ing of the contemporary EU migration regime, which many authors have defined as a «Border Regime» (Balibar 2010; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Berg and Ehin 2006), characterized by the articulation of the policing and securitization of physical borders and the reproduction of internal racialized boundaries (Fassin 2011). Adopting the concept of racialization supplies a multi-dimensional frame that, as stressed by Coretta Phillips, because of its dynamic nature, «allows the intersection of race with class, gender, sexuality and nation to be incorporated into any empirical investigation» (2010:174). Providing a multi-layered and multi-dimensional frame, «the value of the concept lies precisely in pointing not just at race and racism, but beyond them in their manifold imbrications» (Rattansi 2005:273). The emphasis on the process of racialization contributes, therefore, to explain the material effects of a contemporary racialized hierarchization around citizenship – an ontology of difference based on the distinction of who belong from those who do not, reiterated and reproduced through the contemporary migration regime – and, at the same time, to identify multiple exclusionary practices in terms of differential access to choices, opportunities, and resources. Hence, what has been described as a process of subaltern, conditional or «differential inclusion» (Mezzadra and Neilson 2010).

One of the aims of the present essay is analysing one of the forms in which, today, the process of racialization manifests itself in a structural, and structuring, differential inclusion of migrants living in Europe. In order to investigate the phenomenon not only in the exceptional episode or as expressions of private preferences, but also in its silent articulations, in its «historical specificity» (Hall 1986) and its *structural* and *institutional* forms. As a matter of fact, to understand how race-based discrimination works and manifests in the contemporary EU migration regime and societies, the concept of "institutional racism" turns out to be a useful analytical tool to explain some specific practices in everyday migrants' discrimination.

Nevertheless, in continental Europe, the concept of institutional racism was never really considered a valuable analytical tool to analyse structural racial discrimination (Boulila 2019; Lentin 2008; Goldberg 2008; Roig 2016). Gail Lewis (2013) highlights the convergence of three main factors to explain the disavowal of race (and consequently institutional racism) as a legitimate term of inquiry in the region. First, the legacy of the Holocaust had on European societies a strong influence in considering themself as post-racist. Second, the spreading of a multiculturalist narrative shaded by a politically correct discourse invisibilized race in public and political debates. Third, the investment in a «national self-image of egalitarianism» (Lewis 2013:878) obscured institutional racism's operations and material effects. This European race-blindness and post-racialism, focusing almost exclusively on individual aspects of it, failed to address historical, structural, and institutional racism and lacked to underline «the privileges, positions and biases of the white dominant population» (Roig 2016).

Therefore, it is essential to develop a new understanding of institutional racism within the contemporary EU migration regime. Based on recent calls to racialize studies on mi-

gration by prioritizing race and racism as core concerns (Saenz e Douglas 2015; Erel, Murji e Nahaboo 2016), and, at the same time, to contribute expanding public and academic debate on institutional racism, the present essay aims to trace «the presence and functioning of contemporary institutional racism by making visible how institutions have transformed and adapted the ways in which they (re)produce discrimination along racist lines» (Orsini et al. 2021:3). Specifically, I will empirically adapt the concept to the case of migrants' discriminated access to "*residency*" (a form of local membership) in Italy.

The present paper draws on some reflections developed, and data collected, during my broader Ph.D. research project on migrants' housing segregation and institutional racism in the cities of the South of Europe.

2. Institutional Racism: a Multilevel Framework

My understanding of institutional racism takes account from Stuart Hall's idea of race as a «floating signifier», as a discursive category and a socio-historical and cultural construct, whose meaning is relational and non-essential and therefore never really fixed but subject to constant processes of redefinition – constantly re-signified – in different moments and historical formations (1997). The emphasis on historical specificity underlines that more significant than undoubted general features to racism «are the ways in which these general features are modified and transformed by the historical specificity of the contexts and environments in which they become active» (1986:23). More than racism in general, it would be more accurate to talk about *racisms*.

On this basis, my idea is, therefore, to propose a conceptualization of institutional racism that acknowledging the role of racialization at different levels of analysis, would be able to embrace the structural racist differential inclusion of migrants in contemporary Europe, and in Italy, and to assist a deeper understanding of ethnic and racial discrimination in different aspects of social policies. The key argument of the present essay is that the EU multilevel governance of migration participates in generating and maintaining contemporary forms of structural and institutional discrimination of racialized groups along European countries (Mezzadra 2008; De Genova 2016; Erel et al. 2016). Practically, the implementation of multiple policies on migration (on the national and international levels) and their articulation with racist governmentalities on a juridical and administrative state-level results in a systematic differential inclusion of migrants: material expressions of structural and institutional racism. For a broader analysis of institutional racism, I will then build on Coretta Phillip's «multilevel framework» model:

> [...] a multilevel framework which considers the complex configurations of identities, discrimination, and outcomes at three discrete but intersecting and overlapping levels:

> micro, meso and macro. Existing conceptualisations of institutional racialisation would place it at the meso level, with micro-level racialisation constituted by individual-level practices and interactions. Macro-level racialisations takes into account structural forces beyond individual practices and institutional processes. Such an account recognises, nonetheless, that institutional processes are developed, formulated and implemented by individuals constrained or enabled by structural factors. Thus, racialisation and inequalities are produced and reproduced at each of these levels in interaction (2011:175).

The first and macro level of analysis, on the one hand, refers to the results that globalizing forces had on great changes in the social, economic, and political arenas that have defined a neoliberal «new way of the world» (Dardot and Laval 2013). From the mid-1980s in the era of capitalist financialization, a progressive decrease of state intervention and decentralised governance and public managerialism within a neoliberal governmentality comported a reconfiguration of the nature of the welfare from a universalistic idea to a residual one in different aspects of social life like education, health, housing, and employment. Moreover, while the rhetoric subsequent to the end of the Cold War of a borderless world lost its appeal, in the last few decades, stressed by the so-called "war on terror" post 9/11, transnational circulation of people became increasingly restricted and controlled for the majority of the world population (Campesi 2015). In Europe, the phenomenon of migration reached new and distinguished harmful and threatening features, whose result was the progressive strengthening of an EU Border Regime of migration, characterized by a capillarization of control, multiplication of actors, securitization of movements and a racialized hierarchy of citizenship (Hess, Kasparek 2019; Tsianos, Karakayali, Vacchiano 2011).

On the other hand, for the interpretation of the macro level are also very key the assumptions that race and racism constitute core features of the modern nation-states, which are racially configured in symbolic, philosophical, and material terms (Goldberg 2002). In Europe, from the beginning of large-scale immigration in the post-world period, the biological understanding of race has been progressively substituted by the rise of cultural differences in legitimizing the racist discourse (Balibar 1988, Modood 2018). As stressed by Nicholas De Genova what is relevant is

> a rejuvenated racial project of expressly 'European' identity, against which a precisely post-*colonial* whiteness is refashioned against the amorphous, heterogeneous, non-descript, yet essentialized and decidedly 'culturally' inimical mass of 'immigrants', who come to be encircled by an ostensibly race-neutral but mercilessly racialized sort of generic alterity (2010:408-09).

Consequently, in contemporary Europe, race and racialization have changed their mode of operation within and across institutions, establishing multiple norms of be-

longing that have kept framing national citizenship and migration policies (Lentin 2014; Mbembe 2016).

The second and meso level of analysis refers to the reproduction of the border regime in the space of everyday life as a government of citizenship and social hierarchy, a differential inclusion of migrants within the juridical system and public administration of specific nation-states. Following the theorization of a «multiplication of borders» (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013), the present essay empathizes the idea of the border not only in its physical forms (as external frontiers) but at the same time in its political and metaphoric ones (as internal racialized boundaries), providing an invisible and indirect selection of a suitable and a non-suitable population. It is in the articulation of these two phenomena that a "governmentality of immigration" is thus developed: «a politics of borders and boundaries, temporality and spatiality, states and bureaucracies, detention and deportation, asylum and humanitarianism» (Fassin 2011:214). The delocalization of borders has thus a profound influence on the levels of social, economic, and racial stratification that manifests itself as a mechanism of differential inclusion of migrants. Therefore, this level investigates the functioning and operation of the governance of migration in its expressions as bordering devices and «mechanisms of administrative borders» (Gargiulo 2017; Vacchiano 2011). The meso level of analysis is thus centred on situating and contextualizing forms and aspects of institutional racism that are temporally and spatially connotated (Phillips 2010).

Lastly, the third and micro level considers the effect and consequences of the first and second levels, focusing on migrants' everyday experience of institutional racism. In particular, how racist governmentalities function and operate through daily interactions of migrants (regardless of their legal statuses), through the work of a «street-level bureaucracy» (Lipsky 1980), within the juridical and administrative system, in their everyday dealing with public institutions and their officials, and how these produce expressions and experiences of discrimination.

To shift the discussion to a less abstract and more empirical level, I will propose an example of how institutional racism and racialization operate at the *meso* and *micro* levels (and on their constant overlapping) through a focus on migrants' housing discrimination in the city of Rome, with a specific emphasis on anagraphic residency's differential and discriminatory access.

3. A differential access to residency in Italy

In recent years, in Italy, as part of the broader securitisation paradigm within the EU Border Regime of Migration, new laws were introduced and implemented to regulate migrants' access to residency, whose consequences were to determine a differential and

discriminated legal regime for the migrant population. These differential treatments and mechanisms of exclusions are between the expressions and forms in which institutional racism manifests in the contemporary landscape of the Italian social, political and economic territory. Actual bordering devices that do not cause an immediate and direct physical exclusion but "invisibly" produce a systemic social stratification and differentiation (Gargiulo 2017).

Indeed, the complexity and pervasiveness of the Border Regime of migration manifest itself in this multiplication of borders, boundaries, barriers, and obstacles, territorial and non-territorial. The latter falls into the definition provided by Enrico Gargiulo of «status borders» and «administrative borders»:

> which do not take the form of walls, fences or material object and devices that physically impede individual movement, but rather that of administrative acts and provisions or bureaucratic actions excluding certain individuals from official status and rights (...) aiming at regulating mobility and identifying, as well as categorising, individuals (Gargiulo 2021:2-3).

