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Giulia Daniele, Manuel João Ramos, Pedro Figueiredo Neto

Border Crossings in and out of Europe

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

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Title
Border Crossings in and out of Europe

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Jorge Louçã obtained in 2000 a PhD in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence from the Université Paris Dauphine, Paris, France and the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon, Portugal. Since 2000 he is professor at Iscte – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, where he teaches Programming Languages and Complex Systems Science. He founded the Doctoral Programmes in Complexity Sciences, joint academic program at Iscte and the University of Lisbon. He developed his research at the laboratory LAMSADE - Laboratoire d'Analyse et Modélisation de Systèmes pour l'Aide à la Décision, Université Paris Dauphine, from October 1995 to Mars 1999, and LabMAg - Laboratory of Agent Modelling, University of Lisbon from Mars 1999 to September 2011. He presently develops his research at ISTAR – Information Sciences and Technologies and Architecture Research Center, at Iscte. He participated in several European research projects. Jorge Louçã was member of the Council of the Complex Systems Society (CSS), and Vice-President of the Unesco UniTwin Complex Systems Digital Campus. He is the coordinator of The Observatorium research group, aiming to real-time monitoring of multi-level network structures for the study of knowledge generation and opinion dynamics on the Internet.

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Pedro Figueiredo Neto is an architect, anthropologist and filmmaker, currently research fellow at the Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa (ICS-ULisboa). He was invited Professor at Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa and FCSH-U.NOVA, but currently engaged only with ULisboa in several master and PhD courses. He has conducted extensive research in Southern Africa (Angola, Zambia and Mozambique) on topics such as forced displacement, borders, refugee camps, political mobilization, development and violence. This has resulted in several pieces published in renowned journals such as Cultural Studies, Ethnography, Journal of Borderland Studies, Planning Theory and Practice, among others. In both 2019 and 2020, he was awarded the Best Text - Young Anthropologist, by APA (Portuguese Anthropological Association). He has also directed more than a dozen award-winning audiovisual pieces (experimental, fiction and documentary, both short and feature-lenght) showcased in academic events, art galleries and film festivals: namely "YOON" (2021, w. R-Falcao), Abyssal (2021); "Withering Refuge" (2020), "Curupira" (2016), or Sizígia (2012). Research reference: 2021.03558.CEECIND/CP1696/CT0002. More info at pedrofneto.com.

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Simone Tulumello is a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning (2012, University of Palermo), currently assistant research professor at the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon and member of the Coordination of the PhD in Development Studies of the University of Lisbon. He has been a Fulbright Research Scholar at the University of Memphis (2016); Benjamin Hooks Institute for Social Change Policy Fellow (Fall 2016 to Spring 2017); Visiting Scholar at the Interuniversity Department of Sciences of Territory, Polytechnic of Turin (2019); Senior Expert Evaluator for Regiostars Awards 2019 (DG-REGIO, European Commission; 2019); coordinator of the thematic section 'Political economy of territory' of the Portuguese Association of Political Economy (since 2020); adjunct editor-in-chief of Análise Social (since 2021). His research locates at the intersection between human geography, planning research and critical urban studies, and with geographic focus on Southern Europe and the South of the United States, and develops among three main axes: i) urban security, violence and fear; ii) housing policy and politics; and iii) urban policy and urban futures. He is the author of several articles, and the book “Fear, Space and Urban Planning (2017, Springer) and is currently working on his second monograph (with Andrea Pavoni) on Urban Violence (under contract with Lexington).

INTRODUCTION

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1.

As it so often happens in academic publishing and in life, the aim of this book is manyfold. As it may be guessed by its subtitle, it addresses the variety of institutional and non-institutional responses to the contemporary movement of people from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, to, within and out of Europe. As it was mainly conceived, written, and edited in what today seems a distant past – that of the pre-pandemic era (meaning the sanitary, social, political, and economic effects of the propagation of the Coronavirus SARSCOV2 among the world human population) -, it doesn't cover the changes, some durable, some not, that the viral disease has had in both Europe-related migratory fluxes and in the multiplicity of reactions to it. It is still too soon to gauge its importance and pregnancy: what parts will be but a conjectural blip and what will stay with us for the long-term, which pre-pandemic currents and conditions will be accentuated, and which will wane, what shapes the new normalcy will take and what past features will resurface, and when. In the last pages of this book, we shall return to these issues in the manner of an afterword.

While the book's title points to a particular regional and topical context – that of contemporary migratory fluxes with Europe as its gravitational centre –, its title ascertains a general epistemological stance: that of the dialogical nature of that context. Physical and mental border crossings are, differently from crossings of borders, questionings made from distinct points of departure of the implied structural stability of borders. They refer to mobility – of ideas, of people, of driving forces – and they appeal to a kind of conversation and exchange where a self-critical posture of putting oneself in the other's shoes is a pre-condition to making sense. European responses to migration, and especially to a self-declared "migration crisis" (because, let us face it, those wouldn't hardly be the migrant's words), are not simply "responses" but responses to responses to responses. In line with this, although it has been extensively observed that the current movement of migrants happens within the African continent, the issue of borders along with their identitarian appropriation continues to be obscured by contradicting conventional assumptions (see de Haas and Flahaux, 2016). Very much as conservative protestants in the 1850s or in 2020s USA were and are eager to adopt a phraseology of nativism to mark them as distinct from Irish Catholic migrants or Latin-American Catholic migrants (and otherwise), the Europeanness of European responses is filled with indicators of a delusional identity. This book doesn't deal with historical preconditions, but they cannot be dismissed as they cast an overarching shadow over the claims, contestations and reactions that underscore the current dialogue on migration into Europe. Historical outbound European migration under the banner of the colonial enterprise, as well as more recent outbound economic, military, and ideological interactions, adventures, and interventions, laid out the path for inverse fluxes. When it comes to migration and response, the popular notion of "push-and-pull factors" can be a damaging platitude as it limits the complexity and the relational nature of the matter at hand. To paraphrase a well-known masterly piece of confusionism (Donald Rumsfeld's "known and unknown unknowns"), the pulled-pushes of the pulls and the pushed-pulls of the pushes need not be dismissed.

Knowing only too well that saying so risks being taken as a cliché, the adopted stance in this book is that tackling the complexity of the sensitive issues arising from its matter not only requires a multidisciplinary approach but also a set of contributions from different (inter)national perspectives, institutional or otherwise. What we aimed to offer was necessarily fragmentary elements for a critical debate about the relation between processes of reification of borders and the many manners of their transposal, and about the chiasmic transformations these entail on those.

Considering that non-European current immigration fuels major ideological reconceptualisations of European national and extra-national identities (as well as varied forms of citizenship), the book offers topical flashes of causal and effectual aspects of human mobility towards a regional space, but also a mental space, wherein identifications, contestations, discriminations, and reorganisations convene in a swirl of humpty-dumptyan logic – meaning, in the sense that absurdity is the background whereupon sense pops up to be dissolved in it again. European integration, the rise of populist forms of nationalism, cultural interactions, ethnic-religious conflicts, and securitisation of European external and internal borders are brought to the fore, hand in hand with the tragedies of human suffering, individual and collective strategies of survival and of reinvention.

Founded on an interdisciplinary approach – we could even see it as indisciplinary, in the sense of that is an informal and methodologically unbound dialogue between (disciplinarised) practitioners –, a major goal of this publication is to provide an in-depth discussion about many of the key migratory issues that afflict the world today, as illustrated by the European case as a reference point.

2.

Besides being (as already said) a fragmented attempt at an assessment and a call for debate, this book is also – or perhaps primarily – a legacy. A textual and to some extent visual legacy of more than 15 years of academic interactions that took varied forms, crossings of several borders, that were caused by and inspired a mashup of mobilities, aspirations, and conversations. It is a physical (or rather virtual, as it comes in e-book format) vestige of an unassorted journey that suffered many bumps and offered many joys along the way. Its now distant point of departure came in 2010 as an engaging (and in its authors' eyes sound) but sadly doomed proposal for an international graduate teaching and research program on, precisely "border crossings", that developed inside a pan-European interdisciplinary network of university centres devoted to the study of the African regional area – AEGIS, or African-Europe Group of Interdisciplinary Studies, that congregates all major African studies research centres in Europe, linked to African, Asian and American counterparts. The ideas that inspired that program proposal - *Border crossings in and out of Africa* – came from the perception of the relative weakness of Southern Europe's international academic presence in African studies, in comparison to its northern counterparts, and the intent of fostering research and teaching ties among European and African institutions to promote both diversity in dialogue and mutual scientific enrichment.

More specifically, the proposed program would bring together French (University of Paris I - Sorbonne), Italian (Oriental University, Naples) and Portuguese (Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa) institutions, through the driving force of their research centres integrating AEGIS: CEMAF – Centre for the Study of African Worlds (now IMAF), Naples' Centre for the Study of Contemporary Africa, and Iscte's Centre of African Studies (now Centre of International Studies). In the background, but at the time yet out of the main news headlines, African migrants' deaths in the Mediterranean were already pilling up, Italy and Spain were already pushing "fortress Europe's" security borders to the southern marches of Morocco and Libya through murky partnership deals with those buffer states, and Frontex was in its first footsteps as a pan-European agency to sieve migrants. The Erasmus evaluators were unmoved: the proposal was praised but the topic lacked appeal.

For the proponents, though, it was a worthy and timely subject, and the failed program proposal soon morphed into a lighter alternative: an Erasmus Intensive Program (IP) co-organised by the same partner universities[1] that ran for three weeks in the Summer of 2014, at Iscte, Lisbon. The objectives were adapted and updated from the earlier proposal, and the initial ideas, questions and concerns were finetuned, shared, and discussed by a lively transnational group of students and lecturers. New perspectives and concerns emerged, as the Syrian and Libyan tragedies unravelled, the migratory contingents from the Middle East and Africa swelled, and important cracks and dissentions made way both inside each European nation and between European states, as fortress Europe, ecumenic Europe, liberal Europe, and atavist Europe redefined their conceptual and ideological boundaries. New words and images were enacted, and with them new landscapes took shape: "fortress", "floodgates", "invasion", "identitarian", "altright", "plight", "jungle", etc. The media and the legal documents were peppered with a novilingua that came to cushion the extraordinary verbal flowerings that the Brexiteers, the ADLers, the LePeners and the Trumpers began spewing over the world.

[1] With some changes, tough: the reshuffle of institutional research in France led to the merging of many centres into large laboratories and EHESS's small African studies centre integrated IMAF and other centres, eventually becoming today's multipolar IMAF – Institute of African Worlds. A similar process took place in Portugal, but African studies centres couldn't or wouldn't transcend the competitive logic that took hold of Portuguese universities' interrelations and CEA-ISCTE opted instead to bring to its midst in other area studies and become present-day Centre of International Studies.

From 2012, the so-called "Troika"[2] administrators did their utmost to dismantle the fragile Portuguese research set-up, and most financing for science dried up almost completely. The research and teaching landscapes were ravaged, with centres closing, teams disbanding, researchers migrating to greener northern countries. Funding for new editions of the IP couldn't be found, so the way to press on with the study and debate around "border crossings" was through creative thinking and improvising: the summer course became a winter course, the previously independent program was harboured by a postgraduate course, international lecturers were recruited via the still-active Erasmus mobility grants, and so this forum of ideas and exchanges was kept open in those dreary years.

This is not the place to detail the astounding effect the radical changes imposed by the "Troika" in both the job and real-estate markets had in propelling the city of Lisbon to the top of the global tourist industry (see Malet and Ramos, 2018). The fact remains that from 2016 the city became the sweetheart of global tourists, global students, global real-estate investors, and global temp workers. The editors of the present book organised *The Current Refugees Crisis and Beyond: Narratives and Itineraries* Conference in April 2016, at ISCTE, already hinted at the relevance of enlarging the scope of analysis of the "border crossings" original plan to include other concurrent modes of migration and narrative-creation. This opening concurred with another research network involving members of CEI-Iscte in a University of Barcelona-led longstanding investigation into appropriations of space in African and European cities.[3] And so, almost from night to day a research and teaching network dedicated to the study of "border crossings" became itself the target of a new wave[4] of border crossers, that of international students.

[2] A popular epithet referring to the group of grey administrators appointed by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Central Bank to apply a harsh austerity diet supplemented by a radical neoliberal set of policies in the insolvent P.I.I.G.S.

[3] This long-time research network, led by University of Barcelona's GRECS (Grup de Recerca en Exclusió i Control socials), has been morphing from financed program to financed program: "Estudio comparativo sobre apropiacones sociales y conflictos de uso em centros urbanos de ciudades europeas y africanas" (2009-2012); "Affric – Migration and the transformations of space as a social process: Urban planning, intercity mobility, and roadway accidents in Sub-Saharan Africa" (2021-2015); "Transafric – Urban transformations, means of transport and road accident rates in Africa" (2015-2018); "Mover – Mobility overflow: A comparative study of new urban mobilities" (since 2020).

[4] New wave, that is, for Portugal, a country that had been until then kept apart (or according to another point of view, shielded) from the major academic circuits. Mild winters, low university fees, cheap accommodation, and cheaper still booze were/are important factors for Lisbon's popularity among European and non-European students.

The latest iteration of the "border crossings" program was founded on an unlikely partnership between Iscte and an Australian interuniversity agency,[5] which for three summers brought waves of exceptionally committed "Aussie" students, and very welcome financing, to Lisbon.

More than before, the AIM Overseas immersive teaching and seminar program made it possible to bring together a broad range of lecturers, researchers, activists, and individuals willing to testify of their poignant personal migratory experience. The topics, contexts, nationalities, and disciplinary backgrounds were varied and mutually enriching: comparison of European responses with those of the US and Australia, legal issues surrounding crimmigration, gatekeeping in Morocco, Libya and Turkey, migrants navigating EU's laws and roads, the dramas of the Calais Jungle, the ghettoization of Muslims and the jihadist networks in Europe, Nepalese migrants in Southern Portugal's greenhouses, Moroccan women workers in Spain and in Tangier's tax free zone, media analysis of the impact of Brexit (and the Trump years) upon public opinion on migration, Sahel demographics and European geopolitics, NATO and Frontex as defenders and expanders, geo-economics in Europe-Africa relations, the agro-industrial complex and the need for cheap labour, the historical roots of Europe-Africa relations, European and African artistic and aesthetic cross-pollinations, migration of European goods and ideas to present-day Africa, the life of asylum-seekers in Portugal, refugee settlement in Germany, the complexity of internal African borderlands, women trafficking into Europe, African participation in internal European mobility, Congo in Paris, West Africa in Bahia, Paris in Senegal, Allep in Turkey, Addis Ababa in Italy, Africa in Lisbon, Brazil in Mozambique, Islam in Africa, Erasmus students and the touristification of Lisbon, historical and contemporary refugees in Palestine and Israel, African refugee camps, Mozambican mines, Zimbabwe politics, Medieval cosmography, halal tourism in the Maghreb, secessions in the Horn of Africa, visual methods in fieldwork.

In addition, an equally intensive fieldtrip program empirically mapped out many of the topics covered in the urban tissue of Lisbon and its outskirts. The participants were able to meet an off-the-charts Lisbon just as the city's touristification accelerated: guided visits in mixed neighbourhoods and ghettoed African quarters (Cova da Moura, Quinta do Mocho, Chelas, Almada), exchanges in refugee hosting residencies, visits to the Portuguese structures enforcing Frontex operations,

[5] AIM Overseas (https://aimoverseas.com.au/) is a private provider of international learning programs for Australian university students based on a series of partnerships with academic institutions around the world. Its activities were deeply affected by the COVID19 pandemic, given the many restrictions to international travel.

tours centred on the historical African presence in central Lisbon, interactions with NGOs running solidarity canteens and cultural centres. This variety of inputs also extended to the national and disciplinary background of the program's participants: British, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Syrian, and Turkish lecturers, and convenors; French, Italian, Portuguese, British, Australian students; filmmakers, lawyers, economists, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, historians, international relations specialists, military intel, etc.

This was a teaching and research program that managed to survive and to thrive in the interstices of the customarily gated Portuguese academia, thanks to an altruist mindset that alleviated the effects of both institutional bureaucracy and financial shortages. To its coordinators and participants, it has been a good, practical, example of the remedial nature of promoting "thinking in the classroom" within the walls of the ideologically ruined institution that is the market-driven, enterprise-like, university (Readings, 2000).

3.

The different programmes that were held across the years were certainly much richer than this book could ever be. Nevertheless, the collection of articles and visual essays to be found below aimed at tackling the diversity of contributions, disciplines, and perspectives the topic of migration entangles. The eBook then is organised around 13 chapters that seek to compose a coherent thematic and geographic path covering some to the most pressing issues concerning the crossings into and out of Europe, questioning the relative value of labels such as migrant, asylum seeker, refugee, or citizen.

Active and without an end in sight, the Syrian refugee crisis sets the background of Adam Al-Alou's first chapter. In it, the author seeks to move beyond common humanitarian analysis as well as the civil war narrative in Syria to explore the underlying politics that did not only create the crisis but also shaped its development. Migratory dynamics in the neighbouring territory of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories set the stage for Giulia Daniele's chapter in which she discusses the influx of non-Jewish immigrants, namely African, and the discretionary and ethnic-tainted political policies being crafted in this disputed land. On a more artistic and testimonial approach, in chapter 3 Manuel João Ramos depicts the struggles of an Ethiopian woman trying to make a life as an asylum seeker amidst the idiosyncrasies of its welcoming country, Portugal.

The challenges set forth by African migrants in Daniele's and Ramos' pieces find an echo in Alessandro Triulzi's chapter 4 through the dimension of memory and the traces of migrants' perilous journeys into Europe and the quest of being heard and respected. Waste, and its relative value, is the object of Pedro F. Neto and Ricardo Falcão's visual-essay, Chapter 5, in which the authors address the transformational trajectories of items deemed socially valueless, namely obsolete vehicles and second-hand and broken items, as these travel south by the hands of fearless Senegalese roadsters. Such example highlights how the possibility of crossing borders is what is often at stake, challenging the political fear-mongering discourses on the need of curbing migration and fencing up. Chapter 6, then, brings to discussion the symbolic function of the immigrant. Manuel Delgado puts into dialogue the socioeconomic and symbolic function of the immigrant, further questioning his or her impossibility to, as beings of another world, to ever partake the hosting universe.

Securitisation has been in the order of the day and served as a smokescreen to handle the so-called refugee crisis between 2013-2016. In chapter 7 Ines M. Ribeiro discusses in detail the EU responses to such influx considering the inclusion and exclusion of citizens within the union. As Filipe Faria follows-up on chapter 8, European identity debates are nourished by the broader situation, retrofeeding nationalist and xenophobic discourses and the rise of extreme-right agendas and populist parties across the old continent. Chapter 9, by Ricardo Falcão and Clara Carvalho, looks deeply at several conundrums around the practice of FGM/C through the human rights framework, with a specific focus on the connections between Portugal and Guinea Bissau. The article of Carlos Branco, chapter 10, discusses the risks of political mobilisation of Muslim populations in Great Britain and France beyond the Islamic radicalisation discourses as of a fundamental security threat/breach while advocating/interrogating assimilation policies. Chapter 11 brings another yet complimentary strand. Simone Tulumello runs to zoom in into the universe of borders, particularly the borders within the city of Lisbon characterised by the existence of several marginalised yet central districts. Fonseca & Jorge Louçã, on Chapter 12, seek to foster an understanding of migratory patterns, past and present, through the composition of dedicated algorithms. The extent to which AI will not only foresee but also decide the future of migration is yet to be clearly revealed. Finally, chapter 13, Dirk Bustorf gives some personal impressions on his experience in a refugee centre in Hamburg.

4.

From the start, Sónia Henriques, former head of the international office of ISCTE, was key to help us navigate around the institutional rocky bottoms that imperilled our teaching and researching. Thanks to her, the *Borders and Border-Crossings* learning program found an incongruous place in a largely fictitious entity: "ISCTE's institutional degree" – out of the reach of the well-tended gardens that are its departments and schools. Also, a word of recognition and gratitude is due to CEA-CEI's trans-disciplinary openness in a traditionally bordered milieu.

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

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Abstract

Although considerable focus has been given to the Syrian refugee crisis, it has hardly been examined in relation to its political origins. Rather, it is often treated as an isolated humanitarian event or one that was simply caused by 'civil war.' While true, such a broad and simplistic explanation says little about –and sometimes ignores - the underlying politics that did not only create the crisis but also shaped its development. Therefore, this article comes as an attempt to trace the political roots of the Syrian conflict, explain its dynamics, identify its main actors, and finally illustrate how it drove millions out of their homes.

Keywords: Syria, civil war, jihadism, refugee crisis

Presentation

The period between 2015 and 2016 witnessed a shift in the migration flows to the European bank of the Mediterranean, which left European leaders facing their biggest challenge after the financial crisis and struggling to devise adequate responses. The migration or refugee 'crisis,' as it came to be known, saw an enormous influx of migrants and refugees from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia who crossed the Mediterranean Sea to reach the southern parts of Europe. The numbers of illegal border-crossings began to rise early in 2011 as thousands of Africans started to cross the Mediterranean towards the Italian Island of Lampedusa, but this trend changed and between January and September 2015 the majority migrants were setting sail from Turkey to Greece through the Aegean Sea. By 2016, those had constituted 70% of the 1 million who had reached European shores (UNHCR, 2016).

Such a change in migration trends was rooted in the political turmoil and armed conflicts that swept these parts of the world, especially the MENA region during the Arab Spring. But the numbers abated dramatically after the European Union and Turkey reached an agreement that allowed Greece to return illegal migrants to Turkey in exchange for financial assistance and increased resettlement of refugees from Turkey to the European Union.

Notably most asylum applicants during the crisis were Syrians, who were fleeing its years-long conflict. Between April and June 2015, the number of asylum applications lodged by Syrians rose from 11,000 to 21,000, and in the following three months around 190,000 Syrians were moving towards the EU. By October the total became 507.000 Syrians, around 39% of the overall number of asylum seekers in Europe, and by 2018, the number reached about 1 million (Eurostats, 2018).

Yet, although the refugee crisis became closely associated with the conflict in Syria, little focus has been dedicated to its political background. More often than not, the mass exodus of Syrians is looked at as an isolated humanitarian problem, and not as a consequence of a crisis that, in essence, is a political one. What caused this crisis and how did it turn into a civil war? Who are the actors involved in the war? And how did that drive millions of Syrians out of their country? Exploring the roots, context and background of the crisis is important not only to developing a deeper understanding of it, but also to devising viable responses and expanding the scholarly outlook on it. Therefore, this article seeks to examine the political roots that led to the Syrian war and the ensuing refugee crisis, and to explain how and why it happened.

It will do so by providing a historical perspective of pre-war Syria and the underlying social, political, and economic factors that triggered the protests in 2011, and how the pro-democracy movement descended into a protracted civil conflict. Against this backdrop the chapter will illustrate how the conflict drove millions of Syrians out of their country.

Pre-2011 Syria

Following Syria's independence from France in 1946, and a brief semi-democratic period, the country underwent a long period of political instability characterised by a cycle of military takeovers. This had continued until the Ba'ath party seized power through a military coup in 1963 in what came to be known as the "8th of March Revolution." Ba'ath brought about a massive transformation to Syria's political landscape, as a new class of rural, lower-class politicians and militaries, most of whom came from religious minorities took over, thus replacing traditional urban Sunni elites. The ideological drive of Ba'athists was a mixture radical nationalism and a high level of populist politics (Van Dusen, 1975), and their vision was not yet another coup, but wholesale revolution towards which they employed institutionalised sectarianism, military rule, and Leninist political organisation (Hinnebusch, 2002, p.44)

Nonetheless, the Ba'athist revolution was not a guarantee for political stability, as schisms within the party ranks continued to undermine its position, especially after the defeat against Israel in 1967 and the loss of the Golan Heights. It was not until the then minister of defence Hafez al-Assad came to power that Syria ushered in a long reign of stability.

Assad approached state construction and power consolidation with the priority of ending the divisions that had characterised Syria's political life since the independence and cost Ba'ath much of its capital (Darwishe, 2013, p.5). Once in power, he assigned a loyal group of his clan, mostly Alawites, to key offices in the party and the security branches. He also built patronage networks of other religious minorities around the regime and worked to co-opt notable Sunni families to prevent potential dissent. Economically, Assad was able to create a sustainable model by loosening the radical economic program of Ba'ath. He established a lasting alliance with wealthy Sunnis by giving them economic advantages as well as high posts in the party and the government. Furthermore, a limited process of economic liberalisation created class of urban bourgeoisie (mostly merchants and industrialists) and granted it a privileged access to the system by means of personal connections and patronage making it largely dependent on the regime.

In so doing, Assad founded a cross-sectarian, cross-class coalition that would guarantee long-term political and societal stability (Darwishe, 2013, p.6-7). As both stability and power consolidation progressed, the Ba'athist state gradually began to take a pyramidal shape with the base being Assad's inclusive cross-sectarian, cross-class composition; while at the top the loyal circle of party and military leaders constituted the main levers of power and control (Ziadeh, 2011, p.14).

Power was further concentrated and legalised through the constitution of 1973,[1] whose design came to codify a strongly presidential system whereby a pyramid-like structure makes all state institutions lead to the president (Heller, 1974, p.53). The hallmark of that constitution was its 8th article that declared the Ba'ath a de facto "leader of both state and society," and cemented a power dynamic via which a new social contract made Ba'ath an uncontested force in politics, as well as social and economic planning. Such monopoly over power was also reflected in the electoral system that guaranteed party a legislative majority in the Syrian Parliament and made the party's leadership responsible for nominating the president. Only a small number of other parties were permitted to engage in national politics under the National Progressive Front, a coalition of "progressive parties" lead Ba'ath. Political life in Syria was further paralysed by a state of emergency that had been in force since the party came to power and was extended beyond Assad's death until 2012. Maintaining it was important as it meant greater unchecked authority to the president, who could accordingly encroach on the legislative branch and make decisions without referring back to the parliament. It also gave security organs and intelligence apparatus an upper hand, at the expense of the judicial branch.

The status quo remained almost unchanged until Assad's death on June 11, 2000. One day after, presidency was transferred to his son Bashar. The power transfer arrangements included the amendment of Article 83 of the constitution, which required the age of the president to be at least 40. Accordingly, it became 34, the age of Bashar at the time. He was also promoted from Staff-Colonel to Lieutenant-General by Decree no.9 to become the Supreme Commander of the Syrian Armed Forces (another requirement for presidency). His nomination was approved unanimously in the parliament, and later received 97.92% of the votes in a national referendum. The swiftness of this hereditary succession and the ease that characterised the process came to showcase the institutionalisation of authoritarianism in Syria, and the depth of the Ba'athist control over the state (Rubin, 2007, p.133-36; Stacher, 2011, p.198-212).

[1] Full text available at: http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/mideast/SY/syria-constitution-1973/view

The arrival of a new leadership stirred significant debate and speculation on whether Syria was going to maintain its old authoritarian track, or otherwise adopt a new path of reform. Early on in his presidency, Bashar was conceived as a young, westernised, pragmatist reformer who could revolutionize Syria's politics and Economy; such an image had raised both domestic and international hopes (Leverette, 2005, p.68). At the same time, the fact that Bashar launched a series of reforms, though arguably not drastic, signalled a serious commitment to modernising Syria. His approach involved a more liberal economy, as he opened the country for private investment, and later sanctioned a transition to social market economy. At the same time, a limited process of political liberalisation included a modification of the NPF charter to include more political parties, far-reaching reshuffles, and the announcement that Ba'ath would no longer interfere in managing the state's day-to-day affairs. Criticism of the regime started to be met with more tolerance, and wider freedoms of expression and assembly were granted (Leverette, 2005, p.96). Yet, others expressed an immediate cynical view and questioned the impact of these reforms on the existing authoritarian structure, given that any meaningful change would imply an existential threat to the regime (Hinnebusch 2002, 161). In fact, disillusionment with Assad's will to reform became began to increase after the so-called "Damascus Spring" movement invoked a ruthless reaction from the Syrian authorities in 2001 (Ziadeh, 2011, 68). The movement included hundreds of prominent Syrian intellectuals and civil society figures who signed the "Manifesto of the Thousand" demanding Assad to cancel the martial law in effect since 1963. Their demands also included amnesty for political prisoners and law reforms to allow a more inclusive political environment. However, the movement was soon crushed and several of its members were arrested and charged with "trying to change the constitution by illegal means."

While some saw that Assad did not envisage a departure from his father's policies, especially one that could jeopardize the existing status quo, others argued that his impetus for change was hampered by various overwhelming factors. The first of those were the regime's "old guards," who were strictly opposed to reform and the challenging legacy of structural problems that were larger than Assad's "good intentions" (Ziadeh, 2011, 49). Leverette (2005, p.94-98) opined that because of such factors, Assad's approach to change favoured a gradualist Chinese model, where economic liberalisation precedes political openness. However, the first decade of Assad's rule fell below the high expectations, and his planned upgrade to post-populist authoritarianism did not only fail to fix the built-in state vulnerabilities, but also created more fatal ones.

The promised political openness advanced in a slow-pace, and so did the promises to improve rule of law and protection of human rights. Meanwhile, *Infitah,* or economic liberalisation, morphed into a *laissez fair* but only to a small class of capitalist cronies, making business opportunities evermore exclusive. This also unveiled the deep roots of corruption and clientelism within the state's institutions. The transition into the social market economy made the urban bourgeois increasingly richer, while leaving the plebian rural population susceptible to both poverty and anti-regime mobilisation. Other measures such as the selective enlargement of the private sector had similar impact on widening the gap between society classes. Furthermore, a growth in free trade with China and Turkey caused great damage the domestic industrial community (Hinnebusch & Zintl, 2014, p.92). Consequences were ultimately catastrophic as 30% percent of the population toiled under poverty lines (El-Laithy & Abu Ismail, 2005), and levels of inequality rose from 33.7 in 1997 to 37.4 in 2004 (Bibi & Nabli, 2010, p.40). To further exacerbate the situation, a wave of drought hit the eastern part of Syria in 2006 putting 95% of the region's population in need for assistance and driving over a million people to be internal migrants (Darwisheh, 2013, p.11). Failure to absorb the migrating agrarian class in bigger cities raised the already alarming level of unemployment. Gradually, the regime was losing its social base, mainly in the once-loyal rural constituency. The impacted population was highly mobilised for rebellion, until eventually the occurrence of the Arab Spring provided an incentive and emboldened Syrians to take to the streets to demand reform. But as that happened, and protests started to grow, they were met an excessively violent reaction which was an early indication that the regime was neither ready, nor willing to compromise.

Post-2011 Syria

Scenes of mass protests across the Arab Spring states and televised resignations of dictators in Tunisia and Egypt provided an impetus for Syrians who had already been mobilised by social, economic, and political grievances. But the direct trigger of the protests in Syria was the arrest and torture of a group of school children who sprayed anti-regime slogans on their school wall. Anger over the incident turned into an expansive wave of popular protests that started to gain increasing momentum. The Syrian government responded by intensifying its crackdown causing more civilian deaths and encouraging wider political dissent.

At the outset there was a realisation within the upper echelons of the Syrian regime that making any concessions that involve structural changes may have uncalculated consequences that could jeopardize the regime's very existence. Therefore, a decision was made early on to pursue a security strategy and end the protests through military means (Darwisheh, 2013, p.2). To justify the use of force against the anti-regime protests, whose peaceful nature won both domestic and international support, the regime's strategy involved a propaganda campaign that invoked sectarian terms to depict the movement as a Sunni-led, Jihadi one or as a conspiracy orchestrated by foreign intelligence. Furthermore, using excessive force constituted a way to push what became a nationwide uprising toward militarisation, thus making it easier for the regime to its full military power while appearing as a state actor defending its security against armed insurgents. Eventually, the outcome of this strategy was a dramatic rise in the death toll and further escalation.

Later in 2011, a group of army defectors founded the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and announced they would lead an armed struggle to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad. The birth of the FSA marked the beginning of the militarisation of the Syrian uprising and the civil war the ensued. But by 2013, loose organisation, internal divisions and lack of support had weakened the FSA significantly and gave way to Islamist factions that had already emerged and began to dominate the scene. In parallel, a political body called the Syrian National Council formed in Turkey and later merged with other opposition groups under the name the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and opposition forces. The latter has since acted as a government in exile, while representing the opposition in negotiations with the Syrian government.

Unlike the other Arab Spring cases, efforts towards toppling the Syrian regime have been largely unsuccessful. Apart from the Arab Spring's delayed advent to Syria, which provided the regime with sufficient time to devise a counterstrategy, the resilience it has exhibited could be attributed to several internal and external factors. On the internal level, the Syrian regime's power dynamics and institutional structures have made it more resilient than initially expected. As Darwishe noted, the complex power relations within the ranks of the Assad regime and its strong foundational nature enabled it to "maintain elite cohesion and minimize institutional defections," while its informal layer of power, including security apparatus, the military and the Ba'ath party allowed it to be "less constrained by institutional considerations" (Darwisheh, 2013, p.13). Another crucial factor is the sectarian structure of the Syrian security sector through which key positions in the army and the intelligence services were assigned to Assad's clan, including members of his family, inner circle, and the Alawite community.

This has guaranteed unwavering loyalty, stemming from a conviction among these circles, especially the Alawites that their survival is closely associated with that of the regime. Third, the neo-liberal economic policies of Bashar al-Assad and the transition towards the social market economy created a new class of capitalists who were given exclusive access to, and even monopoly of the different sectors of Syria's economy. This new group, in addition to the traditional, wealthy, Sunni elites in Damascus and Aleppo has become largely dependent on the regime, and therefore saw that their economic privileges required maintaining their support of the status quo (Haddad, 2012). Eventually, these overlapping factors have significantly helped Assad to weather political, military, and economic challenges on the internal front.

Beyond the original parameters

Despite Assad's ability to maintain his grip on power, the crisis continued to escalate, especially as it began to be evermore internationalised. A growing number of state and non-state actors who pursued divergent agendas in Syria added to the original complexity of the situation and protracted the conflict. The competing interests of certain regional and international powers were but some among a host of interwoven factors that took the Syrian war out of its original parameters and invited these powers to intervene. Other factors included the Syrian opposition's hopes for a western military intervention, as in the case of Libya, and the regime's military inability to engage in a prolonged guerilla warfare with armed opposition groups, as well as the unprecedented flow of Syrian refugees to neighbouring countries and Europe and the rise of transnational terrorist groups that have been viewed as a global threat. With the involvement of international players like the U.S and Russia, and regional ones like Iran, Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, the Syrian civil war was no longer about the politics but about the geopolitics of Syria.

Key Players

The American involvement in Syria started with calls for President Assad to step down, and though that role later grew, it remained limited to providing limited assistance, including training and equipment to several moderate rebel factions. Such assistance, however, has been far from sufficient to tip the power balance in their favor, and the program was ultimately terminated.

As extremist organisations including al-Qaeda's affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra and The Islamic State in Iraq and Sham, (ISIS) emerged between 2012 and 2013, the focus of the Obama administration shifted towards fighting terror, and thus, an international U.S-led coalition was formed and began conducting airstrikes against ISIS targets in eastern Syria. Simultaneously, the U.S supported the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a joint ground force of Kurdish and Arab Fighters created to fight ISIS. In 2017 and 2018 the U.S conducted punitive airstrikes against several Syrian regime locations as a response to its repeated use of chemical weapons against opposition areas (Humud, Blanchard & Nikitin, 2017). After 2017, as the American-led efforts succeeded in driving ISIS out of most its territories in the East, the U.S objectives saw a strategic transformation towards stabilising the region and countering the Iranian presence.

Russia on the other hand has sought to preserve its long standing and strategic alliance with Syria by working politically and militarily to keep Assad in power. To Russia, the stakes in Syria involve Russia's only naval base on the Mediterranean at the Syrian port of Tartus, and a fear of losing yet another ally in the region should Assad face the fate of former Libyan leader Muammar Ghaddafi. Equally important are Russia's lucrative weapon sales to Assad's government and the reconstruction contracts the latter has promised Russian firms. Furthermore, Russia regards its involvement in Syria to project military might and to present itself as an increasingly influential power in global affairs. Those reasons prompted a direct Russian intervention in the conflict in 2015 to shore up Assad after his forces had suffered various defeats, especially in in the north-western province of Idlib. This intervention has helped Assad recapture vast rebel territories but has also driven the largest waves of external and internal displacement during the conflict (Borshchevskaya, 2018).

Another ally of Assad, Iran, has stepped in earlier in the conflict and has invested vast resources to ensure the survival of the Syrian regime. Tehran's investment has translated to petroleum supplies, credit line extension and large numbers Shia volunteers and IRGC fighters deployed for combat and advisory purposes. The reason behind this support derives from a history of converging interests between the two regimes, and Iran's regional strategy to which Syria is deemed vital. For decades, Tehran has been keen to establish and expand its foothold in Syria, especially as a gateway to its Lebanese proxy, Hezbollah. The latter two, along with Iraq form a crucial axis to Iran's long-term strategic goal of playing a more prominent role in the region. Therefore, Iran has been trying to establish a land route connecting Iran with Lebanon via Iraq and Syria to facilitate moving arms and fighters (Sadjadpour, 2013).

This has provoked Israel, which considers a permanent Iranian presence in Syria an existential threat and led it to conduct dozens of airstrikes against Hezbollah and IRGC targets Syria since 2011. A similar view is shared by both Saudi Arabia and Qatar whose leaderships have actively financed Sunni rebel factions, including hard-line Islamist groups like Jaish al-Islam, to counter Iran's Shi'te influence.

Turkey, where over 3 million Syrians found refuge, has been vocal against the Syrian regime and a sponsor of its political and armed opponents. Turkey's geographic location along Syria's northern border has made it a key player in the conflict and has shaped the primary objectives of its strategy in Syria. Though these objectives initially involved ousting Assad, the focus has been establishing a zone of influence along Tukey's southern border to fend off the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which Turkey sees a as an offshoot of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) and prevent a political Kurdish entity from emerging in the north-eastern region. To that effect, Turkey lunched two military offensives inside Syria and captured large swathes from the Kurds. But Ankara's goals have put it at odds with the U.S, given the American military support of the YPG as a key ally in the fight against ISIS (Sloat, 2018). On the other hand, the geopolitical volatility of the scene resulted in an understanding between Turkey and Assad's main backers, Russia, and Iran, who agreed establish "de-escalation zones" in several areas across Syria, and to the launch the Astana peace process in parallel to Geneva's. Yet, strategic rifts such as the fate of Assad continue to exist among the three countries.