These processes of everyday bordering contribute actively to the phenomenon of migrants' differential inclusion and the process of a racial hierarchisation of citizenship.

Access to residency is indeed one of the significant issues concerning migrants' differential inclusion. At the same time a securitarian device and a channel of access to other rights; residency is, in fact, a fundamental key to the analysis of migrants' «precarious belonging (*appartenenze precarie*)» (Gargiulo 2019) along the Italian territory. Residency is a form of recognition at the municipal level, a kind of local membership, that is defined by Article 43 of the Italian Civil Code as: «the place where the person has her/his usual living (dimora abituale)». Residency, as a legal status, is at the same time a duty, everyone who legally and stably lives in a specific territory has to register for residency, and a right, mainly because it is a tool to exercise other rights. Indeed, local registration is a necessary precondition to access fundamental rights like social assistance and public housing, health assistance (essential for the registration at the "*Servizio Sanitario Nazionale*"), school enrolment and the acquisition of citizenship (Gargiulo 2017). Although the state legally regulates residency, the power to implement its registration is delegated to local authorities, which are responsible for applying the national rule. Nevertheless, in recent years, there were multiple municipalities that, from their side, restricted or even refused access to the right to residency registration, mainly for migrants and Roma people, often recalling issues of public security and control (Ambrosini 2013). Against these «non-citizens authorised to live permanently in Italy, the refusal of residency is a 'last resort' strategy of exclusion from recognition and rights carried out at the local level» (Gargiulo 2017:12).

Different laws contributed to implementing such mechanisms of differential inclusion in the past years. First, the "Security Package" of 2008 (l.n. 125/2008) introduced

the legal notion of "urban security" and extended the mayor's power concerning public and social security. Even though the law did not refer explicitly to the regulation of residency, it was often used in different municipalities to restrict the right to anagraphic registration (Ambrosini 2012, 2013). Moreover, the second part of that law (l.n. 94/2009) granted local authorities the possibility, if necessary, to certify the hygienic and sanitary conditions of the house once a person applies for residency. Even though that could not be used as an impediment, there were different cases of local authorities applying it as a cause to deny residency enrolment (Gargiulo 2017, Mariani 2010).

Second, Article 5 of Decree n.47 of 2014 – later law n.80 of 2014 –, (the so-called "Housing Plan"), has effectively prevented residency registration and the connection to public services, such as water, gas and electricity, for all those people living in occupied homes or properties, creating for the first time a connection between the type of occupation of the property and the possibility of obtaining the access to residency. This measure ended up affecting people already conditioned by precarious housing and living conditions, making it even more challenging to exercise certain constitutionally guaranteed social, civil, and political rights for which residency registration is the only way to access. (Actionaid 2020). In Rome, where I carried out my research, the percentage of migrants living in occupied houses is estimated to be around 90% (Puccini 2019; Tosi 2017; Fondazione Michelucci 2007); therefore, the effects of the law deeply impacted this part of the population, condemning them to even more precarious living conditions (Meltingpot 2021). The practical implications of this law have been innumerable. Firstly, it has led to extreme recourse by this population to "fictitious residency", an instrument created to guarantee the civil registration of homeless people. Secondly, it contributed to the further criminalisation of this social group and, simultaneously, to the racialisation of informal dwellings and squats, transforming the instrument of fictitious residency into a deeply racially marked brand of illegality. This has triggered a process of racialisation of housing deprivation and poverty that associates and naturalises informal living spaces and migrants, who are automatically framed within the discursive figure of the «migrant squatter», what Stephania Grohman has defined «the ultimate intruder» (2017). A figure, the latter, capable of combining two images and social, political and media discourses that threaten the security of the territory and of the national population. Therefore, in this sense, fictitious residency, by essentializing such narratives, is constantly used arbitrarily to maintain this population in a state of social and material subalternity.

Third, Decree n.113, "Security and Immigration", known as the "Salvini Decree", promulgated in October 2018, specifically targeted asylum-seekers and refugees' access to residency. The law attacked the right of asylum seekers to enrol in the municipal registry office. The law did not explicitly forbid residency enrolment; however, it stated that the "permit to stay" (permesso di soggiorno), usually the only valid document asy-

lum seekers possess, was insufficient for registration. Despite the absence of a formal prohibition, but rather the introduction of additional obstacles and difficulties to be circumvented, the consequences of the Salvini Decree have been countless, often dictated by the will of the individual officer or a general line adopted by the various public offices, creating a state of confusion that has affected the entire chain of essential services. Due to the unclear wording of the law itself and the improper interpretations of public administrations, the Decree's consequences were not limited to asylum seekers alone, which was already highly problematic and unconstitutional, but spilt over to anyone considered a "foreigner".

This "rhetorical game" shows once again the procedures of how migrants are perpetually and voluntarily discriminated against in the exercise of some social rights. Therefore, these internal racialised boundaries participate in a systemic racial stratification and hierarchisation of the population, a wider gap between "first class" and "second class" citizens. Moreover, the voluntary lack of clearness of the Salvini Decree increased the conjunctural and arbitrariness of the operators applying the law during their interactions with migrants, not only when they were applying for residency, but also concerning diverse essential public services.

The Decree was eventually declared unconstitutional in the summer of 2020 by the Italian Constitutional Court, which restored the right to residency registration for asylum seekers and refugees. The Court censured the provision for violation of Article 3 of the Constitution, declaring the Decree unconstitutional in two respects: for intrinsic irrationality (it does not facilitate the pursuit of the aims of territorial control), and for unreasonable unequal treatment (it makes it unjustifiably more difficult for asylum seekers to access services) (Gargiulo 2021).

Nevertheless, the effects of the Decree were multiple and varied. The most common cases I could testify to in the course of my fieldwork were: the rejection of valid applications to residency, the block or the postponement of the renewal of some documents, and the multiplication of problems in carrying out various administrative procedures (such as enrolling children in school or applying for social housing). The most common cases were those who were refused residency registration even when in possession of other documents (such as the health card or the C3 form). Several people were also blocked or postponed the renewal of some documents (such as a residence permit) just because they were resident in via Modesta Valenti (Rome's fictitious residency address). Finally, many have had problems in carrying out various administrative paperwork, such as enrolling their children in school or applying for social housing. Over the course of the months, and in some cases years, all these difficulties and problems have progressively been resolved, given the pretextual and arbitrary nature from which they arose. However, all these cases are clear examples of how the system contributes to exacerbate the precarious and emergency conditions of the first and second

reception systems and to vulnerabilise the living and housing conditions of the migrant population as a whole.

More recently, local measures going in the opposite direction began to emerge along the Italian territory. For instance, it is noteworthy to report some novelties in the Roman context with respect to institutional actions on the issue of residency. Indeed, on the 4th of November 2022, the mayor of Rome Roberto Gualtieri enacted the Directive n.2/2022. The Directive stated that people who are "deserving of protection" and frail must be able to count on the possibility of registering their residency where they have their habitual dwelling and being able to connect to essential public services (water, energy, etc.). Mayor Gualtieri signed the Directive authorising the "derogation" from Article 5 of the aforementioned "Lupi Decree", the law that prohibits residency and connection to public services for anyone who illegally occupies a property, and the impediment for five years to participate in procedures for the assignment of public housing if the occupation is an ERP (*Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica*) property. Although still very limited, the Directive appears to be a first step towards the constant and repeated calls for institutional action on this issue from numerous social realities fighting for the right to house and inhabit and migrants' social inclusion.

4. Grappling everyday institutional racism

The conduct and daily practices of public and police officers, commonly known in the academic debate as the «street-level bureaucracy» (Lipsky 1980), are often highlighted as recurring and prominent areas of everyday migrants' discrimination (Gozzi e Sorgoni 2010; Carbone et al. 2018; Perazzo 2022). Indeed, how street-level bureaucrats implement racist mechanisms of exclusion, specifically in the interactions with people who recur to them for different necessities, are widely reported by migrants' testimonies and social operators, volunteers, and activists' accounts. In this micro level of analysis, these processes can be detected in several individual actions: from more explicit prejudicial or openly racist attitudes to a more meddling and slow bureaucracy. Namely, through the altering of legal requirements for some specific essential enrolment, the prescription of not necessary controls or documents and the recall to unclear laws and provisions, often used as a pretext for denying some access to rights and benefits, or even to just delay it (Gargiulo 2017). Examples of what the anthropologist Carlo Perazzo defines «functional dysfunctions»:

> that do not work insofar as they hinder the functioning of the exercise and enjoyment of rights, and at the same time function precisely in their being an effective obstacle, capable of creating an increasingly hostile context for the foreigner and facilitating his marginalisation (2022:93).

The context of housing, as it is possible to observe for instance through a focus on the registration to residency, is one of the spheres in which the arbitrariness and the conjunctural nature of the daily actions of the public operators appears to be paradigmatic and recurrent. The experience of Zala, whom I have met during my field research, is in this sense representative.

Zala is a 37 year old Ethiopian woman. She arrived in Italy at the beginning of 2018, with her own two young children (2 and 5 years old), as part of the family reunification process. In fact, her husband Yonas, a beneficiary of international protection, has already been living in Italy for a couple of years in the *Selam Palace* squat in the outskirt of Rome. In February of 2019, a few months after her arrival in Europe, Zala gave birth to a girl, Niyyat. At the end of July, however, the request for the first permit to stay (*permesso di soggiorno*) for her newborn daughter was denied by the central police station (*questura*), the office defined to release these permits.

What happened to Zala and, specifically to her six-months old daughter Niyyat, was that the *questura* wrongly interpreted and implemented the prescriptions of the new Decreto Sicurezza. Being that Zala's residency is a fictitious one (Via Modesti Valenti), the only one she can apply for due to the fact that she is living in a squat, the *questura* denied to release Niyyat's permit to stay. The refusal was based only on the fact that the fictitious residency address was not a satisfying requisite for the release of the document. Although this aspect has been proved to be wrong multiple times, by different lawyers and human rights associations, this arbitrary application of the new *Decreto Sicurezza* has been very common in Rome.

The most controversial aspects in these, unfortunately usual, practices are the results and repercussions that these decisions have on migrants' everyday life. Because of the lack of information and because of a wrong, and arbitrary, application of the law, the same state institutions are condemning already vulnerable people to an even deeper level of precarity. They are, in addition, creating a wider load of work for numerous associations of the so called "social private", that will have to solve problems created by the same state laws. At the same time, this is adding to and confusing the migrants' reception system, already slow and unable to face the requests, with additional juridical appeals of people unfairly denied of their rights to access residency and to own their permit to stay.

Zala and Niyyat's case is a clear example of it. Denying the access to the permit to stay and, consequently, to residency to Niyyat has, indeed, created multiple difficulties. On the one hand, it has precluded a newborn baby to access public health services, at an early age at which the possibility to easily contact a doctor and to access the public health service is clearly fundamental. On the other hand, it has initiated a juridical recourse to subvert the decision of the police central station, that even though it eventually ended with a positive result, it slowed and postponed by almost a year a very easy

case. Condemning a baby girl to a, although temporary, illegal stay on the Italian territory, and precluding her from fundamental rights such as the access to free healthcare.

Therefore, the restriction of the access to residency, whether explicit – through formal acts – or implicit – through the arbitrary practices of public offices –, highlights the primary role of residency registration in classifying and managing the hierarchically ordered cohabitation of different subjects within the same territory: what has been defined as a differential inclusion of migrants across the European and Italian territory (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). Residency, by essentializing such narratives, is used arbitrarily as a tool to maintain a part of the population in a state of social and material differential inclusion and, moreover, as an instrument of institutional racism in Italy. Indeed, the unequal treatment that emerges in the relationship with public administration offices and in bureaucratic procedures only reinforces racist governmentalities that reproduce phenomena of discrimination and separation in a plurality of spheres of migrants' public and private lives. As Orsini et al. argue: «In enforcing racialized logics of in/exclusion, the daily – and agentic – choices of public administrators become structural, insofar as they contribute to the state's securitized effort to curb the arrival and presence of unwanted migrant populations» (2021:15). It is therefore by turning our attention to this multiplicity of mechanisms of differentiation in the urban space that we can identify, and define, the different forms in which institutional racism operates and manifests itself on a daily basis.

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On the racialised production of space. Some ethnographic notes on urban spaces and migration in Naples

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Abstract

Through some brief ethnographic notes collected after a participant observation inside a building mainly converted in an asylum seekers' centre in the city of Naples, the aim of the article is to put under the spotlight the deep and intertwined relation between the production of urban space and the processes of racialisation. Often understudied in the Italian context, this relation could enlighten us on the changes in the urban social fabric composition and on some global processes in what I call, along with other scholars (Borghi, Camuffo in Barberi 2010; Yeoh 1996, 2011), the postcolonial city. Specifically, the catalyst that led me to focus my research on migrant communities and urban space in Naples resides in my positionality of being born and raised in the city. During my PhD research, thanks to the relationship established with some citizens of the Senegalese community, mostly asylum seekers, I have tried to understand the phenomenon mentioned above, firstly by standing from the point of view of this community, and, in addition, by theoretically looking at the city as a prism from which taking a look at the articulations of race device (Cross, Keith 1993). As the article will show, the most significant spaces to observe those ongoing processes were, in my opinion, those around Naples' central railway station. In these places, the statistics made available by the Municipality for 2016 show a relevant clustering of the non-Italian resident population and especially of citizens from the African continent. Therefore, some initial questions arose: why do we have this clustering? Can we speak of forms of self-ghettoisation by migrant communities, as some scholars do (Casella Paltrinieri et al. 2006)? Some answers, however true, seem to be the shallowest ones: cheaper rents, proximity to primary means of mobility, relevant presence of asylum centres and third-sector associations. As we shall see, the in-depth human and inquiring relationship established with several young Senegalese living in one of the asylum seekers centre in Piazza Garibaldi, 60, has shown me other possible paths of understanding what I was looking for.

Riassunto

Attraverso alcune brevi note etnografiche raccolte a seguito di un'osservazione partecipante all'interno di un edificio prevalentemente convertito in centro per richiedenti asilo nella città di Napoli, lo scopo dell'articolo è quello di mettere sotto in luce la relazione profonda e intrecciata tra la produzione dello spazio urbano e i processi di razzializzazione. Spesso poco studiata nel contesto italiano, questa relazione potrebbe illuminarci sui cambiamenti nella composizione del tessuto sociale urbano e su alcuni processi globali in quella che chiamo, insieme ad altri studiosi (Borghi, Camuffo in Barberi 2010; Yeoh 1996, 2011), la città postcoloniale. In particolare, il catalizzatore che ha portato a concentrare la mia ricerca sulle comunità migranti e sullo spazio urbano di Napoli risiede nella mia posizione di "nativo". Durante la mia ricerca di dottorato, grazie al rapporto instaurato con alcuni cittadini della comunità senegalese, per lo più richiedenti asilo e protezione internazionale, ho cercato di comprendere questi processi innanzitutto ponendomi dal punto di vista di questa comunità, da come viveva la sua quotidianità, e, inoltre, guardando teoricamente alla città come a un prisma da cui osservare le articolazioni del dispositivo razziale (Cross, Keith 1993).

Come si vedrà nell'articolo, gli spazi più significativi per osservare questi processi in corso sono stati, a mio avviso, quelli intorno alla stazione centrale di Napoli. In questi luoghi, le statistiche rese disponibili dal Comune per il 2016 mostrano una presenza rilevante di popolazione residente non italiana e soprattutto di cittadini provenienti dal continente africano. Sono quindi sorte alcune prime domande: perché c'è questa concentrazione? Si può parlare di forme di auto-ghettizzazione da parte delle comunità migranti, come fanno alcuni studiosi (Casella Paltrinieri et al. 2006)? Alcune risposte, per quanto veritiere, sembrano essere le più superficiali: affitti più convenienti, vicinanza ai mezzi primari di mobilità, presenza rilevante di centri per richiedenti asilo e associazioni del terzo settore. Come vedremo, l'approfondita relazione umana e di indagine instaurata con alcuni giovani senegalesi residenti nel centro di accoglienza di piazza Garibaldi, 60, mi ha mostrato altri possibili percorsi di comprensione di ciò che stavo ricercando.

1. The postcolonial city. On the racialised production of urban space

Over the last ten years, I got the chance to observe with a closer look some of the processes that have led Naples to become the second Italian movie industry hub and one of world's top tourist destinations. The change set in motion by the global flows of the tourism economy has been running parallel to another phenomenon that is profoundly modifying the social composition and the division of labour of the local population; namely, the migratory flows subsequent to the refugee government crisis in Europe (Mellino 2019). However, before proceeding any further, it is necessary to explain what I mean by racialisation: that is, a set of norms and practices, either formal or informal, that make race and racism structural elements of productive, reproductive, and accumulative processes. In other words, the processes that institutionalise race and racism. While on one hand, we have 'institutional racism,' i.e., a racially structured legal and political system; on the other, we have the process through which racism becomes an institution. Specifically, I refer to all those (not necessarily normative and formal) processes that structure the different spheres of society in a customary and informal way. These practices form the social body at all levels of its hierarchical scale. It does not take a racialised rent law to affirm the praxis of landlords seeking only non-Italian citizens by putting up posters on city walls. Or conversely, to refuse a rental proposal because it hasn't been made by an Italian. Or again, it would be superfluous to legislate that the least qualified, most underpaid, unprotected jobs should be for the immigrant population. This is already the case.

During my stay on the field, putting the concepts of race, structural racism, and racialisation to work has proven to be quite effective in bridging, on the one hand, what seems to be an epistemological gap in some of the most popular urban studies research and theory and, on the other, in reducing a gap in understanding the processes mentioned above. In my opinion, one of the most significant elements that help me to deepen my comprehension was a reversal of the epistemological coordinates of progress and modernity we are used to. The Comaroffs in *Theory from the Global South* (2016)

illustrate this reversal through their ethnographic fieldwork in Africa. Standing to their assumption, modernity has always been, from its origins, a "North-South collaboration", however asymmetrical. The frontiers of Western modernity, according to the two anthropologists, have always hosted fusions, "junctions between values," and, above all, have always functioned as laboratories "for ways of doing things that are impossible elsewhere": "in the field of architecture and urban planning, in the development of brutal practices of labour discipline, in the creation of public health regimes that had never been tried before." Contrary then, to what is advocated by the hegemonic discourse order – which wants the Global South trudging behind the curve of history, "always chasing" – the Comaroffs believe the opposite to be true: that it is very often the South that first suffers the effects of global historical forces; that it is the South where "new and radical configurations of capital and labour take shape, thus prefiguring the future of the Global North". Thus, Naples, depicted by public discourse as backward and non-modern city, characterised by informal and flexible economy, real estate speculation, organised crime, suffocating urbanisation, and chronic unemployment, could be considered, conversely, an advanced edge of global capitalism's socio-economic processes.

As I mentioned, the frameworks of the Critical Race Theory and Postcolonial Studies in general should be brought into dialogue with the epistemological framework of classic Western studies on the city: I am referring to the contributions of some of the most famous geographers and urban scholars, such as Henri Lefebvre (1991), David Harvey (2010, 2011, 2013), and Saskia Sassen (1996, 1997a, 1997b). David Harvey's studies in *The Enigma of Capital: And the Crisis of Capitalism*, or in *Rebel Cities*, as well as the concept of "global cities" elaborated by Saskia Sassen, seem to be the most symptomatic synthesis of an attitude towards racism (see Barberi 2010) on the part of a specific social theory that we could define as 'white' (Mellino, Pomella 2020). The discourse on race seems ousted from their theory on the production of space and the (post)modern city. For Harvey, for instance, racism is something 'inessential' to capitalism as a mode of accumulation, thus showing the difficulties of these theorisations in making a dialectical and non-Eurocentric shift from Europe to the colonial world and from 'class' to 'race' (Mellino 2019 cf. Robinson 1983, p. 82). As Cross and Keith pointed out (1993), while the British geographer may linger on the racialised imagery of a dystopian Los Angeles, he does so, however, by "systematically sidestepping the central role of the racial division of labour, in order to privilege the process of just-in-time production, which he believes critical to the new urban political economy in the postmodern condition".