Various peace initiatives have been put forward to bring the warring parties in Syria to the negotiation table, and with them their international backers. The first of such initiatives was the United Nations-sponsored Geneva I, in which an action group[2] consisting of key players have met and issued a *communiqué* stipulating a political transition of power to end the conflict. However, the Russian and American views on the future of Bashar al-Assad diverged causing peace talks to collapse. Over the following years, three other conferences were held as Geneva II, III and IV but without much success. Another attempt took place in the Kazakh capital, Astana in 2015 (months after a peace conference in Vienna[3]) and included several rounds of talks extending until 2018.

[2] Action Group on Syria consisted of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and representatives of the League of Arab States

[3] UN resolution 2254.

The talks were essentially a trilateral effort undertaken by the leaders of Russia, Iran, and Turkey, who agreed to a ceasefire and later to establish "de-escalation zones" in multiple areas across Syria, but their effort was not fruitful either. In 2018, Russia hosted the "Syrian Congress for National Dialogue" in Sochi, but major opposition groups refused to attend.

Almost all these attempts to broker peace have met similar obstacles and concluded with disagreements on the Assad's future role in Syria, and which groups should represent the opposition (some groups are considered terrorist groups by certain players), as well as the presence of foreign militias in Syria.

Illustrating the Conflict

The ongoing violence in Syria has resulted in one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent history, while failure of local and international actors to find common ground has deepened it. Although it is difficult to gauge the exact magnitude of the conflict, the following aspects could help in illustrating its nature and impact, namely on millions of civilians who were forced to leave their homes:

Systematic targeting of civilian areas: Human rights groups have documented vast violations of human rights and international law including indiscriminate attacks and deliberate targeting of civilians by all parties. However, the Syrian government and its allies are accused of most of these attacks through continued bombardment of civilian areas including homes, schools, markets and hospitals using wide-area explosives, barrel bombs and cluster munitions as well as incendiary and chemical weapons (OHCHR-IICISyria, 2018). Though the United Nations seized to count the death toll in Syria, the number is estimated at 470,000 of whom 188,026 are civilians (Violations Documentation Center, 2018).

Arbitrary detention, forced disappearance and torture: Arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment, torture, enforced disappearances and even extermination have been systematic in Syria. An estimate of 117,000 people has been detained or forcibly disappeared, the majority of whom by government forces. 12,679 have died in detention, 6,786 of them under torture (HRW, 2017; SNHR 2018).

Siege, starvation and forced displacement: According to the United Nation's UNHCR and OCHA, 6.5 million Syrians were internally displaced and 5 million sought refuges outside Syria. Overwhelmed, neighbouring countries have restricted the entry of new refugees, leaving

left them exposed to targeting and deprivation. Those who remained inside Syria, including the internally displaced have been subject to systematic siege and starvation. The UN has accused the Syrian government of forcing sieges on 400,000 civilians, using starvation as a weapon of war, and ultimately forcing them to evacuate their areas. Armed groups, namely Ahrar al-Sham and Hai'at Tahrir al-Sham have also been accused of besieging and starving 8000 civilians in the towns of Kefraya and Foua (OHCHR-IICISyria, 2018; Amnesty International 2018).

Sexual and gender-based violence: The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria reported that the Syrian government and its allied militias have used rape and sexual violence against women, girls, and men, to intimidate and punish opposition. The report concluded that these acts amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Commission found that rebel groups, too, have committed sexual violence on a considerably smaller scale (OHCHR-IICISyria, 2018).

Deliberate targeting of medical facilities: Attacks on medical facilities and personnel have happened deliberately and repeatedly. According to Physicians for Human rights, between 2011 and 2017, 446 attacks carried out by the Syrian government and Russia targeted 330 different facilities, 30 attacks were committed by rebel groups and 8 by ISIS. During the same time span 874 medical personnel were killed, 767 of them by Syrian and Russian forces, 48 by rebel groups and 28 by ISIS. The number of such attacks has surged in 2018. 67 attacks were recorded and January and February roughly half of which took place in Eastern Ghouta (Physicians for Human Rights, 2017).

Mandatory conscription: Many young male Syrian refugees have fled Syria to avoid the compulsory drafting into the Syrian military, which in many cases involves combat duty. Numbers have risen notably since a general mobilisation came into effect in 2016 and followed by a crackdown on corruption within the Syrian army, which had previously allowed room for "draft dodging" or at least avoiding assignment to combat missions. On the other hand, accusations against groups like ISIS and the Kurdish YPG of compulsory recruitment, including that of child soldiers, forced many to flee areas under these groups' control (Danish Refugee Council, 2017; HRW, 2017).

The above-mentioned were some of the driving forces that pushed Syrians to flee to neighbouring countries or to take a risky journey through the Mediterranean to reach Europe. Other important factors include the search for economic opportunities after many Syrians lost their livelihoods due the severe damage that the Syrian economy has undergone.

Concluding Remarks

The refugee "crisis" of 2015 saw an abnormal influx of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia towards the Southern shores of Europe. At the core, the unprecedented flow of refugees is attributed to the political upheaval that swept the MENA region in 2011 when a wave of popular protests morphed into political and economic turmoil in some countries or and civil wars in others. As the latter became the case in Syria, Syrian asylum applicants made the bulk of the overall number of asylum applicants.

But though considerable focus has been given to the Syrian refugee crisis, it has hardly been examined in relation to its political origins. Rather, it is often treated as an isolated humanitarian event, or one that was simply caused by 'civil war.' While true, such a broad and simplistic explanation says little about –and sometimes ignores - the underlying politics that did not only create the crisis but also shaped its development.

The Syrian conflict began as wave of pro-democracy protests inspired by the Arab Spring. Large numbers of protesters took to the street to demand reform and later an end to the rule of the Ba'ath party that has been in power since 1963. However, the Syrian government's unwillingness to compromise and its violent response pushed the uprising down the path of militarisation and civil war. The situation was further exacerbated by the involvement of several regional and international actors, including Russia, Iran, the United States, Turkey, and Arab Gulf States. Consequently, the conflict was taken beyond its original parameters as the new actors began to actively pursue conflicting agendas.

The result was dramatic escalation that led to a humanitarian catastrophe. Millions of people became subject to grave war crimes and human rights violations including deliberate targeting of civilians, detention and torture, siege, starvation, forced displacement and sexual violence, forcing them to seek refuge in neighbouring countries or in Europe. Reports from the ground indicate that, besides ISIS and other non-state rebel groups, the Syrian government and its primary allies Russia and Iran are also responsible for various crimes against civilians. However, these violations have not been the only concern for Syrians. Many have left looking for economic opportunities after they lost their sources of income due to the war.

Between 2017 and 2018 the Syrian government, backed by its allies, managed to regain control over major parts of Syria. Since then, Russia has campaigned actively to end economic sanctions over the Syrian regime and urged Western government to contribute to the reconstruction of Syria so that millions of refugees can return.

But most Western powers have rejected these proposals consistently citing the regime's war crimes, and the need for a political transition for returns to be sustainable. Since the beginning of Russia's military intervention, both Moscow and the Syrian and Turkish regimes have been accused of "weaponizing" refugees, first to destabilise Europe, and later to rehabilitate the regime internationally and extract Western reconstruction funding (Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, 2018).

Meantime, the living conditions of refugees in their host countries have become increasingly challenging. This is exhibited though restrictive policies and anti-refugee sentiments in countries like Jordan and Lebanon where the risk of forced returns is rising. On the other hand, Syrians have fears of prosecution, loss of property rights or compulsory conscription if they were forced to return to regime-controlled areas. While refugees feel trapped between these two bitter options, a mass, safe and sustainable return seem unlikely, especially without an internationally backed agreement that provides guarantees for security. Yet, even if such an agreement is to be reached, many Syrian refugees see that it should not entail only war-termination, but also answers to the political origins of the crisis (Yahya, Kassir & Hariri, 2018). To them, this means presenting a roadmap for a political transition and mechanisms for justice and accountability. In parallel, international efforts toward reconstruction and economic rehabilitation are considered crucial guarantees of sustainability as they help the social and economic reintegration of refugees in their areas of origin.

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

CHAPTER 2

THE REFUGEE DEBATE IN PALESTINE/ISRAEL: AN ONGOING NARRATIVE OF STRUGGLES FROM PALESTINIANS TO AFRICANS

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Abstract

Since 1948, with the establishment of the state of Israel and the Palestinian *Nakba* (Catastrophe), the refugee question has become one of the major issues debated not only in the historic Palestine, but also in many countries across the world. Throughout history, several waves of refugees, along with their struggles and demands, have characterized the Jewish state. Accordingly, this chapter aims to analyse the current situation of the most recent waves of non-Jewish African refugees, mainly from Sudan and Eritrea, and their role within the heterogeneous panorama of Israeli social and political activism.

Keywords: Palestinian *Nakba*, Israel, non-Jewish Africans, Sudan, Eritrea, refugees, infiltrators, activism

Introduction

Both the representation of a mythical homeland for the Israeli Jewish settlers based on the Zionist principle of "a land without a people for a people without a land"[1] and the consequential issue of the Right of Return for the indigenous Palestinians have been constructed and consolidated within the land of historical Palestine. In parallel, the two events of the establishment of the state of Israel and the *Nakba* (the Palestinian 'Catastrophe') affected Palestinians through the loss of their home and dispossession of their lands, forcing them to become refugees.

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Palestinian refugees are defined as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 one 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict." These refugees were about 750,000 persons when the Agency began operations in 1950 to some 5 million at present (UNRWA, 2018). On the other hand, Palestinians who remained inside the Jewish state and represent the twenty per cent of the current Israeli population have been subjugated under a hierarchical status dominated by Ashkenazi Jews.

At the time when the 1951 Refugee Convention[2] was borne of the Holocaust and of the experience of European Jews fleeing World War II in Nazi Europe, the just proclaimed state governed by and for Jews started working on the creation of a legal system to prevent Palestinian refugees entering Israel by means of the Prevention of Infiltration law that was enacted in 1954. By this law, 'infiltrator' was defined either as "a national or citizen of the Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Trans-Jordan, or the Yemen" or "was a resident, a visitor in one of these countries" or "a Palestinian citizen or a Palestinian resident without nationality or citizenship" who "entered Israel knowingly and unlawfully" and who was "armed with any instrument or material likely to cause death or serious or dangerous injury to a person".

In the same period, Jews coming from the Arab and Muslim world[3] began immigrating to Israel and they became immediately Israeli citizens

[1] Even though that land was not 'empty', since the Palestinian Arab population was flourished and included also a small number of Jews, the Zionist leaders created such a myth in order to complete the dispossession of the indigenous population and to establish the ancient land of Eretz Israel.

[2] Although this Convention and the 1967 Protocol were ratified respectively in 1954 and 1968, Israel has never incorporated them into domestic law (Yaron, Hashimshony-Yaffe & Campbell, 2013; Ziegler & Berman, 2015).

[3] Also called as *Mizrahim* ('Eastern Jews'), they include Jews coming from Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey, who continue to be at the margins of Jewish Israeli society. The Ashkenazi population, Jews of European, American, and Russian origin, represents the ruling economic, political, cultural elite of the country. The Palestinian citizens of Israel

due to the Law of Return of 1950 granting automatic citizenship to all Jews. Nevertheless, they were placed in transit camps, also called *Ma'abarot*, and later settled in peripheral areas with the aim of marginalising them at various levels and through different tools.

In the following years, as Jews and always in accordance with the Law of Return, other two main groups arrived in Israel, respectively the Ethiopian Jews - also defined *Beta Israel* - in late 1970s and early 1980s, and the Russian Jews in the 1990s. Also in these cases, the new immigrants have dealt with power asymmetries within Israeli society, and in particular racism and discriminations have been used towards the Ethiopian Jewish community.

In a parallel way, in the 1990s an increase in non-Jewish labour migration started and it was especially related to the political and economic changing realities of that time. In fact, since the outbreak of the first *Intifada* in 1987 and the Oslo Accord in 1993 Israel imposed severe restrictions on Palestinian movement from the Occupied Territories, such as it closed border crossings and denied working permits to Palestinians that had previously represented the main source of cheap labour within Israel and forced the division between two distinct Palestinian and Israeli labour markets (Kemp & Raijman, 2007; Schnell, 2001). For this reason, Israel needed further cheap labour force and mainly from non-Jewish international migrants coming from countries such as Romania, Thailand, Turkey, China and the Philippines.

Apart from the case of migrant workers, in general terms, throughout the history of the Israeli state, the great majority of immigrants to Israel was represented by Jews coming from various countries around the world[4]. Such a situation changed in 2005 when the first wave of non-Jewish African refugees arrived in Israel and they became the protagonists of one of the most challenging as well as controversial internal issues in the last decade, widely debated from the public opinion to the institutional level.

It has caused a deeper demarcation between Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants, since the Jewish immigration has continued to be actively encouraged, while the non-Jewish one has been more and more restricted.

correspond to 20 per cent of the total population and they are at the bottom of the Israeli socio-economic and political system.

[4] One of the few exceptions of non-Jewish immigration was the case of Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s, fleeing their war by small boats and picked up by an Israeli cargo in a port in South China since they could not find any other country available to accept them. In that occasion, the former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin granted them political asylum (Omer-Man, 2014).

The most recent non-Jewish and non-white immigration has caused a strong impact on a society based on the assumption that ethnicity is one of the major criteria in the distribution of power and resources (Yiftachel, 2006). In a country whose primary object has historically remained to be a home only for Jews, non-Jewish people have been considered as a threat to the Jewish character of the Israeli state related to "their presence in urban space and their uncontrolled flow through borders" (Yacobi, 2010, p. 15).

In this chapter, I aim to analyse the current status of African refugees, mainly from Sudan and Eritrea, and their most significant struggles within heterogenous forms of political and social grassroots activism existing inside the Israeli state at present. Although in comparison with the number of refugees in other states of the region, such as in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, and also with the number of migrant workers within Israel, the amount of asylum seekers is still small, this issue needs to be explored and questioned. As an increasing academic interest in migration and refugee studies has taken place across many disciplines and through different approaches, this study suggests a further perspective by connecting the specificity of the Israeli case to the current global phenomenon.

Non-Jewish Africans[5] in Israel: from refugees to 'infiltrators'

The number of African refugees[6] in Israel is about 41,477, much less compared to the total of legal migrant workers who are 81,438 and illegal migrant workers who are 15,284 (Israeli Ministry of Interior, July 2016)[7]. Among African refugees, 30,009 people represent the large majority coming from Eritrea and who are mainly escaping from indefinite forced conscription, 8,130 people coming from Sudan and fleeing the conflict in Darfur[8], and 2,815 people coming from other African countries,

[5] An earlier wave of Africans - mainly belonging to the international labour migration - arrived in Israel by air from West Africa during the 1990s, by means of tourist or pilgrim visas, until the vast majority of them was deported in the beginning of the 2000s (Sabar, 2010).

[6] As established by the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the term 'refugee' shall apply to any person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it". The full text is available at the following website http://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html

[7] The data are published on the Israeli Minister of Interior website at the following link: https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/foreign_workers_stats/he/q2_2016_0.pdf

[8] The case of refugees from Sudan is even more complicated since Sudan is an enemy state and it is a punishable crime to enter Israel.

such as from South Sudan, that was formed in 2011 and it has been experiencing an ongoing status of civil war since 2013. The common denominator of such authoritarian places of origin has been the lack of a state protection of its citizens' basic rights and of the freedom of expression for any form of dissent. Despite the legal recognition of refugee status by Israel, there is not institutional support directed to integrate refugees into society and to help them to obtain the legal status of citizenship[9].

In the beginning of 2007, when the conflict in Darfur was internationally recognised, the former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert decided to give 498 Darfuris, as a one-time and humanitarian gesture, a status of group protection (Duman, 2015, p. 1241), but in reality they could not have access to basic rights and to social services. It was considered as a temporary solution by giving automatic group protection instead of individually examining each asylum claim.

In a few years, the number of refugees has significantly increased. One of the main reasons why African refugees have decided to migrate to Israel has been the attractiveness of Israel, perceived by many refugees as being a bridge to Europe and a country in which economic conditions are still better than in the neighbouring states[10]. On the other hand, many of them have arrived in Israel not by choice, but because they were tortured and kidnapped in the Sinai desert by smugglers, who have usually taken advantage of refugees' close community ties in the diaspora in the West that can pay large amount of money to release their relatives[11].

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[9] The data used in this study come from the main Israeli organisations supporting the rights of refugees and migrants, namely ARDC-African Refugee Development Center, ASSAF-Aid Organisation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel, HRM-Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, PHR-Physicians for Human Rights. Founded both by refugees and Israelis, they provide different services towards refugees that include basic needs, legal advocacy, language training, health and psychological assistance.

[10] One of the most tragic events happened in Egypt in 2005 when twenty-seven Sudanese refugees were killed and about two thousand and five hundred people - including women and children - were removed by the Egyptian security forces during a demonstration outside the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) offices in Cairo. Such a dramatic episode of violence clearly showed the deteriorating conditions of refugees and the lack of political will to solve this issue in Egypt.

[11] Human trafficking in the Sinai desert has become a highly profitable business using horrific treatments towards African refugees who are usually kidnapped from refugee camps and sold to torture camps. In many cases, refugees have been obliged to pay large sums of money to secure the release of members of their families or of their groups held captive by smugglers in the Sinai (Sigal Kook Aviv, author's interview, 2016). On the issue of human trafficking and the role of Bedouin smugglers in the Sinai there are several reports documented by both Israeli and international human rights organisations. Among them, see Tortured in Sinai, Jailed in Israel: Detention of Slavery, and Torture Survivors under the Anti-Infiltration Law (Hotline for Refugees and Migrants & Physicians for Human Rights, 2010) and "I wanted to lie down and die": Trafficking and Torture of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

As one of the leading Israeli activists working and struggling with African refugees, Sigal Kook Aviv, explained to me:

> Most of them did not plan to come here, what they do is normally to leave trying to cross the border from Eritrea to Sudan, and then towards the border with Ethiopia, even though they say Ethiopia is an enemy state. They flee everywhere. They fled to Chad, to Libya, to any imaginable place. Most of them look for places where they would not be persecuted, for some of them the easiest way was to migrate to Egypt, and when they came to Cairo, they found secret agency police from Sudan that controlled everything was happening in Egypt, they knew them and persecuted them in Egypt as well. Many from Eritrea were involved in human trafficking and were pushed to come to Israel. The smugglers obliged refugees already in Israel to call their friends and to convince them to come to Israel. This is the way they made money (Kook Avivi, 2016).

When hundreds of refugees quickly turned into thousands and thousands of people, the central issue in the Israeli public debate started to deal with the use of a hostile lexicon to describe the newcomers. African refugees have been defined as 'infiltrators', the same way used in the 1950s to describe Palestinian refugees who wanted to go back to their homeland after the establishment of the state of Israel "at first to salvage their belonging and work their lands and then to commit sabotage and terror attacks" (Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, 2016). More than fifty years later, in 2008, the Israeli government applied again this term to identify African refugees crossing illegally the border between Egypt and Israel after enduring perilous journeys from their countries of origin to the Sinai Peninsula. As described by the spokeswoman for the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, Anat Ovadia-Rosner:

> The way through which they connected the global phenomenon of refugees with the conflict here and with the security problem, was genius. In that way, African refugees are considered to be a security threat, such as the Palestinians and other 'enemies'. People do not want to care about this problem, they do not have any compassion towards them. The general atmosphere is completely against refugees (Ovadia-Rosner, 2016).

From that time, non-Jewish Africans entering Israel have been no longer considered as refugees, but as 'infiltrators', by violating the Refugee Convention and its prohibition to impose penalties on refugees who illegally enter another country if they present themselves to the authorities with no much delay.

By labelling all African refugees as *mistanemim* ('infiltrators' in Hebrew), several institutional members, including the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Minister of Culture and Sport Miri Regev and the former leader of the ultra-orthodox political party Shas Eli Yishai, used such a provocative and powerful language to directly imply that being a refugee is a crime and to consider refugees as 'a cancer' inside Israel and, eventually, to suggest expelling all of them from the country[12]. Since mid-2009, when ethno-religious and extreme right-wing parties gained much more power, the Israeli government has introduced several measures to deter further arrivals of African refugees. As underlined in the 'Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination' submitted in January 2012 by the African Refugee Development Centre (ARDC), racial discrimination inside Israel has increased arousing violent acts against members of the African refugee community.

At the institutional level, one of the main policies adopted against African refugees took place in early 2012 when the Knesset passed Amendment III to the Prevention of Infiltration Law in which stated administrative detention of people crossing the border with Egypt for up to three years. Nonetheless, the Israeli Supreme Court voided it and ordered the government to release about 2,000 refugees among men, women, and children. As in many other contexts, the Israeli state did not fully comply with the Court's decision and in 2013 passed Amendment IV allowing for administrative detention for one year, and interminable administrative detention in Holot[13] for people who could not be deported in their countries of origin. The creation of such a 'open' dentition camp has not improved refugees' everyday conditions of life, rather they have continued to be excluded from their basic rights and to suffer daily exploitations.

In addition, by Amendment IV, the government started coercing them to sign 'voluntary returns', signifying documents that have allowed the Israeli government to send refugees back to third countries, mainly Rwanda and Uganda, in return for cash.

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[12] All these public declarations are documented by the journalist David Sheen and can be read and watched at the following website: http://www.davidsheen.com/racism/

[13] It has been defined as an 'open' detention camp located in the Negev desert (south Israel) since the detainees can leave the facility during the day, but they have to answer to roll-calls (in the beginning three times per day, at present only once at night). If they do not show up, they are automatically transferred to the other jails nearby, such as Saharonim that is a proper detention centre, Ktzi'ot that was traditionally used to hold Palestinians, Sadot that includes different buildings for education, health, teaching, sport and cultural activities, and Nachal Aviv that is formed by rows of tents.

These procedures have not guaranteed that refugees would have been protected against the possibility to be sent back to their countries of origin or that they would have access to basic rights and services.

On the contrary, Israeli human rights organisations have collected testimonies of African refugees sent back to their countries where they have experienced tortures, imprisonments and, in several cases, they have been eventually killed.

A year later, in December 2014, the Knesset passed another amendment, Amendment V, in which was stated that refugees would have been detained for a period of twenty months in Holot, and if they had tried to cross the border with Egypt, they would have first spent three months in prison and then transferred to Holot. In the meanwhile, the border fence between Egypt and Israel was completed by the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a very few African refugees were able to cross it. This meant that most people in Holot have been already living in Israel for several years and were sent to the 'open' detention centre directly from the Ministry of Interior where they went to renew their temporary stay (Kook Avivi, author's interview, 2016).

In contrast with such governmental policies, Israeli non-governmental and human rights organisations have played a crucial role in petitioning for refugees' rights, opposing new laws and discussing the refugee issue in the political national agenda as well as providing essential services such as food, housing, and medical supplies. One of the major successes was a legal petition submitted by a few Israeli human rights organisations[14] to the High Court of Justice calling for the invalidation of Amendment V that was partially accepted and, consequently, the detention period in Holot was reduced from twenty to twelve months.

Since throughout the last few years Israeli policies towards the refugees' issues have often changed, it is difficult to give a comprehensive overview regarding what has happened to the majority of refugees. For several people who have been released from prison, a free one-way bus ticket to Tel Aviv has represented a new starting point in their life, even though in very difficult conditions. Once arrived in Tel Aviv, most of them has entered social networks mainly founded on common national origins in order to get primary assistance with clothing and food. Later on, they have usually started looking for other basic priorities to improve their lives, such as for a job, a house, along with the rights to education (in particular, the study of Hebrew and English language) and health services.

[14] For more information, see this report at the following website: http://hotline.org.il/en/press/the-government-is-continuing-to-ignore-and-mock-the-high-court-of-justice/

In such a context, Sudanese and Eritreans have achieved a sort of temporary protection in the form of a conditional release visa, called the 2A5[15], that they have received automatically without any review of their asylum claim and that they must renew every three months. Until November 2010, the Israeli government did not condemn employers who hired refugees, but then, after a new law in which was stated that this conditional release visa was not a working permit, it has become more complicated to be hired (Furst-Nichols & Jacobsen, 2011, p. 14). Such an unstable status has discouraged refugees to remain in Israel, and, at the same time, it has made refugees' work conditions much more difficult. By means of this conditional release visa, a protection from deportation has been contemplated, but no additional rights have been provided to the refugees.

At the institutional level, such governmental policies can be read as an attempt to control the African refugee community, but they can also be considered as a non-policy approach unable to reach long-term solutions. This, also described as 'chaotic bureaucratic ambiguity' (Afeef, 2009, p. 11) and 'governmental unruliness' (Willen, 2010), has continued to represent the current strategy used by the Israeli government.

On the other hand, at the civil society level, as it will be explained in the next paragraph, the issue of refugees has been mostly taken into account by NGOs, human right organisations, individual volunteers and political activists: since the initial waves of African refugees, they have been mainly engaged with refugees' basic needs, such as from food and clothing to medical services. Although these forms of aid and solidarity campaigns were quite effective at the very beginning, their way to include African refugees in the Israeli public debate and society has been problematic. As illustrated by Haim Yacoby (2009), the so-called 'NGOisation of human rights' has represented an evident process related to this phenomenon, and in particular to the relationship between African refugees, along with their ability to organise themselves autonomously, and Israeli human rights organisations and activists.

Voices and stories from African refugees together with Israeli activists

Throughout these legislative and political passages evidencing the lack of a legal status for refugees in Israel, the everyday life of African refugees has become even more complex, not only within 'open' camps and prisons, but also inside the major Israeli cities.

[15] This status is based on the 2008 UNHCR recommendation calling for Eritreans' group protection as the majority of them can be included in the Refugee Convention definitions (Müller 2015, 9).

On the one hand, since the beginning, African refugees have attempted to organise themselves and to promote their active role within Israeli society to emerge as an independent actor able to struggle for their own rights and causes. On the other hand, several Israeli NGOs, human rights organisations, and student groups (especially from Tel Aviv University and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Be'er Sheva) have challenged such governmental restrictions and non-policies, and, in a parallel way, they have tried to take the state role in providing social services to refugees.

As demonstrated by the most successful political mobilisations organised by African refugees in the end of 2013 and early 2014, when thousands of refugees marched out of the 'open' camp in Holot and headed towards the Knesset in Jerusalem (African Refugee Development Centre, 2015), they addressed directly the government demanding their asylum requests. The first people, mostly Sudanese refugees, who decided to march were desperate since they thought to be realised from Saharonim prison and to join their relatives and friends, rather they were deported to the 'open' camp in Holot. By organising what have been called 'Marches for Freedom', they quickly spread across the country and set out alternative ways of struggling against the Israeli government as well as resisting everyday discriminations. Despite being considered the most invisible part of Israeli society, African refugees have succeeded in becoming the most talked-about subject during the peak of their demonstrations.

What started in the mid December 2013 represented a turning point in the sense that it was the first time African refugees led and planned autonomously their own protests. These acts have been also considered a first attempt of civil disobedience that has remained at the core of different forms of protest used by African refugees. Such a central standpoint has been defined as the most significant element of recent struggles also by most Israeli Jewish activists I interviewed during my fieldwork in summer 2016[16], as Elisheva Milikowsky, who was firstly involved in the students' group at Ben-Gurion University and then worked for human rights organisations such as ASSAF and Physicians for Human Rights, and Moran Mekamel, one of the leading figures of the Negev Refugee Center, described:

[16] The aim of my current post-doctoral research is to focus on the main heterogeneities, challenges and struggles experienced by the most marginalised communities inside Israel in relation to the ongoing social and political protests. In detail, I intend to explore and to analyse social and political counter-narratives emerging from the most silenced actors of Israeli society. I conducted my latest fieldwork in summer 2016, mainly in Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem.

> In 2014 the protests were led by them; we only help for technical stuff. Everything was organised by the community. In the media someone tried to represent it as left-wing, that anarchists led the protests for their interests, but it was not true, it was very much led by them (Milikowsky, 2016).

In the winter of 2014, I was marching with them from the first day, it was unbelievable, something that in my opinion should be written in the history books, it was a lesson how to arrange non-violent struggles. I never seen or participated in anything like that before. It was a very hard month, also to see the reaction of Israeli society. It was a great honour to be part of it (Mekamel, 2016).

Israeli Jewish activists supported African refugees' decisions and helped them only in terms of logistic and contacts with media and police, but they did not take any leading role in such protests. In a few cases, Eritreans and Sudanese very quickly pushed those Israelis who wanted to take a leading role out. Among the protesters, every kind of decision - from sharing food to starting a new political strategy - was taken by voting: a democratic practice represented the foundation of their powerful determination to achieve their asylum rights. As for the majority of Israeli society it was impossible that Eritreans and Sudanese could be able to plan such protests and marches by themselves, the government along with the mainstream media channels started accusing that there were left-wing activists behind who were trying to use African refugees for their own agenda.

In the meanwhile, as several interviewees refereed to me, many Israeli Jewish activists working with refugees have been monitored by the police and a few of them also interrogated. Such a tense climate is not either new or unexpected if it is compared with the increase of violence against African refugees and other marginalised groups inside Israel. In response to the higher influxes of refugees and supported by the governmental exclusionary discourse, violence against African refugees has become more frequent and extreme through assaults, stabbings, arsons, shootings and with the aim of creating a constant status of fear among such communities. As a result, a xenophobic popular mobilisation has been disseminated and legitimised within Israel implementing daily anti-refugees' practices (Duman, 2015).

Although African refugees' different forms of protest and struggle - from marches to hunger and labour strikes - have not evolved into more organised and formal political movements, they have been able to get the attention of the public and to raise awareness of their problem, both inside Israel and abroad.

Nevertheless, they did not have a real impact in the end, and very soon the African refugee community went down to a deep depression mixed to a strong disappointment that pushed many of them to accept to be sent to third countries.

One of the main problems of such waves of actions, especially among the leading figures, was related to the fact that they thought to obtain immediate results, while they did not.

Most of these protests ended violently through physical and psychological pressures, and in several cases the government arrested and deported the community leaders since they were the most integrated, they could speak good Hebrew and they had a job. This governmental strategy had also the intention to break common struggles between Eritreans and Sudanese as well as to weaken each community (Kook Avivi, author's interview, 2016).

Another controversial issue has been the role of the Israeli left-wing, and mainly the Zionist Left[17], in such a question. Only a few parliament members have been interested in the African refugees' struggle, especially from Meretz Party[18] and Hadash[19], while the Labour Party has remained rather ambivalent. It has never become a core issue within the Israeli left-wing that has continued to spend most of time and energy in supporting their cause against the ongoing military occupation and in being in solidarity with the Palestinian people. In line with this, a major critique coming from a few Israeli leftist activists who, on the other hand, have been engaged with the African refugees' struggle has dealt with the necessity of creating a 'huge democratic block of the Left', composed of the Arab List, Meretz Party and a part of the Labour Party, to work together about common struggles on the side of human rights (Shtayim, author's interview, 2016).

In representing the place inside Israel in which African refugees' daily reality has been the most visible and the most conflictual one, south Tel Aviv has become very soon the core of such protests. This is also the reason why most initiatives in solidarity with refugees have started in Levinsky Park, close to the Central Bus Station.

[17] The Zionist Left, along with what has been defined as the 'Israeli peace camp', has historically represented the Israeli Jewish mainstream left-wing supporting the 'two-state' solution with the creation of a viable, independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. More recently, it has lost its internal legitimacy especially in the aftermath of the 2015 legislative elections.

[18] Although in the 1990s it took a central position within the Zionist left-wing, since the political elections in 2015 it has been crushed by the migration of the majority of its supporters to either the Zionist Union or to the Joint List.

[19] Founded in 1977, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality has united Jews and Palestinians with the aim of reaching peace, equality, democracy and worker's rights. In 2015 elections, it joined into a new coalition called the 'Joint List' along with the United Arab List, the National Democratic Assembly (Balad) and the Arab Movement for Renewal (Ta'al).

In this peculiar context, where I conducted most of my fieldwork, refugees have shared their marginalised living conditions with other underprivileged communities, and in particular with the Mizrahi population[20].

The situation in south Tel Aviv (mainly in the poorest areas such as Shapira, Neve Shanan and Levinsky) is very tense and hard, not just because of the refugees' arrival, but for the lack of infrastructures and services due to the complete absence of socio-economic policies to revaluate such neighbourhoods.

On the other hand, at the grassroots level, a few examples of cooperation between the local population, the African refugee community and Israeli activists have attempted to construct a new discourse based on common forms of oppression and poverty existing in the area. Successful initiatives have been mainly led by *Ahoti* (Sister) - for Women in Israel, that is a Mizrahi feminist organisation promoting social and economic justice by starting from a feminist perspective and dealing with the interconnection of ethnic, national, social, class and gender narrative identities. Mizrahi women along with Ethiopians, Palestinians, Bedouins, migrant workers, refugees and other marginalised communities have worked together to change the current political, cultural, and economic cleavages existing within Israeli society[21].

By a rather different approach, other grassroots initiatives have taken place, such as the most well-known 'Levinsky Soup' (*Marak Levinsky* in Hebrew) through which volunteers distributed food to refugees. This was the combination of home cooking offered by common people who became involved in the project and collections from restaurants and bakeries in order to provide up to 850 meals in a single evening, and also clothing for hundreds of refugees. As Yigal Shtaym, the main responsible of the project, told me:

> In 2012 the situation of African refugees became a disaster, there was a moment when I was very aware to do something, and I think it was a part of the Occupy Tel Aviv movement. That was the atmosphere that helped me.

20 The division of Tel Aviv is not only geographical, but it is related to ethnic and class internal conflicts: residents of north Tel Aviv (also called the 'White City', as UNESCO nominated Tel Aviv's collection of Bauhaus architecture as a World Cultural Heritage site) are usually upper-middle class Ashkenazi people, while in south Tel Aviv (the most impoverished part of the capital labeled as the 'Black City', in juxtaposition to the 'White City') the historic population is represented by *Mizrahim* experiencing hard conditions of poverty and marginalisation. The relationship between ethnic cleavages and class stratification is at the core of Israeli society and its internal issues. About this topic, see the following book White City, Black City: Architecture and War in Tel Aviv and Jaffa (Rotbard, 2005).

21 For further information on their role, aims and activities see the following website http://www.achoti.org.il/?page_id=414

> We survive for a year and half in giving supper in the Levinsky Park, with no money, I think it was the best meal in town for a long time. It happened because it was under my eyes, it was here (Shtaym, 2016).

Although similar initiatives have claimed that formal political processes cannot always be considered the best way to achieve social change and to empower citizens to stand up and react towards dramatic events, they have been also questioned since they have not concretely faced power structures or affected current policies. If the immediate provision for basic humanitarian needs related to housing, food and health care by a few spontaneous groups and human rights organisations has been significant especially in the peak of such waves of migrations, it has been not enough in the long term. The arrival of refugees has also caused further tension between human rights organisations and the local population. In particular, historic residents, mostly Mizrahi people, have felt to be excluded from the decision process taken by such organisations regarding African refugees in their own neighbourhoods. This ongoing deadlock is still real, as explained by Anat Ovadia-Rosner:

> Nowadays, the stereotype of NGOs / human rights organisations is related to the fact that common people think that organisations like us represent the elite from north Tel Aviv. It's not true, but it's a stigma. I do not want to be portrayed as an enemy, as a rival towards people from south Tel Aviv. Our common enemy is the policy of the government. The struggle here is against the government. We should have a common struggle (Ovadia-Rosner, 2016).

Conclusion

The current legislation has been planned to make African refugees' life miserable and desperate, and consequently to oblige them to leave the country by accepting terrible conditions imposed through the 'voluntary returns'. If African refugees do not see a future in Israel, they do not have any reason to remain, even though it is more dangerous to leave to third countries or, as it has often happened, to their places of origin. In a few cases, refugees who have decided to remain have started focusing on their homeland situation, such as sending money to IDP (internally displaced people) camps, organising actions against their regimes, and supporting rebel groups. By trying to change politics in their countries of origin from outside, they have needed to establish connections with other diaspora communities, mainly in Europe and in the United States.

On the other hand, looking at the Israeli Jewish side, the issues of responsibility and awareness have been at the core of my interviews as many Israeli activists have to constantly face the following rhetoric question: "Why do not you help Jewish people?". This reflects the current Israeli society in which the national-patriotic feeling is becoming even stronger than in the past and it continues to generate an endless sense of victimhood, which has come from the Holocaust trauma and has been regenerated in a constant conflict among most Jewish people.

Most of Israeli Jewish citizens fear non-Jews, and in general of the so-called 'Others', people who do not come from their same backgrounds and histories, including historically the Palestinians and more recently the African refugees. In opposition to this, Israeli Jewish activists, who have been involved in diverse forms of grassroots struggles and protests in solidarity with the most underprivileged communities inside the country, have referred to Israel as a place where everybody is a refugee and it should be open towards further refugees, since being a refugee represents their story as well. The fact that most Jews are descendant of refugees has been another issue at the core of my interviews:

When I met refugees and understood how Israel treated them, I started thinking about other levels of problematic issues inside Israel, about the military occupation, and deeper about the essence of being here. It made me able to see how the government controls everything, from military occupation to social level, how people treated other people, about racism, about power control. For me everything is very connected, everything comes together. For most Israeli people being a Jewish state means you cannot help refugees that are not Jews. For me it is the opposite. A Jewish state should be the first state accepting refugees (Milikowsky, 2016).

In line with this, working with African refugees has also meant for many of my interviewees working with the Israeli public and trying to change the reality from within. In order to get awareness among Israelis about these issues and to create bridges among people, Israeli activists along with African refugees have organised both formal and informal events, such as academic lectures, guided tour to Holot, specific initiatives with women and children refugees, collaboration with universities (Mekamel, author's interview, 2016). Although many of these Israeli Jewish activists have recognised their own actions as political activism, they have been also aware that most of the Israeli society is still afraid of declaring to take actively part in such a change.

Further evidence is the fact that discourses and practices used towards the Palestinians have been reproduced in more recent years in relation to the African refugee issue. In depicting them as dangerous and existential threats, the government,

supported by mainstream media and right-wing parties, has augmented a more generalised panic inside the country. Ethnicity, race, gender and class have continued to be prevalent factors in fragmenting the society and in instigating exclusionary responses.

The Israeli governments, throughout different historical moments and political coalitions have used similar strategies and applied similar policies to oppress the poorest and most marginalised people, from *Mizrahim* to Palestinians, from African refugees to Bedouins. As a 'copy-past' system, it has always worked, it has never failed (Kook Avivi, author's interview, 2016). It is in this context that Israel, a country founded on the refugee issue, has continued to refuse to adopt a coherent asylum policy and to take responsibility on this, from the time of the Palestinian *Nakba* to the present with Sudanese and Eritrean refugees. Indeed, an asylum resolution would mean reintroducing the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees into the political discourse and deciding which road to take at the current crossroad: either carrying the dominant exclusionary and racist policy on or listening to the heterogenous refugees' voices in a wider perspective by recognising their claims in terms of global human rights.