Nonetheless, the centrality of racism in the material constitution of the urban space has been addressed in several works such as the collection edited by Malcolm Cross and Micheal Keith, *Race, the City and the State* (1993), and the texts by Anthony D. King brought together and updated in the volume *Writing the Global City. Globalisation, Postcolo-*

nialism, and the Urban (2016), as well as in various scholarly articles, such as those by Ananya Roy (2009, 2011) and Brenda Yeoh (1996, 2001). According to these authors, the postmodern European city cannot be spoken about without taking into account its urban others: immigrant men and women, black and indigenous peoples, queer and non-binary subjectivity. Furthermore, the massive contribution of these subjectivities to the formation of the city itself is often silenced or removed "in the culturally elitist search for the 'essence' of the postmodern urban condition" (Cross, Keith 1993, p. 8). In line with Cross and Keith, I believe that race is a 'privileged metaphor' through which the confusing texture of the city can be made intelligible. Just as Edward Said had shown the existence of an imaginary geography of Orientalism, which handed down a deformed narrative to justify colonial exploitation, similarly Cross and Keith suggest that portraits of the postmodern city contain 'tacit' social orders, which naturalise the existence of racialised Other and define it with the characteristics of a second-class, socially deviant citizenry. On the other hand, if we consider King's assumptions, one of the main actions of colonisation was precisely the re-functionalization of the city: the urban order was not simply effective for territorial conquest but represented the spatial concretisation of colonial ideology. Thus, if we can look at the colonies as "incubators of modernity", as Olivier Soubeyran (1994) defined them, in the same way we could think of postcolonial cities, inside and outside Europe, as incubators of the most advanced edge of global phenomena.

The homogenisation of space associated with the urban effects of a new international division of labour has led to a progressive convergence between the characteristics of the cities of the so-called 'First' and 'Third' worlds: the former colonial city becomes more and more similar to the metropolis, and the metropolis takes on the peculiarities of the colonial city. In her essay *Postcolonial Cities* (2001), Brenda Yeoh argues that the colonial city should not be considered the exclusive product of colonizing forces but, on the contrary, as the result of resistance, conflicts, and interactions between the colonised and the colonisers. Similarly, we could think of contemporary European cities as the result of the counter-power exercised by migrant communities and postcolonial citizens within them. If the rationale that guides the transformation of spaces today draws its reasons from the colonial past, then the extensive postcolonial literature might help us understand them. Indeed, the postcolonial dimension of a city concerns a question of identity, the formation of which takes place through the selective recuperation and appropriation of indigenous and colonial cultures to produce appropriate forms of representation of the present (Yeoh 2001). This is evident, for instance, in architecture which can be examined through its ability to translate colonial constructions and categories of thought into the matter.

The same buildings that make up the city are not only a tangible image of the society that produces them, but also tools to shape social attitudes: Abidin Kusno (2000) argues

that buildings and spaces form a collective subject conveying a coherent and univocal vision of the past. The dual function of a vehicle and producer of identity assumed by urban space presents very particular characteristics if we look at the postcolonial cities belonging to the former colonial metropolises: they, in fact, spatially translate the signs of the relationship and construction of the idea of the 'other,' which was codified in its current shapes during the colonial period. The migratory phenomena of the ex-colonised, which today dramatically and inexorably mark the edges of the European landscape, question us on the effectiveness of using the concept of the postcolonial city exclusively for the old imperial capitals, such as London or Paris and the ancient capitals of colonial administration, such as Dakar or Casablanca. If we take colonialism as a constitutive element in creating European identity and modernity, then it does not seem forced to call all European cities postcolonial. It is what Blanchard and Lemaire call "colonial culture" (2003), sedimented in space, time, and the European unconscious, which includes in the colonial enterprise even those territories that were apparently affected by it in a minor or indirect way. It represents the body of knowledge derived from the observations of administrators, missionaries, and explorers that influenced the perception and understanding of the history of others, conditioned by European epistemological categories. The cultural naturalization of a Self-Other binomial derived from the colonial system, legitimises a series of discourses on the management of the migrant-other and its function and location in the city. And thus occurs what Blanchard and Bancel (1998) have called the shift from the figure of the colonised native to that of the immigrant.

2. Ethnography of a 'camp'. The asylum seekers' centre in Piazza Garibaldi, 60

The statistics made available by the Municipality for 2016 show a demographic clustering of the non-Italian resident population and especially of citizens from the African continent in the neighbourhoods surrounding the central railway station of Piazza Garibaldi. Thus, assuming the aforementioned epistemological framework it becomes clearer to me how the buildings and the space structure in Piazza Garibaldi have affected the every-day life of the asylum seekers I met during my research. Spending entire days for months with them, mostly Senegalese citizens, in a semi-autonomous flat managed by the non-profit organisation previously in charge of the Naples' asylum project, the L.E.S.S., several problems emerged plaguing their way of experiencing public and private space, helping me to find a path to understand my research questions. Inability to host in their rooms friends, acquaintances, and relatives. Sudden checks during the night by operators who, keys in hand, entered every single room to make sure there were no third parties or irregularities. Impossibility to put clotheslines for laundry outside

balconies and windows because considered indecorous or, maybe, because visible immigrant presence could be disturbing in buildings that host tourism businesses and asylum centres. Delays in the disbursement of the so-called 'pocket money', that is a daily allowance, with the consequent limitation of individuals' autonomy. Apprenticeships for job placement paid five hundred euros a month for a full-time employment, often in companies several kilometres away from the 'camp' and, most significantly, de-qualifying considering the skills already possessed by most of the research participants. I have spoken with an electrician employed as a cleaner in a hotel; with a mechanic doing the shelving clerk in a household goods shop; with an English teacher, a farmer, an electrician, and a tailor hired as a dishwasher or farm labourer. They were 'integrated' into the lower value-added sectors of the labour market. Furthermore, I have observed many other mainly working in the street market sales or as hawkers and doing jobs closely linked to the tourist economy, particularly in catering and the hotel industry. They were employed in what Maurizio Ambrosini (2005) called about the Italian context the 'five-P-jobs' (*pesanti*, *pericolosi*, *precari*, *poco pagati*, *penalizzati socialmente*).

What, in my opinion, dramatically represents the context in which the life of the asylum seekers unfolds is what Fanon, in *Year V of the Algerian Revolution* (2007) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), calls "neurotic factors" that influence the existence of the oppressed – colonised or immigrated to the European 'motherland' – namely environment, space, and atmosphere. Once inside the building housing the asylum seekers' semi-autonomous flat, after passing under the astonished and, at the same time, disgusted gazes of the Neapolitan managers of the adjacent pizzeria, the absolute silence became heavy with palpable tension. As if there was an eye following and watching your every step. And in a way, it was. Every hotel business located in the building had its video surveillance system pointed at the stairwell and courtyard. Notices written on printed sheets and posted on the building walls imposed a ban on talking loudly and parking bicycles – the applicants' primary means of transport. Stepping out of the flat, holding the door open or waiting to be opened often meant being photographed or filmed by hotel managers, who would then complain to the asylum project managers.

External visits formally could not take place in the applicants' rooms but only in the common room, as one of the operators reminded us, evidently astonished at our presence in one of the private rooms. At any time, those hosted in the rooms simply to rest a couple of hours were thrown out if discovered. Not only opening that door, going outside but also experiencing the interior spaces of the house and the bedroom meant for these young people giving life to that "permanent struggle against an atmospheric death [...], materialised by endemic famine, unemployment, significant morbidity, the inferiority complex and the absence of prospects for the future" described by Fanon in *The Wretched*. This same atmosphere could be perceived when observing the visits received in the house and the social relationships established, humiliated by daily checks

by the operators. During the years of research, the only outsiders who pay visit to the asylum seekers, except for a few of their closest compatriots, and remarkably the only two white people from outside the asylum project, were me and the photographer Emanuela Rescigno, whose pictures are published in this paper.

Leaving the 'camp', we realise that the station area is a multifunctional space for our acquaintances. In addition to being a critical residential location, thanks to cheaper rents and a place of work – or the mobility hub to get there – Piazza Garibaldi symbolises one of the rare leisure spaces to get together and share a meal or a drink, a link to countries of origin thanks to travel agencies, international telephone and internet centres and, of course, smartphones. Thanks to the friendship developed over time, I was able to enter the square, not in the merely physical sense, but in the symbolic one, of acceptance into the accidental community that the sharing of a place can form daily. The passing of days and weeks sitting on the steps of the Piazza revealed a clear map of the cultural and social diversity among the non-Italian inhabitants of the neighbourhood, often represented by a specific separation into groups according to a national affiliation (Amato 1992). These years of research led me several times to come to terms with a field that was not as I had imagined it: our Eurocentric and colonial structures, even though, as researchers, we train to deconstruct them, continued to inhabit me, and led me, initially, to consider the migrant communities of the Piazza as a homogeneous social group that share the same needs and the same material conditions. And yet when I heard that a Senegalese citizen with a twenty-year history of residence in Italy does not have a favourable opinion of the 'new arrivals' or when a Moroccan citizen addressed sub-Saharan Africans with epithets such as "blacks" and "foreigners", my instinctive and unconscious (white) certainty of a mechanical solidarity existing between migrants, revealed itself in all its coloniality. In any case, those who were rare to meet on the bleachers were white Neapolitans: a mostly elusive presence, often wary of those who hang around the same public space. This is why I thought it might be efficient to use the concept of racialization to understand the phenomena that guarantee the reproduction of segregated public urban spaces and housing, of a labour market, defined according to citizenship – as ANPAL (2018) has described it – and of affective relations sublimated only in specific spaces of security.

What could be at the root of this mechanism of segregation? Only the time spent with these people has somehow answered this question: passerby's looks of disgust and contempt, of astonishment at seeing two white people in a group of black people; black people walking through places they do not usually walk through. Precisely that white gaze that "stares at you like a dye preparation" as Fanon wrote in *Black Skin, White Masks* (2015). Or having to claim your spot in line at a public drinking fountain on the city's waterfront because someone stood in front of you because you are black. Or being served coffee in a disposable cup because the barista saw that you are a black hawker. Or being shunned in the street or kept at a distance on public transport because you

are black. All this, repeated day after day, I believe, can only activate a self-defence mechanism, which induces you to frequent mainly the places you consider safe. Why leave Piazza Garibaldi or a symbolic space such as the community you belong, to venture into unfamiliar areas where you can suffer humiliation and abuse? I believe that it is this very set of everyday and informal practices making the city's spaces 'racialised'.

Thus, deepening the human and investigative relationship with these Senegalese men led me to understand better their relationship with the city in general and how the space becomes racialised. In this regard, one thing that I believe is quite significant was their lack of knowledge of the city where they had lived for several years. On numerous occasions when we walked together around the city, I noticed that they knew little or nothing about those very places that tourists usually visit in a few days. Those same places through which Naples is known to the rest of the world. I observed that this lack of knowledge of the city was somehow determined by a hostile atmosphere consisting of gazes of contempt, even of more explicit humiliation. That same deadly atmosphere of which Fanon speaks when he describes colonial space in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Furthermore, all this could generate the tendency to frequent those spaces where a safe environment had already been established, which often coincided with the presence of the national reference community. Furthermore, most of the men and women I met lived in material conditions that prevented them from leaving the station area. It did not matter how many years they had lived in the city. The possibilities for socializing were, in essence, bordered within the perimeter of the Piazza, the block where one lived, the markets where one worked, the main chapters of religious communities, and a few other public places, such as the Centro Direzionale, that is the business centre. Therefore, even though Piazza Garibaldi and the urban spaces around the station are told and shown by white public opinion as dangerous places and, at best, to be 'regenerated' (Dines 2012), probably, for the structure of feeling of the people I met are the safest ones, where you are protected by existing social networks and sheltered from a hostile external environment. Then, it becomes problematic to address the attitude of spending time solely where one lives and with people of your own community as 'self-ghettoisation', like some scholars do (Casella Paltrinieri et al. 2006), suggesting that it depends on an individual will and/or a will of not being integrated, and not on spatial conditions.

After two years of research, the manager of the asylum project closed the flat in Piazza Garibaldi, 60 due to pressure from the condo's hotel businesses. The people we met were transferred or took independent living paths. That space of confinement but also of sharing, refuge, and resistance to a hostile environment has disappeared from the geographies of the Piazza, leading to a reconfiguration of social relations, and forcing the elaboration of new survival strategies. The Piazza remains an arena of solidarity but also of conflict; as a place of an actual confrontation between powers and counter-powers, but also of incubation of the future to come.

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4.
Outliers

Mapping migrant commons

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Abstract

Solidaristic spaces where to fight for migration rights intersect with notions of community and commons, often drawing on cartography as a medium through which to mobilize migrant struggles. In this chapter, I focus on mapping endeavors sustained by a solidaristic agency, considering maps that are created in a participatory way or shared among several communities of migration for various purposes, either to visualize abuses experienced by illegalized migrants or to support them with logistical information during their journeys. To build a theoretical bridge between migration, commons, and cartography, I draw on Roberto Esposito's notion of community—a space in which one irremediably exposes oneself to the other—to rethink cartography beyond its individualistic and coercive reputation, that is a common.

Riassunto

Gli spazi solidaristici in cui si lotta per i diritti dei migranti si intersecano variamente con le nozioni di comunità e beni comuni, spesso attingendo alla cartografia come mezzo attraverso cui esprimere tali battaglie. In questo capitolo mi concentro sugli sforzi di mappatura sostenuti da forme di *agency* solidali, considerando le mappe create in modo partecipativo o condivise tra diverse comunità di migranti per vari scopi: sia per visualizzare gli abusi subiti dai migranti illegalizzati sia per supportarli con informazioni logistiche durante i loro viaggi. Per costruire un ponte teorico tra migrazione, *commons* e mappatura, parto dalla nozione di comunità di Roberto Esposito – uno spazio in cui ci si espone irrimediabilmente all'altro – per ripensare la cartografia oltre la sua fama individualistica e coercitiva.

1. Introduction

The notion of commons is intended in several ways but broadly refers to practices, actions, and spaces that go beyond the state and the market and challenge individualism and concepts of private property. Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos (2015) noticed that previous scholars who have studied such commons (e.g., Hardt and Negri, 2011; Harvey, 2012; Rifkin, 2014) have rarely considered the migrant question in their work. Only recently, especially after the reconsideration of «the autonomy of migration» approach by social movements, have cultural and political struggles over migrant rights more clearly intersected with notions of community and commons. Likewise, many attempts to map migration as a common space of solidarity and to draw on mapping as a common ground to fight for migration rights have flourished (e.g., Campos-Delgado, 2018; Casas-Cortés et al., 2017; Orangotango, 2018). In this chapter, I add this new layer of reflection—cartography—on the debate over the migrant commons, focusing on the agency of mapping as an enabler of the visualization of injustices and abuses and as a logistic platform that helps migrants in their convoluted and deferred journeys toward the European Union.

With the notion of «cartographic commons» or «mapping commons», I do not aim to enthusiastically explore new methods to map the commons that one might increasingly experience within the digital turn, but I want to stress the potentialities and unintended consequences that arise when a map, with its navigational and communicative apparatuses, becomes the space for a common action: the shared site for a collective intervention in the context of migration struggles or the result of a collective mapping endeavor. In this respect, I draw on Esposito's (2010) notion of community as a space where «we» feel obliged to «owe you something» (p. 6) to expose the self to the other and then rethink the act of mapping as the operation of mapping *outside* ourselves and *outside* our egocentric interests. However, it is precisely that «we» that will be questioned and seen in its plurality: Who is, in fact, the «we» of the migrant commons? Who are the mapmakers and map users who run against the historical conception of the map as a tool of control and state power and instead promote through their action a counter use of maps?

Within migratory struggles, we should consider both the agency of migrants – how they get organized – and that of activists and social organizations offering them support without living in the same vulnerable conditions. This unbalanced entanglement constructs an intricate web of relations in which interests might be different but can be aligned, although power asymmetries may shape such relationships in different ways. Such diversity clearly emerges in the cartographic context, in which maps and mapping are produced, used, donated, or exhibited by different actors involved in the migration struggle. As noted by Winther (2020, p. 180), «Map thinking about migration is a tense, pluralistic space – a socially and politically contested area of discourse and action».

To let those different subjectivities emerge, and the cartographic spaces where they operate, the writing of this text is shaped by the following questions: Can activist networks and social organizations assisting migrants in their daily crossing of Fortress Europe be considered an infrastructure of commons, a mutual-support network for migrant passage? Are maps effective (either navigational or media) tools for performing such commons, and if so, what kinds of actions engender that are functional for the creation of the migrant commons? In short, what are the spaces and subjects that maps enact and connect within the migratory sphere?

2. The shared munus of migration

While using the label «commons». I do not want strictly to refer to an economic sense of the common in the urban sphere, but I begin to more speculatively interrogate the heterogeneous idea of a community of migration, starting from the perspec-

tive foregrounded by Esposito (2010) in his philosophical work. Community is not considered a plenitude by Esposito (2010) (a property, a membership) but the exposure of the self to the other, a community of risk, not a warm blanket. In other words, the community is considered an arena in which one renounces to their individual interests and allows for the construction of new forms of agency. The term comes from the Classic Latin *Communitas*, a compound word (*cum-munus*) that embodies plural meanings: a shared obligation, gift, debt, artifact, funeral offer, tax, and public spectacle. Drawing on such different understandings of the *munus,* Esposito (2010, p. 6) underlined the idea that:

> The munus that the communitas shares isn't a property or a possession. It isn't having, but on the contrary, is a debt, a pledge, a gift that is to be given, and that therefore will establish a lack. The subjects of community are united by an "obligation," in the sense that we say "I owe you something," but not "you owe me something."

However, as a reactionary act, *Immunitas* (the immunizing mechanism) prevents such a subversive idea of the community from fulfilling by protecting identity through defense barriers against this exposure to the unpredictable outside. This community/immunity mechanism, diversification versus homogenization, is closely interlaced with the understanding of migration more broadly. Different communities of migration have been created and even dissolved over time through the intervention of subsequent immunization's forces. Since around the beginning of nationalism, which, according to Hobsbawm, should be posited around 1780, migration has indeed become the *munus* of Western societies in several ways: for some, a burden or a debt; for others, a legislative void, an economic opportunity; and for many others, critical thinkers' and activists' an indissoluble bond, a gift-to-be-given for the reimaging and restructuring of society. On the other hand, such an idea of community does not take into consideration the other way in which migration may construct itself as a common from the perspective of migrants themselves, the usual target of immunizing forces. Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos (2015, p. 19) drew, for instance, on the notion of «mobile commons» to highlight the mutuality and reciprocity of the exchange of information and support between migrants. For them:

> The mobile commons as such exist only to the extent that they are commonly produced by all the people in motion who are the only ones who can expand its content and meanings. This content is neither private, nor public, neither state owned, nor part of civil society discourse in the traditional sense of the terms; rather the mobile commons exist to the extent that people use the trails, tracks or rights and continue to generate new ones as they are on the move.
>
> (Trimikliniotis et al., 2015, p. 53)

Mobile commons, in this respect, refer to shared (and secret) knowledge about border crossings, routes, shelters, hubs, escape routes, and resting places that migrants share between them. These forms of solidarity are much more linked to the idea of mutual than non-reciprocal solidarity, as considered by Esposito (2006). While, through Esposito's (2006) understanding of the community as *an exposure to the outside*, the map can be conceived as a tactical product that activists offer to support the migration struggle, mobile commons underline the ways in which mapping is *appropriated* by migrants as a necessary tool in organizing the journey, orientating in the traveled space and staging encounters (Zijlstra and Van Liempt, 2017). Within the framework of illegalized irregular mobility, thinking of maps as part of the broader mobile commons introduced by Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2013) is actually a way to reframe the whole category of mobile commons as a counter-cartographic concept. For the authors, in fact:

> The invisible knowledge of mobility circulates between the people on the move (knowledge about border crossings, routes, shelters, hubs, escape routes, resting places; knowledge about policing and surveillance, ways to defy control, strategies against bio-surveillance, etc.), but also between trans-migrants attempting to settle in a place (knowledge about existing communities, social support, educational resources, access to health, ethnic economies, micro-banks, etc.).
>
> (Trimikliniotis et al., 2015, p. 53)

This knowledge is, in fact, spatially grounded and can draw on mapping both as an act of connection and as a material surface to make such connecting points visible. These two different forms of mapping—as shared *munera* and mobile commons – will be discussed in the following paragraph.