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CHAPTER 3

ZENAB'S PROTECTIVE SCROLL. A MIGRANT VOICE, AND A GRAPHIC ESSAY

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Abstract

Despite its epistemological shortcomings, the anthropological use of qualitative methods and of argumentation by illustration as a source of knowledge has a positive side: that of helping us surmounting the opposition between us and the others and allow for empathy to check our analytical and cultural biases. Availability to listen and to let other people's minds in ours is an essential corollary of anthropological research. The following paragraphs and drawings are an attempt to both let a "migrant voice" be freely expressed within an academic publication and a mediated form of reaching out to cultural values and experiences that lay outside the bounds of the host population. It offers an edited and anonymised testimony interspersed with drawings inspired by the Ethiopian art of the *abənnät*.

Keywords: human mobility, migrant voices, travel memories, Ethiopian illustrations

Refugee crises, migration flows, and mass tourism tend not to be jointly analysed, and yet they are three concurring facets of present-day human mobility, as they frequently converge in time and space to places that, for diverse reasons – namely, affluency – act as population magnets. Longing for safety, for jobs and for leisure are not mutually exclusive drives; on the contrary, they often feed each other, complexifying the pull-and-push analytical approach to human mobility.

In a much-quoted 2015 article in the British newspaper *The Guardian*, Mawuna Remarque Koutonin, the editor of *SiliconAfrica*, has made an interesting point about the debatable but usually not debated nature of racial categorisations surrounding the lexical distinction between "expats" and "migrants" when referring to transnational working mobility. In Western vocabulary, he says, everyone can be a migrant, but "expat" is a word exclusive to migrant "Europeans" (a term he equates with "whites" and "anyone with roots in a western country"; Koutonin, 2015).

In fact, the ideological framework that applies to this self-ingratiating distinction extends much further to encompass a labyrinthine portrait of national identities, social boundaries, and a myriad of economic and demographic inequalities. Is an asylum-seeker not a migrant? A tourist not a (temporary) exile? Can't a migrant, or indeed an invading soldier, not be viewed, and view him/herself, as a tourist? Legal and security apparatuses are summoned to politically legitimise such social distinctions and such semantic borders, but in doing so they create the basis upon which performative discourses can dialogically develop in multiple contexts, and somehow establish some sort of parodical common ground where mobile and non-mobile people, insiders and outsiders meet and come to grips with linguistic and cultural diversity.

That the above-mentioned correlations tend to be inadmissible as propositions in the public arena and in most specialist studies is a given, as they threaten to inconveniently pull the rug from under ideological conviction and narrative certainty. In this respect, for whomever may find such correlations palatable, Portugal could stand out as a particularly rich case-study. Being a traditionally poor and peripheral country, its population has for centuries tended to migrate and establish communities of various sorts in the four corners of the world. Such solipsist marginality was strikingly dissolved three decades after its accession to the European Economic Community (later the European Union) in 1986. The traumatic aftermath of the worldwide 2008 financial crisis that led to a state of near bankruptcy of public finances was characterised by a *de facto* loss of the country's national sovereignty, and far-reaching legislative and structural transformations during the so-called "troika years".

This short period was marked by direct and indirect interventions of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Central Bank, not only in Portuguese public finances and economy but also in core legislative areas such as employment, housing, transport, and migration policies. By 2015, the country that emerged from these intensive transformative four years was profoundly challenged by an unprecedented movement of incoming people (Lestegás, 2019). As its capital city and other urban conglomerations started to accommodate a sudden and massive tourist boom and a wave of "expats" (that is, affluent migrants from all world's regions), they also began attracting a growing number of low-income "migrants" to work in both the tourist services industry and in intensive greenhouse agriculture. As is obvious, mass tourism, expat settlement and economic immigration aren't in themselves rare phenomena in today's richer world. What was notable was the fulminant way in which it occurred, to the point that in just four years Portugal became the world's fourth country most dependent on tourism (WEF, 2018), a sector making for almost 20% of the national GDP just before the Covid19 pandemic hit, in 2019 (from under 12% in 2000).[1]

A concurring factor in this new situation was the impact of the Libyan and Syrian conflicts on Europe-bound migration flows, and novel securitising conceptualisations aimed at furthering legal and social borders between the statuses of political refugees and economic migrants. Given Portugal's enduring economic stagnation and it's geographic position, the territory had been mostly untouched by the intensifying of Middle Eastern and African migration that in the previous 20 years growingly affected European political and social life. But after 2015, the ground had been cleared to put in practice new migration policies and to embrace the European-wide pull towards mitigating some of the most the negative effects of the Dublin Agreement. The country's government enthusiastically embraced the "welcoming" of non-European refugees and vowed to accommodate a share of the refugee/asylum-seekers/migrants amassed in Greek and Italian triage camps.

I found myself being pulled towards trying to understand these above trends, both in my teaching and researching practices. Not only were the classrooms' composition drastically changing, thanks to the growing number of European and non-European foreign students, but all aspects of Lisbon, and generally Portuguese, public life were being called upon to incorporate this new mobile reality.

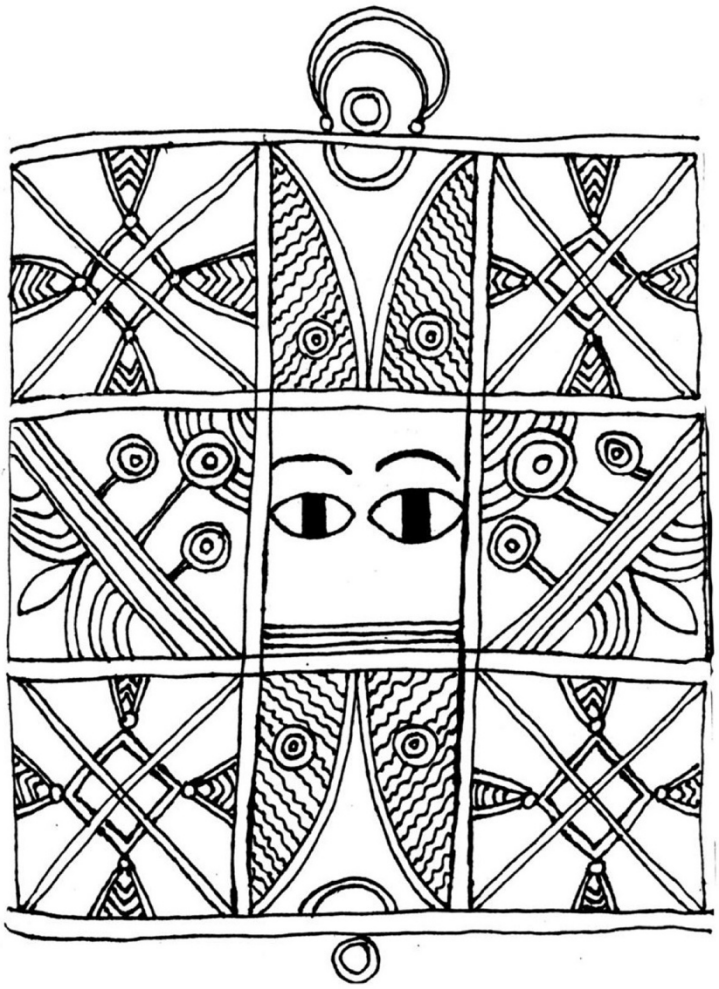
[1] World Data Atlas, 2021. On the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on Portuguese tourism industry, see Almeida and Silva, 2020.

From 2012 onwards, teaching courses on migration, on wars and conflicts, on Europe-Africa relations, working with refugees and asylum-seekers, surveying Asian workers in rural areas, and discussing tourism and gentrification, became for me varying but, as I saw (and see) it, complementary aspects of the study of contemporary human mobility (see Ramos, 2016; Malet Calvo and Ramos, 2018; Pereira et al, 2021).

It was during my inquiries with refugee/asylum-seekers/migrants that I met Zenab (a pseudonym), who had left her hometown in Ethiopia in 2013, had crossed the Sudanese and Libyan deserts towards Tripoli at the height of the second Libyan war, and had managed to board a flooding and overcrowded dinghy headed towards international waters in the hope of attaining European shores by being picked up by a Search and Rescue naval operation. My repairing with her wasn't simply that of an interviewer, since she was also for a Pro period my student and confident, and an informant on Ethiopian matters; concurrently, I sometimes acted as her tourist guide and as mediator in her travails in the face of Portuguese byzantine bureaucracy.

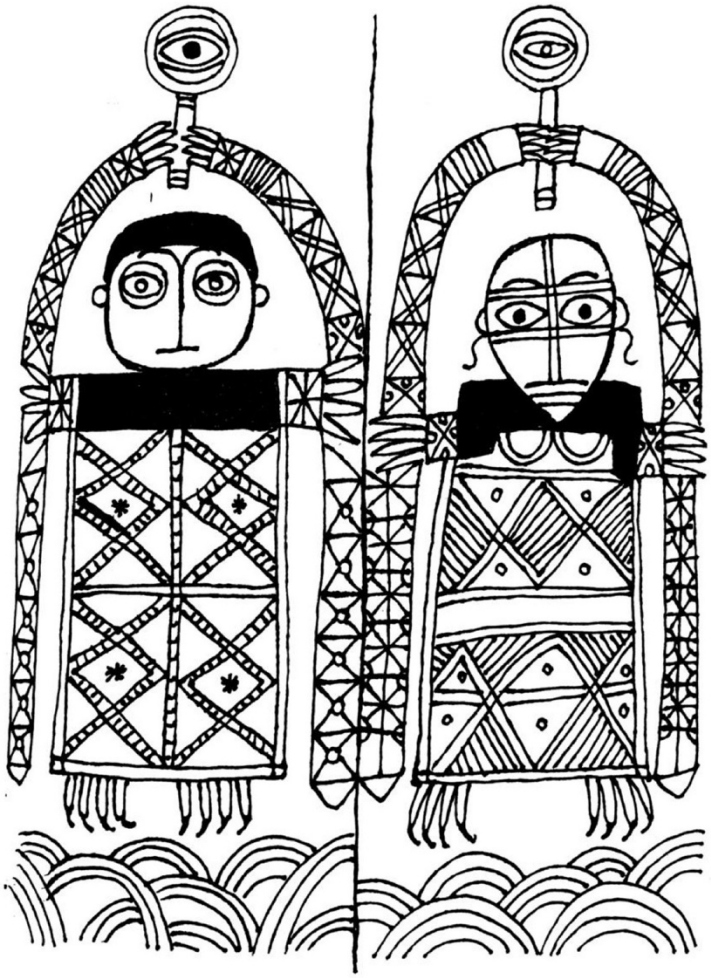
The text below is a strongly edited excerpt of my interviews with her, intentionally cleansed from identifying markers that could somehow jeopardize her requested anonymity. The accompanying illustrations are the result of my rather inept attempts at graphically interpreting her odyssey. In this, I drew inspiration from the very formal, and yet improvising, framework of the imagetic features of Ethiopian *abənnät* productions.[2]

[2] *Abənnäts*, more commonly (but mistakenly) known as *asmäts* ("hidden words" or "protective ('magic') scrolls"), are illustrated manuscripts produced by *däbtäras*, unordained clergymen of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, who are practitioners of traditional medicine and masters of "magical" incantations of various kinds (on a comprehensive review of Ethiopian *abənnäts,* see Gidena Adissu Kebede, 2017; also Chernetsov, 2003).



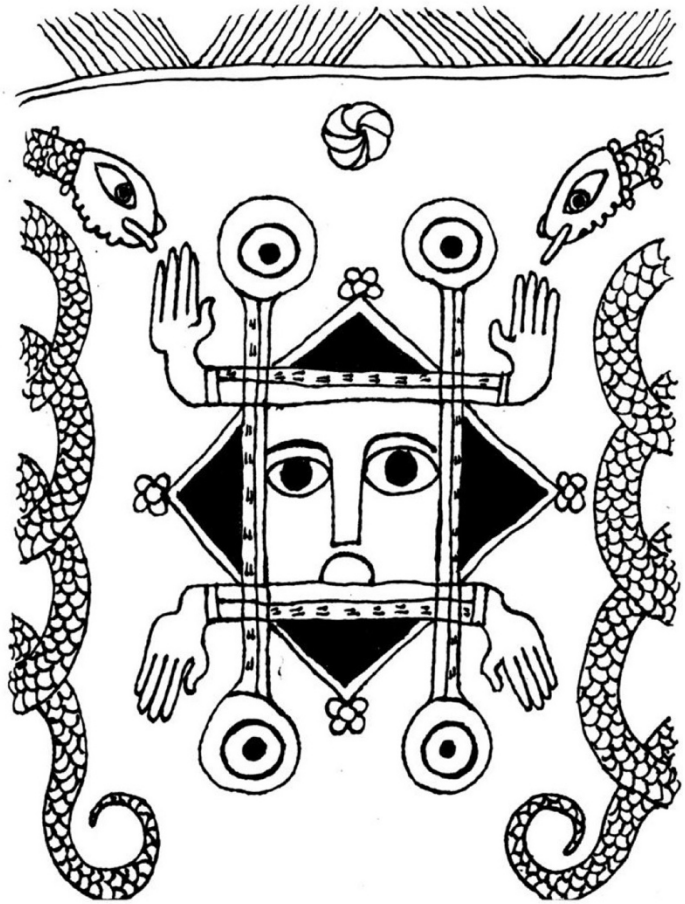
It is you who call me Asylum-seeker and not migrant and not tourist ∷ Why you want to know about me? I tell you my story and what I get in return? You want people to be sorry for me?

If I say I made it, I am blessing the traffickers and the police and you ∷ If I tell you I don't like it here, you say that is my problem, why I don't go back ∷



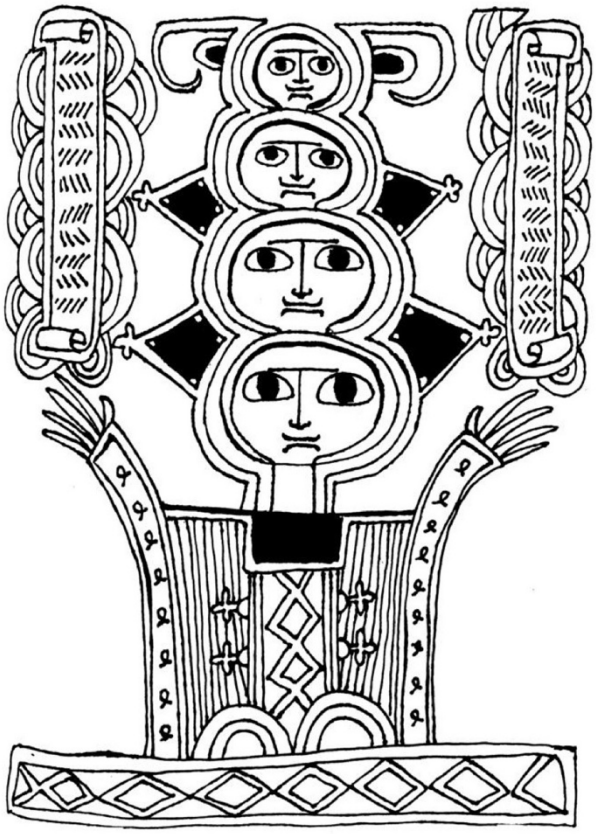
Ok, I tell you my story and you can believe it or not ⁝ I don't care ⁝⁝
My name is Zenab ⁝ That means "Precious Jewel" in my country ⁝ I speak Amharynia., Oromiffa., Arabic and English ⁝ I am learning some Portuguese, but I prefer to learn German and go there ⁝⁝

Who wants to stay here? There are no good jobs ⁝ I have no one, that is no family and no friends ⁝ Plus, the SEF and the people that do the reports for my residence visa. don't recognise my qualification ⁝ I took the nursing degree in Addis and I trained as nurse in Hayat hospital ⁝⁝



But here they say you have to go back to study from the beginning because I can't get my Ethiopian certification ⁝ Here there is no embassy and I can't go to Paris to ask in the consulate ⁝⁝ I cry when they say "we welcome the asylum seekers, we are very open" ⁝ That is what they say to look good to the outside ⁝⁝

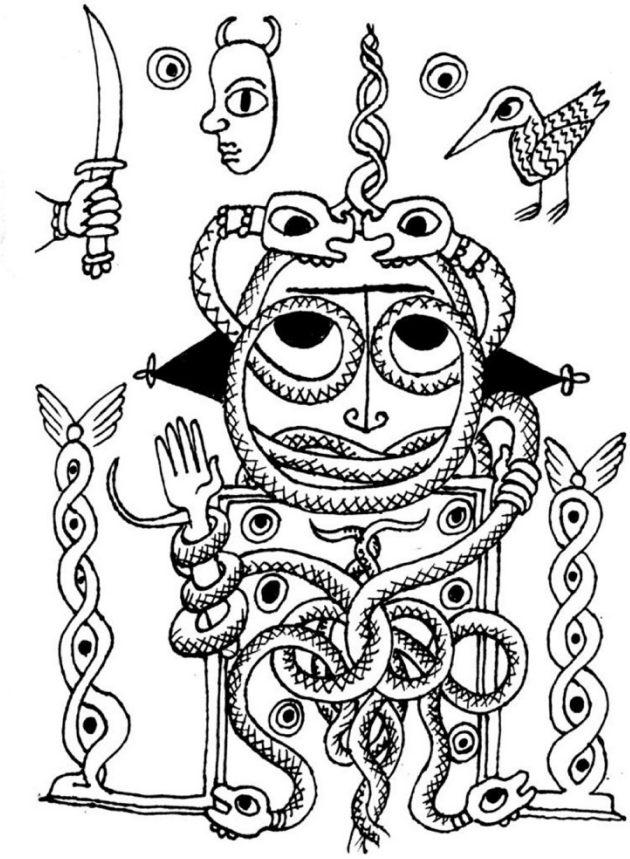
To them I am only like a thousand-birr note ⁝ The government gets money from Europe to accept me ⁝ The CPR gets money from the government to keep me in the Bobadela centre ⁝ The language teacher gets money from CPR to make me learn a language I don't need ⁝ And the SEF people enjoy giving me a hard time for free ⁝⁝



We are a mix family, Oromo and Amhara, Bétäkrestyan and Islam ⁝ My father wanted that I married soon ⁝ This is the custom in the rural area. ⁝ He wanted that I marry in a family of the kebele next to our village ⁝⁝

I said no ⁝ I said I wanted to study and become a nurse ⁝ He beat me and locked me in the house ⁝ So, I ran to Addis ⁝⁝

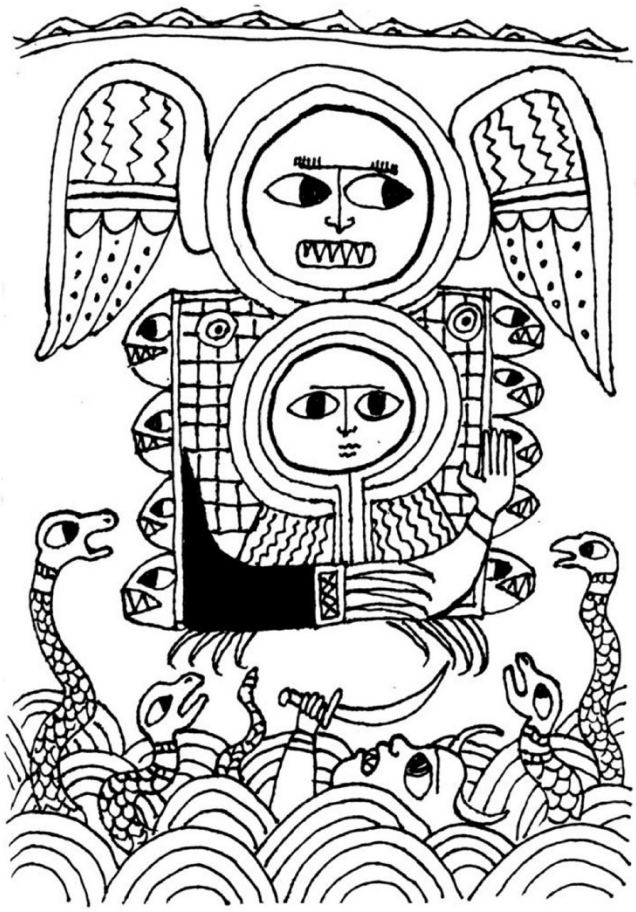
I made the trip on foot and went to live with my mother's cousin and her husband ⁝ I worked in the house and was allowed to study ⁝ I finished my degree and my training in Addis and went back to our woreda. ⁝ I married there but my husband didn't want me to work ⁝ He wanted me at home all the time ⁝ I went back to my family, but my father was angry and locked me inside ⁝⁝



I asked friends to help me and ran away again ⁝ My friends were working in Khartoum and so I took the Metema road with them ⁝ I worked in a big family house, cleaning and cooking ⁝ It was there I learned Arabic ⁝ But the husband of my lady became in love with me ⁝⁝

He wanted to take me as second wife ⁝ I was afraid to say no, I didn't want to lose my job and go back to Ethiopia. ⁝ So, I said yes but one night I left the house ⁝ I took the Libyan road ⁝ The Libyans are very racist against Habesha but for me it was ok because I know Arabic and I know the Koran ⁝⁝

In Libya I never said I wanted to go to Europe ⁝ I arrived in Tripoli after the bombings and the death of the Coronel Khadafi ⁝ I said to the police that I was working for an Arab family ⁝
In the house lived many different people ⁝ I was staying with two Ethiopian women ⁝ They were not careful ⁝ They were Christian and could not speak proper Arabic ⁝
The police became suspicious and tracked them to the house ⁝ At night they came and arrested us ⁝ They took us to prison ⁝ That was very hard ⁝ We were always afraid because the police always rape women prisoners ⁝ First, was the older woman ⁝ The other night was the younger ⁝ So, I knew they were coming for me ⁝

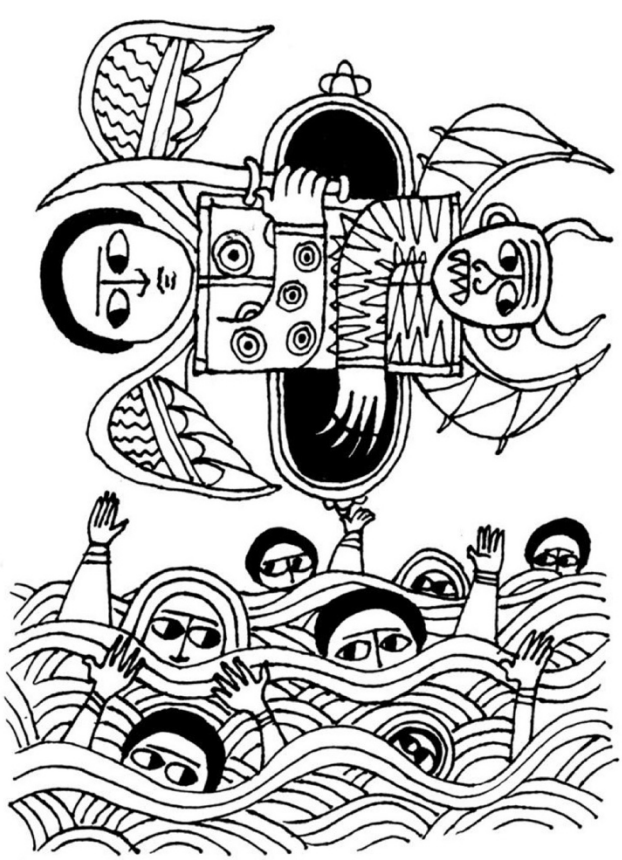


When I was being dragged by three police, a Libyan working for the UN came and said that he wanted to interrogate me : He knew what was going to happen and he helped me : He took me near the gate of the prison and said to me: run :: So I ran and was free : I went to the house and got the money that I was hiding there : I had a telephone of a man who deals with the boats : I met him quickly and gave him all my money to put me in the next dingy ::

We were 80 in the boat, and we all had to drain the water that was coming in ⁝ When we reached the international border, the man in charge started making phone calls to send signal ⁝ But it wasn't even dawn, and the boat was flooding too much ⁘
There were women with babies crying ⁝ No ship was coming, and we were very afraid because the boat was sinking ⁘

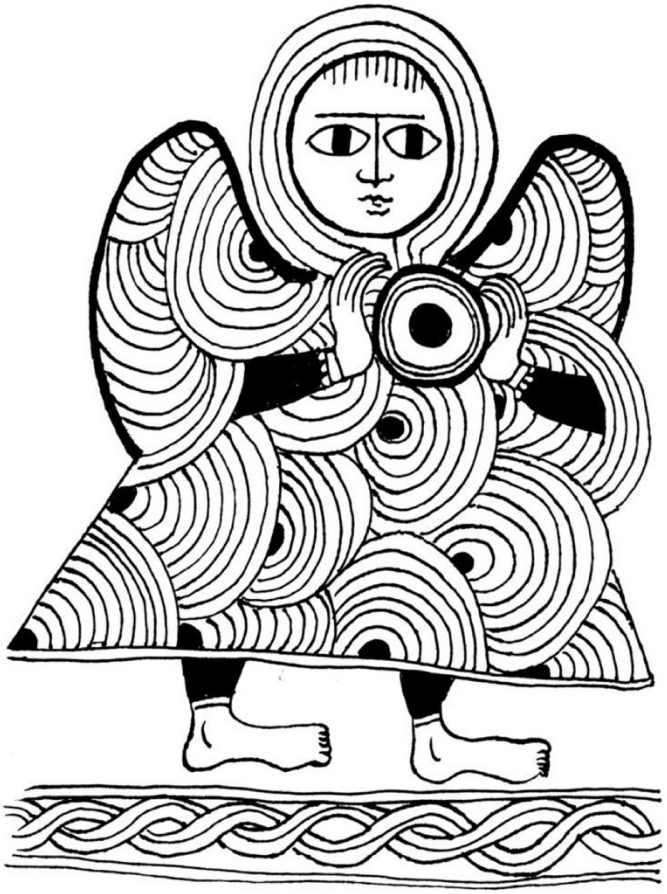
Then a Spanish ship came ⁝ That was the will of God to save us in the eleven hour ⁘

They took us to an Italy port and asked us questions and documents ⁘
And after we were transferred to another ship ⁝ They took us to Lampedusa ⁝ I stayed there three months ⁝ There I met other Ethiopians and Eritreans ⁘



One day, the frontier people came to question me ⁝ They said I was approved ⁝ I asked to go to Germany because that is where everyone wants to go and I have friends there ⁝ But they said no ⁝ They said, you can go to Portugal ⁝⁝
I asked: Is Portugal in Europe ⁝ And they said: Yes ⁝ So, I said ok ⁝ I really regret I said that ⁝⁝

Now, I got residence ⁝ So, I don't care ⁝ I can say this ⁝ I can say that the Portuguese authorities they just pretend to be like Europeans, but inside they are not different from our government and the police ⁝ Creating problems with a smile, saying yes but not doing anything, treating us like barya ⁝⁝



My story is just like many migrant stories : I was lucky but God was good to teach me Arabic and make me smart ::

You like drawing, you can make pictures of my story : You can do like a *tälsäm*, in a prayer to protect migrants ::

Glossary

Amharynia ("Amharic"): an Ethiopian Semitic language spoken as first language by the Amhara people. Serves as lingua franca for most other populations in Ethiopian urban areas.

Barya: Amharic derogatory term denoting someone from slave descent, typically employed as unskilled labour.

Bétäkrestyan ("Christian House"): refers to the followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, a millenary myaphisit (non-Chalcedonic) Church, previously administratively part of the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church; autocephalous since 1949. Roughly a third of the Ethiopian population is Orthodox Christian,

Birr ("silver"): the Ethiopian national currency.

C.P.R. or Conselho Português para os Refugiados ("Portuguese Council for the Refugees"): a Portuguese NGO dedicated to offering support for asylum-seekers, and running a hosting house at Bobadela, in the outskirts of Lisbon.

Habesha ("Abissynians"): an identifier used to refer to Semitic language-speaking peoples, inhabiting the highlands of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Hayat Hospital: a private hospital and medical college situated in Bole Road, in Addis Ababa.

Kebele ("ward"): can refer to either an urban neighbourhood or a small rural village; the smallest unit of the Ethiopian territorial administration (composed by up to 500 families, or 3.500 to 4.000 persons).

Lampedusa: refers to the Reception Centre (Centro di Accoglienza) located in of Lampedusa, Italy's southernmost island; in operation since 1988, this overcrowded camp is Europe's primary entry point for immigrants sailing from Africa.

Metema (also known as Metemma Yohannes): a town in north-western Ethiopia, bordering Sudan; part of the Semien Gondar Zone of the Amhara Region.

Oromiffa or Afaan Oromoo ("Oromo"): an Ethiopian Cushitic language spoken predominantly by the Oromo people and neighbouring groups in the Horn of Africa. Used as a lingua franca particularly in Ethiopia and north-eastern Kenya.

S.E.F., the acronym for Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras ("Foreigners and Borders Service"): a national police agency of the Portuguese Ministry of Internal Affairs responsible for border control, and immigration and asylum enforcement.

Tälsäm ("image"): stylised visual elements inserted in an abənnät, or "protective ('magic') scroll", to separate its manuscript parts: the introductory formula, the asmat (or "names"), the so-called Brillenbuchstaben (or "letters with eyeglasses"), the caution, the gäbir (or "execution").

Woreda ("district"): woredas are third level the administrative divisions in Ethiopia (under zones and regional states); they are governed by an elected council representing each kebele in the district (Ethiopia is divided into 670 rural districts and 100 urban districts).

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CHAPTER 4

WORKING WITH MIGRANTS' MEMORIES IN ITALY: THE LAMPEDUSA DUMP

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Abstract

The Archive of Migrant Memories aims at recording and diffusing migrant self-narratives in Italy to leave a visible trace of recently arrived migrants and their rising agency in Italian society. Retrieving oral and written records of migrants travelling to and landing on Italian soil intends to contrast, both physically and metaphorically, the hiding or cancellation mechanisms lying behind the collective unease surrounding immigration policies in today's Italy. The recurrent dumping of migrant lives in the Mediterranean, particularly on its European southernmost gate at Lampedusa, symbolizes the careless disposal of irksome memories of migration within present-day Italian society. Here the remains of rotten boats derived from the repeated landings of irregular migrants on the Island and their human 'waste' – old shoes, clothes, cooking utensils, children's toys, throw-away objects, but also water-stained documents, photos, holy books, and individual writings such as letters, memoirs or diaries – lie to decompose as a vivid expression of what is not to be remembered in the nation's past.

Keywords: archive, dump, migrant voices, politics of memory, objects of affection, displaced memories

> *I am not asking for a big thing, I am only asking to remember the value of man, and to respect it. I hope our arrival has been a useful thing, not just a burdensome one, one which may be useful [to all]. Let us teach the human values of respect, and of sharing* (Mohamed Ali, 2013).

Returning to Lampedusa as a free man

It is with these words that Zakaria, a Somali student of journalism who left his home and country the day after his teacher was gunned down in Mogadishu, ends his video appeal for a retrieval of personal objects he and his friends lost on the island of Lampedusa where they had fortuitously landed four years earlier. Zakaria's return to Lampedusa as a free man after he received refugee status from the Italian authorities is in itself a return journey into memory. Invited by Dagmawi Yimer to join the film jury of the Lampedusa In Festival, Zakaria went back to the Island in September 2012 accompanied by Mahamed, an Eritrean youth who served in the Army for seven years before escaping to Italy after he was denied by his military commander attending the funeral of his father. Like Zakaria, Mahamed had landed in Lampedusa as a 'clandestine' migrant four years back, had been 'disciplined' (Gatta 2012: 13–17) at arrival according to the usual disembarkation procedures (the aluminium foil over a trembling body, squatting on the ground in ordered lines, being asked by a local policeman the standard questions: 'what is your name, where are you from, who was driving your boat'?) before being group-escorted to the Imbriacola Identification Centre, where he was stripped naked, showered, given an anonymous pair of shorts and a T-shirt, and provided with a disembarkation number, which identified him throughout his stay in the Centre.[1]

The return of Zakaria and Mahamed to Lampedusa was promoted by the Archive of Migrant Memories (AMM) in line with its policy of leaving a visible trace of individual migrants' trajectories in today's Italy (www.archiviomemoriemigranti.net). The return of the two young migrants Zakaria and Mahamad to Lampedusa in the Summer of 2012, this time by air, of their own free will, as invited guests of a local festival, was quite different from their earlier anonymous and 'clandestine' landing four years earlier. In the words of Mahamad:

[1] 1. For a close observation of disembarkation procedures at the Lampedusa harbour, and the arrival of the migrants at the Centre of identification and expulsion, see Gatta (2009).

> I was lucky enough to see Lampedusa again four years after my landing there. When I climbed into the airplane my heartbeat went up and I started thinking about myself and the difference between the first landing and now. I am going back with a [new] identity, a legal document, knowledge of the Italian language, and [especially] freedom and my own name (Mahamad Aman, *Return to Lampedusa*, further).

When the two returnees climb together the hill overlooking the Imbriacola Identification Centre, and stare at the burnt-out building that was put on fire during an inmate revolt the year before, they have no difficulty acknowledging the 'clandestine' nature of the Centre[2] itself, located in a low, out of sight valley at the end of a winding no-end road. Pushed back by the guards who ignore the search for the lost documents by the two ex-inmates, the real nature of the Centre becomes clear to Mahamed as he starts reminiscing his earlier arrival there:

> We were welcomed [in Lampedusa] but we were locked in and we could not go out, surrounded as we were by iron wire, armed guards and security checks. The difference then was that we could not get out, just as today I could not get in. We [Zakaria and I] could make it to the Centre because no one saw us coming until we were quite close to it as [the Centre] lies hidden in a valley and is quite invisible [from outside]. I only realised it was so when I went back to it. I asked myself how invisible we must have been from outside (Id., *Return to Lampedusa*, further).

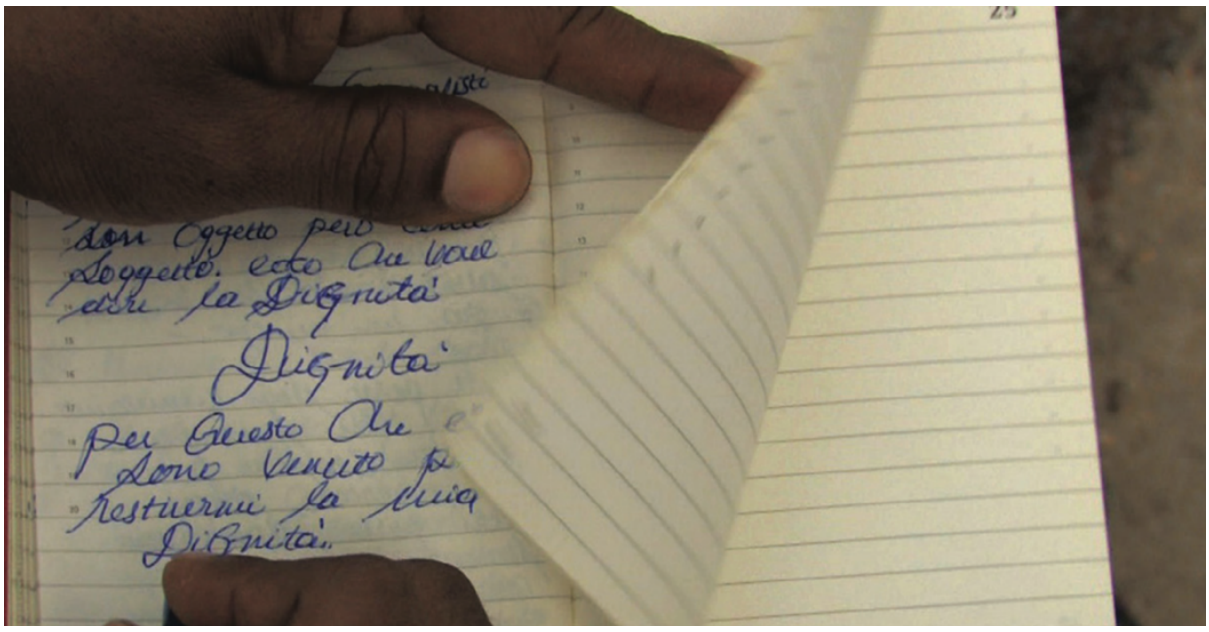
The invisibility of the Imbriacola Centre points to the much wider invisibility and anonymity of foreign migrants within Italian society in the past twenty years. Since the early Summer of 2008,[3] when the Berlusconi Government introduced the first repressive bill into Italian Parliament which criminalised all undocumented foreign migrants as 'stowaway' (*clandestini*) within Italian society, foreign migrants in Italy –

[2] The Centre has changed name several times. Started as a Welcome Centre (Centro di Primo Soccorso e Accoglienza [CPSA]), was transformed in 2008 into a Centro di Identificazione ed Espulsione (CIE) and after 2013, returned being a Welcome Centre (Centro di Accoglienza [CdA]). In December 2015, it started operating as a Hot Spot for fingerprint taking and for expressing a possible, if restricted, asylum choice. See the latest Report on Italian 'malaccoglienza' (bad hospitality) by the Lasciatecientrare Campaign (Accardo and Guido 2016: 18–32).

[3] The 'pacchetto sicurezza' was introduced by the Italian Government in May 2008 and was approved by the two Chambers, in spite of strong opposition by civil society, on 27 July 2009 (Law 94). According to it, irregular migrants could be detained in the Identification and Expulsion Centres (CIE) up to eighteen months without process, their crimes being punished with a 1/3 increase on the sanctions applied to Italian citizens. Italian writer Erri De Luca has renamed the CIE as 'Centres of Extreme Infamy'. Alessandra Ballerini, a well-known human right lawyer in Genova, has recently stated the following: 'When they ask me to explain what the CIE are I am always in difficulty... They are cages, cages for undocumented migrants' (2013).

whether refugees, asylum seekers or economic migrants – have been seen and perceived (and often represented in the media) literally as 'non-people' (Dal Lago 1999). Unlike other postcolonial countries, Italy has perceived and treated the incoming migrants, among whom were increasing number of descendants of her colonial subjects, not differently, and in some case worse, than their fathers ignoring their postcolonial status and claims to a common past (Iyob 2005). The established presence in today's Italy of a consistent number of refugees, and asylum seekers coming from her ex-colonial possessions, combined with mixed marriages to descendants of former colonial subjects trying to escape from the ravages of their countries in conflict, have reopened ancient routes and connections. Moreover, they have also stirred up memories and images that go far beyond modern fears and insecurities, reviving the legacy of past relations of colonial domination (Triulzi 2015b).

Figure 1 – Eritrean youth Mahamed Aman returns to Lampedusa four years after landing there 'to have his dignity back' (still from Zakaria Mohamed Ali's To Whom it May Concern @AMM2013).