3. Whose mapping commons? For whom?

With the spread of digital technologies and the availability of open-source software, a whole range of users can collectively produce maps and share open data, thus making even the bond between mapping and the commons increasingly strong. Many mapping projects crafted around the jargon of crowdsourced cartography, participatory mapping, Volunteered geographic information (VGI), and neo-geographies bring out several ideas and experiences of what communing (Linebaugh, 2008) might mean. We should not only consider the many flourishing cartographies of common goods and services but also the no single-authored production of a map; we might focus our attention on the open circulation of maps and the information they bring or on the free use of a database and continuous appropriation of its content. Techno-optimists would say that

new digital technologies, by allowing the multiplication of the points of enunciation, the sharing of information, and cooperation at a distance, enable the creation of new communities that negotiate and challenge collective decisions. The democratization of digital technology is seemingly implicated in the spread of counter-mapping practices.

However, it is fair to look at these open spatial data in their ambivalence, on the one hand, as a strength because it is possible to modify and supplement data and develop numerous counter-mapping strategies that trouble hegemonic systems. On the other hand, we need to be aware that power relations and discursive formations are nonetheless mediated by digital technologies. In each mapping context, we should ask who participates and who remains potentially and practically outside (Graham et al., 2013). Overall, the technology of digital spaces may act either as a potentially liberating force or as a tool that reproduces existing power relations. In a time of global migration crises, rising reactionary ethno-nationalism, and violent bordering practices (Jones, 2016), the map perfectly embodies such an ambiguous role. Cartographic devices and visualities can work to hinder border crossings, as in the case of surveillant mapping practices, or they can highlight and denounce the obstacles and constraints of movement (including deaths at the border) that affect migrant people, as in the case of counter-maps. In a sort of inverse surveillance, the operational space in which the technology is used by certain governmental apparatuses for storing, displaying data, and acting in a coercive way can be exploited by other actors to prefigure and activate alternative political spaces. In its various possibilities and methods, especially through the help of digital technologies, something that we could broadly define as «mapactivism» takes vigor.

3.1. Mapactivism. — From the perspective of activists and social movements, the role of maps as shared *munera* offers many interesting insights. The spectacular passage of migrants from Budapest to the Austrian border in September 2015, the «march of hope» or the «long summer of migration», as it has been called, clearly took the characteristic of a political movement. On that occasion, the efforts of activists, groups, and individuals would have been vain if not supported by digital technologies and social networks. For instance, on September 6, an activist group in Vienna tweeted about the exact location of the temporary refugee camp in Roszke, a small town on the Serbian border. Driving from Austria, many volunteers used GPS coordinates to reach the camp and help migrants escape. The embedding of mapping in a social network enacted the organization of a voluntary movement. In this sense, the map was transformed into a shared *munus*, a shared product, but this event also revealed the existence of a community of migration in which the recognition of the right to passage became the subject of a common interest. The mobilizing characteristic of navigational mapping has also allowed activists and social organizations to establish several platforms that aim to com-

bine the rescue operations of migrants, especially on the Central Mediterranean Route, with the building of bridges with migrants and social struggles on land. It is important to remember that people constantly risk their lives by crossing the sea in an attempt to reach Europe. While European Union State Members have literally decelerated their search and rescue (SAR) activity at sea since the end of 2014 and blocked new attempts to safely reach Europe, many NGOs and social movements have attempted to fill this huge void by sharing legal knowledge, transport means, and mapping tools that could comply with the shared obligation that European agencies refuse to do: save people in danger (Lo Presti, 2019). Alarmphone, for instance, is an activist hotline that receives and tracks SOS calls sent by migrants or their relatives in situations of distress. Through the platform, activists mediate between migrants, who attempt to reach them by phone, and national and international actors, who may not detect distress calls or choose to ignore them. Here, the possibility of reconnecting those bodies of waters with the land is made possible through the aural tracking of unseaworthy boats (see Casas-Cortés et al., 2017; Stierl, 2016; see also https://alarmphone.org).

The function of Alarmphone is not only to connect distinct actors to manage the rescue of migrants at sea but also to denounce the breach of legal obligations of European countries concerning the search and rescue. An additional feature of the map should then be considered: exposing and making visible injustices and abuses. This means that crowdsourced databases and maps are not only produced to support nearly real-time migrant crossings and rescues, but they are also media, collecting data that locate fatalities at sea, abuses, or the location of detention centers (e.g., Heller and Pezzani, 2014). Map users eventually assume the role of investigators, and maps are consequently designed as evidence for public advocacy, constructing a collective space for intervention where current necropolitics is exposed. The map, again, acts as a common; it is the result of a crowd-sourcing practice, and the shared search for death and abuses offers a space to produce new forms of collective insurgent agencies.

Among maps that are used to materially move people through their navigational properties and to move discussions and legal evidence through their mediatic apparatus, we can also acknowledge a third specific function of the mapping as a common: memorialization. We might have encountered many maps produced as the output of a shared database to make the deaths of migrants visible. Yet, even the experience of physically gathering around a map may construct a performance of the common. In Latin, the *munus* of communitas also meant a funeral offer and a public spectacle. Not by chance, to commemorate a tragic migrant shipwreck that occurred on April 19, 2015, a large map of the Mediterranean Sea was unrolled over a square in Marseille, and flowers were left on its surface to reproduce the setting of a funeral. When maps are used to memorialize migrant tragedies, they often inspire a form of «grief activism» (Stierl, 2016) – that is, feelings of empathy and mourning toward people we have never met, which can motivate us to denounce European anti-mi-

gration policies. This denouncing reaffirms the value of hospitality, thus shifting to a necessary political discourse on the free movement of people.

3.2 Mobile commons. — If we now consider the role of maps from the vantage point of migrants, they emerge as media that allow people to share their needs with peers and organize safer routes, revealing new forms of intimacy, solidarity, and activism. Mobile navigational tools integrated into smartphones, such as Google Maps, have become some of the most important and reliable companions (Dekker et al., 2018). Institutional information about safe routes is often difficult to find, while non-institutional information provided through smugglers is likely deceptive or false. There is, however, a third space between the dissuasive one performed by institutions and the persuasive—but dangerous passage promised by smugglers—and this is the one that migrants construct autonomously, navigating through the routes marked by Google Maps and always adopting new strategies. The «WhatsApp Way», as some sociologists refer to it, stresses the importance of digital technologies in finding crucial information about safe routes, gathering information about the politics of receiving countries, and keeping in contact with families, smugglers, and aid organizations. Diminescu (2008) referred, more generally, to connected migrants to highlight the possibility of migrants constructing virtual spaces of encounter, contact, and organization where physical ones are missing. Depending on who accesses smartphones and Wi-Fi, the digital might activate online fluid territories that contrast with the physical immobility experienced by migrants on the ground, for instance, when they are stuck in detention centers, camps, and boats. Even beyond the digital sphere of mobile commons, the horizon of clandestine human migration is studded with extemporaneous, asynchronous, and fragile mapping acts – a meshwork of directions, paths, loopholes, and shelters that migrants must learn by heart or in advance and subsequently discover *en route* by following the ephemeral landmarks left on trees, on the ground, on the snow, and on makeshift maps and, at best, indicated by human mappers. This is particularly telling of the Alpine route, where smartphones loaded with the Google Maps app and its well-known automated path should in fact be turned off at night to avoid the detection of the light screen by French gendarmes.

4. Conclusion

Once the etymology of the community is considered in full, many unorthodox ways of thinking about commons within a cartographic migration culture emerge. Through the lenses of migrant mobility in particular, new forms of commons flourish in alternative spaces beyond those usually covered by activist criticism (e.g., the city): the sea, the refugee camp, and the detention center. Migration is certainly a context in which map-

ping, in its digital and non-digital forms, has increasingly emerged as a *cum-munus*: a shared obligation, a donation, a funeral offer, and a gathering spectacle. A least three operational forces mapping embodies for migration struggles have been highlighted: mobility, visibility, and memorialization. As Schwiertz and Schwenken (2020, p. 414) suggested, «transversal and inclusive concepts of solidarity enable us to imagine commonality in differences, and processes in which subjects that are placed in hierarchies vis-à-vis one another align their actions accordingly in the sense of common concerns». From the vantage point of activist scholars and social movements, the community imagined by Esposito (2010) might be one of those: leaning forward the outside, mapping outside us. However, the subjects involved in these mapping activities are heterogeneous, from activists and ordinary citizens to migrants. As suggested by Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos (2015, p. 36), «All these singularities contribute to an affective and universal gesture of freedom that evades the concrete violence exercised by capitalist control on moving people». Thought as migrant mobile commons, migrant maps engender plural outcomes: they are navigational tools that support mobility, they are political visual struggles, and they are evocative meditations. Focusing on the plural nuances and practices of counter-mapping, this posture challenges the often-absolutizing vision of critical geopolitics in cartography in which maps are merely thought of as instances of territorialization and control.

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Citizenshop. On the commodification of EU citizenship rights*

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Abstract

The article examines the growing trend among EU member states of normalizing financial investments in exchange for residency and citizenship rights, critiquing the EU visa system as increasingly class-based and economically driven. Through an investigation of Residency-By-Investment (RBI) and Citizenship-By-Investment (CBI) programs, it sheds lights on the commodification of EU residency and citizenship, emphasizing the economic factors that dominate visa approval processes, and advocating the need for a renewed engagement between border studies and class analysis.

Riassunto

La ricerca esamina la crescente tendenza tra gli Stati membri dell'UE a normalizzare la concessione di diritti di residenza e cittadinanza in cambio di investimenti finanziari, rivelando il carattere classista e meramente dominato da interessi economici del sistema di rilascio dei visti nell'UE. Attraverso l'analisi dei programmi di Residenza per Investimento (RBI) e Cittadinanza per Investimento (CBI), l'articolo disvela l'attuale mercificazione dei diritti di residenza e cittadinanza, sollecitando l'urgenza di un rinnovato dialogo tra gli studi di confine e l'analisi di classe.

Introduction

In contemporary border literature and research it is common to describe borders as violent and deadly processes. In the case of the European Union (EU), there is an abundance of researches addressing EU border and migration management as "necropolitics" and "thanatopolitics", focusing on its lethal bordering practices in the Mediterranean waters, along the Balkan route, and whenever the hotspot is temporarily located. In recent years, many scholars have analysed the paradoxical renaissance of walled-borders all over the globe, others have focused on police brutality against migrants, and demonstrated how borders perpetuate daily discrimination based on race, nationality, gender, age, and religion. While critical border studies are often associated with Marxist or

* The text was fully co-written, nevertheless, for evaluation purposes, the first paragraph is attributed to Fabiana Piretti, the second and third paragraphs to Luca Paolo Cirillo.

post-Marxist theory, we argue in this short paper that critical border scholars are paradoxically overlooking a fundamental analytical spectrum: class. What does accessing the EU mean for a wealthy traveller? How is the trip for a HNWI (High-Net-Worth Individual)? Looking at the growing golden visa and commodification of EU citizenship rights, allowing wealthy people to quickly obtain EU citizenship by making specific investments (ius doni or ius pecuniae), we assert that EU's borders are violent and deadly processes only for poor travellers, being the mobility divide mostly rooted in economic wealth.

1. The visa apartheid

Although during the last decades we have witnessed the progressive fortification of EU's external borders, in this short paper we argue that the main reason people continue to perish in the Mediterranean and on the Balkan route today is the impossibility of obtaining a visa legally. It is what has been termed the "global inequality trap of paper borders" (Van Houtum, Van Uden 2021, 20), a direct consequence of the invisible visa controlling system. This form of "tele-politics" (Ibid., 21) imposes visa-granting even before accessing the physical border, constituting a non-spectacular pre-bordering process, paradoxically at odds with the etymology of the term visa itself which, according to the Online Etymology Dictionary, coming from Latin VISUM, inherently involves visual control.

The national monopolisation of citizenship papers leading to the introduction of passports and the visa system originated in the early 20th century as provisional measures to regulate migration flows post-World War I (Torpey 2000). Notwithstanding, what were meant to be temporary instruments of bordering gradually turned the world into a "locked-in normality", a process necessary to secure economic interests enabling various national and international institutions to halt, beat, detain, and violently push back people simply because they are not wealthy enough to get access granted in advance (Van Houtum, Van Uden 2021, 21). As Van Houtum and Van Uden remarked, paper borders prove indeed more effective than physical walls, serving as a geopolitical tool whose discriminative taxonomy is funded on untransparent criteria, much like the obscure standards determining a country's inclusion in the visa-obliged or visa-free list (*Ibidem*).

In his 2010 article, Henk Van Houtum suggested the idea of the EU's border regime as a "global apartheid" machine operating through a "human blacklisting" by country of origin. While discrimination by nationality was and still is a fundamental practice in contemporary EU visa policies, we are persuaded that attention must shift to the core of the discrimination itself: money, transcending any national logic and idea of wrong state of birth. The classical nativistic discriminatory rhetoric that looks at birth as a "passport lottery" (Shachar 2009) – where the vast majority of humanity is loser – decays when we assume that talking about citizenship rights implicates a debate on a

global form of renewed class conflict. In the light of the increasingly growing golden visa market – i.e. the commercialization of passports – allowing HNWIs to easily obtain EU citizenship through specific investments, we can definitely claim that EU's borders are violent and deadly processes only for globally less affluent would-be travellers.

The world division into positive and negative migration countries is based on the migrants' expected ability of swelling the coffers of the target country. In the EU's case, approximately two-thirds of the planet is blacklisted, and rich countries often deny the visa applications of persons from countries considered sources of elevated migration pressure (which encompasses almost all the poorer countries in the world), using the pretext that the return of these individuals to their countries of origin cannot be ensured, as Marc Spescha explains in his Migration law manual (Spescha et al. 2020).

Visa rejections remain a murky matter, manifesting as ritual humiliations that undermine human dignity and potentially fuel dreams of illegal migration – easily turning into *sans papiers* nightmares. We are personally acquainted with numerous cases involving African artists who faced visa denials despite their perfectly fulfilled dossier, invitations from reputable institutions in affluent countries, and pre-booked tours. One such instance involves the Tunisian artist Ghoula, who, along with the other members of his band, applied in 2018 for a French visa to perform in several planned gigs across Europe. Surprisingly, his application was the only one rejected, even though the band had submitted a comprehensive dossier, and he had previously studied and travelled to Europe. In situations where there is a lack of a firm commitment and profound understanding of the socio-economic dynamics in affluent countries for less privileged immigrants, the aspirations to escape one's home country, effectively a prison in the open, are not only understandable but also legitimate.

The current pre-bordering of visa has indeed resulted in increased irregularity and insecurity, leading to a brutalization of border and post-border control, along with the reinforcement of detention and deportation programs, and a higher incidence of border deaths (Van Houtum, Van Uden 2021). On this matter, drawing on a series of Foucauldian materials, Mbembe has delved into the concept of "necropolitics" (2003), while Murray has extensively written on "thanatopolitics" (2006), i.e., the creation and maintenance of institutions that prioritise the life of certain people as more valuable than others. On a similar note, Subhabreata Bobby Banerjee coined the socio-economic concept of "necrocapitalism" to refer to "contemporary forms of organizational accumulation that involve dispossession and the subjugation of life to the power of death" (2008). This is what happens repeatedly in the EU, where "discriminative borderism" (Van Houtum 2021) has become the daily reality for our generation, now accustomed to witnessing the Mediterranean sea turning into an open-water cemetery, with politicians using those same corpses in their electoral campaigns. The primary reason why people still die everyday is tied to the lack of legal channel to migrate, at least for the economically disadvantaged of the world. Once again, it's the apologia of the Man-

ichaean vision "making a division between good and bad circulation [..] and eliminat[ing] its dangerous elements" (Foucault 2007, 18). Nevertheless, the dichotomy between good and bad circulation is tied to purely economic criteria that can easily overturn the conventional discriminatory taxonomy of paper borders for some thousand euros.

2. La *dolce visa*

While in the last three decades, more than fifty thousand people have died in their attempt to access the EU through illegal means, wealthy individuals have at their disposal a wide range of legalised opportunities to get in through Citizenship-By-Investment (CBI) or Residency-By-Investment (RBI) programmes. These programmes have redefined the acquisition standards of citizenship rights by disrupting its classical paradigm based on the three keys mechanisms of *ius sanguinis* (also called Law of Blood, inherited from parents), *ius solis* (also called Law of land, tied to the country of birth at the time of birth), and the long, pitfall-full path of naturalization (Spescha et al. 2020).

As explained by Surak, CBI and RBI programmes are the result of a process of "exchanging mobility for money [that] has become normalised" (Surak 2021, 16), a legal framework facilitating the attraction of foreign investments and entrepreneurs; in his own words "as long as participants park their cash in the country, they can freely enter and reside" (*Ibidem*).

CBI and RBI programmes – defined by Krakat as "predominantly mercantile phenomena" (Krakat 2018, 180) – were invented in 1983 when the Carribean island of St. Kitts and Nevis started offering new identities to Medellin cartel's affiliates for $50,000 US and a service fee (Grassegger 2023). Over the years, these schemes have been stripped of their cover-up nature and either been exported to some of the most affluent countries – notably Australia, Canada, and the US (Surak, 2021) – or transformed into a more elaborated (and marketable) programme to be extended to less affluent countries. It is what "king of passports" Christian H. Kälin (Nesheim 2018) termed as *ius doni* (Kälin 2016, 2019), i.e., the legal infrastructure of contemporary golden visa market, which would be more aptly to be described as *ius pecuniae,* as investments and money are the sole criterion to access the fast-tracked acquisition of the right.

Capitalizing on the fact that citizenship is an unregulated sector with no supreme global authority or worldwide passport register, since the early 2000s, an increasing number of private actors started commercializing passports and citizen rights following Kälin's scheme. As reported in Hannes Grassegger's recent article (2023), in 2006 the CEO of Henley & Partners – Christian H. Kälin – had shrewdly cleared the bad reputation of St. Kitts and Nevis' passport making it reputable and relatively cheap: a passport for an individual and his/her so-called financial dependents (up to three family

members) would cost either $250,000 invested in real estate on the island, or $150,000 donation to a money pot of his own devising. Since 2013, the business model was imported to insular Europe: CBI and RBI firstly flourished in Malta, overseen by Kälin himself, and in Cyprus, whereby Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit obtained a leaked set of documents known as The Cyprus Papers.

According to Krakat, over the last decades, these "exceptional municipal legal mechanisms that allow anyone to directly purchase citizenship from a selling state for a substantial monetary contribution" (Krakat 2018, 145) led the emergence of a kind of "transactional citizenship" right (147). It was indeed a short step from citizenship to citizenshop, as the name of a Hungarian start-up evidenced – it is literally called this way: Citizenshop –, together with the existence of numerous specialised companies. As a matter of fact, with a quick online search, it is possible to find an infinite number of agencies operating in the citizenship market, offering consultancy for CBI and RBI programmes. The right to have rights – as Hannah Arendt acutely defined citizenship in 1949 – is now purchasable at varying prices based on the rights associated with the selected passport.