Right from the start, foreign migrants have been seen by mainstream/official Italy as intruders into the country's history and culture, a potential threat to Italian institutions and society. Forced to eke out a hazardous fate in the country of arrival most migrants, irrespective of their status, have lived in a precarious state of marginalisation with no real integration procedures and programmes to ease their moulding within Italian society (Accardo and Guido 2016). Here is how Abubakar, a Somali refugee interviewed by Dagmawi Yimer in 2009, defines the 'Italian welcome':

> The Italian welcome can be summarised in one word: *buon appetito!* After landing, they took me to this centre [the Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Centre at Castelnuovo di Porto north of Rome] where I am staying now. Life is very difficult here. I expected to find a future in this country, instead they only give you a place where you can sleep and eat, *buon appetito*, after which you are left on your own. I have crossed the whole city looking for something to do. We Somali have a proverb: *qooro lusho aa qeyrka ku jira* ('only dangling testicles give you peace'), meaning that people need to move, to do things. In other European countries they give you a traveling card that allows you to go around. Here instead it is *buon appetite*! and nothing else (Yimer 2014: 134–35).

Abubakar's *buon appetito!* summarizes well the limits of the Italian welcome to the 'Uninvited' (Harding 2000). In more than one way, for nearly twenty years Lampedusa has been a consistent training ground, and a political laboratory, for creating Europe's public image of the excessive number of uninvited poor migrants coming to European shores, and for the staging of successive and necessary 'states of exception' (Agamben 2003) to limit their numbers whatever the cost. By December 2015, when more than one million migrants mainly escaping the Syrian civil war reached Southern Europe, new walls and iron-wire borders emerged within Schengen Europe and new legal obstacles and social prejudices spread sharply along migratory routes (Medecins sans frontières 2015; Tazzioli 2016). Early apprenticeship of rough treatment for the un-invited hosts was tested first on the Island of Lampedusa, where irregular migrants escaping war and hunger, though rescued at sea by the Italian Navy through Mare Nostrum,[4] were hardly welcomed beyond the ambiguous mix of State humanitarianism and security measures which accompanied their arrival. Although private and often generous hospitality was shown by the islanders to their fellow men in distress, the dumping of migrants' rights together with their hopes and dreams for a better future kept unabated in the island's identification/detention Centre as the uninvited hosts were hidden from public eye in the militarised structures of the Centre, the ill-famed Identification and Expulsion Centre now turned (since early 2016) into one of the six 'hot spots' in southern Italy (Vassallo Paleologo 2016: 18–22). Since the very beginning undocumented migrants, with few exceptions in case of international protection or relocation, were not to stay in Italy.

[4] During the one-year rescue operations started on 18 October 2013 Mare Nostrum rescued 150,518 people at sea. See http:// www.marina.difesa. it/EN/operations/ Pagine/MareNostrum. Accessed 31 October 2014.

Once they set foot on the Island, they were summarily identified to be quickly repatriated or expelled or were allowed informally to continue their migratory journey further north, which most of them did much to the disconcert of Northern Europe.[5] The arriving migrants were thus surrounded from the very beginning by invisibility and anonymity as a measure of containment, but also as a way of getting rid of their presence as quickly and as unnoticed as possible.

The *Archivo delle Memorie Migranti* and the recovered voices

It is exactly the invisibility surrounding foreign migrants in Italy, and the need to re-establish their own voice and agency, that moved a small group of researchers, teachers, and activists in early 2000s to lay the basis of what later (2012) became the AMM. The Archive was born out of open dissatisfaction with the way mainstream and state media under Berlusconi Governments (*c.* 1994–2011) represented the migrants and their alleged 'invasion' of the Italian peninsula. Basically, we wanted to change the prevailing negative image surrounding the new 'arrivants' (Derrida [1996] 1999: 30) and wanted to do it through joint action not just for, but together with, them: the 'migrants' archive' was what came out of it. The idea of compiling a repository of migrant memories (the migrants' own recollections of their leaving home and travelling to a safer place) came out of an experimental Language School in Rome titled *Asinitas*[6] which based its teachings not on books but on the students' own narratives (Triulzi 2015a). The school was started in Rome in the early 2000s in association with a group of Italian psychologists and therapists named 'Doctors against Torture', who were themselves dissatisfied with treating migrants' post-trauma stress with individual face-to-face sessions.

Through the daily welcoming and care of foreign immigrants at the school, and the choice to draw teaching methods and materials from the students' live voices, learning Italian was conceived as a necessary form of 'survival' for migrants who wanted to claim the memory and dignity of their migratory journey. Thus, narrating one's own story was encouraged to recover from the 'travelling pains' (Coker 2004) of the journey, and to search for new forms of self-expression of individual needs and desires.

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[5] Italy was sanctioned several times by Europe for allowing migrants not to identify themselves. See 'L'Europa chiede conto all'Italia dei 60.000 migranti "spariti"' (http://www.lastampa.it/2015/09/02/esteri/ lue-chiede-conto- allitalia-di-mila- migranti-spariti- 0TuncZiu4U8zNblQtXu2VM/pagina.html. Accessed 2 November 2015).

[6] The school was named after Giordano Bruno's praise of donkey's endurance and determination (Bruno 1985; see www.asinitas.org).

This is how the first 'narrative circles' came about – sitting around in group, each one narrating and listening to each other's stories (and silences) to diminish, if not to cancel, the inbuilt distance between those who listen and those who narrate (Scego 2009).

Thus, the migrant memory archive – in its double sense of *migrants*' and *migrating* collective memory – was born out of the necessity to gather, share and make public the individual stories of people who, for whatever reason, ended up coming to or crossing the Italian peninsula. When we started our work in the early 2000s, only few echoes of these personal narratives reached private media, and no trace of them was to be found in public statements, as little peoples' histories often struggle to find recognition beyond the attentions of sensationalist journalism and inquisitorial bureaucracy. Like Svetlana Aleksievič recording Russian women's experience at the war front, our focus was not the event itself but 'the individual person' going through that event ([2005] 2015: 16). Alienated Eritrean and Ethiopian youths trying to escape the ravages of war and the lack of a foreseeable future were the first individual migrants' recollections we recorded for our Archive:

> My name is Adam [...]. I am the fifth child (out of eight) in my family. I was born in 1989 E.C. in Addis Ababa [...]. At [school] I was able to score sufficient points to go for higher education but at that time many kids of the younger generation were leaving the country in different directions, for different reasons. Some went out to Kenya and then to South Africa. Others went to Yemen via Somalia; the rest went to Sudan and Libya. I was restless at the time. I was only 17 then (AMM, Interview Adam, 13 May 2008).

> My name is Negga [...]. I am 19 years' old and am a tenth grader. I came here because I heard a lot from other youngsters in Qirqos about people who had come over to Europe, London, Italy, also by watching western movies and TV. We knew nothing about the problems of how to get to these places, we only heard that life in Europe was beautiful; we were encouraged by all these rumours and tales to make the journey (AMM, Interview Negga, 18 February 2008).

> At that time, I heard that some of my friends were ready to go out of the country. I talked to my sister, and she said she would find some money to help me go with them. She sent me the money. Together with my friends, we made preparations [...] We were eleven youngsters from the same *safar* who had started the journey together and travelled through the Sahara for 21 days. We chose the route thorough Sudan and Libya because we thought it would be easier there to travel without documents [...] We did not want anyone to know about our intentions. We prepared our trip secretly (AMM, Interview Dawit, 2 February 2008).

It was only when they started savouring the bitter fruits of random violence and extortion, which accompanied each step during their repeated crossings of desert and sea that the reality of trafficking and exploitation appeared in all its naked brutality:

> We were stopped, imprisoned, and sold time and again. I did not think we would be treated like donkeys; we were being sold just like objects. It reminded me of the past when we were sold [like slaves]. In Libya it is the same [today]. I could not believe it [...] After the fifth [arrest] I called my mother and told her crying that I could not bear it any longer and wanted to return. I thought the journey would simply be from Sudan to Kufra, from Kufra to the Libyan coast, and from Libya to Italy. What I did not expect was all that in between (AMM, Interview John, backstage of *Come un uomo sulla terra*, March 2008).

It is individual accounts such as these that Dagmawi Yimer recorded during the shooting of *Come un uomo sulla terra* (*Like a Man in Earth*) (Segre et al. 2008) that made the Archive a space of remembering and a springboard for migrants' voices to be publicly heard and acknowledged. This is how the AMM, through an act of common sharing and trust with the migrants, found its own *archè* and *commencement* (Derrida [1996] 2005: 11). Our main aim was to mould together the researchers and the migrants' own experience to co-produce oral and written narratives with the migrants directly participating in the collection, archiving and diffusion of their own stories and testimonies. We wanted to empower migrating voices in all their creative *agency* and self-expression. We thought this participatory process by necessity had to involve Italian and non-Italian actors in one single ethical and political project aimed at changing transnational migration from being something allegedly 'other' into a collective shared patrimony, one which – we hoped – would allow a more balanced view of Italy's own historical unfolding in time.

Figure 2 – Ethiopian film-maker Dagmawi Yimer films a migrant boat rotting ashore at the Lampedusa dump (Still frame from Soltanto il mare *@AMM2011).*

The Lampedusa dump

The invisibility of the Lampedusa migrants who were held up in increasing numbers in the off-limit Identification Centre of the island was more difficult to break. The Island had its own record of 'invisibility' within Italian history as it traditionally hosted a penal colony under the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and later became a dumping ground for political exiles under fascism (Fragapane 1993). In both cases, invisibility and distance were considered the indispensable marks of a prison island where different forms and states of exception could be safely applied, as the dwellers' rights and welfare, not differently from the island's inhabitants, could be easily wiped out or ignored at the country's southern limit in the Mediterranean. Besides, the geographical and cultural location of the island, closer to Africa than to Italy, appeared to justify its relative geographical and cultural isolation from the Italian mainland and the demeaning attitude of the central government towards its inhabitants and resources.

All this helps explaining how, culturally, and politically, Lampedusa has a consistent record of acting as a somehow 'legitimate' dumping ground for undesired peoples, lives, and norms of the Italian state. This is why the island of Lampedusa itself and its mixed population of mobile fishermen and strangers can usefully be taken as a metaphor of the nation's stowaway or marginalised communities through time.

When the Berlusconi Government decreed in May 2008, and the Italian Parliament ratified one year later, that irregular migrants were to all effects unlawful and 'clandestines' on Italian soil, and could be held in detention up to six months and fined 5000–10,000 euro each, the island of Lampedusa – where most irregular migrants arrived up to the Summer of 2015 – appeared to be the ideal place where the state could safely employ extraordinary measures and impose an out-of-sight state of exception where the institutional violence of 'indefinite temporary zones' (Rahola 2003) could be safely applied and dissimulated.

Lampedusa was an ideal dumping ground for this throwaway use of (poor) people and (long-worn) norms. Through a careful balancing of humanitarian apparatus coupled with health measures and security checks, the Italian state was able to present to the international media and to the Italian public a carefully constructed image of a courageous forward-looking state able to cope with the sudden arrival of 'humanity in excess': the innumerable landings and rescue operations at sea which were repeatedly shown at peak hours in every Italian house ensured the classic 'border spectacle' (De Genova 2005: 3–6) of all half-humanitarian half-security exploits. The spectacle showed how the southernmost Mediterranean tourist resort was acting to all effects as a border not just to Italy but to Europe and was closely guarded by the state (with the help of Frontex, the European agency for 'border management') to stave off hordes of 'African', i.e., black and poor immigrants, while at the same time saving them from the hands of unscrupulous traffickers (Cuttitta 2012).

Thus, the island of Lampedusa, in the past twenty years or so, saw the staging of two contrasting layers of memory: that of a welcoming 'firm' land (terra-ferma) equally hospitable to both rich tourists and impoverished migrants, and that of a tragic closed land (terra ferma) where the traffickers' victims and the Government's stowaways were the anonymous migrant bodies to be expelled or 'repatriated' away from the Italian soil. The two sides of this 'oppositional identity' (Wright 2014: 775–802) were closely linked. While the first layer of memory implied by necessity the importance of 'guarding' the border in order to save Italy (and Europe) from barbaric invasions, and to save the migrants themselves from unlawful crimes, Lampedusa's temporary norms were seen as the only way of applying the rule of law to un-receivable masses of foreign citizens with different knowledge and experience of human rights. In other words, like in the peripheries of most empires, law at the border had to be necessarily 'borderline'law.

How this oxymoron was to stay unresolved became clear during the fateful events of Summer 2013 when the visit by Pope Francis to Lampedusa of 8 July was followed, on 3 October, by a renewed shipwreck of a migrant boat in front of the island's most famous tourist bay, Spiaggia dei Conigli. The Pope's visit, which was purposefully led outside official acknowledgement of state authorities, saw a massive turnout of people listening to the Pope's slanting the 'globalised indifference' of the world towards the migrants' plight. During the Mass homily, which was celebrated on a wooden altar made out of the relics of a migrants' boat, Lampedusa was praised as 'an island of hospitality', thus renovating the more benevolent imagery of the island as a'firm'hospitable land (Cacciatore and Petrone 2014).Yet three months later, when in early October a boat crowded with more than 500 migrants capsised a few hundred yards from the island's shores killing 368 people, mainly women and children from Eritrea, Lampedusa's oppositional identity was reaffirmed by its renewed burden of death.

Indeed, the Mediterranean crossing has been plagued in the past twenty years by continuous death, the Sicilian Channel being consistently on the forefront since 1996. During the period 1998–2015, 27,382 people drowned in the Mediterranean, an average of some 1,000 dead per year.7 For an island of barely 20 square km inhabited by less than 6,000 residents, the death toll surrounding it is really incommensurable. Thus, the island for the past twenty years has been literally filled up with migrants' bodies and memories. Everywhere on the island there are traces of their passage, in the boats rotting down for years in the island's public dump at Imbriacola till they were removed from public sight, in the live memory of fishermen and volunteers who do their best to create and keep alive the tradition of hospitality in the island. Now that massive movements of people trying to escape war and poverty are pressing again at Europe's southern borders, it may be useful to recall the lesson of memory the Lampedusa dump has left behind in the island itself, and the wider inheritance it bestowed on Europe's ability to cope with today's peoples in flight pressing at its borders (Mezzadra 2006).

7 For further information please see Italian journalist Gabriele del Grande's blog, Fortress Europe: http://fortresseurope. blogspot.it/p/ la-fortezza.html. Accessed 10 July 2016.

Figure 3 – 'Thanks for your visit'. State of salvaged documents retrieved in Lampedusa by Askavusa before restoration (© Askavusa 2012).

Towards a new politics of memory?

How should Italy and Europe memorialize the current migratory plight in the Mediterranean with its increasing toll of death has been long debated on the island itself (Askavusa 2013, 2016). At the heart of debate is how to represent the 'complexity and variability' of present-day migration through a bottom-up local museum able to share and engage both the curators, the local population, and the arriving migrants through an 'affective and participative' curatorial stance (Chambers 2016: 49–50).

The recent opening in Lampedusa of a self-styled 'Museum of trust and dialogue' for the Mediterranean where the Island's people and its visitors are offered world-famous works of art such as Caravaggio's *Amorino dormiente* (*Sleeping child*) or the Greek Head of Ade recently recovered from the Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles has reopened the vexed question of what and whose memory is to be preserved in the island for a critical pondering of the present. One wonders in fact how Caravaggio's *Sleeping Child* or ancient Greek masterworks borrowed from major world Museums can provide more than tourist attractions in an island, where drinking water must be brought from outside and local women cannot give birth due to the lack of an adequate childbirth structure.

If Lampedusa is to become a Place of Memory, is Caravaggio's *Amorino dormiente* (so closely yet falsely resembling the 3-year-old Syrian child Alan Kurdi drowned on a Turkish beach while crossing the Aegean Sea with his family) the image to back a proper politics of memory on the Island? Shouldn't such a memory include more inclusive evidence of local and migrant voices and agency retrieved in the Island itself?

Figure 4 – A hand-written page of the Ethiopian deacon's diary in Amharic retrieved from the Lampedusa dump (© Badagliacca 2012).

The travel diary of an Ethiopian deacon and the 'glossary of survival' composed by a Bangladesh youth are pertinent examples of such memory. The two documents were among the 'objects of affection' rescued from the Imbriacola dump by members of the local Askavusa Association before the original Museum of Lampedusa was agreed at a Town Hall meeting in February 2013, and were exhibited the following September during the LampedusaInFestival.[8] As the exhibition 'With the objects of the migrants' showed, the initial input of the Museum was the direct sharing of the objects with the migrants and the involvement of local volunteers, researchers, and art historians, so as to have a 'direct dialogue' between them (Chambers 2016: 49).[9]

8 For further information about this Festival read Ilaria Vecchi's article in this issue.

9 It should be recalled here that the original Museum of Migration was conceived under the guidance of Prof. Giuseppe Basile, a well-known restorer of Giotto's paintings in Italy, for whom migrants' relics

At that time both documents were sent to our Archive to be curated and translated as they were considered vivid testimonies to the richness of data they could provide to the willing listener of the migrants' own voices.

The first document is a fourteen-page travel diary written in Amharic by an Ethiopian Orthodox deacon stranded in Libya in 2006–07. The deacon attempts to cross the Libyan desert and the Mediterranean Sea twice, each time being arrested and pushed back by the Libyan authorities to the prison of Kufra in the middle of the Libyan desert (Triulzi and Eshetu 2014). Here the deacon and his group are handed over to local *dallala* (intermediaries) who 'buy' the youths out of the Libyan jail to make them cross the desert again, this time in the hands of another group of traffickers:

> I was extremely sad. While in my country, at this very moment – the diary entry is dated Maskaram 1 1998 E.C., equivalent to 11 September 2006 – the best sheep are selected for New Year's Celebrations, here we are picked up according to our origin and sold out according to where we've come from (AMM, Diario di un diacono etiopico, col. 22).

The Diary is a living testimony of endurance, resilience, and faith in God: prayers appear to be the only viable source of hope or sanity as the Ethiopian group travels through hostile lands in the hands of money-hungry traffickers colluded with police and local authorities. Families at home follow the group's odyssey with anguish as the deacon's sister, in a swift letter exchange found together with the Diary in the Island's dump, urges his aggrieved brother not to despair:

> My dearest brother [...] We've heard about the incredible violence and sufferings you went through, and of the dead persons and the sick ones, and of the boys who returned here out of despair. I feel certain that you will make it with the help of God. After all you went through, God will give you a good life, and you will be an example to your brothers and friends. What you have lost you will be given back, the hunger you feel, all the fears you have, will disappear in the end. When suffering becomes unbearable, do not lose hope because you will be repaid of all this. God will repay you with a joyful life. All this happens by His will. You must not be aggrieved by it (AMM, Family letter encl. in *Diario*, letter 2).

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of travelling were to be considered of equal importance for Europe's memory as medieval works of art (see Mosca Mondadori et al. 2014: 133–46).

The second document is a small eight-page list of some 100 English words transcribed into Bengali language, which compose a sort of self-made Bangla-English glossary written by an anonymous migrant from Bangladesh. On his way to Europe, the author is caught up in the Libyan turmoil preceding the violent overthrow of Kaddafi's government in 2011 and eventually lands in Lampedusa where his Bangla glossary is eventually found rolled up in a pair of jeans retrieved in the island dump (Matta and Ghosh 2014). The Bangla 'glossary of survival' is an open invitation to interpretive thinking and exploration of the migrants' own imaginary world. While working on the glossary with the help of another Bangladesh migrant, Mara Matta, a young researcher at L'Orientale University in Naples, has this to say as to the possible origin of the glossary (personal communication, 20 January 2013):

> Reading back, I keep thinking that this youth (we think he is a man but may have been a woman) wanted to tell a story, and that his choice of words is not a casual one. By this I mean that he is not copying words out of a text or a manual but is using an English-Bangla Dictionary to build his own vocabulary, something that would allow him to communicate with 'us', tell us why he went away (or was sent away) from Bangladesh. I have the impression that his words follow some sort of semantically inspired sequence. When he talks of wedding, he also talks of poets, mediators, and lawyers. When he talks of the Sahara desert, he writes of wind and sound – the sound of void. When he talks of the police, he writes of being sent away from home, is speaking of the end... I don't know, it may only be the fruit of my imagination, but reading back in this way, I believe we can understand more, and perhaps even reconstruct, part of the author's story.

Figure 5 – The 'glossary of survival' transcribed into Bangla language by an anonymous migrant from Bangladesh (© Sicilian Central Library, Restoration Lab 2012).

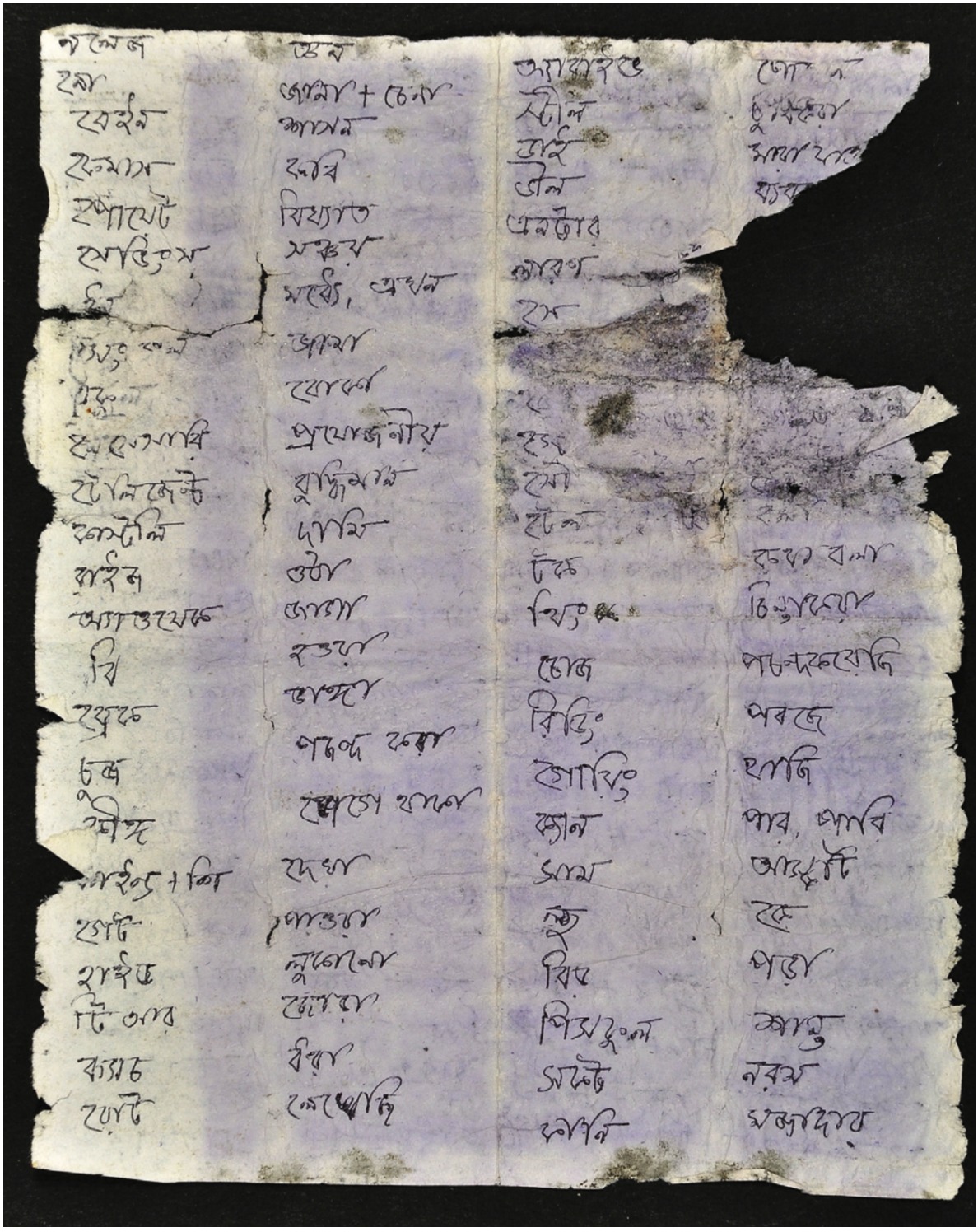
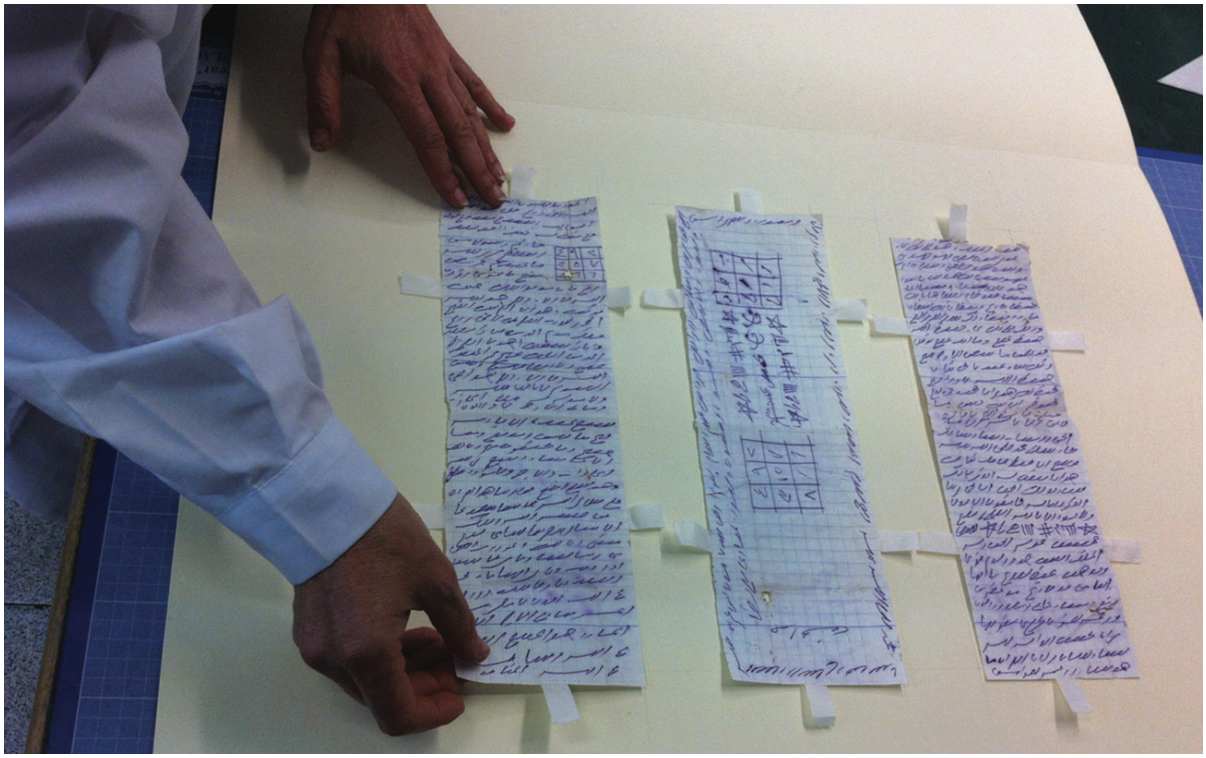


Figure 6 – Islamic amulet (hijab) retrieved in one of the Lampedusa boats being restored in Palermo (© Sicilian Central Library, Restoration Laboratory 2012).



These two documents are small samples of the rich documentary evidence to be found in the scattered points of arrival along the Mediterranean and Aegean seas, for which retrieval operations may bring further evidence beside and beyond the one provided by the Lampedusa dump. It is clear that sources such as these question our own 'incurability' as wasteful citizens of the world, and bring forward a crying need for uncovering, conserving and making visible the untamed humanity, which lies behind it. The fact that the Ethiopian Diary was found neatly wrapped in several layers of sellotape to withstand water, and that the list of anglicised Bangla words was carefully rolled up and hidden inside a worn-out pair of jeans, is a reminder of the importance their owners attributed to the personal belongings they lost or were deprived from at arrival. Clearly, much more work is ahead of us if we want to revisit the experience of the Lampedusa relics as mere 'waste' or anonymous 'exhibit' and reassess their potential use and decoding in raising awareness to the universal dimension of the individual humanity landing at Europe's shores. In this respect, Caravaggio's *Sleeping Child* appears to be yet another form of uncritical cultural 'dumping' on the island: one should not be surprised if the new Museum structure has been attacked by the Askavusa collective as being part of the yet unresolved 'colonial discourse' lying behind Italy's flippant memory of her imperial past now refurbished into the all-englobing humanitarian vocation of the State (2016).

As the 'dumping' of migrant lives and memories continues unabated in the Mediterranean, the risk of transforming Greece and Italy into front-line states to defend Europe's restrictive migration policies is quite real as the two countries and their southernmost islands act as de facto no-entry outposts to the European Union. It is to be expected that such dumping policy will continue in the near future, inside the very heart of our continent. It is this dumping of European identity and universal values the real challenge for our collective destiny in the new millennium.

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

CHAPTER 5

ROUTIERS' TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAJECTORIES OF *WASTE*, FROM PORTUGAL TO SENEGAL

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Abstract

Routiers are men of African origin that regularly drive decades-old vehicles from Southern Europe to West Africa. In their vehicles they carry a set of second-hand items which are sold, traded, and/or bartered along the way. This essay offers a collection of images that depict and interrogate some of the symbolic, socioeconomic, and spatiotemporal qualities of *routier* activity while fostering an understanding of the transformational trajectories of the items handled – from discarded, disposable, virtually valueless things into things of/with value, sometimes, reconverted, reemployed, replaced, resettled.

Keywords: West Africa, used-cars, second-hand, visual ethnography

> *If you think I'm taking Europe's waste to Africa, you're wrong! No one would accept others' waste! (…) Africa is not a rubbish bin!* (Mbaye Sow, 07/12/2017).

Mbaye Sow reacted furiously when questioned about the nature of the *routier* activity – *routiers* being African men who live of the road, driving out-dated vehicles loaded with used and broken items from Europe to West Africa. A sense of uneasiness pervaded Mbaye's words as he denied any potential linkage between the idea of waste, the car and other stuff he was taking South, and his territory of origin. We were travelling with this seasoned *routier* in an old Peugeot 504, in one of the two journeys we made together (in 2017 and 2019) as part of the research and shooting of a documentary-film.[1] This is a 10-days-long journey that traverses several peripheral geographies, from Reboleira to Pikine, that is, from the outskirts of Lisbon, Portugal, to the outskirts of Dakar, Senegal, only rarely passing through urban centres. Mbaye Sow is a knowledgeable and well-travelled individual and has made this lonesome and perilous journey almost every month in the last decade. This means he was aware of how discarded stuff regularly floods the continent's dumpsites and street markets (Doyon, 2015; Bredeloup, 2016). He himself has been an agent of that process. However, the perception that the sort things carried by *routiers* were seen as rubbish – from the old vehicles to the myriad of used and broken items – deeply annoyed him because these were not considered waste in the broader context of West Africa.

We are aware that waste is not waste but rather a sociocultural construction driven by a desire of order and classification (Douglas 1966). But disposed items are not immune to (re)emerging cycles of value and interest (see Thompson 1979). What some, at a certain time and place, consider waste, is often seen otherwise by others, elsewhere, in another moment, making its value contingent. The out-dated, used and sometimes broken vehicles, house appliances, toys or clothing carried by *routiers* elude this classificatory drive, especially when these move South. Cultural, political, and economic circumstances reveal the ambiguity of "things" deemed waste, evincing how categorical definitions can be tricky and conflicting (see Millington & Lawhon 2018). In this vein, the framing of waste as things "deemed socially valueless" as proposed by Moore (2012) is encompassing enough to accommodate the sort of items dealt with by *routiers*.

1 The film YOON (dir. Pedro F Neto & Ricardo Falcão; C.R.I.M. productions, 2021) will have its première in the end of October at DocLisboa International Film Festival 2021. "Yoon" [jɒn] is a word in Wolof which can mean "path", "law", "norm", "religion", or simply "journey". The film follows the regular round trip taken by a Senegalese *routier* on old Peugeots 504 along the 4000 Kms that separate the two places he calls home.

In fact, it further allows us to explore its opposite, that is, to understand how certain things become again "socially valuable" – but also culturally and economically. In this regard, the trajectories of waste are central to the understanding of this process of ontological and socio-material transformation in a double, complimentary process. First, a process of metabolization with the identification of things discarded as potentially valuable, things which are then bought and/or found, eventually repaired, transformed, and adapted. Even though metabolization refers to a chemical process occurring in living organisms, we consider this a valid metaphor to describe this process of transformation (cf. Millington & lawhon 2018). This process entails that the things being gleaned exit the system where they have been found. Secondly, in order to fulfil the metabolization dimension, all these things need to be judiciously mobilised, reinserted into other value chains, often elsewhere. This is a process that requires the skill and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexity of the terrains such as those traversed by *routiers*.

Mobilisation, then, works and articulates different levels beyond the mere territorial movement, to include bureaucratic and cultural dimensions. These double transformational trajectories work at different, yet inseparable scales: while the metabolization relates to the inception of sociomaterial and ontological transformations, it is the mobilisation that eventually substantiates and gives meaning to such transformation as it places them elsewhere.

As we will see, the specific case study at hand provides relevant evidence on how these transformational trajectories happen. It impels us to look not only at the points of departure and arrival, nor merely observe the movement in-between (cf. Millington & Lawhon 2018), but rather observe the very trajectories of "things". Value cannot be decoupled from the *routiers*' abilities and skills to navigate such rough terrains with unfolding borders, customs, and other unexpected encounters from the immense risks of failing to do so. Reckless *routiers* can easily be arrested, have their cars blocked and their cargos seized. At the same time, to grasp how value is regained, we need to understand how and where the items carried by *routiers* circulate (Lombard & Ninot 2012, Choplin & Lombard 2014), in light of the differential inclusion and material relationship particularly imposed by borders (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013). We need to focus on the different types of infrastructure that enable the *routier* activity, namely "people" (Simone 2004). We are particularly interested on how the *routier* trade is a "conjunction of heterogenous activities, modes of production and institutional forms" where its actors attempt to "derive maximal outcomes from a minimal set of elements" in what Abdoumaliq Simone calls «people as infrastructure» (Simone, 2004: 410-411).

As *routiers* articulate the movement of myriad objects, goods, ideas, vehicles, and other *people,* collaboration and solidarity permeate this livelihood as much as non-declared forms of competition, strategizing and scheming, with that very infrastructure. As a result, the specific trajectories enacted by *routiers*, from Southern Europe to West Africa, the way in which they articulate and are articulated by other flows and encounters, are what allow us to grasp, depict and inquire how *waste* is transformed and reinscribed with value. However partaking more globalised processes of mobility (Choplin & Pliez 2018) as well as waste and/or second-hand processing dynamics (Millington & Lawhon 2018), *routiers* inform us of a different, individual scale whose socioeconomic and cultural specificities deserve a closer look.

In Wolof, the words *dëgger* (hard, durable) and *oyoff* (light, perishable) are frequently employed to qualify objects and describe their durability. Things coming from Europe are generally seen as *dëgger,* even if in certain parts of the old continent those very 'hard and durable' things were considered unworthy, disposable, discardable. Greater appetite for innovation rather than repair is common (see Martínez & Laviolette 2019). It is also true that the gradual withdrawal of old vehicles from European roads and its inevitable loss of value are the result of emerging regulations concerning CO_2 emissions, security criteria, and broader technological improvements. While most cars reach the end of their life cycle in Europe, others will find a way to an afterlife. Models such as Peugeots 405, 504 and 505, old models of Ford Transit, Toyota Hiace, Hyundai H100, Mitsubishi L200 and L300, Volkswagen Golf, Renault Trafic, Mercedes 190, remain embedded in a complex and highly segmented trade that thrives in many Western Africa countries. Despite its ups and downs, with changing trade routes and actors, the used-cars business remained an important activity in the region in spite of the several existing institutional, political and administrative frictions (Ezehoa et al, 2018). Peugeots 504 and 505 remain on demand in Senegal. The *sept-places* ("seven seats"), as these are locally called, are mostly employed in medium and long-distance transportation of people and goods (Lombard et al 2006). In Guinea-Bissau, models like Mercedes 190 are preferred and are mostly used as street taxis. In Mauritania, Renaults R21 have their niche, and remain in trend for private and public transportation.

In turn, countless items are carried by *routiers*', then sold, traded, and bartered along the way and upon arrival. House appliances, bicycles, car spare parts, clothing, and toys rank among the top picks. Most of these used items, sometimes broken and in need of repair, are judiciously bought from online services like OLX and Facebook Marketplace, in flea markets, from scrapyards, colleagues and other workshops in greater Lisbon and along the way.

As we will see, these play a key economic role but also a sociocultural one. The resulting earnings help covering travel and mechanical repair costs, sometimes also allowing modest economic gains. Noteworthy however, is how many of these items are used to nurture a whole sociocultural system/practice known as *teraanga.* Though often translated as simply "hospitality", *teraanga* is in fact a culture of "gift" binding people to social relations that become themselves durable and relevant, as opposed to fleecing (for more see Riley 2016). Things offered as *teraanga* to Senegalese peers help consolidate and expand social networks and leave open the possibilities of future assistance. This is also a form of investing in social recognition since someone known for his/her *teraanga* becomes a socially respected individual. Still, beyond recognition, it is, first and foremost, an investment in people (or in social relations), further giving meaning to the idea of people as infrastructure mentioned above.

Few scholarly works aim at depicting the concrete trajectories of items, how they travel and with whom, or the socio-material and ontological transformations that these items undergo (cf. Knowles 2014; Bouhali et al 2018). Moreover, *routiers*' activities posit us with a paradoxical visible invisibility. It is easy to identify *routiers* when you see their obsolete and overloaded vehicles. However, their lives and activities remain largely invisible, shrouded in secrecy and blurriness. We know very little about them, where they move and live, how they navigate borders. This piece aims at making visible that. As William Viney noted, items described as 'waste' can have a peculiarly telescopic effect on our imaginations. They are things that seem to disclose ways of living, permit certain ways of seeing and give access to wider actions, collectives and environments (2014:1)." This is probably even more accurate in the case of *routiers*, for whom what some see as waste, is their primary source of income, as well as for the fact that it is precisely that waste that fosters the depiction, telescopic or otherwise.

Following a chronological and linear geography, this visual-essay offers a collection of images that depict and interrogate some of the symbolic, socioeconomic, and spatiotemporal qualities of *routier* activity while fostering an understanding of the transformational trajectories of items handled – from discarded, disposable, virtually valueless "things" into "things" of/with value, sometimes, reconverted, reemployed, replaced, resettled.