As advertised on its website, La Golden Visa agency claims that: "In Europe the programmes of Cyprus and Malta mean citizenship not just of those countries but the European citizenship benefits that come with it, meaning the ability to work, travel and study anywhere in Europe" (www.goldenvisas.com). Global market leader in CBI and RBI programmes Henley & Partners provides on its website a catalogue of citizenships on sale and golden visas opportunities for wealthy travellers. For instance, RBIs to Italy and its "great works of art and architecture" cost 250 thousands euros, CBIs in Montenegro and "its magnificent and unparalleled natural beauty" cost 450 thousands euros (www.henleyglobal.com/countries).

At stake, the difference between CBI and RBI programmes is that, in the case of CBI, the applicant obtains the citizenship as soon as his/her application come to be accepted; for RBIs, the applicant obtains a residency permit as soon as his/her application comes to be accepted and, at the end of the residency permit, the possibility to apply for citizenship. Being national legislations, each country has its own regulations and, using Henley & Partners' vocabulary, offers specific "key-benefits". According to the EU Report A9-0028/2022, in 2022 the highest price was paid to become Dutch (1,25 million euros), while the cheapest citizenship to acquire was the Latvian (60 thousand euros). The report also states that nowadays twelve EU countries have implemented CBI and/or RBI programmes (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain).

Henk van Houtum and Annelies Van Uden have highlighted how the commodification of passports is seen by some economists as the most efficient and egalitarian way to select would-be migrants, at the same time creating extra national profit (2021: 22). Of course, this extra profit has not to be measured in the cost of the sole investments.

A recent interview we carried out with a golden visa agent based in Portugal catering to the Chinese market revealed that the real appeal for a Chinese client purchasing a Portuguese passport is the long-term perspective of moving capital out of China. Thus, from the European perspective, this dynamic becomes extremely compelling, wherein passport trading is seen as a low-cost method of generating substantial inward investments. Despite the risks associated with corruption, the reshaping of the urban landscape, and the relatively few advantages in local economic growth as highlighted in the 2018 Transparency International & Global Witness' report, the financial appeal of CBI and RBI programmes is extremely high, and the number of European countries allowing those practices are on rapid growth.

According to the Hungarian start-up Citizenshop: "The demand for CBI/RBI schemes has increased in recent years making it a $15 billion dollar industry annually, with some 20 golden visa schemes and 12 CBI schemes actively running as of 2019 [..] The CBI/RBI industry is set to expand to $20 billion and already sees significant competition and more and more players are entering the market [..] In 2018 Malta became the first country to announce citizenship test for robots and Saudi Arabia became the first country in the world to grant citizenship to Robot Sophia. [They] also believe citizenship will extend to space in about 100 years" (www.citizenshipshop.com). Although the concept of EU citizenship extended to space still sounds very visionary to us, the perspective that Citizenshop offers of golden visa as a growing market seems to be quite realistic.

In the aforementioned EU Report A9-0028/2022, the European Parliament "considers that schemes granting nationality on the basis of a financial investment (CBI schemes), also known as 'golden passport', are objectionable from an ethical, legal and economic point of view and pose several serious security risks for Union citizens, such as those stemming from money-laundering and corruption" and that the "Union citizenship is not a commodity that can be marketed or sold and has never been conceived as such in the Treaties".

The risks associated with these programmes were notably underscored by one-woman wikileaks Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia - who would later be killed in a targeted attack in 2017. While the Maltese government was working hard to be among the ten countries in the world with a national AI strategy and granting citizenship to robots, Daphne Caruana stressed systemic problems and nefarious purposes connected to Maltese and global citizenship programmes. Caruana Galizia also addressed personal accuse to Kälin himself, as he could not do in Malta what he did in the Caribbean Island, namely "behav[ing] like a colonial power".

In a similar vein, the "explanatory statement" of the Report A9-0028/2022 claims that: "governments are selling what is not theirs to sell: Union citizenship. [..] Although the schemes selling 'golden passport' and 'golden visas' are euphemistically called 'Citizenship by investment' (CBI) and 'Residency by investment' (RBI), in reality applicants

have no genuine interest to invest. [..] The contrast with the treatment of refugees or labour migrants, or of Union citizens with dual citizenship born in the Union, is staggering. [..] Thus far, the Member States have been reluctant to address the matter, to the point of refusing to engage in talks".

In the long-lasting debate within national enclosures and global overture, the real point is that the EU accuses EU's member states of indirectly selling EU citizenships through their national CBI and RBI programmes. The aforementioned "explanatory statement" also reports that "Union citizenship is a bit like the surprise one finds in the BBC Antiques Roadshow: a seemingly worthless object turns out to be extremely valuable. Most Union citizens are unaware of the treasure sitting in their attic: Union citizenship. It is highly coveted not just by many across the world dreaming of working in the Union, but also by some of the world's richest people. Governments of Member States quickly recognised a business opportunity: by joining the Union, the value of their national passports suddenly skyrocketed".

3. A eulogy to border studies?

In 1991, Guillermo Gomez Peña penned an article titled "Death on the Border. A Eulogy to Border Art". Reflecting on the escalating interest of the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art in border art, he lamented: "In 1989 everyone went border. Our difficult experiment in collaboration between Anglos and Latinos was turned into an open invitation for major institutions and opportunistic artists with no track record whatsoever to jump on the Aztec high-tech express. Border art left the trenches to become a specialized exercise in grant writing and institutional self- promotion. [..] A movement that began as an attempt to dismantle Anglo-Saxon patriarchal authority ends up being appropriated, controlled, promoted and presented by Anglo-Saxon patriarchs [..] The border as metaphor has become hollow. Border aesthetics have been gentrified and border culture as an utopian model for dialogue is temporarily bankrupt [..] The border remains an infected wound on the body of the continent, its contradictions more painful than ever" (Gómez-Peña 1991).

In parallel, we see critical border studies standing at a similar juncture. The arduous experiment undertaken by border scholars in recent decades to critically and extra-disciplinarily explore borders is now in jeopardy. The discourse on borders has shifted to a "specialized exercise in grant writing", distancing itself from engaged and confrontational research. Indeed, the EU citizenship market signals a profound crisis in the debate on borders and bordering processes, overcoming the metaphor of fortress Europe and its violent and deadly border regime. For affluent travellers, EU borders resemble smooth, first-class business trips (money to be paid), and this could serve as a catalyst for renewed

reflection. While critical border studies often recall Marxist or post-Marxist theory, there appears to be a paradoxical oversight – a missing fundamental spectrum of analysis: class. The prevailing focus on poor border crossers in border research prompts a fascination with this unconscious neglect (an attempt to find ethnography addressing wealthy border-crossers yielded no satisfactory results). Yet, we argue that today, more than nationality, economic wealth becomes the pivotal point of otherness and discrimination.

In this regard, it is significant to recall the parallel migration stories portrayed by Ollie Williams in his investigation into wealthy Nigerian migration for Al Jazeera (2020), where he traces the migratory routes and methods of two Nigerian men of roughly the same age and holding the same passport, but from vastly different social standings. One story features Dapo, a wealthy Nigerian in his thirties, who obtained Maltese citizenship for a minimum investment of 800,000 euros, granting him the ability to relocate to Malta permanently at any time. This case exemplifies the lesser-known narratives of Nigerian migration, even though Nigeria ranks as "the second-largest nationality to apply for such schemes after Indians," according to Henley & Partners website. Contrastingly, Kingsley, a few years older than Dapo and with the same birth passport but significantly lower social and financial status, reached Europe only by perilously crossing the Sahara and the Mediterranean. These mirroring stories highlight not only the ethical controversies of citizenship trade practices, but also the necessity to get back class-based analysis in our tool-box, renovating the engagement between border research and a radical critique of the global hierarchies.

Indeed, the privilege of purchasing EU residency and citizenship rights reconfigures communities in both origin and destination countries through purely pecuniary lenses. The rise of the gated-community model reshaping the urbanisation the world over became a praxis also adopted by institutions at national and EU levels. In this regard, it bears mentioning the housing problems emerging in countries such as Portugal and Malta, where real estate investments constitute more than 90% of the total investments in CBI and RBI schemes leading to a speculative reconfiguration of the urban layouts of their respective capitals (Transparency International & Global Witness 2018, 16). Furthermore, such investments in "passive segments" of the economy (i.e., real estate) yield fewer benefits in terms of local employment, innovation, and industrial development (*Ibidem*), when not becoming havens for corrupted wealthy individuals born in countries ranking at the bottom of the 2023 Global Passport Power Rank.

Yet, beyond the ethical concerns regarding the corrupt uses of CBI and RBI schemes, it is crucial to recognize the challenging nature of this phenomenon as a potent cross-border agency, thus striving to democratise it. As envisaged by Krakat, we should struggle to make these "mechanisms [..] available for all, whether wealthy or poor, as members of humanity" (Krakat 2018, 145). He proposed, for instance, prize-bond CBI programmes for enhancing climate justice (Krakat, 2021), i.e., creating prior-

ity channels for climate migration. As suggested by van Houtum and Bueno Lacy (2020), visa apartheid is "deeply internalised by now and may seem practically unbreakable, but so did the divine right of kings, feudalism, and slavery once", i.e., finite contemporaneities. Therefore, advocating for the expansion of the determining criteria of *ius doni* beyond its purely economic shape is surely a promising starting point to circumvent the discriminations of birthright-based citizenship systems.

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La collana Mobilità Migrazioni si prefigge l'obiettivo non solo di raccogliere i lavori delle attività del Centro di elaborazione culturale Mobilità Migrazioni Internazionali (MoMI), ma anche di essere la sede editoriale di linee di ricerca innovative e di dibattiti scientifici sui temi della mobilità e delle migrazioni, di proposte di ricerca di giovani ricercatori e anche di traduzioni in italiano di lavori fondativi apparsi in altre lingue. Una sezione ulteriore sarà dedicata a working papers frutto di attività didattiche e laboratoriali dell'Ateneo.

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