Figure 1

In a seemingly metal scrapyard, the improvised Senegalese car workshops sit along a short segment of a former military road in Reboleira, municipality of Amadora. Some fifty years ago this was a rural landscape. It now integrates the urban continuum of Greater Lisbon.

A Peugeot 504 from 1989 goes through basic mechanical repairs – just enough to arrive in Southern Morocco where further interventions will take place. That is the car in which we will travel for more than 4000 Km.

Reboleira is a central node in a broad network of people and spaces that sustain and articulate routiers' activities. Obsolete vans, camouflaged by the apparently chaotic scenario, protect working mechanics from adverse weather while also storing their tools and the more valuable components. When required, these stranded vehicles also offer the hideout for secretive conversations and negotiations between routiers, the businessmen involved in the used-cars and spare parts trade, and/or the so-called GP's – from the French groupage, these men group other people's goods and organise its transport to and from Senegal. There are also other individuals that regularly drop by to "facilitate" paperwork for these cars to leave the country.

Furthermore, in here, one can obtain relevant information from the road, the situation of friends and colleagues, the permeability of borders and security conditions. It is also here that the metabolization of waste starts as stranded, rundown cars experience revival or are cut for parts, and second-hand and broken items are loaded and get ready to head south.

Figure 2

Rusting carcasses and spare parts, disembodied technology and unidentified components pile up in Reboleira. They are not waste. Virtually all these loose items have an owner. Virtually all the Reboleira habitués know to whom these belong to. Amidst the ruderal vegetation, the perennial puddles of mud and oil, loose parts and rusty carcasses, slices of torn down walls and floor tiles recall this place's genealogy of disposability.

This place used to be an informal neighbourhood, which mushroomed in the late 1970s after the influx of Africans from Portuguese former colonies. Houses were initially built with wood stalls discarded from the construction sites in which its dwellers worked, and with scraps of bulky power cable coils from a nearby factory of high voltage cables. Bricks and cement gradually replaced the more ephemeral materials. But that did not avoid the beginning of demolitions and evictions following the beginning of major resettlement programmes from the 1990s onwards (see Cachado, 2013). In mid-2000s, upon the latest clearance of this area, Senegalese individuals seized the opportunity to set up their mobile workshops.

The palimpsestuous postcolonial features (cf. Stoller 2008) of this archeological site inform about the multiple trajectories of people, houses, objects, narratives (cf. Viney 2014), and the moment in which they were deemed socially valueless, perceived as nuisances, and turned into shrapnel. By defying obsolescence and redundancy, *routiers'* activities and presence interrogate the perception onto diverse (capitalist) debris (Yates 2011). While shedding light into the possibilities of restoring waste and wastelands into valuable things, they further challenge the relevance and relative centrality of this place.

Figure 3

Port of Algeciras' (Andalusia, Spain). At the border checkpoint, on a winter day, people traveling with vehicles queue up to take the ferry and cross the Straight of Gibraltar. *Routiers* are easily identifiable by the overloaded vans and hilly roof racks. Their out-dated vans and station wagons contrast with the more recent cars in which individuals and families of both tourists and immigrants travel. The exposure afforded by *routiers'* old vehicles and the myriad of loose items and travel cases contrasts with the invisibility of their secretive navigations and personal strategies. In the background, huge cranes silently await to receive large freighters and unload container cargo.

The passage from Algeciras to Tanger Med, Morrocco, is the most convenient and affordable route for the *routiers* based in Portugal, Spain, France or Italy. Packing the vehicles with all kinds of stuff is part of the *routiers'* economic strategies and a way to maximise the meagre margins arising from the eventual selling of the car. The Straight is more than a simple geographic fissure that simultaneously separates and articulates two countries. This geopolitical frontier highlights the material relationship and symbolic differential inclusion-exclusion between Europe and Africa, between the idiosyncrasies of the so-called global North and the global South dynamics (see Mezzadra & Neilson 2013). Once on the other side, the relative value and perception of obsolete vehicles and second-hand cargo is automatically upgraded (reminding us that "coloniality" is also material). However, regardless of the legal situation of vehicles and merchandise, while crossing borders and on the road, *routiers* will inevitably face several attempts of bribes and seizures by the police and the military. This is a missing picture that interferes with and potentially compromises expected profits, but one that carries costs and hindrances to be duly managed by *routiers*.

Figure 4

Under the early morning rain in Casablanca's suburbs, boxes with Moroccan ceramic tiles replace a dozen of 18kg bags of Indian rice brought from Portugal. A few Senegalese immigrants, friends, and business partners of Mbaye, help him loading and unloading his Peugeot 504. He had spent the night at their small and crowded flat. Echoing the unfinished atmosphere of *routiers'* diverse geographies, in this grand ensemble buildings and public space are either under construction or derelict.

Beyond the transport of personal luggage and renting cargo space to third party entrepreneurs, *routiers* themselves often accept direct requests stemming from Senegal, Morocco, Mauritania, Gambia, or Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conacry. Furthermore, the trajectories of *routiers* heading south intersect and articulate the trajectories of other migrating people heading north, resulting in a vast constellation of flickering socioeconomic relations, individual and collective strategies, shared routes, and reference points. *Routiers* and migrating individuals are part and parcel of the same fundamental "infrastructure of people" (Simone 2004) that fosters the circulation of people, items, ideas, and information. But each *routier* deploys his personal approach to the road and develops his own "network of trust" (see Scheele, 2011). Networks of trust are often secretive to avoid being tracked, what would be considered incautious from a Senegalese perspective, especially in this activity. These networks need also to be multiple and flexible as the trajectories and relative value of things might suddenly change. Still, unexpected needs and problem resolution requires *routiers* to keep good harbouring "ports" that can allow for longer stays in certain places. The lack of proper social relations makes these men more vulnerable.

Figure 5

In the town of Belfaa, Southern Morocco, Mbaye Sow checks and reorganises his cargo while two mechanics overhaul the car. Head lights, battery, windows' lifts, door and boot handles are repaired or replaced. The exhaust pipe is welded later. The car's brakes will finally be operational after 2000kms and three attempts by different mechanics to fix them. Quietly, an elderly man will also turn up inquiring Mbaye if he is interested in selling the 504 – though unsuccessfully. It is not uncommon to observe how local people approach *routiers* in search of second-hand stuff or spare parts. Roadside car workshops along the Amazigh towns of Southern Morocco are fundamental in the *routier* activity. Les garages, as these are locally called, not only offer affordable and skilful repairs, but also provide important trade and barter opportunities.

Although the more profound repairs can be costly and consume *routiers* limited resources, part of which earned on the way, such interventions are essential to ensure the vehicles succeed in traversing the more risky and lonesome sections of the road ahead. Still, it is noteworthy to observe how sometimes small interventions are requested simply to strengthen bonds with local mechanics (see Graziano 2019), expanding and consolidating *routiers'* networks of trust.

Only rarely do aesthetic interventions take place, and when they occur are kept to the essential; otherwise, potential buyers might suspect that mechanical issues have been hidden.

The several encounters at the Amazigh garages are informative of the "sociomaterial transformation of waste" (Milington & Lawhon, 2018:11), which is complementary to this movement south.

Figure 6

A cemetery of vehicles grows by the day in the roughly 5 Kms of the Guerguerat buffer zone that separates the border post of Moroccan occupied Western Sahara territories from the Mauritanian border post. Out of the main tracks, this strip of land remains heavily mined. Most of the countless carcasses that pile up account for people that were unable to either (re)enter Morocco or Mauritania and whose cars were eventually dismantled in Guerguerat. Cargo overloading, mechanical issues and/or the bad conditions of this tarless section further dictate the end of the road for many vehicles and individuals. Chopped for the trade of spare parts the remnants of immobilised vehicles are then re-metabolised for those who make a living from the idiosyncrasies of this no man's land (Drury 2019). Some of the material leftovers are also employed by the Sahrawi freedom fighters in their watch-and-shoot improvised cabins. These are key to secure this slice of territory from the Moroccan recurring advancements.

Dumpsites are frequently away from sight. Beyond the vehicle-related waste, the universe of Guerguerat further interrogates the plight of the Saharawi people, whose land has been occupied, whose recognition and right of autonomy was betrayed by trade and political agreements (Kutz 2021; cf. Yates 2011). While the Moroccan Kingdom has the intention of cutting through this strip of land to satisfy their commercial agreements, Saharawi people stand in the way. This standstill reminds us of how the growth of capitalist venture create superfluous populations, human waste, in Bauman's words (2004).

The buffer zone of Guerguerat is a wasteland in many senses. "Kandahar", as it is called by those who dare traverse it and in an allusion to the dangerous and unexpected nature of this geography, is probably the most delicate leg in *routiers'* trajectories.

Figure 7

Mbaye Sow dismantles a wooden crate disposed along the Mauritanian desert roadside. The wooden slices will be bundled with other scraps and used as shims to sustain the roof bars set which collapsed with the constant potholes and bumps.

Purchased from a scrapyard in Lisbon outskirts, the roof bars in use were not suited for Peugeots 504. On top these roof bars Mbaye set up a mattress stand thus improvising a stable structure capable of holding cargo. Once the trip is over, roof bars are sold and the mattress stand is taken home, informing of how each piece of the *routier's* trade is based on value and utility.

Setbacks as the above described are not faced as problems but rather perceived as part of the metier. *Routiers* keep a constant state of awareness and seek solutions everywhere. Their eyes scout the road and its vicinities for discarded materials that can come in handy. As Mbaye eventually suggested, "there is no such thing as waste, there are only materials".

Figure 8

Already in Senegal, parked in the Gare *Routière* of Thiès, Mbaye Sow seduces middlemen and potential buyers. He had been arranging these encounters since his departure from Portugal, sharing photos and audios showing off the "new" car via WhatsApp. While showing the engine and the overall condition of the car, he starts unloading the countless luggage and items. Other sept-places will be in charge of delivering most of the cargo to his home in Pikine, in Dakar suburbs. The Peugeot 504 is expected to leave the country in a couple of hours.

In 2003, the Senegalese Government banned the entering of cars aged more than 5 years old. Abdoulaye Wade, then president, stated that Senegal was not Europe's dumpster. Conceding to mounting social and political pressure, in 2012, the president Macky Sall revised existing regulations, extending the ban to allow the entrance of cars up to 8 years. In 2019, such amendment was repealed, leaving the ban as it was first drafted. Officially, then, once paperwork at the border post is settled, these old vehicles shall immediately proceed in a convoy out of Senegal.

While hassling those involved in the business, particularly the Senegalese *routiers* living abroad, such legislation did not curb the fundamental dynamics of supply and demand of old vehicles. On the contrary, it has only resulted in a more complex process. After crossing the border from Rosso-Mauritania to Rosso-Senegal, negotiations involve the *routiers* and a myriad of middlemen, as well as a growing number of custom officials and authorities, often with political connections, nurturing in a closed web of corruption and cronyism (Dimé 2016). The task of *routiers* ends by the moment cars are delivered to a third country, usually Gambia.

Revival, that is, the legal entrance of these vehicles, is achieved by buying another car's papers (carte grise) with similar features. Before the integration of these cars into the regional transport system, sturdier rear suspensions replace existing ones. This makes vehicles better suited for extra load and endure the country's derelict roads.

Figure 9

At a crossroad in the town of Louga, a rundown Peugeot 504 drops a few passengers.

While mechanical and aesthetical conditions remain decent, sept-places stay in use linking major Senegalese towns and cities (see Lombard & Ninot 2021). However, tougher legislation and control have been increasingly forcing these vehicles out to more peri-urban settings.

As degradation becomes obvious and mechanical repairs get costly, a new process of marginalisation takes place. The "really" old cars then start being used in local fixed routes, from smaller towns to villages. It is not unusual to observe how the further a village is from the main road, the more battered vehicles circulating are. Eventually, the rusty cars, with holes on the ground and whose doors no longer work, end up being exclusively used in the bush, defying once again their expected lifetime.

Figure 10

Mbaye's living room in Pikine. The green caterpillar, a gift to his younger son, was a second-hand toy brought from Portugal. The TV and the fridge were brought from Portugal, later fixed by a bricoleur from the neighbourhood. The fridge was eventually sold despite decay, revelling how appliances keep a certain market value until their very last breath.

Mbaye's flip-flops bordering the carpet suggest he is around, probably resting or praying behind the black curtains that hide his bedroom.

Downstairs lay most of his cargo that which was not delivered, sold, or bartered along the way.

Personal luggage is delivered to the recipients as indicated back in Portugal. The other items, second-hand and broken stuff, are either mobilised as gifts into Mbaye's social networks or sold to businessmen who waited for "new" products. These are often called Fëgg jay, which literally means "shake" and "sell" as to illustrate the Senegalese vendors approach (Bredeloup, 2016).

As usual, Mbaye will stay with his family for a week or so before flying back to Portugal.

Conclusion

In this visual essay we have depicted and discussed some of the strategies employed by West African men working as *routiers* between Portugal and Senegal. We have pointed out how the spaces these men dwell in form a particular geography intimately connected to the transformational trajectories of waste, namely obsolete vehicles and used and broken items. Inseparable from this activity is the network of people that sustains and, until recently, made it thrive.

Without exhausting the interpretative possibilities, visual elements proved to be relevant as elements that constantly remind and confront us with a Southern European aesthetic and materiality of disposability. The view on the excesses of material consumption is what started our conversation on with Mbaye Sow in the first place. His uneasiness concerning what was perceived as waste made us investigate the concrete materiality of things, the transformational trajectories through mobilisation and metabolisation of those very things that somewhere, at some point in time and by someone, was deemed waste.

After our second journey together, in late December 2019, Mbaye still managed to complete another trip to Senegal in the end of January 2020, but not without several setbacks. An accident held him for over three weeks in Boujdour, Morocco, as he was travelling with an overloaded Mitsubishi L300. In the meantime, SARSCOV2 related travel restrictions and lockdowns swept Europe and Africa, dictating the selective closure of land borders and the interruption of *routiers* activity.

Mbaye Sow managed to return to Portugal six months later much due to his double nationality condition. In the meantime, Mbaye, like other *routiers*, has had to find other sources of income. First, he moved to South-western France to work in the greenhouses in fruit and vegetable picking. Contractors were not regularly hiring him, so he decided to return after half a dozen frustrated tries. As we write, Mbaye, 63, works in a construction site of high-rise office blocks. It is the same type of job he performed when he arrived in Portugal back in the 1980s.

While the flow of old cars from Portugal to Senegal came to a halt, and many *routiers* found other activities, used items diverted into alternative trajectories. Entrepreneurs other than *routiers* gather used goods in containers and ship them to the West Africa main ports. As travel restrictions due to the pandemic loosen and *routiers* will likely return to the road, new forms of competition will certainly emerge.

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

CHAPTER 6

BEINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD: ON THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTION OF THE IMMIGRANT

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Abstract

The so-called immigrants are guarantors of the demographic renewal of urban societies, ensuring that the most inclement needs of their labour market will be covered. But they are also, as part of a system of representation, able to make social disorder thinkable. Their socioeconomic function both requires and is required by their symbolic function, putting them between quotes to make sense of them. Foreign workers are enticed to meet hegemonic material requirements in the societies that receive them. But such requirements, based on the massive derogation of cheap labour force, cannot be met without a previous or parallel set of rhetoric operations that make each foreign worker an immigrant, a non-objective figure that leads to (and depends on) a process of political, media and popular assemblage, that turns him/her into a conceptual character, into a being from another world.

Keywords: immigration, alien, stigma, function, monster, conceptual character

H.P. Lovecraft begins his brief essay "The Street", originally published in the form of a book in 1920, like this: "Men of strength and honour fashioned that Street; good, valiant men of our blood who had come from the Blessed Isles across the sea…" What follows is a metaphor of the United States' own history that found in that imaginary street the perfect scenario in which to synthesize what, from the anti-modern point of view of the author, had been a process of degeneration, a gradual dissolution of the foundational values with which the fugitive European puritans had begun to build the nation back in the seventeenth century. Among the first signs of its decline was the appearance of strange, grim, malevolent people in the street:

> New kinds of faces appeared in The Street; swarthy, sinister faces with furtive eyes and odd features, whose owners spoke unfamiliar words and placed signs in known and unknown characters upon most of the musty houses. Push-carts crowded the gutters. A sordid, undefinable stench settled over the place, and the ancient spirit slept.

It is easy to see in that image Lovecraft's rejection of what the racist North American nativism interpreted as a detestable invasion by immigrants of inferior races and cultures. But the interesting thing is how one of the great masters of twentieth-century terror literature included immigrants among the indescribable and amorphous abominations that comprised his gallery of creatures.

The incorporation of the Immigrant into the Lovecraftian evil bestiary - along with Azathoth, Shoggoths, Tsathhoggua, the Great Cthulthu and other unmentionable others - should not be surprising. In stories of horror, fantasy or science fiction tend to be filled with all kinds of physical and/or moral monstrosities that emanate from the outside to the place of a certain ordered society to disrupt it, subvert it or ruin it. These monstrosities can come from remote and exotic countries - real or imaginary -, from the outer universe, from the beyond or from the underworld, but they always embody the Absolute Stranger, the Total Foreigner, who, suddenly, abruptly or in a sibylline way, bursts into the social cosmos so that all kinds of chaotic and dissolving energies act in its midst. Dracula, King Kong, the Mummy, Godzilla, Freddy Kruger and all types of zombies, ghosts, sects, demons, or extra-terrestrials, compose a vast gallery of cruel and devastating entities that manage – either alone or in legion - to breach the walls and borders that protect "us" from the beyond in which the most radical forms of alterity inhabit. Although the character may be an Alien that better and more explicitly sums up that living horror that has slipped into or broken through our world to destroy it or submit it, step by step.

So, it is hardly surprising that the immigrant and the monster are brought together in the shuddering lovecraftian pantheon. Not only because almost all of our literary or cinematographic monsters are immigrants - that is, entities that arrive from a different place, be it the sub-soil, the afterlife, another country, another galaxy or another dimension -, but because the so-called "immigrants" are thought of and perceived as hyper-dangerous deformities which come to life in the nightmare of the Invasion of the Body Snatchers, the legendary film by Donald Siegel of 1956. There, the protagonist desperately screams to an incredulous and indifferent world: "They're here already! You're next! You're next!"[1] After all, immigrants are aliens; alienigĕna, means, in Latin, "born somewhere else", and it is for this reason that the first meaning that the dictionary of the Oxford Dictionary for "alien" picks up associates it with "belonging to a foreign country". Their perception may be that of an unsettling corporeity that has broken through illegitimately into the scenarios of our daily life, in shared spaces in which we encounter them, with a phenotypic aspect to which all kinds of common places, in most cases laden with negative implications, are associated. They are the immigrants: men, women, boys, and girls hiper-visibilised, since it is impossible not to notice them, often in a way not dissimilar from that of Lovecraft in his tale: that is, contemplating them as they unsettlingly meander through that Street, the mother of all our streets, all our squares, all our parks, all our public transports, etc. That is, as they become the unequivocal sign of the imminent danger that all the xenophobic – i.e. alienophobic – ideologies presume that their omnipresence in our landscapes implies every day.

A nuance could be added to what has been said. It is true that as an alien, the immigrant can be imagined as a creature that brings with him/her everything that is feared in the outer worlds that surround us, that besieges us. But that same condition is what also makes him/her a bearer of all kinds of hopes for renewal or change. This is an ambiguity that is not only structural, but even structuring, of the monster and of its conceptual relative, the immigrant. The mythification that commemorative and trivialised anti-racism makes of the immigrant, the way it makes him/her a kind of civilising hero that brings virtues of exemplary authenticity, is of the same nature that, in certain stories, it sees in the monster the physical expression of a kindness and a truth that the "normal people" have lost.

[1] Regarding the analogy between immigrants and extraterrestrials in the cinema, it is not by chance that the protagonists of Men in Black (1997) are agents of a special unit of the immigration police, or that Alien Nation (1988) imagines a future in which the aliens have joined the earthly society and live among their original inhabitants, promoting "ethnic" or "racial" conflicts.

The outer being that has come this far is the one through whom it is possible to imagine overcoming the present, improving it, even free it. For the xenophobe, the immigrant is the undesirable external agent that triggers the alteration or alienation of a desired order, but the antiracist does not stop thinking in similar terms, even if by reversing them, by making his/her alterophilia the expression of a desire for transformation, even a moral redemption of society thanks to the intrusion of the stranger. Our repertoire of monsters and other imaginary aliens would not fail to provide us with a handful of examples of how, in parallel with the immigrant, the hopes of individual or collective salvation can also be deposited in them. Deep down, the stranger we have seen appear among us is the living proof that not only, as the antiglobalisation motto proclaims, "another world is possible", but that world is somehow already here.

Strange bodies

One could, from these premises, develop two presumptions that others have already noted. One of them has to do with the above question: certain people from poorer countries who come to work with us exhibit an immediately observable aspect that can and must be pointed out as an exception and often as a source of alarm. In effect, the racialised person is charged with such a quantity of pejorative and disqualifying connotations that their co-presence in the same public space becomes an almost automatic source of anxiety, discomfort or fear, but also sometimes of a sympathy that does not deny - on the contrary - its exceptionality, all in keeping with his/her status as a stigmatised individual, in the sense noted by Goffman (2009) in his famous essay on deteriorated and difficult identities. That is why the immigrant is the subject of a permanent task of focusing that denies him/her the right to the disaffiliated consideration that is supposed to preside and organise relations in public urban areas - that is, relations with strangers in spaces of generalised accessibility (Delgado, 2008). One assumes that the user of the so-called "public space" never stops, even for a moment, conceptualising and judging the surrounding actions and characters, from which normally he/she only expects a modicum of scenic intelligibility. In such a space defined by a relation of indifference towards those with whom immediate cooperative action is not to be foreseen, everything changes when a socially discreditable individual or group is detected – "immigrants", for instance, are recognisable as such based on immediately perceivable sensitive qualities, compounding non-Euro-Western features and aspectual elements that denote a poor socio-economic extraction.[2]

[2] Nadja Monnet has produced an excellent research on the visibility of "immigrants" in the daily activity of the Plaza de Catalunya in Barcelona; an example of how "different people" are tied to a particular

In these cases, the interaction, even if only visual, becomes mechanically problematic since the strangers who are there are no longer totally unknown: they have been identified, recognised, scrutinised, detected, placed under surveillance. They are put in a permanently active state of exception that affects their whole being. The problematisation that their mere presence creates doesn't have to be justified by a certain objective conduct, nor by their reputation as a risk factor. The fact of their incarnation in the street or the plaza is much more than that: it implies an ontological alarm, since their being there is that of the Intruder and that of the Usurper, a tangible proof that the World - ours, of course - has been or is being invaded by instances that we imagine as substantially strange to us, by living entities coming from universes that are incompatible with our own, the contact with whom will surely be highly damaging, if not lethal to us. They are, again in a literal sense, beings of another world.[3]

The interchangeability between the imaginary figures of the monster and the immigrant is based on a deviation, by excess or default, a deformity, that makes them distorted, dislocated or deranged beings, in regard to a normality of which, ultimately and paradoxically, they are, ad contrario, the guarantors. What Claude Kappler has written in his treatise on medieval monsters is equally applicable to the immigrant: "Nature amuses itself: the monster isn't, a priori, a denial or a questioning of its established order, but the test of its power "(Kappler, 1980: 21).

This premise - that of the deformed and threatening foreigner as endorsement of normality - is what allows us to insist on the validity of Georg Simmel's famous digression on foreigners (2012), in which the great German sociologist established that they – the immigrant being an extreme case of the foreigner – create the possibility of conceiving that what is alien can be recognised as being present. Simmel argued that the foreigner embodies the contradiction of a being who is at the same time near and far: physically close, but morally distant. An inhabitant of another country isn't a foreigner, as long as he/she remains in it; only becoming one here, in this place that is not his/hers, but ours. Needless to say, that virtue of the foreigner – that of someone who is inside, but who does not belong to the inside – is what synthesises what is at the same time remote and close – so to represent all kinds of external dangers that managed to slip into the heart of society.

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space, and are denied the right to move beyond that space as well as the right to privacy that "non-different people" can claim as theirs only (Monnet, 2008).

[3] Nothing new in such appreciation. A splendid Spanish film, directed by Icíar Bollain in 1999, tells the story of two Dominican women who come to a town in Alcarria to marry two Spanish men they have only previously contacted by mail. The title is eloquent enough: Flowers from another world.

It was based on Simmel, and on the first urban ecologists of the Chicago School on the figures of invasion or intrusion to refer to migratory avenues (cf., for example, Park, 2002), that Isaac Joseph (1996) underlined how the current figure of the immigrant is perfect to think about social disorganisation from within or, what is the same, to rationalise about a whole set of negative signs of the present that, thanks to the presence of the completely alien, can be explained as a consequence of their own contradictory, logically unacceptable, impossible existence in our midst.

The immigrant gives materiality to the "beyond is here" or the "there are other worlds, but they are in this one" of the surrealists. His topological ambiguity - there, here - brings him closer to that figure that is familiar to the anthropologists who study rituals: the liminal being, who is forced to be trapped for a certain period – sometimes his whole life; even that of its descendants - in an undefined territory without clear borders that imaginarily stretches between the place of departure and that of arrival but without ever completing the journey. Just like the initiate in the rites of passage, the immigrant is placed in that inner space in which, as Victor Turner wrote in his classical essay (2005 [1965]), is neither one thing nor the other. As eternal neophytes, liminary beings are no longer what they were; but they haven't yet been given the right to hold a new status or rank. That is, without a doubt, the case of the immigrant, destined to embody a human entity in a situation of chronic liminality: permanently in a threshold - in that space that is neither inside nor outside –, always suspended in an ambivalent relationship with the social mediations and the institutions into which he/she is, nevertheless, trapped.

Ordinary language recognises the immigrant's liminal or border condition, as applied to a being that is not at a border, but rather that he/she is the border that keeps the inside and the outside of the social system always separate and distinguishable. The immigrant is part and parcel of the social system, but with the status of a foreign entity. The immigrant – very much like the teenager or the concubine - is converted into a noun. not someone who has moved, who was there before and now is here, no matter how it seems, but is someone who has already left, but has not yet been given the right to arrive. Immigrants exist in an intermediate limbo, moving in its bosom towards us, but never arriving. They are conceptually perceived as beings in movement, in perpetual instability, even though we know that they're not moving and that they became sedentary.

We could well say that the ideology that makes immigrants travellers trapped in the outside they have never left – that is to say, as aliens to the inside in which they are, but in which they have not really entered – has become, literally, verb among us.

The active participle is that impersonal verbal derivative that denotes the ability to perform the action that expresses the verb from which it derives – to immigrate, in this case – and that, in the present tense, implies an update of a permanently renewed action, the reinstatement of a pilgrimage that never ends, which demands to be repeated again and again, never reaching the final destination: the now and here in which the immigrant is, but to which he/she cannot belong. That is why the logical impossibility of the expression "second" or "third generation" immigrant is constantly reiterated: the anomalous condition of an immigrant parent or grandparent is inherited as an original sin of which not everyone can be redeemed.

This analogy between the immigrant and the ritual passenger brings us back to the symbolic role of the monster and the monstrous. Indeed, when theorising about rites of passage, Victor Turner emphasizes the role played by monstrous representations in them, to which he attributes an essentially socio-intellectual role, so to speak, in the sense that they act in the manner of a kind of thought-inducing mechanism by decomposing or altering the key elements of social relationships to highlight their relevance. That what is distorted or disproportionate allows the neophyte to clearly distinguish the value of certain factors of social reality that have been undone and reshaped in the ritual setting and that invite or oblige him/her to speculate about social links, be them empirical or metaphorical. It can also be said that the monstrous alteration of the divisions in the social order acts in the manner of the concave and convex mirrors of the "alley cat", to use the figure proposed by writer Valle-Inclán in his Lights of Bohemia when referring to the relation of Spain with Europe: a deformed but highly eloquent mirror image of the terms in which a certain social structure is produced and developed, still seeing itself as its own parody, as its aberrant caricature.

All the above allows us to depict the immigrant as a "semantic molecule", in Turner's terms, whose monstrous imperfection helps conceptualise those other imperfections of the social order that, through him, becomes thinkable. The exceptional nature of the immigrant's presence in public space can be compared with that of the classificatory imperfection represented by the abominable animals of the Leviticus, whose cursed nature derives, according to Mary Douglas (2007), from their (mainly) locomotive inadequacy to the species they belong. The poor foreigner - the immigrant – correlates to marine animals without fins and scales, to land animals that either crawl or have hands instead of paws – a taxonomic stridency that in light - or in shade – of their imperfection provide for the systematic ordering of ideas, especially when it comes to elucidating those of perfection or unity.

The same can be argued by following, in his controversy with Douglas, Dan Sperber's (1975) interpretation of the role played by monstrous – or even hybrid – animals in certain symbolic devices studied by ethno-zoologists. In short, by their very presence, immigrants deny the ideal state of the social thing, while they make it thinkable by validating and sanctioning it. Every derangement, fragmentation, disorder, discouragement, decomposition, etc. that affect society can be thought of as the contingent result of the anomalous and undesirable presence that immigrants embody, thus appealing for their urgent eradication or, if that is not possible, at least for an heightened surveillance.

The two functions of the immigrant

It is well known the way two of the most referenced European social anthropologists have addressed the question of totemic classifications and the privileged role that certain animals or plants deserved in them. The first, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown argued that totemic species were chosen because of the strategic contribution they made to the maintenance of social stability, even if for reasons as elementary as sustenance. That is to say, the privilege enjoyed by some but not other natural species in the totemic taxonomy and the ritual treatment they deserved corresponds to the contribution they make to sustain social order, even if simply by their role in the basic diet upon which the totemic community depended on (Radcliffe-Brown, 1996). Faced with this presumption, Lévi-Strauss argued that totemic animals were rather defined as such because of the role they played as symbolic operators, chosen from observation of the environment for speculative purposes; that is, as objects available to a collective mind that used them for certain conceptual operations, such as conceiving the passage from nature to culture, for example. Thus, against the structural-functionalist perspective natural elements such as vegetables were "good to eat" and that made them totemic, in the structuralist interpretation they were essentially recognised as "good to think" (Lévi-Strauss, 2003: 162).

This is where two meanings of the term function become contrasted. A given entity can fulfil a function in the organicist sense – that is the position Radcliffe-Brown adopts –, i.e., in the sense that the productive and dynamic task carried out by a given organ at the service of the proper functioning of a certain structural morphology. But it can also fulfil a function in the logical-mathematical sense, i.e., as a relation between mutually dependent variables in a formal plane. C. Lévi-Strauss speaks of "symbolic function" in this last sense, by adopting that meaning from glossematics,

which views it as equivalent to the semiotic function, or the capacity a sign has to express an amorphous content that is initially external to it, but with which becomes solidary (Hjelmslev, 1971: 73-74). There is no need to dwell here with the genesis of the symbolic function's idea, as it was proposed by structural anthropologists.[4] Let us simply note that it refers to a certain type of logic operations of the unconscious mind whose task is to impose given forms to any content, with the goal isn't to refer some facts to their objective causes, but rather to articulate them in a congruent and significant totality, and to organise them in such a way that the final product allows to integrate contradictory data, to order fragmentary and unformulated experiences, objectify confused feelings, etc..

As a matter of course, an organic function is not incompatible with a symbolic function. An object of the perceptible world can be useful, or even essential, to maintain a certain social structure, thanks to its role in the techno-ecologic and techno-economic spheres, while at the same time becoming an instrument at the service of the intelligibility of experience. Thus, the immigrant is not only a fundamental part of a production system based on human exploitation or a guarantor of generational change, but a true conceptual character, in the sense Deleuze and Guatari suggested for that notion in their introduction to their acclaimed essay What is philosophy? A certain system of representation generates, as the imaginary philosopher referred to by Deleuze and Guatari, its own conceptual characters; that is, personalities through which a social complex can think of itself as other, forced to incarnate its strongest concepts, or at least the very strength of its main concepts, not to designate something extrinsic, "an example or an empirical circumstance, but an intrinsic presence to thought, a condition of possibility of the very same thought" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1991: 9). As a conceptual character, the immigrant represents what is heteronomic, that is to say "the other names", that may correspond not only to the profile of who conceives them and speaks to or with them, but also to their negation or their opposite, as if the social order and its self-representation can find in the immigrant something similar to what Nietzsche found in Zarathustra or Plato in Socrates – in other words, someone with whom to talk, even if, as in the present case, in controversial terms, that is, with whom we can imagine ourselves antagonistic and incompatible.

[4] Actually, Lévi-Strauss includes the theoretical value symbolic function in only a few instances of his work. There are references in chapters I, IX and X of his Structural Anthropology, which correspond to texts originally published between 1949 and 1951 (Lévi-Strauss, 1958: 28, 202, 225 and 245). He only returns to this notion twenty years later, in the "Finale" of the fourth volume of his Mythologiques, The Naked Man, and only to mention how the beatitude that laughter produces is the reward our conscience receives for having seen this symbolic function satisfied, whereas the opposite of laughter would be anguish, which is the consequence of our inability to achieve it (Lévi-Strauss, 1971: 571).

The immigrant is an opportunity for our "thought to fraternise with its enemy", as Kappler (1999: 13) put it when discussing the relationship between monsters and humans in early medieval cosmology.

It is from this framework that the immigrant can assume his/her role not only as a guarantor of demographic renovation or agent of a precarious labour force at the service of a strategic informal economy, but also as a symbolic-conceptual artefact. This perspective doesn't deny the obvious fact the so-called "phenomenon of immigration" is above all a phenomenon of exploitation, as well as proof of the dependence that urban-industrial societies have on contingents of foreign young people they cannot help attracting; but it helps explain why the objective role of immigration and immigrants in relation to the demands of the labour market and of the demographic logic seems to matter so little, that it deserves so little public relevance, compared to that obtained by other more ethereal arguments in the media, in institutional discourses, in militant pronouncements of all kinds, or in popular judgement. With his back to the objective data, what seems of primary public importance is not the objective facts but moral considerations that refer to the above-mentioned ideal order of the social system that, for better or for worse, the immigrant as symbolic operator and conceptual character brings into question.

There is nothing incompatible between the socioeconomic function of the immigrant and that other function that conceptualises him/her in order to spark meaning. On the contrary: one requires the other. Let us accept the assertion made by Marvin Harris when, taking up the imaginary debate between Radcliffe-Brown and Lévi-Strauss, he tells us that if certain animals are good for thinking that is because before they have been declared good to eat – or, as he puts it, they present a favourable practical cost-benefit ratio (Harris, 1995: 15). If we bring this point of view to the understanding of the "immigrant", it becomes clear that if thousands of foreigners come to live among us, the reason is not to spark our reflexive speculation, but to attend hegemonic material requirements of the receiving society. But such requirements, based on the massive stigmatisation of a cheap labour force, cannot be satisfied without a previous or parallel set of rhetorical operations that have made an immigrant of each foreign employee. The immigrant is a non-objective verbal figure that results from, and depends on, a process of political, mediatic and popular construction, that makes him/her a legendary character, a mystification needed to recognise in him/her new versions of old mythological figures, enigmatic variations of the "The Thing from Another World", the title of a mythical B series film of the 1950s.[5] It is through this transfiguration that the exploited foreigner becomes

[5] The Thing from Another World is a 1951 film directed by Christian Nyby and Howard Hawks.

the Alien: a threat or a hope, but always someone that is there to be controlled, to be persecuted, to be protected or who to be expected – never as what he/she is, but as a product of our imaginary, someone who is always someone more and something else.

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

CHAPTER 7

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S RESPONSE TO THE MEDITERRANEAN 'REFUGEE CRISIS': THE NORMALISATION OF SECURITISATION

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Abstract

The goal of this chapter is to explore the European Union's (EU) response to the Mediterranean 'refugee crisis' mainly from 2013/4 to 2016, as well as beyond this 'peak' period, by means of the triangulation of document and discourse analysis, newspaper articles and secondary scholarly literature. We provide an overview of the main events, the EU's responses (including the Member States), and discuss the consequences of what we identify as the 'normalisation of securitisation'. We conclude that this increasingly common practice is detrimental to the European integration project as well as to the freedoms of its citizens in addition to promoting the exclusion of non-EU citizens.

Keywords: European Union, securitisation, refugee crisis, migration, discourse

Introduction

The mass movement of forcibly displaced persons (including asylum seekers and economic and other types of migrants) around the Mediterranean, primarily from the South to the North, following the Arab Spring uprisings, led to substantial changes in how the European Union (EU) deals with border control – at least in rhetoric (Trauner, 2016) – and its securitisation largely contributed to the rise of far-right political movements in several (if not all) EU Member States (Collyer and King, 2016; Menéndez, 2016; Gattinara, 2017; Rheindorf and Wodak, 2018). The goal of this chapter is to explore, through the triangulation of document and discourse analysis, newspaper articles and secondary scholarly literature, the EU's response to this phenomenon – commonly dubbed as the European or Mediterranean 'refugee crisis' – primarily from 2013 to 2016, even though relevant events after this 'peak' will also be contemplated. We seek to provide an overview of the main events that took place in and around the EU during this period, as well as of the EU's responses (including individual Member States' responses), and to critique and discuss the consequences of the overall tendency to normalise securitisation.

The policy field of migration and home affairs is an area of shared competence between the EU institutional structure and the Member States. At the EU level, the Council adopts legislation along with the European Parliament and ensures coordination between the Member States' internal security. Following constant changes and developments over the last decades – as ensuring external border control has been relevant for Member States since before the EU's actual inception (Loescher, 1989) –, this policy field currently deals with issues such as judicial cooperation in civil and criminal law, the fight against organised crime and terrorism, fundamental rights, asylum and immigration policies, the free movement of peoples and goods (i.e., the Schengen area, which includes all EU Member States except for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, and Romania), border management, police cooperation, as well as civil protection.

The EU agency that is most relevant for our study is Frontex, which has undergone changes in the aftermath of the phenomenon under study, following the attempt of implementing a problem-solving kind of neofunctionalist logic (Niemann and Speyer, 2018). Established in 2004 as the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU, Frontex subsequently became the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in 2016. This EU agency has, in recent years, been charged with monitoring and managing the EU's external borders. In this sense, and because this is a shared competence policy field, Frontex complements and assists EU Member States' border management systems

by monitoring migration flows, assessing risks and vulnerabilities, training border guards from the Member States (including assisting in the establishment of common training standards for border guards), assisting in search and rescue operations, and ultimately by supporting EU Member States in returning third-country nationals that do not have the right to stay on EU territory. Despite the 2016 'revamping and relabelling' effort, the agency remains highly dependent on the Member States and does not necessarily ensure the latter's compliance with common EU border and asylum standards (Carrera and den Hertog, 2016).

Throughout this chapter, we opted for consistently referring to this phenomenon as the 'Mediterranean' rather than 'European' 'refugee crisis', as the latter Eurocentric discursive choice is limited and problematic, since the phenomenon goes well beyond Europe or the EU. Even though we admittedly chose to study the EU's specific responses, by opting for the former designation, we remove the EU's centrality regarding the phenomenon and its consequences and frame it within a wider geopolitical context that is not bereft of significance for the understanding thereof (Collyer and King, 2016).

In addition, while we recognise that most people arriving in EU shores during the established timeframe are either asylum seekers or economic and other types of migrants, we opted for using the term 'refugee crisis' (between inverted commas), simply because this has been one of the most common and recognisable designations for this phenomenon in recent years. Still, we are aware of a distinction between migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, at least from a legal standpoint. A migrant is commonly understood as a person who leaves their home to seek a new life in another region or country (it can be a regular or irregular/undocumented migrant); an asylum seeker – which has progressively been replaced with the term 'international protection' – is commonly understood as someone fleeing war, persecution, or natural disasters and who is seeking asylum, i.e. , the legal permission to stay as a refugee in the country of arrival. Refugee is thus a legal status conferred to an asylum seeker following a successful application process. It is important to notice that not every asylum seeker will be recognised as a refugee, but every refugee is initially (at least in principle) an asylum seeker, although many do not apply due to a myriad of reasons, which can include not wanting to register due to fear concerning irregularities regarding their means of arrival or lack of documentation, fear of deportation in case of refusal of refugee status, association with criminal activities (e.g., paying to reach a desired country), among others. The problem with these concepts is that the distinction between them is not always entirely clear, it is artificial and often arbitrary,

and ultimately creates exclusion (e.g., where does someone fleeing from extreme life-threatening poverty fit?).

We chose to use the term 'crisis' to refer to this phenomenon because, similarly to 'refugee', it has been the most recurrent and recognisable designation for it. However, we do argue that this term is neither innocuous nor neutral, as it reflects the framing of the phenomenon of displacement of peoples from one place to another considering exceptional security measures. Throughout the chapter, we define the concept of securitisation, and we focus not only on the growing securitisation of this phenomenon, but also on the *normalisation* of securitisation in and around the EU, as a continued and systematic use of the term 'crisis' not only reduces its original meaning of emergency (Jeandesboz and Pallister-Wilkins, 2016) but also helps, simultaneously, to normalise emergency measures (Rheindorf and Wodak, 2018).

The goal of this chapter is to explore the EU's response to the Mediterranean 'refugee crisis' mainly from 2013/4 to 2016, as well as beyond this 'peak' period, by means of the triangulation of document and discourse analysis, newspaper articles and secondary scholarly literature. We will begin by identifying the main events concerning the EU and its Member States' responses to the 'refugee crisis', and by looking at the consequences of these events, following a chronologic sequence. In the subsequent section, we will discuss a phenomenon that we have identified as the normalisation of securitisation, as well as the escalation of 'crimmigration' within the EU and its spread to humanitarian assistance. In the last part of this chapter, we will examine the logic of exclusion encased in the discursive dimension of the 'preservation of European spaciality' (Dalakoglou, 2016) found in the initial designation proposal of a portfolio in the 2019 von der Leyen Commission dealing with migration and security issues – 'Protecting our European way of life'. We finish the chapter with concluding remarks regarding the substantial changes that occurred in the EU as a result of the Mediterranean 'refugee crisis'.

EU responses to the 'refugee crisis'

In light of a substantial increase in migrants and asylum seekers arriving in the EU, an appropriate response could have been a Common European Asylum System. Even though the EU's refugee and border control policies had already been undergoing changes (albeit of questionable efficiency) in previous years (Klepp, 2010), reality during the peak of the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 was rather a patchwork of 28 different asylum systems producing uneven results (Trauner, 2016), in addition to the enforcement of the Dublin Regulation.

Before the peak of the 'crisis', this regulation meant, by and large, that asylum seekers had to register in the first EU country they reached, which privileged EU Member States to the North (the desired destination of many migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees), to the detriment of Southern Member States, where most people first arrived at due to the former's location bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

In the aftermath of a shipwreck that killed around 250 people off the Italian coast in September 2013, in the subsequent month the Italian government launched the search and rescue operation *Mare Nostrum* (Triandafyllidou, 2018). In 2014, shortly after the launch of this operation, Syrian asylum seekers and refugees became the world's largest internationally displaced group (around 3.9 million people). By the end of the year, the EU, in response to pleas from the Italian government, converted Italian operation *Mare Nostrum* into a Frontex border control Operation named *Triton*. Although there were high expectations that the EU could solve the Member States' obstacles and problems in this policy field, the 'refugee crisis' has shown that the EU is not well equipped to act as a unified actor in this area, and that this issue surpasses the area of Home Affairs. While in late 2014, when the Junker Commission was organised, for example, the Directorate-General for Justice and Home Affairs was renamed Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), thus emphasising the importance of the former policy area within the broad field of Home Affairs, the structures and functioning, and especially the institutional fragmentation did not change much, which led to a shift of the focus from domestic issues to the control of the EU's external border.

Despite the effort of Frontex's Operation *Triton*, in April 2015 more than 800 people died (around 350 Eritreans, 200 Senegalese, as well as Syrians, Somalis, Sierra Leoneans, Malians, Gambians, Ivoirians, and Ethiopians) on a vessel that capsized in the Mediterranean Sea off the Italian coast trying to reach Europe (ibid.). In response to this event, two months later the EU launched military operation EU NAVFOR (Naval Force) MED (Mediterranean) to identify, capture, and dispose of vessels and other assets used by migrant and asylum seeker smugglers and traffickers.

There are two aspects of this operation that reflect the EU's strategy for tackling the issue at hand. One aspect is that the operation represents an important instance of the EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflicts and Crises, a 2013 Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council produced by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy at the time, Catherine Ashton, and her team at the European External Action Service (EEAS).

This concept – revised in the 2016 EU Global Strategy as the EU's 'integrated approach' – proposed a mobilisation and interconnectedness of all tools and instruments available to the EU with the purpose of maximising coherence and effectiveness in tackling external conflicts and crises. The 'comprehensiveness' of EU NAVFOR MED resides in its location in between the policy areas of Home Affairs (which deals with ensuring domestic security for the EU) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (an externally-oriented security and defence crisis management policy). This, in turn, reflects not only the securitisation of the migrant and refugee 'crisis', but also a growing link between domestic and external security concerns and tools. The second relevant aspect is that the operation EU NAVFOR MED was subsequently renamed Operation Sophia by the EU High Representative at the time, Federica Mogherini, in a discursive effort to humanize the EU's response, as the name stems from a Somali baby who was born on, and named after, a German EU NAVFOR MED taskforce vessel in August 2015 that rescued over 400 people from the Mediterranean.[1]

In August of 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared openness to suspend the Dublin Regulation and, consequently, to temporarily interrupt the obligation of new arrivals to submit their asylum applications in the country of arrival. Even though the European Commission had already decided on a relocation scheme for 60,000 people arriving in Italy and Greece to other EU Member States in May of that year, following Merkel's declaration, this number went up to 120,000 in September. This, in turn, led to the closing of the Hungarian borders, as well as the building of barbed and razor-wire fences in the border with Serbia (ibid.).

In October 2015, the EU started negotiating a deal with Turkey. In this deal, the EU promised Turkey financial assistance with the more than 2 million Syrian refugees therein, and to be more open with the enlargement process as well as to accelerate visa liberalisation between the two parties. Turkey, in turn, would help stop and prevent new routes for irregular migration from Turkey to the EU, and would accept the return of irregular migrants that had gone from Turkey to Greece.

Throughout 2016, some EU Member States' political elites and population in Central and Eastern Europe were openly dismissive of resettling refugees and asylum seekers. Countries in particular from the Visegrad Grup (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia) have had a historically difficult relationship with Germany's hegemonic role in the EU, and the response to the 'refugee crisis' was no exception.

[1] https://www.operationsophia.eu/about-us/#story

The focus of these Member States has primarily been the reinforcement of external borders as well as tackling the root causes of migration flows, rather than receiving the migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

In January of 2016 Austria temporarily suspended the Schengen agreement and imposed full border controls and considered allowing officials to reject migrants at the border. This eventually became unnecessary because the number of arrivals decreased. In October 2016, Hungary's response to the imposition of quotas was to hold a referendum. While over 98% of participants voted against the imposition of relocation quotas, less than 50% of the Hungarian electorate participated, and the minimum threshold to consider the referendum valid and binding was not reached. Nonetheless, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán still presented the result of the referendum as a validation to his anti-immigrant rhetoric.

In March 2016, an agreement between the EU and Turkey was reached. This highly criticised agreement led to a substantial decrease in arrivals in the EU coming from Turkey, but it was also marked by a form of 'coercive bargaining' that sits upon an imminent threat of the release of masses of migrants and asylum seekers (Greenhill, 2016) from Turkey. The Turkish government has often threatened the EU with such releases (Stevis-Gridneff and Kingsley, 2020) leading to a gathering of over 13,000 migrants and asylum seekers at the Turkish-Greek border in early 2020 (IOM, 2020).

The EU's shift to focusing on its external borders by attempting to reinforce Frontex or by striking a deal with Turkey was linked to the perceived risk in the difficulty in getting rid of internal 'emergency' border controls that had been established as a response to the 'crisis', and which ultimately risked the Schengen area of free movement of people and goods – one of the pillars of the EU. Nonetheless, a number of conflicts and normative divergences remain between, on the one hand, EU actors and institutions that claim that offering easier access to the EU through a facilitated visa policy would strengthen EU relations with some third countries and, on the other hand, Member State Home Affairs officials who focus more on security concerns and on preventing the overstay of those who arrive. In other words, there is still fragmentation, lack of coordination, and problems of information exchange between EU institutions and bodies, as well as a frequent 'de-prioritisation' of the area of migration and asylum in the direct relations between the EU and third countries, despite the opposite rhetoric in public diplomacy.

The normalisation of securitisation

The concept of securitisation was most notably developed by the Copenhagen school (e.g., Buzan et al., 1998) with the purpose of capturing a broader understanding of security beyond the traditional political-military milieu. This concept focuses on non-military elements and events that are perceived and labelled as 'emergencies' or 'threats' and thus justify the deployment of whatever means possible to contain them – even if this means supressing some of the freedoms of the community, such as in the case of self-contained surveillance systems, for example. Even though securitisation in the area of migration is not new in the EU context (Huysmans, 2000), this 'crisis' has seen not only the securitisation of asylum seekers and migrants, but also of those that frame it with a humanitarian rather than a security focus – such as in the case of the arrest of Sea-Watch 3 captain Carola Rackete (Al Jazeera, 2019). In addition, we argue that the EU (and its Member States) is not only experiencing, but also actively encouraging a normalisation of the securitisation of this and other policy fields.

Even though the concept of 'crimmigration' – i.e., the association between criminal law and immigration – is hardly new, the 'refugee crisis' and the normalisation of securitisation in the EU context have contributed to the rise in this challenging and exclusion-prone association within EU Member States. Stumpf (2006), discussing the context of the United States of America, refers to this association as "membership theory," arguing that it "provides decisionmakers with justification for excluding individuals from society, using immigration and criminal law as the means of exclusion" (p. 366). While this concept is often associated with external borders, and it also not new in the EU context (Majcher, 2013), van der Woude and van der Leun (2017) bring attention to the increasing application of this association in the context of the allegedly temporary re-emergence of the EU's internal borders in the midst and aftermath of the 'crisis'. Normalisation of the temporary restrictions in the Schengen area (Collyer and King, 2016) feed into the rise of 'crimmigration' within the EU, as "countries are increasingly looking for ways to use the grey areas of supranational and national legislation in such a way that the promise of a borderless Europe applies only to a privileged group of *bona fide* travellers and not to those who are seen as the crimmigrant 'other'" (Aas, 2011[2] *apud* van der Woude and van der Leun, 2017: 41).

The criminalisation of humanitarian assistance providers is also associated with the phenomena of increase in 'crimmigration' and with the overall normalisation of securitisation (Provera, 2016; Carrera et al., 2018).

[2] Aas, K. F. (2011) 'Crimmigrant' bodies and bona fide travelers: Surveillance, citizenship and global governance. Theoretical Criminology 15 (3): 331–346.

Some of the problems that emerge from "policies that criminalise contact with irregular migrants" include "widespread feelings of subjective insecurity as well as stigma, ill trust and prejudice towards migrants" (Carrera et al., 2018: 92). Moreover, the growing practices of 'policing humanitarianism' and 'criminalisation of solidarity' (Fekete, 2018) "negatively affect wider societal trust and divert the limited resources of law enforcement from investigating more serious crimes" (Carrera et al., 2018: 1).

'Protecting our European way of life'

During the presentation of the 2019 European Commission by President Ursula von der Leyen,[3] a new portfolio attributed to one of the Commission's Vice-Presidents (Margaritis Schinas) has garnered substantial media attention for the controversial choice of name: 'Protecting our European way of life'. Von der Leyen proposed a rethinking of the DG HOME portfolio from the previous Juncker Commission with a focus on migration, security, employment, and education.

Critiques stemming from the European Parliament, various NGOs, or civil society organisations have dubbed it a 'far right slogan' and 'an insult to European values' (Rankin, 2019). Notwithstanding, the notion of 'protecting the European way of life' is not necessarily new – it has been used in discourses and narratives related to the normative justification of the EU's crisis management policy, alongside the EU's self-portrayal as not just 'good', but as 'the best,' not as a 'model,' but as an 'ideal,' not just as a norms promoter, but as having the responsibility, as part of its *raison d'être* to help 'less civilised' actors on the way to progress and development, regardless of its own actual performance as an actor (Ribeiro, 2019). In addition, the increasingly volatile domestic and external environment and the strong securitisation tendency of the policy field of migration – including, as mentioned in the previous section, the criminalisation those who attempt to help migrants and asylum seekers as well as the rise in the association between criminal law and immigration within EU borders – has led to a shift in the EU's understanding of its security as both physical and ontological and to an apparent retraction in its normative ambitions towards external actors (Roccu and Voltolini, 2018).

The issue that has attracted so much controversy is the connection between the expression 'protecting our European way of life' and the portfolio that deals with the policy fields of migration, security, employment, and education.

[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwbdIDC29GA

In addition, this is arguably the most visible instance of the use of this expression with connection to security and migration in the EU's public discourse in recent times, and, without clarification, it sends a message widely understood as problematic. In fact, the direct association between migration and security in the same portfolio is as telling as the initially chosen name (it has since changed) in that both reinforce the normalisation of securitisation and the logic of exclusion encased in the preservation of European 'spaciality' (Dalakoglou, 2016), mimicking discourses of populist movements and of Member State governments – such as "protecting Austria against the influx of refugees" (Rheindorf and Wodak, 2018).

In her mission letter to Schinas, von der Leyen defines 'the European way of life' as

> built around *solidarity, peace of mind and security*. We must address and allay *legitimate fears* and concerns about the *impact* of irregular migration on our economy and society. This will require us to work together to find common solutions which are grounded in our *values* and our *responsibilities*. We must also work more closely together on *security*, notably on new and emerging *threats* that cut across borders and policies (Von der Leyen, 2019: 4).

However, the President of the European Commission also argued that the 'European way of life' entails "a strong focus on integration [of migrants]" and "making sure workers are equipped to thrive in our evolving labour market" (ibid.).

This discourse is ultimately being criticised for appearing to establish a distinction between '*our* European way of life' (which is, nonetheless, left only vaguely defined) and 'other' ways of life, arguing that the former must be protected (inherently, from the others), thus creating a discursive logic of alterity and exclusion. The EU itself is largely a discursively constructed concept – it is constantly being spoken on behalf of by different actors within its institutional architecture and thus has a fluid and contestable identity. So, the way actors within the EU structure speak about it is fundamentally relevant for the general public's understanding of social and political phenomena around them, and it also matters because it has practical consequences – such as the exclusion of certain groups or the establishment of artificial hierarchies.

Discussion and conclusions

The necessity for the EU to ensure its own (European) physical and ontological security (Roccu and Voltolini, 2018), in a logic of resilience, as articulated in the 2016 Global Strategy (Biscop, 2016; Juncos, 2016; Bendiek, 2017; Colombo et al. 2017)

was fuelled and accompanied by a tendency to increase securitisation the areas of borders and migration due to domestic political pressures and a growth of populist and right-wing political movements in Europe that, in turn, also stem from perceptions of a worsening security environment within and outside Europe. In this chapter, we argued that securitisation has not only marked the EU's response to the Mediterranean 'refugee crisis', but it has also become normalised. The 'normalisation' of actions, discourses, or narratives – i.e., the assumption that they are normal, natural, impartial, accepted – is a common occurrence in the social world. However, when certain ideas (e.g., 'crimmigration' or 'the criminalisation of solidarity') are acquiesced and normalised by the public, they become sustainably powerful and taken for granted to the disadvantage of certain groups that are excluded in this process.

The *nonchalant* manner in which security appears to be integrated with other issues of varying importance and centrality for the European project as such (migration, education, employment) reflects an assumption of its normalisation. While we could argue that this reflects a downgrading or marginalisation of security from the EU's agenda, the centrality of this issue in the EU's public discourse (visible, not least, in the 2016 EU Global Strategy) suggests otherwise. Instead, it seems, everything has become embedded in a security frame – i.e., everything is being *securitised*. And the normalisation of securitisation as an action that is meant to be exceptional in nature in the context of EU policies is the core of the problem, as the exceptional and all that comes with it (including the limitation of certain freedoms – such as the free movement of peoples and goods) becomes acquiesced as normal for the sake of an artificial sense of security, not only fuelling populist and far-right movements but also risking the European integration project itself.

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

CHAPTER 8

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND FGM/C CROSSING BORDERS: "VIOLENT" TRADITIONS, CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, AND JURIDICAL CONUNDRUMS

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Abstract

In this article we look briefly into some of the conundrums around the practice of FGM/C. The practice, existent in dozens of countries, is often categorized as a "harmful traditional practice", and a framework of "zero tolerance to FGM/C" has been created to combat it. We will describe how it became an agenda in the human rights framework, before we can discuss how the connections between Portugal and Guinea Bissau, have helped institutionalize an anti-FGM/C agenda in Portugal. We will also discuss the first condemnation for the practice of FGM/C in the country. This example will allow us to make some interpretations on how the juridical approach to the ban on this practice, despite seemingly consensual, is in reality contributing to new forms of invisibility (by pushing the practice underground), discrimination (association of certain groups to the practice) and double victimization (by punishing victims). We will also question the way policy is produced and intervention takes place.

Keywords: FGM/C; criminalization; Portugal; violence

> *Violence today is embedded in a world of reasons. It must have or be given a rationale, even—often especially—when it is deemed to be senseless* (Mehta, 2018).

Everyone thinks they know what violence is, because we have all been witnesses (and possibly victims) to some form of it. We are all aware of how widespread it can become, and how senseless it may seem, just by following daily reports in most contemporary media, or learning History. Yet, even if violence is ubiquitous, we are less prone to think of violence in its less visible forms, namely the violence that lurks underneath social norms and daily life and affects individuals because it has been internalised (Han, 2018). Often, this is not even recognised as violence by the majority. However, for certain groups, or categories of people, violence is more systematic than for others. It is structural, because it forms patterns and is ingrained in social organization; and it also is contingent, because it is embedded in social practices. Violence comes in many forms. it can be symbolic, psychological, domestic, interpersonal, ethnic, and so on. Because it is deeply entrenched in the exercise of power it is rather difficult to analyse. Actually, it eludes analysis, especially if we are not aware of how imbalances are constitutive of certain social relations. Many authors have tried to make the concept more operative for a long time (see Benjamin, 2009; Zizek, 2008; Han, 2018) but have, for the most part, been unable to come up with a clear-cut definition, helpful enough to tackle the idea of how violence is also culturally meaningful. Definitions often circle around legitimacy (legitimate violence), social ramifications and impacts on individuals and their subjectivity, and rely mostly on abstraction. Abstraction distances us from contingency and concreteness.

When considering cultural practices like FGM/C, violence is one of the main concepts on top of which narratives are construed. Conscious of how women's lives are limited by social norms and structural violence, women's movements, especially on the second half of the 20th century, have sought to re-imagine women's rights, pushing for increased political participation and especially protection for women against violence. Anti-FGM/C agendas would emerge from this push. In consequence, a whole set of beliefs emerged in the international scene targeting cultural practices considered to be unacceptable in a globalised world – practices like FGM/C, but also child marriage, forced marriage, breast ironing, *gavage* or forced feeding, to name a few. The expression 'harmful traditional practice' was proposed at some point, firstly by African Feminists, and was intended to be less derogatory than "mutilation". The need to discuss semantics denounces some uneasiness about the way these practices become associated with the representation of the society where they exist.

In international venues (especially in the West), the term mutilation remains the currency, and what is discussed all around is the degree to which these "traditions" can be violent, and how they are based on a perverse patriarchal order. Individual sensibilities clash with carefully crafted languages.

Supported by both Western and African feminists (Sow, Fatou, 1997; Thiam, Awa, 2014; Hosken, Fran P., 1976), the fight against FGM/C became prominent and visible by the end of the 1970s. The main narrative looks at how the practices subsumed under the acronym are violent and abhorrent in a myriad of ways, sounding moral alarms (see Shweder, 2014: 360) while linking them to conceptions of honor, purity and the social institutions of marriage and reproduction (see Hernlund and Shell-Duncan, 2007). This discourse often turns around ideas of choice, free will and equality, against the backdrop of constraining social norms and cultural imperatives. Furthermore, the rationality of the international human rights apparatus is clear in its protection of the individual and its rights, against their chronically unprotected lives – the bareness of their lives in Agamben's (1998) formulation - facing ingrained discrimination and structural violence.

For Jacques Rancière, human rights are formulated as the right of the rightless, the rights of all those who face grievous limitations to the exercise of citizenship (Rancière, 2004), victims of the arbitrary use of power and the normalization of inequality. By invoking a shared humanity to all people, human rights transformed "those without rights" into political subjects. Although

> full participation in the life of the community means different things in different cultures" (Bernstein, 2018), "rights claims project an egalitarian social framework that authorizes individuals, gives social authority to them as individuals, with respect to their social fellows and encompassing institutional habitat (*idem*).

However, today's political landscapes and societies have changed since the inception of human rights. After a clear boom in the second half of the 20th century, the last decades saw a new global framework of hyper-communication that globalised spread of moral sentiments that justify humanitarian intervention. For Didier Fassin, those moral sentiments have become a considerable driving force in contemporary politics (Fassin 2012). For both liberals and conservatives, themes that drive passion are politically useful. The FGM/C debate is an example where the continuous mobilization of moral sentiments blurs the debates and creates ambiguities in the framework of human rights. In this article we will look briefly into some of the conundrums around this cultural practice.

This practice, existent in dozens of countries, is officially categorised as a "harmful traditional practice", and a framework of "zero tolerance to FGM/C" has been created to combat it. We will describe how it became an agenda in the human rights framework before we can discuss the link between Portugal and Guiné Bissau in this particular subject. This example will allow us to make some interpretations on how the juridical approach to the ban on this practice, despite seemingly consensual, is contributing to new forms of invisibility (by pushing the practice underground), discrimination (association of certain groups to the practice) and double victimization (by punishing victims). We will question the way policy is produced and intervention takes place.

Some historical and critical notes on SRHR

During the last half century, the right of women to determine the lives of their bodies is being negotiated in the framework of human rights and, as pointed out by Elizabeth Heger Boyle, "a critical component of the feminist argument was to expand the idea of human rights to incorporate a positive requirement on states to protect individuals against harmful actions that occur in the "private" realm." (Boyle, 2002: 53). Domains such as the body, gender, or interpersonal relations made their way to the human rights discourse. The concepts underlying what we know today as gender violence, for example, were first introduced in the international scene with the CEDAW (Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women), which was signed in 1979. From then onward, violence against women and gender violence would become main concerns in human rights. Contexts of action were, afterwards, globalised (see Berkovich, 1999). At the same time reproductive health was becoming a central matter of concern for women's rights. Beyond the recognition of the importance of education in eliminating violence against women, the CEDAW also introduced in the framework the right to reproductive health (to curb mortality rates giving birth, or promote family planning by insisting on contraception). However, if this Convention was intended to be an "international bill of rights for women", the acceptance of universalism and liberal individualism has, since the start, seen controversy between secular and religious ideologies (cf. Berkovich, 1999).

Women's rights (as human rights) would only become consolidated during the 1990's. Between the 1970's and the 90's the focus on reproduction echoed previous concerns with population and development, on one side, and health, on the other.

The four United Nations World Conferences on Women have represented important steppingstones in achieving visibility for the multidimensionality of discriminations faced by women. Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995), have helped raise awareness to the necessity of worldwide recognition of women's fundamental rights. Even though these new instruments were advances in agenda setting, they also represent an increasing engagement of the States (see Paige, 2014) and the creation of specific structured funds to help further these rights, both at international and local levels. Also contributing to a new momentum, and paramount to the generalization of these rights, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo 1994, was where women's rights were affirmed as human rights. That was also the moment the language of sexual and reproductive rights entered the scope of International Treaties in a more straightforward fashion (see Starrs, 2018) alongside the fight against gender inequality and violence.

These rights comprise the right to education and information, informed decision making concerning reproduction and sexual life, and healthcare before and after childbirth, as well as during pregnancy.

> Sexual and reproductive health is a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Therefore, a positive approach to sexuality and reproduction should recognize the part played by pleasurable sexual relationships, trust, and communication in the promotion of self-esteem and overall well-being. All individuals have a right to make decisions governing their bodies and to access services that support that right (Starrs, 2018: 2646).

These and other important specifications have been widely and profusely discussed in the negotiations conducing to the aforementioned Treaties and Conventions. According to Bhatia *et al* (2020), following political scientist Paige Whaley Eager, the 1994 Cairo Conference represented a paradigm shift, from the language of "population control" to the language of "reproductive rights and health" (see, Bhatia et al, 2019:2). This Conference is considered by many as one of the marks for the international agenda on Sexual and Reproductive Rights. In Cairo, the Protocol for Action was adopted by 179 Governments, and represented a paradigm shift from a focus in population targets and development to a focus on the needs, aspirations, and reproductive rights of men and women. The Program of Action has put at the centre of development sexual and reproductive rights. The process, though, was complex and many concessions had to be made while discussing the text semantics. Eager

(2014) reminds us that the chapter 7.1 of the Cairo Declaration was rather contentious, specifically pertaining to the expression "sexual and reproductive rights", mostly due to the concern that certain countries would not sign the Declaration if this language was not reviewed and rendered less concrete.

> The concurrent codification and paradoxical juxtaposition of sovereignty and universal human rights norms did not go unnoticed by the GWHRM [Global Women's Human Rights Movement]. On the one hand, Cairo called for the full respect of religious and cultural traditions. Conversely, the document simultaneously recognised the need to undo cultural norms and religious practices that perpetuate violations of women's reproductive rights. Despite this dilemma, the GWHRM still viewed Cairo as a major paradigm shift (Paige, 2014: 160).

Nonetheless, even if omitted from the final document, reproductive rights were widely discussed on the background and seemed to be granted a relevant status. Conversely, sexual rights have been almost out of the question and consensus is still to be achieved[1]. For example, when the Millennium Development Goals were made public in 2000, the expression sexual and reproductive health was omitted by fear that certain countries wouldn't sign the texts otherwise. In the same sense, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has included the expression sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, but still excludes the mention to sexual rights (cf. Starrs 2018: 2646).

Since the historical International Conferences in Cairo and Beijing, the actual implementation of sexual and reproductive rights has been boosted by a number of different concurrent factors. Among these factors we can account the paramount importance of political will to create infrastructures that coordinate, provide framework, guidance, and funding to local actors from the civil society with country wide programs. In these Conferences one of the main propositions, at the time, was the recognition of the centrality of gender inequality, which should be fought through concrete political measures in key areas. These have highlighted Government ethical responsibility in ensuring full support to the implementation of the agendas discussed (Pilai and Gupta, 2011). After Cairo (1994) a global network dealing with women's rights and, particularly, with sexual and reproductive rights was consolidated.

1 In the project SEXRWA, hosted by CEI-ISCTE and financed by FCT (PTDC/SOC-ANT/31675/2017), we have been focusing on the resistances to such rights, especially happening in Guinea Bissau and Senegal. LGBTIQ people's rights and the right to abortion are two domains where Sexual and Reproductive Rights provoke some social tensions in Western African societies.

Also, following these important International Conferences in the 1990s, civil society organizations have well received the guiding principles purported by the Plans for Action, from both Cairo and Beijing, and have shifted the focus from population control to women's empowerment.

However, on the international scene, any sort of Convention or Treaty that sees the light of day is the object of endless discussions, negotiations, and lobbying. That is why a critical approach to human rights, like the one proposed by Sally Engle Merry, considers human rights, first and foremost, as the legal instruments they are. For Merry, we have to bear in mind, at all times, that this language originates in the heart of international organizations as a formula to describe and regulate very complex realities (see Merry, 2006: 39). The degree of abstraction normally attained, can't be properly translated onto different belief systems which have their own set of references and ways of dealing with social relations.

Furthermore, lest not forget that those negotiating international agendas are also prone to have their own biases. As they dwell and inhabit socio-political spheres composed of donors, fundraising activities, and the mastery of this form of bureaucratic coded language, they often find themselves detached from local contexts and "local ideas on humanness, personhood, and how one ought to behave towards others" (Brkovic, 2017). These biases, focused on the formulaic nature of human rights language, disregard vernacular forms of humanitarianism, which "are embedded into the very particular local frameworks of morality and sociality" (Brkovic, 2017) Furthermore, besides this problem in translation, we are also faced with the tension between the sites where recommendations are made and those where these are implemented. This is especially critical because at the heart of international institutions' concern for women's rights is the focus, according to Abu-Lughod, on the "third-world woman", her body and her reproduction. This bears continuity, somehow, with populationist visions, and therefore Françoise Vergès points to how the "discourse on birth control was deployed in the context and era of decolonization, the Cold War, the reorganization of global capitalism, and the rise of the American empire" (Vergès, 2018: 265) and cannot be detached from the continued need for labor in capitalist societies and the movement of a gendered, racialised, workforce.

Highlighting the focus of these rights on the «third world woman» adds some critical notes to these debates, especially those pertaining to practices like FGM/C, child marriage and other practices deemed harmful. That particular focus has spiked much criticism and has, ever since, been underlined by feminists, especially those from the Global South.

The stress of sexual and reproductive rights on individual choice is seen as a difficult problem to resolve in societies where the social structure still relies heavily on hierarchy and family relations. Because "the individual only makes sense within a community", in many societies from the Global South, deep rooted practices aim at socialising the body trough multiple rites of passage. If some of these are questionable and involve bodily suffering, others promote social and existential well-being, albeit not using neither the language of human rights, nor its legal instruments. The question is, thus, much more complex than just pinpointing which practices seem legitimate or not.

The fight against FGM/C crossing borders

In line with what has been said so far, the current agenda of the fight against the practice of FGM/C has been the product of decades of policymaking and awareness raising. Throughout the 20th century, a change in perception about this practice occurred and this would lead to an increased consciousness of the problem as one of human rights. If during the first half of the 20th century FGM/C was considered mainly as a health issue - and most international institutions didn't want to meddle in what was then seen as the cultural domain questions – the growing perception of FGM/C as a problem of the "private realm", culminated in the belief that it should be dealt with by policy. Until the 1970s, with little information available and institutional reluctance to deal with sociocultural backgrounds (see Hosken, 1976), FGM/C remained a rather unknown issue. No one had a clear idea about the dimension of the issue and doing something about it was correlated with each country's political will to do so. The recognition of gender inequalities and violence, as well as discrimination, taking place in the private realm brought by the main Conventions, was a critical step for the recognition of practices like FGM/C as a human rights problem (see Baer, 2007:98). Notwithstanding, despite the evolution in the agendas between the 1970s and 80s, FGM/C still failed to make it to the main policy documents (see Berkovich, 1999). This would change with the CEDAW Ninth Session of the Committee, in 1990, where a new recommendation was made (Nº14) on female circumcision.

> Prior to the 1990s, violence against women was viewed as a private, domestic matter, and thus beyond the scope of international human rights law (...). The 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights was a landmark event (...) female genital mutilation became classified as a form of violence against women (VAW); second, the issue of VAW was for the first time acknowledged to fall under the purview of international human rights law (Shell-Duncan, 2008: 227).

Fran P. Hosken had been one of the first women's activists to present global figures on the prevalence of FGM/C[2], and to use the expression mutilation around the end of the 1970s, but it was this entry of women's rights and violence against women in the global human rights agenda that mainstreamed the question. More funds for research and campaigning became available, and the last twenty-five years have seen instruments consolidate and plenty of experiences being done. The last two and a half decades also brought the conscience that FGM/C is not solely a problem in the Global South, but one that is also increasingly becoming a problem in the Global North.

The challenges posed by such a practice in Europe are not only due to it being a human rights and health problem, but they are also linked to it being attributed to a 'cultural other', thus creating fears of discrimination (see Johnsdotter, 2009). Often, institutions tend to consider cultural difference in a culturalist perspective that fails to see how "every culture is contested from its interior, [and] those local moralities are also objects of criticisms" (Massé, 2009: 38). Furthermore,

> When we consider FGM/C as a question stemming from migrations, this unfolds in three different directions: 1) one axis of governance and the management of cultural difference, intersected by questions that are specific to policy in migrations, rights to mobility and entry in territories 2) a biopolitical axis, where the different institutions, like health centers, schools, police, social services, and immigration offices, etc., manage people affected by the practice and apply guidelines that define the practice in an institutional setting, but often struggle with lack of information; 3) one last axis is the one linking migrant communities to their place of origin through many flows, both material and symbolic (social, cultural, economic) and the influence these represent for the prevalence of the practice in both countries of origin and host countries (Falcão, 2017).

Changes in the legislation against FGM/C are an important tool to allow concerted actions in the field. However, these are implemented within a framework of extreme vulnerability at a social, economic, and symbolic level. This constitutes a rather crippling element to the deployment of anti-FGM/C agendas, as women victims of FGM/C occupy mostly the margins of European cities, where the State and local administration face specific problems that go way beyond the possibility of practicing FGM/C. Social vulnerability, which is the exposure of people, families and communities to risk and their incapacity to respond to it on its own (or with help)

2 Even if the figures presented lacked in systematic data, that would only start to be gathered consistently in the 1990s by the DHS and MICS, by USAID and the United Nations respectviely.

(Malheiros *et al*, 2016: 189), also manifests itself in access to free public healthcare, which is often limited because of the ambiguity in legal status of many immigrants' victims of FGM/C; and to other local services.

Meanwhile, as migrations turned FGM/C into a problem to be dealt globally, the framework of the fight against FGM/C has changed, evolving into a more punitive legalistic approach. Newer instruments, like the Maputo Protocol (part of the African Charter on Human People's and Rights) in 2003, the Beijing Declaration in 2000, or the Istanbul Convention, in 2011, have furthered the capacity to create punitive legal frameworks in most of the issues around violence against women, and particularly FGM/C. The Istanbul Convention for example, created specifically to address those issues, has promoted the current wave of criminalisation in the European countries that have ratified it. The punitive-criminalising framework is not consensual, and activists stated some concerns surrounding its consequences, namely: the increasing invisibility of the practice due to fear of prosecution. Furthermore, research in critical human rights, like the one conducted by Didier Fassin (2009), criticizes essentialist notions of culture (Shell-Duncan, 2008) and cultural otherness (Peroni, 2016). Even though there are more legal instruments available to tackle a practice, and those instruments address real problems trying to provide frameworks of action, there isn't enough knowledge about the reasons that make FGM/C so hard to eradicate. This is especially relevant in Western countries where, culturally, FGM/C is mainly considered to be a 'harmful traditional practice' and a 'violation of human rights'.

Social intervention and the case of FGM/C in Portugal

Following the proliferation of legal instruments and frameworks to deal with a practice such as FGM/C, local actors have taken it upon themselves to contribute to the fight against FGM/C. Supported by an institutional framework responding to the international human rights, in Portugal, this fight unravelled in different dimensions ever since it started almost twenty years ago. We can, for organization purposes, divide what is being done in roughly four topics.

1) Information and awareness

From the mid 2000s up until today the FGM/C issue went from a totally unknown practice to one that is periodically reported on the media. Some specialists emerged in the scene and civil society organizations helped disseminate the "anti-FGM agenda".

The most visible actions undertaken, and knowledge produced took place during the 2010's. However, we should go back to the beginning of the 20th century to find the first references of FGM/C in Portugal. In 2003, a first study was conducted by Associação para o Planeamento da Família (APF) about the knowledge of health professionals on the practice of FGM/C. The study would be presented on the first seminar dedicated to the practice and concluded that, in general, health professionals lacked knowledge on how to deal with the victims of FGM/C. There was concern that the system couldn't respond to the special needs of the victims and that FGM/C would continue to go unnoticed. At the same time, the practice was getting some attention in the media, trough the work of Sofia Branco, whose articles in Público date back to 2002. She used personal stories and exposed cases and their consequences. By giving voice to the victims and their own opposition to the practice a "tone" was set for what would be the approach to FGM/C in Portugal, based on a concern that the practice had been "imported" from countries such as Guiné Bissau and was happening in the outskirts of Lisbon's urban area. In 2006, this journalist would publish "Cicatrizes de Mulher", a book that definitely launched the awareness among a wider audience.

These two concerns have remained the main focus of the anti-FGM agenda being deployed in Portugal: a) FGM/C as a practice happening in the country among communities of West African migrants, thus signaling migration flows from these areas as potentially problematic and in need of a specific attention; b) how the system and a wide array of professionals working for public services were not prepared to deal with the practice. Both these concerns have guided the production of knowledge around FGM/C in Portugal for the last twenty years. They have also catalysed several interventions at the local institutional level and the production of a set of institutional documents that guide the actions of professionals, namely for police forces and health professionals. In 2012, the Health Directorate General (DGS) published a protocol (see DGS, 2012) comprising of specific guidelines and a decision algorithm for health professionals.

At the academic level, some Master thesis started to appear in 2007 (see Martingo, 2009), but we would have to wait until 2015 to see the first country wide study on FGM/C, comprising of both statistical analysis and first-person anthropological accounts on the practice. The study, coordinated by Manuel Lisboa (2017) and conducted by Dalila Cerejo and Ana Lúcia Teixeira, brought with it a clearer picture of how the practice spread through the territory.

A different type of approach, not specifically focused on the systemic response to FGM/C nor with the knowledge about the practice, focused on the victims' subjectivity and experiences.

In that sense, some films about the practice are noteworthy because they shed light on activists and women, instead of the system. Films like "Si Destinu", by guinean-portuguese Vanessa Fernandes, a story of a little girl who is being prepared to be cut and her feelings of confusion; *Este é o meu corpo* ("This is my body"), 2017, by Inês Leitão and Daniela Leitão, gathering testimonies from activists and victims; or *A tua Voz* ("Your voice"), 2016, by Margarida Cardoso and Alexandra Alves Luís, are the main references in this area.

Finally, concerning knowledge and awareness we should underline the availability of a vast array of other productions like academic thesis and publications; project reports; booklets; guides for professionals and educators; factsheets, campaigns and media reports on developments. Most of these, though, still focus on the problematic nature of a practice like FGM/C in a European context and on the best way of curbing the practice.

2) Institutionalization

Marked by a favourable institutional environment providing framework to gender equality initiatives and following the focus on sexual and reproductive rights given by the new international framework, FGM/C has been the object of attention, in Portugal, especially in the last decade and a half. Several institutions have tried to apply the coordinates elaborated in the aforementioned Conventions and Protocols for Action. In that sense, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)[3] has been promoting the alignment of the Portuguese legislation, and its institutions, with European recommendations, namely those coded in the Istanbul Convention, ratified by Portugal in 2011. The Commission approved, until this date, three pluri-annual Action Plans and promoted a series of other actions to render this question known by a wider public. The Commission coordinates public policy on FGM/C since 2009.

Other actors were also actively involved in granting visibility to FGM/C in European territory and since 2016 that, on the 6th of February (the International Zero Tolerance Day to FGM/C), at the municipal level, the Regional Encounters are held. These have already taken place in Amadora (2016), Sintra (2017), Seixal (2018), Lisboa (2019), Odivelas (2020). Despite the objectives announced, these encounters present a narrow view of FGM/C, in the Zero Tolerance framework.

3 The institutional page of this Commission is clear on how the international framework contributed to its current organic. https://www.cig.gov.pt/area-a-cig/historia-da-cig/

Professionals coming from several services, from health departments to social intervention, share their experiences and talk about the programmes being promoted. Surveys are conducted and debates take place, catalysed by the presentations of invited guests. Victims of FGM/C are also, often, part of this picture, but unfortunately most of the times they are called only with the purpose of having them share their own personal stories.

Apart from governmental actors and local powers, civil society organizations[4] also developed numerous campaigns focusing on information and training, producing materials and projects. These institutions articulate among themselves and with other institutional actors, in local and international partnerships, also with African NGOs, especially those in Guinea Bissau[5]. During this period in which the visibility of the practice in Portugal has increased, Portuguese institutions participated in several national and international projects, such as: *Create Youth Network*; *Replace 2*; *Change Plus*; MUSQUEBA; *MAP-FGM*, *Youth4Change* among others.

Alongside CIG, one of the most active institutions is DGS (Direção-Geral de Saúde). This institution has tried to provide a framework in the health system, for the practice of FGM/C, by establishing partnerships with other institutions, but also by promoting a framework of continuous training and widening of the scope of knowledge of its professionals. In articulation with some Medicine Schools and NGOs, it has been responsible for the creation of post-graduate studies for health professionals. Recently, in 2018, and articulating with the ACM (Alto Comissariado para as Migrações), it also decided to consolidate a network of Health Centers (ACES) and local powers[6], with the project *Práticas Saudáveis: Fim à Mutilação Genital Feminina*, targeting the five Municipal Administrations with a higher estimated prevalence of FGM/C[7]. In September 2018, this institution also published a report, with data from the period 2014 to 2017, gathered in the Health Data Platform, a software (deployed in 2012) accessed only by health professionals where a special folder dedicated to FGM/C has been created.

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[4] P&D Factor, Associação Mulheres Sem Fronteiras, UMAR, MUSQUEBA, APF, and AJPAS, Balodiren, Associação de Filhos e Amigos de Farim are just few examples.

[5] Among which the Comité Nacional para o Abandono das Práticas Nefastas, Saúde da Mulher e Crianças, led by Fatumata Djau Baldé (see Carvalho, Falcão e Patrício, 2018).

6 Alcochete, Barreiro, Moita e Montijo (Arco Ribeirinho), Almada-Seixal, Amadora, Loures-Odivelas e Sintra

[7] Cascais Municipality is the 6th, reason why it wasn't included in this programme.

Despite the clear evolution of the institutional framework, the data available and the approach undertaken are still quite limited to a bias that focuses on the practice of FGM/C in numbers and statistics, as a violation of human rights that can be curbed by education and awareness raising. In most institutional frameworks, and in most studies, the information that is made available pays little to no attention to the wider contexts of FGM/C. Social Intervention is particularly prone to such generalizations.

3) Local intervention and the limitation of community-based approaches with people from Guinea Bissau.

If on the one hand, localised interventions often target communities, defined roughly as people inhabiting a certain area, sharing the same nationality. On the other hand, community participatory approaches are often built upon rough generalizations of cultural belonging. This categorization bias is part of the problem set by the "anti-FGM" framework in Portugal, especially when this framework is heavily reliant on the engagement with people coming from Guinea Bissau. This is why we can find around the territory of Lisbon urban peripheries several projects that dedicated their attention to FGM/C through (and with) people from Guinea Bissau's "community". Most of these projects, despite their well-intentioned objectives, aim at social change by applying behaviorist models that usually ignore in-depth studies of cultural dynamics and history (see also *Mestre I Mestre and Johnsdotter, 2019*). These models are operationalised with just a few surveys applied to control groups and are designed to achieve accountable short-term outcomes rather than long-term engagements. The people mobilised by these projects become 'mediators', 'women champions', 'stakeholders', 'community leaders' and other categories used in project parlance. These people are then used to create a link between the so-called "communities" and the institutions, but there is little to no critical assessment of this articulation role. Most interventions also don't evaluate their own institutional settings and constraints that show themselves when developing such projects[8].

Most intervention projects, because they do not widen their scope, they often fail to understand that FGM/C is not always a priority in people's lives, and violence against women (or violence in general) is not exhausted by cultural practices. Other social and cultural constraints concerning gender and intergenerational relations are paramount to address the complexity of the framework where FGM/C perpetuates itself.

[8] If anything there is a culture of not questioning the institutional organic.

Dimensions such as systemic racism for example, are normally absent of all projects about FGM/C. We should remember that, even though in Portugal FGM/C is evolving in a migratory context, its intertwined relation with the country of origin cannot be set aside[9]. Social forms of belonging and "making the social" are in constant relation with the origin and often not immediately with the Portuguese context, at least for the generation of people that came from Guinea. Younger generations also have a different relation to sociocultural values and social dynamics, so much so that the generational undertones to cultural practices in the Portuguese context shouldn't be overlooked. So, the truism 'not all guinean are alike' might be a bit obnoxious, but it's something that seems to need a reminder for most institutions.

A complex set of inequalities underlines the need for intersectional approaches. These are far from being the norm for institutions. These would allow us to shift from the two main concerns already discussed: the lack of knowledge on FGM/C on the part of professionals; and the fact that it is a problem particularly connected with a specific group of migrants.

Recent fieldwork conducted in Portugal on gender violence and normativity permitted us to identify a wide array of dividing subjects and social dilemmas faced by Guinean people living in Portugal. These social constructs, which are not directly related with FGM/C, represent daily struggles for most people migrating from Guiné Bissau. Some of these are directly relevant to understand the context where FGM/C exists, other are also relevant, even if in a less straightforward way. The short list that follows gives us a less schematic view of normativity and violence, while underlying the importance of going beyond simplistic views on "violation of human rights" and "harmful cultural practices". These views have resulted from a series of focus groups and individual interviews.

Women tend to experience more violence than men. The accounts on social and structural violence are vivid and concrete for women, while men talk about violence in an abstract way.

The representation of women is highly ambiguous. They are lauded for their reproductive labour and for being "like warriors", meaning that they face life's ordeals with courage; but, at the same time, they are subalternised by the way reproductive labour is underappreciated.

Girls and boys are distinguished strongly while growing. A culture of responsibility is imposed on girls while a culture of carelessness is passed on to boys.

[9] Changes in the laws of both countries, as well as in awareness raising campaigns, have created different dynamics and pace between people living in Guinea and Guinean living in Portugal.

The nonexistence of spaces for dialogue between genders and generations is at the heart of forms of violence. Submission is demanded of women and youth, and it stresses the importance of a culture of seniority, where age is the biggest source of social legitimacy to have a voice publicly.

In cultures where the "social" is very important, many external influences can influence the outcome of people's decisions. Social pressure is often felt as an inescapable dimension across all groups in Guinea Bissau.

In Portugal, Guinean men have feelings of betrayal concerning the choices of women relating to work and their growing autonomy. These feelings of male fragility are also linked with financial stress as well as the culture of the male as provider.

Trouble defining alternative forms of masculinity on the part of both men and women. Normative masculinity is also associated with a certain patriarchal distance (meaning a culture where the man exists first and foremost to impose definition and authority).

The dimension of affects is seen as belonging to the feminine sphere, but it is also problematic between generations, especially related with the culture of seniority. Public displays of feelings are discouraged. This hampers a proper emotional management and communication between groups of people. A cleavage between youth holding progressive views and traditionalists, associated with a culture of parent support. Youth are expected to support their parents from a certain age onward. The difficulty of educating children with traditional values heightens the conflicting aspect of social relations among people from Guinea-Bissau in Portugal. This also provokes clashes between traditional values and values learnt in the formal education system.

This list is far from being complete, but it points out to some of the complexities that are part of the lives of people from Guinea Bissau living in Portugal, among which there are people belonging to communities practicing FGM/C. The very nature of these social relations, alongside gender and generational values, is permanently negotiated. FGM/C belongs in the same framework as a set of other practices that are not at all detached from one another. Social interventions in Portugal often tackle just a narrow part of people's concerns.

Activists frequently dialog with many of these dimensions, but for people from FGM/C practicing communities, these don't forcefully belong to the domain of citizenship as they are still seen as pertaining to the private realm. Even if States regulate, people don't immediately start living on a juridical regime in tune with international law. They rather point to social relations and "ways of doing" that precede them.

4) Criminalization

Criminalization of FGM/C became the main institutional approach to this cultural practice, in Europe, after the Istanbul Convention (2011), which clearly stated that this violation of human rights should have its own juridical framework. The countries that signed and ratified the treaty soon started to present their laws. In Portugal, FGM/C is a public crime since 2015. Before that date it was already considered a grievous offense to physical integrity, but it was not typified. By specifying the aggravating circumstances of this practice, law was able to extend punishment to preparatory acts and moral authority of the crime. An extraterritorial clause was also applied to the law against FGM/C, since often the practice is not done in Portugal but in the countries of origin during holidays and trips to visit relatives. Criminalization is problematic though, in many instances. As we mentioned before, the lack of proper knowledge makes the system ill prepared to deal with the complexities of such a practice. As *Mestre I Mestre and Johnsdotter* (2009) tell us "reiterated law enforcement concerns are not coupled with training and prevention that are needed in the case of FGM in Europe".

Despite the fact that criminalization has become the main framework guiding the juridical approach to FGM/C, "fewer than 50 FGM criminal court cases exist in Europe"[10] (*Mestre I Mestre and Johnsdotter, 2019*). Many conundrums persist when dealing with this practice in the legal sphere. *Mestre I Mestre and Johnsdotter* are among the few to have done a critical evaluation of the cases of FGM/C arriving to criminal courts and the underlying assumptions of the legal apparatus. They propose a distinction between typical and atypical FGM cases. According to these authors, this distinction "connects the court cases to the cultural realities of the practicing communities and requires previous knowledge about the different practices and communities, their migratory history, and the status in Europe of those involved." (*idem*) The "atypical" case should, according to them, involve experts on the appreciation of the material circumstances of the crime.

In Portugal, the first condemnation for the crime of FGM/C happened on the 8th of January 2021. Rugui Djalo, a young woman from Guinea Bissau, at the time 19 years old, was convicted for the crime of FGM. In the proposed classification of typical and atypical cases, Rugui's case would fall on the latter.

[10] This number as changed since the authors have written their article, with convictions in Portugal and the UK.

As *Mestre I Mestre and Johnsdotter (2019)* underline, the atypical cases seem to "reflect the willingness to open investigations and legal proceedings", meaning that there is a sort of pressure in the system to produce culprits and condemn those who practice FGM/C. Whatever the reasons behind the materiality of the act were, the case of Rugui seems to configure such a desire to set an example. In these cases, evidence is not normally "consistent with a sound cultural narrative" (*ibidem*). Events, and the way the play out in court frequently follow "a cultural logic that is unfamiliar to the Western court actors" (*ibidem*). This is what happened to the case of Rugui Djalo. When returning from a trip to Guinea Bissau, the mother of the child, took her daughter to a health center, due to a genital infection. The nurses that oversaw the girl suspected a case of FGM/C and denounced it. Following an evaluation, the Public Office decided to prosecute the 19-year-old woman. The judges in the Tribunal of Sintra, decided to materialize a sentence, setting it to four years of imprisonment invoking the fact that FGM/C is an extreme form of violence, and that the criminalization framework in Portugal is one of "zero tolerance to FGM/C".

Despite the case being publicised in all the media, lauded as the "first sentence condemning FGM/C", the actual circumstances of what happened were not clearly discussed, nor were they object of any critical appraisal. Discussing these circumstances with someone that followed the court hearing closely, we were able to become aware of a general attitude towards the woman accused. As the defence lawyers tried to invoke the fact that the girl, at the time of the facts with 18 years of age, the judges were insisting on the production of guilt, trying to assess the extent to which the mother of the child was aware, or not, of what was going to happen. No specialists were called to the hearing. Mitigating circumstances were also disregarded. The judges were not interested in the fact that the material author of the act was not the mother, that she was pressured by her elders without a real capacity to refuse. Lest we forget that a culture of seniority is especially hard to negotiate for a young woman who is visiting the family of her husband (to whom she has been married to for not so long). There are many crippling factors to hamper any decision contrary to the family's desires. These should have been considered mitigating circumstances and guilt should be considered on a larger framework. What would be the alternative for Rugui? Not to visit the family of her husband? To not present her child to her eager in-laws? Could a 18 year old young wife really refuse to establish those social bonds? Was she aware of the danger the child was in? She might have been, but was she fully aware? And if so, could she really have chosen otherwise? Accused of a "violation of human rights", when she herself is a victim of structural violence, and is trapped in a network of dense social ties that obey to many constraints based on gender and age.

These questions that remain is the reason why *Mestre I Mestre and Johnsdotter* (2019) propose the classification of atypical cases, but also why they remind us that the

> attempt to recognize values and norms in terms of legally privileged justifications toward exculpation (exclusion of guilt) or mitigation of the defendants' guilt and punishment" is what has been deemed to be a cultural defense. In these cases, the "concept needs to be coupled with the definition of culturally motivated crimes (a terminology currently accepted in Italy and Spain).

These arguments are controversial and have been object of critique, but if the objective of a judgment is to produce justice, how is depriving a small child of her mother (who is also a victim of a system) doing her justice? For these two authors, the presence of specialists in court could be used to better understand the logic of the act of FGM/C. If theoretically we tend to agree with this and see here an opportunity for Applied Anthropology, at the same time we are aware that this cannot be done without a proper ethical and deontological clarity (Holden, 2019).

Fortunately for Rugui, the Court of Appeal of Lisbon would suspend the execution of the four-year sentence to which the woman was condemned, considering that the imprisonment would further penalize the daughter. "We believe that the simple censorship of the fact and the threat of prison achieve in an adequate and sufficient way the intent of punishment"[11] were the words with which the Court has, then, allowed Rugui to resume her life.

This case, "the first condemnation for FGM/C in Portugal", is an illustration of the ambiguities in the whole system where the "anti-FGM agenda" has been deployed. Its "zero tolerance" foundations, with criminalization as its tool, contribute to a rather deaf justice system, when it comes to dealing with such a practice. In court, and probably outside of it, people that endure such a form of violence need to be heard on the details of their stories, and the constraints upon them. Criminalization has brought with it consequences, and many activists are today questioning if this is in fact the best tool to combat FGM/C. One of the problems seems to reside in the fact that the huge amount of awareness raising, training of future professionals,[12] training of active professionals, campaigns, protocols, action orientations, cannot educate fully on the cultural logics behind this practice.

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[11] https://www.tsf.pt/portugal/sociedade/tribunal-da-relacao-suspende-pena-de-prisao-por-crime-de-mutilacao-genital-feminina-13947315.html

[12] The authors of this article have participated in an International Project, financed by the European Commission (MAP-FGM), which consisted of training future professionals, and have between 2016 and 2018 trained over 400 people.

This education demands time that doesn't exist, it demands attention to cultural difference, it demands capacity to recognize the narrative underlying peoples' choices.

Conclusion

In this article we have tried to make an overview of the ambiguities and conundrums of FGM/C, from the creation and adoption of sexual and reproductive rights at the international level to the specific case relating Portugal to Guinea Bissau. Considered by many as an "extreme violation of human rights", this practice has been on the radar of international organizations for the last thirty years and has been a strong mobiliser of moral sentiments. A certain vein of humanitarianism, mobilised by these sentiments, and nourished by Eurocentric forms of institutionalised feminism, has created a zero-tolerance framework which seems, in the end, counter-productive because it pushes the practice of FGM/C to invisibility; because it re-victimizes victims; and further discriminates people already socially vulnerable. For us it seems unnecessary to adopt cultural relativism, but we think that, at least, when it comes to such a delicate subject, some critical notes have to be made.

Because contemporary politics is keen on the mobilization of moral sentiments, things often get blurred. In the Portuguese example, all the awareness, training, and campaigns, have achieved a double-edged sword. On one hand, professionals in all areas have a minimum understanding of what FGM/C is and are today legitimised by the rule of law. On the other hand, this often-minimal understanding is clearly insufficient to appreciate the logic at play. This has been the case with the Bissau Guinean woman Rugui Djalo, who was convicted to four years of imprisonment in the beginning of 2021, only to see her sentence suspended some months later. The fact that the same system was able to produce two rather different judgments is proof of the uneven distribution of knowledge on the practice of FGM/C.

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

CHAPTER 9

THE BORDERS OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

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Abstract

Border crossing into the Western world is increasingly becoming a central political question in the beginning of the XXI century. Notably, the growth of populist forms of nationalism in parts of Western Europe and in the Anglosphere is joined by the strong nationalist stances of Eastern Europe's governments that categorically reject non-European immigration. Overall, these political forces are united in their repudiation of the effects of globalisation, focusing their critiques on how global migration negatively impact national identities. Nevertheless, national-populism is more based on an instinctive reply against unwanted consequences than on a substantive doctrine. Hence, this article goes beyond national-populism and focuses instead on how the criticism of the liberal order is being articulated by identity driven forces, shedding light on their post-liberal visions of the future. Namely, it highlights the growing influence of the political philosophy of the Nouvelle Droite via the multiplication of identitarian movements in the Western world. It argues that border crossing into the West is strongly contributing to the rise of Europeanness.

Keywords: Migration, European Identity, *Nouvelle Droite*, Political Philosophy, Identitarianism

Introduction

Western liberalism is a powerful force with various social effects. Its capacity to disrupt social identities through mass migration and fluid citizenship is particularly powerful. Unsurprisingly, liberalism's discontents often point towards its negative impact on communal identities (Sandel, 1982). At the level of party politics, the rise of national-populism in the Western world is a strong symptom of an identity crisis. By raging against mass migration into the West, populists pit what they consider to be the "real people" against uprooted liberal elites (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017), but the question of what the identity of a people is often remains to be clarified.

Formally, a collective identity is intrinsically relational and comparative. That is, it is constructed not only via the affirmation of itself but also through the contrast between identities. Borders are not simply physical barriers on the map. Instead, they normally represent the boundaries of group identity. Consequently, international migration waves generate strong emotional reactions. A mass migration represents a moment in time where identity is put into question; that is, it forces the receiving and the moving population to rethink who they are, a disruptive moment with diverse consequences. Still, it is possible to visualize two general outcomes: either identity profoundly changes with migration, or migration strengthens identity through the contrastive contact with "the other". These seem to be the two possible results for the contemporary West in the face of international mass movements of people into its lands.

This chapter discusses the impact that border crossing into the West has on European imagine identity.[1] Attempting to understand the reaction to this contemporary phenomenon, it focuses on the vision of identitarian nativist forces, highlighting their post-liberal conception of the future and the strong influences of the *Nouvelle Droite*. It argues that the crescent adherence to this vision is underpinned not only by an intense discontentment with a perceived weakening of national identities, but also by a latent concern with the fading out of European identity itself. Hence, by providing a direct contrast with "the other", global migration into the West substantially contributes to the rise of European consciousness.

The analysis of the article is structured as follows. I start by presenting a general overview of the discontents of liberal modernity and of the opponents of mass migration into the West, with a special emphasis on the rise of identitarian movements.

1 I do not attempt to reach a substantive definition of European identity. That is beyond the scope of this article. I use the term to refer to the European people and its diaspora in their historical commonalities.

Afterwards, I expose current identitarian political thought, which comes mostly from the *Nouvelle Droite* (a post-liberal school of political philosophy). Finally, I analyse how the identitarian movements operate along transnational lines in a technological world and I also assess how the intense migration into the West can impact European alliances and identity. The conclusion summarizes the main points.

Western discontents

Border crossing into the Western world is progressively generating reactions at the political level. The hard nationalist claims by Eastern European governments (e.g. the Visegrad group) and the proliferation of national-populism in Western Europe and in the Anglo-Sphere seem to challenge the liberal consensus of the post-war era. The European Union is increasingly divided between an Eastern Europe that broadly opposes non-European migration and a Western Europe that, despite the rise of populist parties, is still upholding the liberal understanding of open societies. It is difficult to predict how exactly this situation will develop. Still, what seems clear is that national-populists in Western Europe and in the Anglosphere have not offered any visions of the future beyond general protests against uprooted elites and mass migration. Their calls for a return to the sovereign nation-state controlled by the "real people" are reminiscent of the liberal spirit of the French revolution and sound mostly anachronistic. There is a lack of substantive doctrine regarding their claims, which reveals that their actions are more based on a discontentment with the consequences of Western globalisation than on a properly designed alternative.

Yet, cultural, and political movements that uphold identity as a major value are growing both in Europe and in the United States. These are known as the identitarian movements (Zúquete, 2018), and they are a direct expression of the demographic transformation of the West as a result of mass migration. Although these movements are a consequence of an acute discontentment with global border crossing, they carry a cultural and philosophical baggage that aims at turning the liberal Western paradigm into a post-liberal one. The militants operate online and in the public realm, focusing more on cultural change and meta-politics than on party politics. In the United States, the identitarian movement known as the Alt-Right (Hawley, 2017) came to prominence with the ascension of Donald Trump to power. Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which these two phenomena are connected, they appear at a moment of general discontentment with liberal globalisation, with the movement providing a cultural background that can influence party politics.

The same can be said about the identitarian movements in Europe, whose ideas can quickly permeate party politics, potentially offering current national-populists a substantive doctrine that they lack. Even centrist parties can be affected.
The identitarian Euro-American transatlantic network represents a shift from a classic nation state allegiance to a transnational allegiance based on European identity. Given the fast migration flows and fluid citizenship that characterize the contemporary West, identity is becoming dissociated from nationality and international networks begin to define the future of politics. It is therefore of importance to understand the main ideas driving these movements, ideas that, to a large degree, were developed by the *Nouvelle Droite* school of thought.

Against liberalism and homogenisation

Born in the late 1960s with the foundation of the French think tank GRECE[2], the *Nouvelle Droite* gathers ideas from authors such as Oswald Spengler, Antonio Gramsci, Friedrich Nietzsche, Julius Evola and Martin Heidegger. Although defining itself as a philosophical school beyond left or right (Griffin, 2000, p. 47), the *Nouvelle Droite* is often regarded as a right wing political force (McCulloch, 2006, p. 176). Yet, the school sees the political right as part of the problem of the liberal paradigm. According to Alain de Benoist, the founder of the school, "one of the tragedies of the right (…) is its inability to understand the need for [attention to] the *long term* … it has not understood the importance of Gramsci" (Benoist, 1979, p. 62). This reveals a common belief of current identitarian movements, that is, the belief in the importance of changing culture by engaging in cultural and philosophical activism, a practice known as meta-politics. At its heart, the *Nouvelle Droite* is a post-liberal school (Lindholm & Zúquete, 2010, Chap. III). More than simply dealing with the question of mass migration, it aims at overcoming liberalism and the metaphysical doctrine that gave origin to it: Christianity. Hence, the *Nouvelle Droite* turns to European paganism and to systems of organisation that underpin the rediscovery of European ancient roots in future contexts.

By highlighting Christianity's desacralisation of nature, promotion of universal egalitarianism and promotion of "one-world-one-God", the school sees the Judeo-Christian ethos as devaluating nature, therefore becoming a destructive homogenising force of the unique diversity in the natural world.

2 Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne.

In the words of Guillaume Faye, another main intellectual figure of the school, the Western liberal order is the "monstrous child of … the egalitarian ideologies created by Judeo-Christian monotheism" (Faye, 1980, p. 5). The radical separation between God and nature underpins the problem that the Christian European tradition of the last centuries brought: the destruction of true European culture, that is, the erasure of immemorial traditions. By clearly pointing the finger at Christian theology, Alain de Benoist explains how this vision is responsible for the uprooting of identities:

> Throughout its history, the West has constantly sought to make the world recognize "universal" values, themes, social, political, and organisational methods that, in reality, are intrinsic [to the West]. The way employed to reach this goal has always been by mimetic injunction. First, the West claimed to bring the dogmas of the "true faith" (Christian) to other cultures. Next, [the West] aimed at exporting "civilisation" and "progress" through colonisation. Today, it advocates "development" and the "rights of man." Successively, the "three M's" (missionaries, the military, and merchants) have tried to *convert* other peoples to a form of religious, political, and economic universalism that today we know very well to be nothing but a veiled form of ethnocentrism (Benoist, 2004, p. 4).

Furthermore, this tradition of homogenising the world is now carried out by the United States, decisively shaping Western modernity. Therefore, human rights are regarded as tools of this continuing colonisation process that aims at homogenisation. For the *Nouvelle Droite*, the concept of human rights lies on a

> contractual and above all individualistic anthropology, on the idea of an abstract man, prepolitical in nature and nonsocial, promoted as self-sufficient, and with the sole aim of perpetually searching his material self-interest (Benoist, 2004, p. 4).

Alternatively, the *Nouvelle Droite* takes inspiration from the Nietzschean doctrine of affirming life in all its natural dimensions. The endorsement of this form of paganism pervades the philosophical school. As Guillaume Faye explains:

> Paganism is essentially the cult of the real and of life in all its dimensions (biological, astronomical, physical) and, contrary to the religions of salvation, it refuses to build a meta-reality, a lie, a phantasm … rather, it looks directly at the sweet and hard tragedy of living (Faye, 2001, p. 128).

Accordingly, it is understood that the recognition and the proper preservation of diversity within nature require a polytheistic pagan worldview.

Thus, as Faye claims, "new Gods must be invented" (Faye, 2001, p. 128). It is through the invention of rooted Gods that European culture can be spiritually regenerated and truly flourish.

The *Nouvelle Droite* is extremely critical of liberalism, especially focusing on its detrimental effects on community life. It identifies several modern pathologies. To begin with, liberalism brought moral individualism, which daily contributes to the destruction of communal life and to the current understanding of the self as detached from lineage, history, and collective responsibility. Massification is regarded as another liberal pathology, bringing standardisation of lifestyles and behaviours across borders. Another identified modern problem is radical moral universalism, that is, the idea that all societies should be functionally built according to a one-size-fits-all social model, one constituted by liberal democracy and markets. For the *Nouvelle Droite*, the result of these liberal pathologies is the increasing feeling of anomie that pervades the West, with the foundations of identity that can provide real meaning being progressively eroded (Krebs, 1997, p. 76).

For this school, mass immigration into the West is therefore the logical conclusion of liberal pathologies. After all, if only individuals are recognised as ultimate moral agents, borders that are based on historical collective identities make little sense. If all individuals should normatively pursue their desires without major restrictions (John Stuart Mill's harm principle), the erasure of borders is required to allow for the maximisation of preference satisfaction. Hence, Western capitalism brings non-European immigrants into Europe in order to remove both the identities of the host societies and of the immigrants themselves (Benoist, 1993b). Notably, even proponents of multiculturalism subordinate group rights to liberal values (Kymlicka, 1995). For Alain de Benoist (2011), the main driver of mass immigration into the Western world is capitalism. In order to break economic unions and keep wages down, liberal capitalists bring increasing amounts of immigrants into the West, a capitalist strategy akin to what Karl Marx named *the reserve army of capital*.

Plans for the future: Pan-Europeanism and ethno-pluralism

It may be surprising for many that the *Nouvelle Droite* rejects nationalism. Instead, it openly embraces European identity against the divisive model of European nationalism that reached its peak during the XIX and XX centuries. The proposed model is a federalisation of the European peoples on the basis of European identity.

Yet, it is a federation/empire that aims at protecting regional identities by employing a robust regionalism, therefore avoiding the homogenising processes intrinsic to the nation-state (Bar-On, 2001, p. 344). The imperial/federal model is chosen because it has "always sought to establish an equilibrium between centre and periphery, between sameness and diversity, unity and multiplicity" (Benoist, 1993a, p. 97). Hence, these theorists point towards a project of progressive political union between European countries and their Diasporas (Bar-On, 2008). Particularly influent is the vision of Faye (2010): The Eurosiberia. It is the vision of an ethno-state from Lisbon to Vladivostok, built on the basis of the bio-civilisational identity of Europe. This project would have the goal of preparing Europeans to tackle the cultural, demographic and military competition of continental blocs like Asia and Africa.

Inspired by Carl Schmitt's notion of friend and enemy, the *Nouvelle Droite* intends to root politics in European identity. Thus, it rejects the existence of friend and enemy dynamics among European identities (e.g., French, Spanish, etc.). Instead, intra-European rivalries are replaced by ethno-continental rivalry. Following Carl Schmitt's model of a "*new nomos of the earth*", these intellectuals envision a multipolar order of autonomous civilisational blocks, which, in their vision, allows for a more robust international balance of power. Europe would therefore be allowed to develop its own civilisational project and to shape its unique destiny and identity, with the same happening with other continental units (Benoist, 2004). But how would this European continental block be politically structured? The envisioned European continental polity of the future operates at two different levels: at an imperial (elitist) level from the top and at the radically democratic and decentralised level from the bottom (Benoist, 1993a, p. 97). While the imperial element is regarded as important to maintain unity, democratic regionalisation is seen as a guarantor of ethno-pluralism.

Ethno-pluralism is the based on the idea that group identity should be protected from political processes of homogenisation (such as liberalism). Hence, ethno-pluralism regards groups as having the right to self-preservation and differentiation (Spektorowski, 2003, p. 118). Both native Europeans and non-European migrants are regarded as having the right to protect their identities from modern globalising forces. More recently, Faye (2016, pp. 81-84) has criticised the school's unbalanced emphasis on the communitarian philosophy of ethno-pluralism, mostly for practical reasons. He thinks that radical communitarianism hinders the cooperation and the coming together of European ethnicities and gives competitive advantages to well established (and expanding) non-European communities in European lands. Ultimately, the defence of European identity seems to trump the radical communitarian doctrine of ethno-pluralism.

As a critic of this school of thought puts it, the *Nouvelle Droite* endorses "ethnic diversity within a federation of European ethnicities, banned to non-Europeans" (Spektorowski, 2003, p. 61).

Identitarian movements within technological modernity

Collective identity in the modern West seems to be under stress due to the Western belief in the moral primacy of the individual over groups. Nonetheless, at the practical level, technological means are connecting the world in unparalleled ways. This capacity to communicate and to rapidly travel through great distances inspires the rise of the cosmopolitan individual. Yet, as communitarian leaning philosophy reminds us (Sandel, 1982), the individual cannot exist in a vacuum and the social group largely shapes his or her social identity. Because tribalism is a pervasive mechanism of social evolution (Faria, 2017), it is necessary to understand how this tribal phenomenon can be manifested under the new paradigm of technological interconnectedness.

Online activism is now the main method that Euro-American identitarians use to produce meta-politics and cultural change (Nagle, 2017). Moreover, the Internet is currently facilitating the creation of networks, that is, the creation of identity-based interest groups that may become political players in their own right without being necessarily attached to states. Due to the increasing difficulties for states to coalesce around a strong identity and to solve collective action problems, transnational actors can more easily exert political influence by taking advantage of the current Western paradigm based on flexible mobility and fluid citizenship. Because nationality is becoming disassociated from social identity (e.g., multiculturalism), each state is subject to pressures from several identity groups within its own jurisdiction. Under the current technological paradigm, allegiances are often made with those that share identity across borders, and not necessarily within borders. The transformation of the state into a legal-bureaucratic one, without attachment to any particular group, facilitates the work of transnational policy lobbies.

With its technological advancements, the Western paradigm is also facilitating the rise of different spheres of belief and perception within national jurisdictions. In particular, the Internet provides segregated perceptions to individuals living in the same geographical space. Hence the rise of what came to be known as the post-truth era (Drezner, 2016), where the intense proliferation of fake news or of extremely biased news becomes the norm. Different social groups can now live side by side while merely consuming information that caters to their collective worldview.

It is in this context that identitarian coalitions are being played out. Due to high technological interconnectedness and the use of English as *lingua franca,* new pseudo-cultures are being formed online, with their own language and moral frameworks (Nagle, 2017). As expected, these identitarian cultures are formed based on Schmittian friend and enemy distinctions, with the most common distinction now being European vs non-European. Although these transnational cultures keep developing narratives and political philosophies that aim at influencing perception across nations (Bar-On, 2011), states are not irrelevant players in this identitarian battle against Western modernity. It is by capturing states that these cultures can build political stepping-stones for the crystallisation of their worldviews. Moreover, their state-based post-liberal philosophies ultimately require such capture. Nonetheless, if and how such development will take place is yet unclear.

The rising borders of European identity

Border crossing into the West is at the heart of the growing popularity of identitarian ideas. Yet, the sense of European civilisational decline has been around at least since Oswald Spengler wrote his *magnum opus*: *The Decline of West* (Spengler, 1991). In it, he identifies the European man with the Faustian man, that is, a man with a nature that seeks transcendence and overcoming. Notably, for Spengler, European man transformed Christianity (a middle eastern religion) into a European belief system. In his own words:

> It was not Christianity that transformed Faustian man, but Faustian man who transformed Christianity--and he not only made it a new religious but also gave it a new moral direction (Spengler, 1991, p. 177).

Yet, he postulates that European civilisation's time of expansion and vital creativity is finished. For him, like plants, cultures go through the cycle of birth, expansion, decline and death. In the particular case of the European model, he thinks it is nearing the end. He believes that "we have to reckon with the hard cold facts of a *late* life" (Spengler, 1991, p. 31). Yet, it can be argued that the pursuit of Western liberalism and universal egalitarianism represents another expression of Faustian man. That is, Westerners are now attempting to overcome themselves by transcending in-group particularism and proselytising liberal morality throughout the world. As Alain de Benoist (2004, p. 4) notes, Western man has been engaged in this proselytising mission throughout the last centuries, first with Christianity and now with liberalism.

While the sense of civilisational decline is not exactly new among broadly identitarian political forces, mass immigration into the West is creating a context that strengthens this sense and makes its resolution urgent. Specifically, in modern times, there is not simply a sense of civilisational decay but also a sense of dispossession and loss of identity. Hence, the identitarian doctrine of ethno-pluralism is defensive in nature. It comes at a time where intense migration is not flowing from Europe to other continents (which in the past allowed for European expansion), but from other continents into Europe or, more generally, into the West. It is not a coincidence that the embracement of the doctrine of ethno-pluralism (which focuses on group rights to their own specificity) happens at a time when millions of non-Europeans are moving and settling in the West. Moreover, ethno-pluralism stands in contrast with previous notions of European superiority and of right to rule that characterised so much of the colonial period, which was a period of migratory expansion. Instead, we currently observe a contraction of European demographics (Faria, 2017, pp. 312-314), both via low fertility rates and via receiving migrants from continents producing demographic growth. This contraction is potentially creating the type of shock that makes the *Nouvelle Droite*'s ideas more seductive. This shock is forcing not merely an adjustment of immigration policies and political representatives, it is also forcing a rethinking of the current liberal paradigm, which increasingly has to deal with the consequences of identity clashes within the West.

Ultimately, the contact with the non-European world within the Western world is potentially creating a more unified perception of European identity. While European nations have often in the past defined "friend and enemy" in relation to their European neighbours, the migratory phenomenon is shifting "friend and enemy" distinctions from European nations to non-European identities. Put differently, the "enemy" is becoming less the European neighbour states and more the non-European in direct contact. Hence, the European/Western peoples who feel threatened by these non-European newcomers increasingly become the new "friend". Via this process, a stronger notion of Europeanness is being constructed. Certainly, this is a complex process that will also generate a fusion of worldwide identities within the West, but one of the consequences of border crossing into the West is precisely to bring together all the identitarian groups united around the notion of Europeanness.

Furthermore, the substantial rise of identitarian forces (Hawley, 2017; Zúquete, 2018) reveals the growing appeal of identitarian political philosophy, and this rise is most certainly propelled by the shift in the perception of friend and enemy. Because this friend and enemy distinction underpins the *Nouvelle Droite*'s strong pan-Europeanism, the school's seductive power in this new age and context increases.

Interestingly, it is in these times of dissolution of nationhood through the forces of liberal individualism and interconnectedness that a greater perception of European commonalities can arise. The process of bringing Europeans together via the liberalisation of European nations is a process occurring for some time now, of which the European Union is the most striking result. Important thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche (2008) already noticed this process of coming together more than one century ago. He understood the liberal democratic movement within Europe as the catalyser for the creation of a conformist and homogenous European man, which would then be unified by elitist action. For him, already in the 19th century there were "the most unmistakable signs that Europe wishes to be one" (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 203). Ultimately, it is possible to divide this ongoing process of strengthening European identity into two phases: 1) The heightening of Europeanness via the liberal erasure of national identities and 2) the intensification of Europeanist identitarianism due to the contemporary border crossing into the West. The latter migratory phenomenon is creating a sense of pan-European existential danger that strengthens alliances along the lines of European identity and weakens standard notions of "friend and enemy" that are based on intra-European rivalries.

Conclusion

The most recent periods brought visible dissatisfaction with liberal globalisation. The rise of national-populism throughout Europe and the Anglo-Saxon world is the most evident aspect of this dissatisfaction. Yet, these populisms reveal a lack of substantive political doctrine, relying mostly on criticisms of elites. Along with these populisms we are witnessing the growth of identitarian movements, who aim at providing the ideological basis for what is until now merely forms of crude discontent.

Mass immigration into the West is propelling the growth of these identitarian movements and of the appeal of their philosophies. The movements rely considerably on the political philosophy of the *Nouvelle Droite* and its Europeanism, which intellectually underpins the transnational dimension of these anti-globalisation dissidents. While technology has connected the world at the level of mobility, news and knowledge, it has also connected the identitarian forces that increasingly act as a transatlantic alliance. This technology, in particular the Internet, begins to affect mainstream politics in unpredictable ways as the spheres of perception become more radicalised and separated. As a consequence of Western multiculturalism, identity networks are increasingly separated from nationality, becoming transnational by nature. These transnational identitarian forces interact with states in unpredictable forms.

In particular, the political capture of states appears to be increasingly complex due to states becoming disconnected from traditional (homogenous) identities, with many internal and external players involved.

Holding the identitarian forces together is the shift in the notion of "friend and enemy", which has gone mostly from intra-European rivalries to a European vs non-European dichotomy. Put differently, mass migration into the West has weakened intra-European rivalries by creating a common threat to European identity. Furthermore, the strengthening of European identity is a process that has already been ongoing, mostly via the dilution of national identities caused by Western liberalism. Ultimately, the contemporary border crossing into the West can be understood as another phase in the reinvigoration of Europeanness. Given the transatlantic dimension of this identitarian phenomenon, the explicit issue of European identity has the potential to become a major part of Western politics.

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

CHAPTER 10

THE POLITICAL MOBILISATION OF MUSLIMS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE CASES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE

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Abstract

This essay has a twofold objective: to describe the evolution of Muslims' political awareness in the United Kingdom and in France, and the way such awareness has materialised in political participation and action'; and to present the different types of Muslim political mobilisation. We argue that neither the Islamic State nor the Jihadist terrorism poses an existential threat to the countries of the European Union, but rather the likely sectarian political mobilization of its increasingly larger Muslim population. The essay underlines the need to understand the different reasons behind the political mobilisation of Muslim communities in the European Union's countries and what lies at its genesis. Reducing the understanding of what is Islam in Europe to vacuous references to "Islamists" and "Jihad" is reductive, factually incorrect, and dangerous. It underlies the need to debate and find realist solutions to incorporate Muslims into the political system of liberal democracies and supports the idea that the future of the EU may depend on how its member states manage to assimilate Muslim communities and integrate them into the social and political mainstream.

Keywords: Terrorism, Muslims, European Union, political integration

Introduction

The spectacular nature of multiple attacks in different European Union (EU) countries and their media coverage has resulted in raising public concerns about terrorism and has contributed to create an exaggerated perception of the danger that jihadist terrorism represents to Europeans, thus diverting their attentions from issues of greater importance. This has helped develop a collective psychosis that is perhaps more insidious and dangerous than terrorism itself.

In our daily lives, both in the media and in political discourse, terrorism has become omnipresent. A limited danger has been portrayed as an existential threat to European societies. The anxiety generated by that strident narrative has infected the Academia, opinion makers and political leaders in the EU. Out of fear and/or prejudice, many of them seem too embarrassed to dare introduce this topic into their agendas.

As is widely known, Europe was recurrently flogged by terrorist acts throughout the 20th century. The present wave of terror is by no means the deadliest – far from it.[1] However, the need to understand the social and/or economic motivations of its perpetrators, radically different from previous terrorist movements, fully justify this study. This is particularly relevant if we consider that political Islam, which increasingly attracts important segments of the European Muslim population, and in particular its youth, is the ideological inspiration of those acts.[2]

This radical political mobilisation is but a manifestation, among others, of a more general issue that lies at its genesis: that of the political mobilisation of the Muslim communities of the various member-countries of the European Union. We would therefore argue that it is essential to study the issue that truly lies at its genesis, which may, contrary to terrorism, evolve and turn into an existential danger. It is not the Islamic State that that poses an existential threat to the EU, but rather the sectarian religious mobilization of large tracts of the Muslim European population.

[1] On the waves of terrorism and criticism of this approach see, for example, Kaplan (2016).

[2] Many experts and politicians see these terrorist acts as expressions of the "revolution" that the Islamic state was supposedly exporting to the entire world. We disagree with the exaggerated way those attacks are presented to the public and with the idea that of an existential threat posed by terrorism and the Islamic State to Western security. The current fear of terrorism has more to do with collective psychology - how people perceive and live with terrorist acts - than with any real threat. Regardless of what will happen to the Islamic State in the battlefield, the evolution of those socio-political movements will not be influenced by their fate. The Islamic State ideologically inspires European terrorists, but the existence of organic links has yet to be unearthed. These movements do not need the Islamic State to survive; they are autonomous, autochthonous and not necessarily their lunga manus.

It is crucial to understand how a growingly large sector of the European population is going to adhere to the political system of liberal democracies[3]. It is, in our view, an inescapable question for which it is urgent to find answers.

The enormous complexity of this phenomenon makes it difficult to understand and to influence it. In fact, we cannot speak of a homogeneous community of European Muslim citizens, but of several communities. We are confronted with multicultural communities separated by cleavages of diverse nature (ethnic, generational, cultural, linguistic, theological, class, etc.),[4] whose frontiers have progressively transformed and blurred.

The development of these multiple Muslim communities has been conditioned by multiple factors in each country, in particular by the provenance of its members and by the way in which the state authorities of the country they live relate to them. The absence of a unified Muslim community and, consequently, of encompassing organisations that legitimately represent them hampers their relationships with the States where they live.

This text is organised in three sections. In the first one, we elaborate on the different types of types of collective mobilisation adopted by Muslims living in the EU space. In the second one, we make a brief presentation on the evolution of their political awareness in the United Kingdom and in France, and on the way such awareness has materialised in participation and political action. The third one is dedicated to concluding remarks.

We based this essay on the works of Salima Bouyarden, Fareen Parvez and Timothy Peace, published in Jorgen S. Nielsen (2014). We shall have as temporal reference the period starting with the migrations of then colonial subjects to the European metropoles that took place after the end of World War II, with particular emphasis on the migratory waves of the sixties and seventies of the last century until the present day. We are naturally aware of the existence of established Islamic communities in Europe prior to these dates, but we take it that these are to a great extent unrelated to the issues covered in this essay.

[3] On Islamic demography in Europe see, for example, Europe's Growing Population (Pew Report Center, 2017).

[4] The French Muslim community includes Algerians, Moroccans, Turks and sub-Saharan Africans.

Types of collective mobilisation

The expression of a European plural identity in the public sphere should not be seen as affirming an exclusive religious affiliation but as a civic alternative to the exploitation of the ethnic and religious aspects of its identity and a common action against any form of intellectual extremism, political or religious. This approach coexists with that in which pressure groups influence legislation and rulings to be adopted by Muslim minority communities (at least for now) who live in secular societies.

Muslims living in the EU have different views of their religion. Many do not use faith as the only lens to interpret social reality and have become politically active members of society (Frégosi, 2014: 129), using different types of collective mobilisation. Frégosi (2014: 129) identifies three, non-mutually exclusive, types: religious mobilisation, socio-political Islamic mobilisation and mobilisation based on a secular identity.

The first type of mobilisation focuses on the defence and preservation of the Muslim faith and / or its rituals, in order to remind believers that faith is the most important dimension of life. These actions are intended for Muslims to be more devout and to frequent mosques more regularly. This type of mobilisation takes three complementary forms: ceremonial mobilisation, associative mobilisation, and sectarian / spiritual mobilisation. In the second type, that is the case of the socio-political Islamic mobilisation, the groups develop their socio-political activity based on the theological foundations of Islam. For them, being a Muslim means being simultaneously socially and politically committed. In a Muslim context, this means the social aim of Islam is to progressively establish Islamic states, and to implement Islamic law. In a non-Muslim context, its aim is to promote a more just social order that is in accordance with Islamic ethics (Frégosi, 2014: 132).

These dynamics can also lead to three types of mobilisation: civic mobilisation, nation-centred mobilisation of origin and radical mobilisation. For followers of the first type, being a Muslim means being socially and politically engaged. On this, Tariq Ramadan (2003: 128)[5] states that there is no Islamic consciousness without political consciousness, a view that encourages Muslims to compound their religious commitment with political activism.

Mobilisation centred on the nation of origin is used mainly by political movements that look at the Islam as structured according to national parameters.

[5] Frégosi quoting Ramadan (2014: 134).

Defending Islam means defending the connection with the country of origin, and applies especially to expatriates (Frégosi, 2014: 134). A good example of this case is that of the *Millî Gorus*, an ethnic-religious movement close to the "Muslim Brotherhood" whose history is closely linked to Turkish immigration. The last type of mobilisation is characteristic of Islamic radical movements in Europe and the jihadist movement. It is usually embraced by young Muslims born in Europe and is not confined to mosques. These groups nurture communities in which actively promote scepticism about Islam's peaceful nature and motivations. Finally, we have the mobilisation on a straight secular basis, i.e. of Muslims who claim their identity in a secular way. These currents refer to Islam not to claim a specific religious identity but rather a cultural identity.

Awareness, participation, and political action

The emergence of identity policies defining Muslims as "Muslims" is a recent phenomenon and refers mainly to the early 1990s. In the UK, religious identity was subordinated to an "Asian" or "Black" identity, whereas in France, the "Arab" identity of emigrants surpassed any other criterion of identity. Organised forms of political participation began sooner within the British Muslim community than that of the French, albeit with a small public impact. Voting was then linked to citizenship. In France, immigrants were not entitled to vote because they were not French citizens, a right they could only acquire after five years of residence in the country, and to be elected only after 10 years, in contrast to the situation of immigrants in the UK who already had voting rights as citizens of the Commonwealth, which facilitated their initial participation in the political system (Bouyarden, 2014: 106).

The key reason for the near-non-involvement of the first generation of Muslims in politics in France is that they tended to regard naturalisation as a religious infidelity. Acquiring French nationality was considered a sinful act (Bouyarden, 2014: 105). Despite this obstacle, Muslim emigrants who arrived in the UK and France after World War II did become involved in struggles for political equality, from workplace actions to struggles against restrictions on immigration. In the UK as well as in France, Muslims participated in trade unions in which Muslim identity had no meaning. Later, quite a few second-generation Muslims actively participated in the alter-globalisation movement,[6] the global social movement against neoliberalism.

[6] For a comprehensive analysis of the participation of Muslims in the alter-globalisation movement, see Peace (2015).

Such participation did not come out of nowhere; it was the continuation of previous struggles. Asian youth movements and the *Mouvement Beur* were the most symbolic of these social movements. In both countries, these early activists mobilised in the fight against racism and police brutality. There are even today groups that in some extent claim legacy from these movements.[7]

By the end of the eighties, the identity foundations of these communities were altered by the occurrence of two important events. The year 1989 was a time of qualitative change, respectively brought about by the Salman Rushdie case in the UK,[8] and by the ban on wearing the veil in French schools. These two events contributed significantly to the development of a "Muslim" identity that has gradually overtaken other identity criteria.[9] The wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Chechnya, all of which took place in the 1990s, coupled with the two Gulf wars in 1991 and 2003, have stimulated and reinforced the call for Muslim causes as a mobiliser of large groups of young people Muslims.

While in the UK, the Rushdie affair and the first Gulf War visibly sparked large-scale protest rallies of the Muslim community, [10] in France only a small minority copied them. Throughout the 1990s, political mobilisation of Muslims in Britain and France continued to take different shapes. Whereas British Muslims' demands were fundamentally proactive, those of the French Muslims arose in response to the repressive actions of the French authorities. The few occasions in which they mobilised massively were in protest against the exclusion from public schools of girls who refused to take off their veil in class. The more defensive posture of the French Muslims offers us a first indication that it is the assertiveness of the French State to apply a universalist and assimilationist approach in opposition to the British cultural pluralism, that defines the context of its claims and demands. The protests of the French Muslims generally took the form of public demonstrations that weren't marked by acts of confrontation or violence.

British Muslims have been indeed more affirmative in presenting their claims and gaining official recognition from the government.

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[7] These include the Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) and the Mouvement de l'Immigration et de la Banlieue, which took part in the European Social Forum (ESF).

[8] We refer here to the controversy caused by Salman Rushdie's publication of the book Satanic Verses in 1988, which caused heated debate and violent reactions from various Muslim groups who accused the writer of blasphemy; he went into hiding after Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa ordering Muslims to kill him, in 1989.

[9] Although not in full; ethnic criteria still prevail in France, but in an attenuated form.

[10] On the demonstrations of the British Muslim community against the war, see Peace (2015a).

Their proactivity resulted in the formation of the *Muslim Council of Great Britain* (CMG) in 1997, an institution that gathers more than 500 mosques, schools, and Islamic associations, and that, in a way, mediates the relationship of the Muslim communities with the British authorities. More recently, the CMG sought to take over as the voice of British Muslims, and the sole arbiter in the dialogue between the British government and all Muslim groups.

Here too, we can find significant differences between Muslims in France and the UK. While the CMG was essentially a bottom-up institution, its French counterpart CFCM (*Le Conseil Féderal du Culte Musulman*), founded in 2003, was a top-down creation of the French government as an attempt to incorporate Muslims in the French political landscape (Parvez, 2014: 194), and to function as the official interlocutor of the French State in the regulation of their religious activities.

Muslim groupings that appeared in the UK during the 1990s, such as the *Muslim Parliament*, the *Islamic Society of Great Britain* and later the *Muslim Association of Britain*, were founded by first-generation immigrants, almost exclusively dedicated to religious questions. In France, Muslim public participation took off in a different way. French second-generation Muslim activists formed their own organisations, which later regrouped under the umbrella of the *Collectif des Musulmans de France* (CMF). These groups tended to mobilise not only around religious issues, but also tackled several other important concerns (curbing police brutality, demanding social and welfare equality, and facilitating asylum requests). Secular groups such as the *Mouvement de l'immigration et des Banlieues* began working with the more religious CMF. The appearance the movement *DiverCité*, that actively brought together secular and religious activist groups has had no equivalent in the UK.

Important to note that in the UK, the Muslim vote traditionally tended to support the Labour Party, whereas in France Muslims would mainly rally with the Socialist Party (Bouyarden, 2014: 116), when it was relevant in the French society. In 2006, Muslims in the European parliaments were mostly in the left side of the political spectrum. There was no conscience of a specific Muslim vote (Sinno, 2009: 72-5).[11]

On pair with these developments, Muslims opted to contest local elections before engaging in national elections. We have witnessed the birth of a Muslim lobby in Britain to mobilize the community vote, to support candidates in local elections around Islamic issues, to negotiate and establish cooperative relations with the state authorities. This Muslim lobby seeks to influence and cooperate with the British government, namely through organisations such as the *Muslim Council of Great Britain* and the *Forum against Islamophobia* (FAIR).

[11] Nielsen (2014: 2) quoting Sinno.

In France, analysts are divided over whether there is actually a Muslim lobby. Some are very sceptical about its existence, considering it a myth.[12] The political participation of Muslims there should not be seen only through the framework of cultural identity, but also of class relations, which increases the complexity of the analysis. The economic aspect and the social scale are aspects that must also be included in the study of the communities of Muslims in the various European countries.

Apart from being divided by ethnic motives, French Muslims are also divided according to class positions and relations, which became central to the dynamics of Islam and politics in France (Parvez, 2014: 190). The Muslim political field is divided by social class and peripheral-urban duality, with the working classes in the *banlieues* (suburbs, typically lower class), and participation is affected by the strength or weakness of their ties with the Muslim middle class (Parvez, 2014: 191). The result was the breakdown of ties between middle-class Muslim activists and those of the *quartiers*, where strict veil use and gender segregation are practiced (Parvez, 2014: 191), and the leaders of the Islamic community. This medium is naturally more conducive to the penetration of Salafists, who did not only withdraw from state-organised politics but also from political participation as members of civil society (Parvez, 2014: 191).

Compared with other European countries, Britain's ethnic minorities have been politically very successful. In Britain, every party in the political spectrum makes a huge effort to get closer to the Muslim electorate. The relationship between the Labour Party and the Muslim communities has always been very strong, and most Muslims who are members of political parties are associated with the Labour Party. Until very recently, most Muslim politicians, whether at local or national level, fit this profile. However, this situation has changed, especially in the large Muslim constituencies, due to the creation of the *Respect Party*,[13] a political grouping that has drastically reduced the support of Muslims to the Labour Party in certain areas, both in local government and in the lower house, in Westminster.

Their success was an impressive achievement considering that smaller parties in Britain have always been at a disadvantage, given the first-past-the-post nature of the UK's electoral system. The use of networking links to mosques, religious organisations and community groups were crucial to ensure support for their candidates.

[12] For a confrontation of contrasting views on the topic, see Bouyarden (2014: 117, 119).
[13] On the foundation and development of the Respect Party, see Peace (2013).

In fact, this seems the only case in Europe where a party dominated by Muslim leaders and activists has achieved an electoral prowess despite strong competition from mainstream parties. The *Respect Party* is a case study of how a social movement has managed to evolve and crystallise into an enduring relationship between political parties and civil society.

There isn't, to our knowledge, anything similar in any other European country. The *Respect Party* has inspired Muslims in other countries, but the initiatives have resulted in stark failures. We currently find "Muslim parties" in other countries as well as individual candidates running on other platforms as representatives of Muslims, but none of these initiatives have had the same success as the *Respect Party*.

Muslims in these two countries were no strangers to attempts at civic participation and supranational social cohesion. Despite what has already been said about the heterogeneity of European Muslims, there is a desire among many of them to create a European Muslim civic organisation that promotes civic participation of Muslims at European level, as an alternative to the politically unproductive tactics of the "Muslim vote" or of the "Muslim lobby" implemented in some countries, notably in the UK and France. However, we cannot fail to note that the attempts to unite European Muslims in a single transnational civic platform were always failed projects, given the deep divergences that separate them (Bouyarden, 2014: 119).[14]

Concluding remarks

Despite the exaggerated public exposure of terrorism provided by the mainstream media in their unbridled struggle for share, it seems clear from the foregoing that to reduce the understanding of what is Islam in Europe to vacuous references to "Islamists" and "Jihad" is reductive, factually incorrect and dangerous, as is suggested by the proliferation of studies on contemporary terrorism and terrorists.

It seems crucial for democracies to understand the reasons for the radicalisation of large segments of the younger Muslim population, in European countries. Despite the diversity of answers being provided by scholars (Basra, et al., 2016, Renard, 2016, Coolsaet, 2011, Coolsaet, 2016, Khosrokhavar, 2017), all tend to agree that the reason for such radicalisation has deep sociological roots, as was suggested above.[15]

[14] On this subject, see Nielsen (2014: 215-238)

[15] On this argumentative logic see, for example, Richards (2003).

One important reason that makes many young Muslims receptive to the calls for radicalisation is the worsening of social conditions associated with the economic decline of Europe], which affects different segments of the population in different ways. The general cooling of the European economy has disproportionately affected the Muslim population and created a frighteningly high unemployment rate among youngsters.

In addition to constant discrimination in the labour market, they feel socially alienated, deprived of rights and very resentful, a risky brew that helps create an atmosphere conducive to the acceptance of radical discourses and easily led to recruitment to radical militancy. On the other hand, these developments have fostered mounting Islamophobic discourses that have been duly exploited by populist and far right activists taking advantage of these manifestations].[16] A long-recognised crisis of representation in the EU has, by itself, worsened this situation. An increasing number of citizens feel no longer represented by the main political parties, trade unions and other traditional institutions. Hence, the prospects of an adherence of the Muslim communities to the principles and values of liberal democracies have clearly weakened, and the idea that they could integrate party systems (themselves undergoing dramatic transition and suffering from popular discredit, with the political centre losing ground on a daily basis) has become less and less appealing.

Although a large proportion of European Muslims come from families living in Europe for three or four generations, many are not actually integrated into the societies in which they live. They reside in predominantly Muslim areas, in more or less autonomous and watertight, kinship-based communities, where they have created and developed their forms of identity, their system of belonging, their loyalties to friendship networks, which, as in the early years of the immigration process, still function as a mechanism of collective support – both independent and parallel to those offered by public institutions.[17]

It would be wise if European leaders seriously worry with this panoply of issues. The challenges to liberal democracies are not only posed by the proliferation of radical Salafist groups but also by other Muslim groups that have sectarian political projects and are seeking electoral access to power.

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[16] In a research dating back to 2008, Matthies associates the growing debate on Islam in European societies with the rise of the far right.

[17] Matthew Levitt, director of the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, notes that only eight of the 114 imams in Brussels spoke one of the official Belgian languages Belgium (Lewitt, 2016).

If these developments aren't properly studied, this social movement has the potential to increase inordinately, risking of becoming uncontrollable. At present, the political organisation of the Muslim communities in the two countries covered, with the notable exception of the above-mentioned case of the *Respect Party*, is in an embryonic condition], fending off its own contradictions. Political leaderships have not yet decisively asserted themselves, strategies are not fine-tuned, and there are no sufficiently mobilising political programs. However, it is easily conceivable that one day these communities also bring about mass political movements equally alien to liberal democracies' values.[18] This situation would worsen if defenders of sectarian violence prevailed, to the detriment of those fostering more moderate approaches. A sectarian and subversive political environment would lead Europe to further securitisation or, if we prefer, to the "Israelisation" of the continent. Strengthening security structures would inevitably lead to the marginalising and ostracising of more moderate political forces. In conclusion, the future of the EU will depend on how the Member States know and are able to assimilate Muslim communities and insert them into the social and political mainstream.

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CHAPTER 11

THE BORDER MADE CITY: SIX VIGNETTES FROM, AND A RUN IN, CHELAS, LISBON

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Abstract

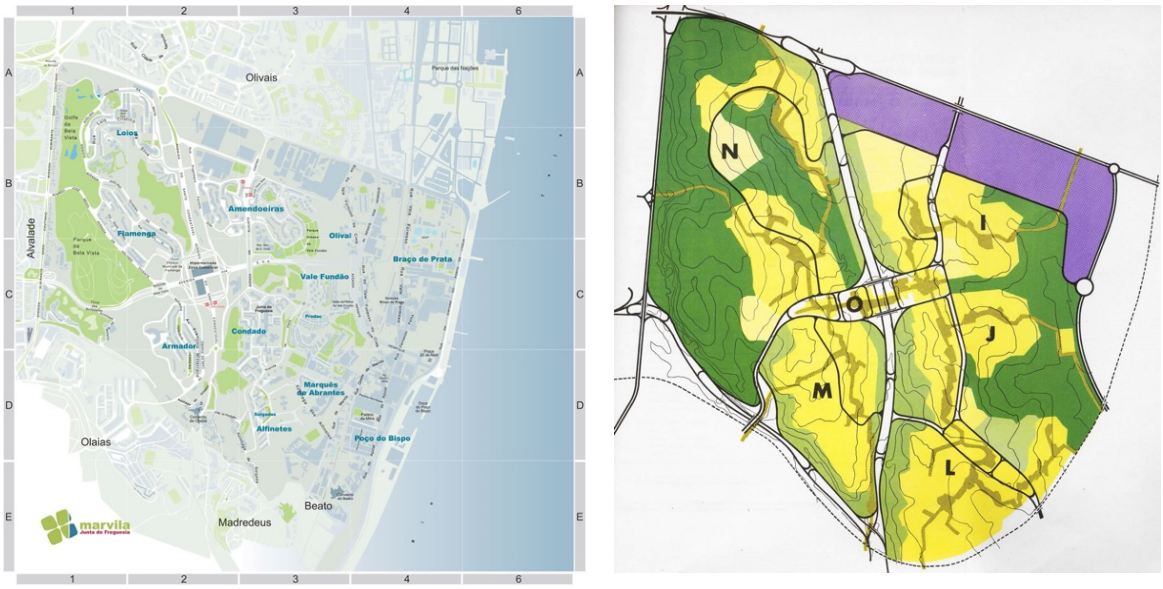
The aim of this article is to capture the idea of the urban border by painting a tour of Chelas — a geographically central district but mentally located by Lisboners in a peripheral space made up of representations of poverty, decay, danger and deviance. For that purpose, the piece is crafted with data from 2011, in the form of notes and photos collected at the time, but also with a different type of "data", that is, collected through another, less common, form of (participant) observation: running. Through running, I have kept experiencing Chelas, observing its change in time and feeling its complex topography. By reflecting on my experience as runner in Chelas as a flow connecting the six vignettes that follow, I will try to think urban running as a way through, and beyond, the border.

Keywords: marginality, centre, fieldwork methods, running ethnography

Enter Chelas

I arrived in Lisbon in April 2011 to carry out a second case study for my doctoral research about the relationship between fear of crime, rhetoric about security and urban planning (Tulumello, 2017). For purposes of comparison with my first case, the city of Palermo and particularly the district of the Zen (see Fava, 2007), I needed to explore the planning history of a district made up predominantly of public housing, one that would had experienced the cycles of investment, disinvestment, marginalisation and re-investment typical of many social housing districts around Europe. My local supervisor suggested the case of Chelas perfectly fitted my needs. The history of Chelas, a district hosting around 20 thousand inhabitants in the parish of Marvila, in a relatively central area in eastern Lisbon, indeed exemplifies dynamics that many similar places have experienced (see Tulumello, 2017, chapter 5).

Figura 1 – Chelas in the Marvila parish (left) and in the 1964 masterplan. Sources: Junta de Freguesia de Marvila and Gabinete Técnico de Habitação, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa



The masterplan for Chelas, part and parcel of a wider program for building public housing in Lisbon metro, was approved in 1964. The masterplan, which envisaged a population of 54 thousand inhabitants, was typical of a modernist conception of urban planning and of an age of large public investment in urban development: Concentrated high-rise housing made space for large open and green spaces, with road infrastructures as the connecting system.

As often happens with such huge developments, the problems—and, progressively, public disinvestment—came with the implementation of the plan: The construction was much slower than expected and it took 30 years for most housing to be built; the priority given to building housing rather than providing overall urban quality caused even bigger delays in the construction of services, facilities, infrastructures and public space. Moreover, Chelas became a place of concentrated poverty: Due to the overall scarce provision of public housing, a typical feature of the Portuguese welfare system, only the poorest sectors of the society have had access to public housing in time.[1] Like in many other places, poverty came to be associated with social problems; and the latter with marginalisation. In particular, the "Zona J"[2] started to be associated with the drug dealing trade;[3] which was indeed practiced in what came to be nicknamed the *corridor da morte* (death corridor), a sheltered public street that had been conceived as the most important public space of the neighborhood but became the perfect shelter for illegal activities. Zona J became "synonymous with the dangerous and marginal area that all big cities 'must' have" (Alves, Brasil & Seixas, 2001, p. 24). In time, the image of marginality spread to the entire district, geographically central but mentally located by Lisboners in a peripheral space made up of representations of poverty, decay, danger and deviance. The only contact the average Lisboner would have with Chelas was—and for most still is—through the massive road system that crisscrosses the district connecting the central residential and business districts with the airport, the bridge Vasco de Gama (which connects the city the southern bank of the river Tejo) and the Parque das Nações (the wealthy district at the north-eastern corner of Lisbon built for the Expo of 1998). For the average Lisboner, Chelas is beyond the limits of the city; and yet something that needs be crossed to move within the city, a buffer zone of sort.

[1] As of 2011, public housing accounted for a mere 3 percent of the Portuguese housing stock (Pinto, 2017).

[2] In the original toponymy of the district, the neighborhoods of which Chelas is made up were identified as zonas (zones), labelled with letters (I, J, L, M, N1, N2, O).

[3] A search for 'Zona J de Chelas' in the most popular newspaper in Portugal, the Correio da Manhã, gives a picture of the image associated with the neighborhood. See www.cmjornal.pt/pesquisa?q=Zona%20J%20de%20Chelas.

Figure 2 – Roads crossing Zona O. Source: author.

When I carried out the fieldwork for my PhD, during the summer of 2011, some processes had already started to point toward a new direction for Chelas. A municipal office, Viver Marvila, had just been put in charge of refurbishing the built environment and public spaces. In the early 2010s, the municipality also decided to rename the Zonas, in most cases with the names of the former agricultural estates.[4] Lately, the southern part of Chelas—and particularly the area of Marquês de Abrantes, in former Zona L—has become a - of attention of the municipality, that has invested in artistic interventions[5] and included the area in the wider regeneration strategy for the eastern waterfront. In "after crisis" Lisbon, suddenly become a hub of global flows of tourism, real estate investment and knowledge intensive economy (see Rossi & Tulumello, 2018)—which are boosting processes of gentrification, touristification and financialisation (Cocola-Gant, 2018)—Chelas seems to be in the eye of the storm, an urban frontier for reinvestment, regeneration, and possibly gentrification, to be.[6]

[4] Amendoeiras (former Zona I), Condado (J), Marquês de Abrantes and Alfinetes (L), Armador (M), Flamenga (N1), Lóios (N2), Baixa de Chelas (O).

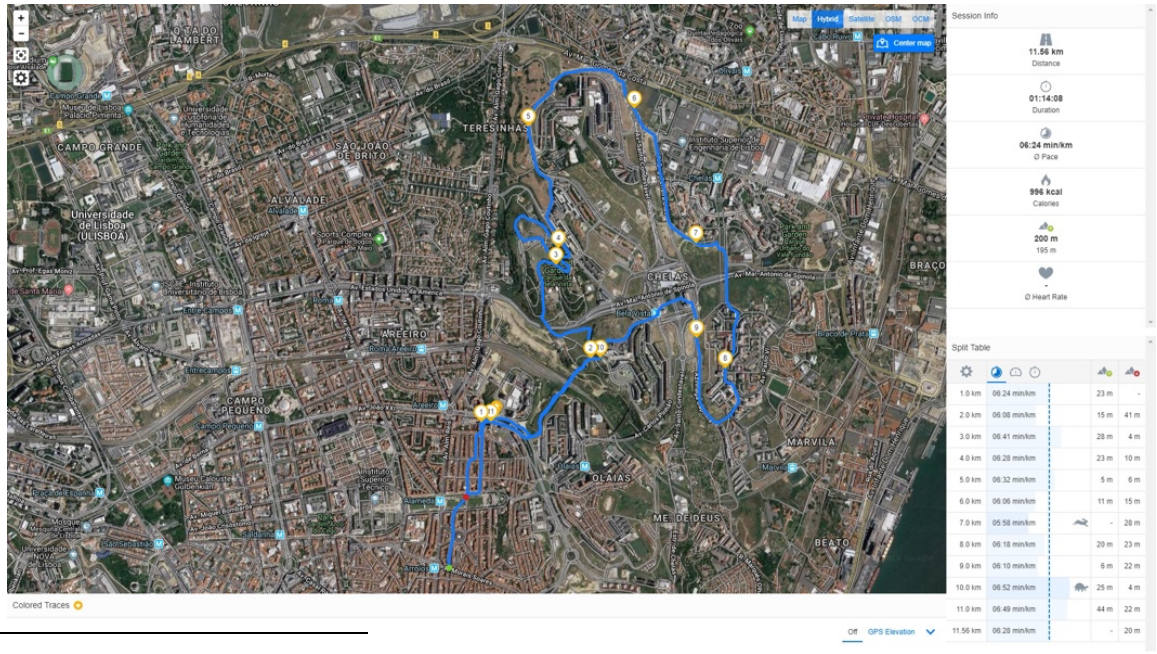
[5] Here was organised, for instance, the 2017 edition of the street art festival Muro.

[6] The metaphor about the "new urban frontier" was developed by Neil Smith (1996) in his classic work on gentrification in US cities. Smith has discussed the importance of the discursive production of "inner city" areas—that had been abandoned by public and private investment during the decades suburbanisation—as places to be regenerated and saved from decay for the promotion of a new cycle of accumulation through gentrification.

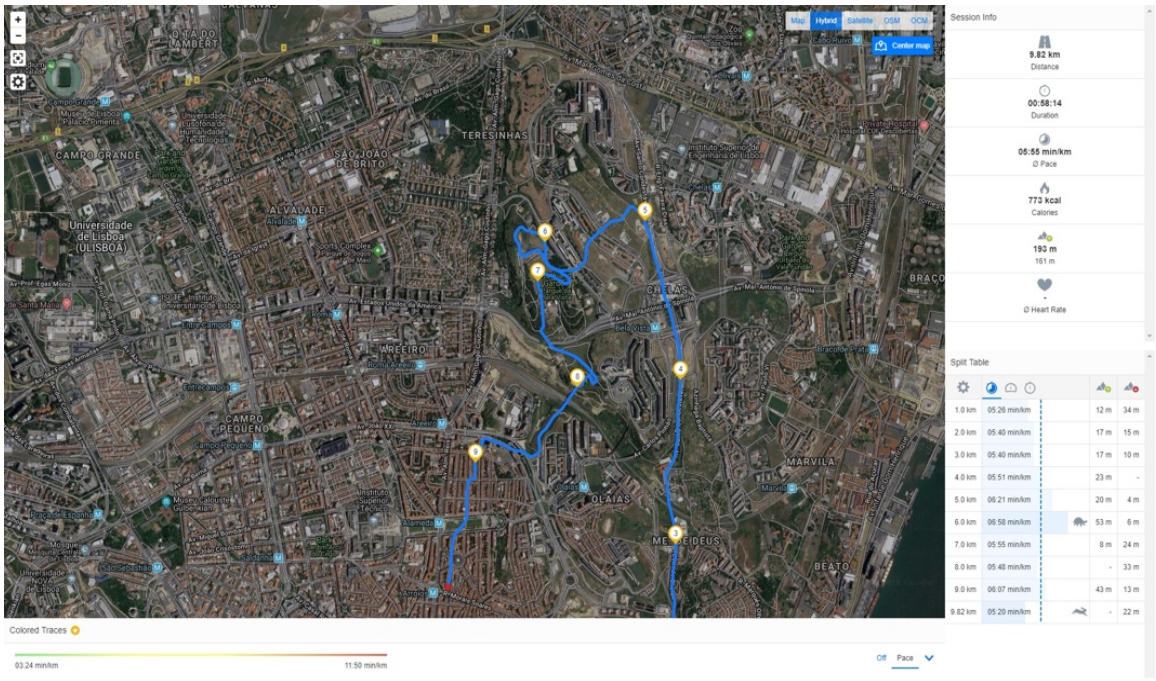
Margin, frontier, limit, buffer. This brief history has been pinpointed by terms that, in a way or another, recall the space of the border: Chelas as a border made (urban) space. Indeed, starting from the 1990s, several strands of urban, social and humanistic research have been conceptualising the border as something more complex than a line separating two polities, and depicting a proliferation of border space within cities and metropolises increasingly complex, porous and diverse (see, from different theoretical perspectives and disciplinary backgrounds, de Spuches, 1995; Muschamp, 1995; Soja, 1996; Zanini, 1997; Clement, 2004). In the decade that followed the abdication of the socialist block and the triumph of capitalist globalisation, amid increasing mobility of persons, goods and capitals, as well as accelerating paces of urbanisation and urban transformation, the concept of the "border within the city" was considered particularly apt to capture the turbulent transformations of, and increasing diversity, polarisation and inequalities within, urban spaces worldwide.

My purpose, in what follows, is to capture the idea of the urban border by painting a tour of Chelas, based on six vignettes from meetings during my PhD fieldwork in the spring of 2011—I make mostly use of the notes I had collected and photos I had taken at the time. However, I will also use of a different type of "data", so to speak, collected through another, less common, form of (participant) observation: During the last three years, I have run hundreds of kilometers throughout the district, at virtually all times of the day and days of the week.[7]

Figure 3 – Running in/through Chelas, two examples of running activities (February 2018 and May 2018).



[7] For instance, in 2017 I have run a more than 400 kilometers (tracked through a GPS-app) in Chelas.



Running, Kay Syng Tan argued (2015), is a technology allowing to engage creatively with our everyday reality. Running is "an emergent process of sense-making, drawing an intimate geography of a city" (Barnfield, 2017, p. 372), in a state of increased alertness and clearer thinking boosted by the physical effort. However, examples of the use of running as ethnographical method are quite scarce, possibly also because of the difficulty to translate movement, and bodily experiences, into written language (Markula & Denison, 2000). Through running, I have kept experiencing Chelas after my fieldwork, observing its change in time and feeling its complex topography. By reflecting on my experience as runner in Chelas as a flow connecting the six vignettes that follow, I will try to think urban running as a way through, and beyond, the border.

Six vignettes from the urban border[8]

This trip starts from Zona I, the first neighborhood to have been built during the 1970s, and the one where a better integration between residential and other activities has been accomplished. Zona I is also the neighborhood that shows least social problems and where residents are more satisfied (see Viver Marvila, 2010).

[8] The vignettes are more extended versions of those I have previously used in support of an article on Chelas (Tulumello, 2015).

Chelas is marked by several internal frontiers, it is a place where segregation has a multi-scalar nature (cf. Picone, 2016), as the following conversation captures.

> ***Zona I / Amendoeiras.*** *The ground floors of the dwellings surrounding the pedestrian area are pinpointed of bars. I enter one and ask for a coffee. The bartender, a middle aged woman, is talking with an acquaintance of her, complaining about the municipality and its "architects". Hearing this, I laugh, and she asks me whether I am an architect myself. I nod and explain that I am here for a research project about Chelas. The daughter of the bartender, who is in the bar as well, suddenly intervenes with a disparaging comment about the district. The mother, annoyed by the comment, reacts, stating she prefers living in Chelas, where people have social ties, rather than in Arrentela (a neighborhood in Seixal, a city in the southern part of Lisbon metro), a "dormitory town", in her words, where she used to live before. There, she says, "if you feel sick in the street, they would let you die". In Chelas people know each other, she says. Still, they all agree that the Zona J is a bad neighborhood. The daughter calls Zona J "Benetton", making fun of the architect who, during the 1990s, suggested painting the dwellings in intense colors as a way to strengthen the identity of the neighborhood.*

Zona I is the neighborhood where the social composition is more mixed and where a middle-class has germinated. Indeed, the bartender had arrived to Zona I, where she became a small entrepreneur, in a process of self-promotion. So it should not surprise that she may fall in the trap of stigmatisation—by pointing the "most problematic" neighborhood of the "problematic" district they live in. At the same time, this conversation shows another divide, the generational one. Even in the "least problematic" neighborhood of the city, youths seem to feel a particular burden. Indeed, they are most exposed to the stigmatisation of Chelas, for instance when they shop for job—it is not uncommon the practice of masking one's residence to prospective employers.

So let us move south, and enter the famous, and "problematic", Zona J, which is also the neighborhood where many immigrants from former Portuguese colonies settled after the 1974 democratic revolution and end of the colonial empire.

> ***Zona J / Condado.*** *I am at the western edge of the neighborhood in a widening that overlooks the Chelas Valley that cuts the district from North to South. A group of males, adults and young adults, two blacks and three whites, are grouped at the margin of the roadway.*

A couple of them are extracting metal components from electronic wastes, another is preparing a barbeque. I am taking photos of the dwellings and the valley, and a black man from a Portuguese speaking African country (as I will understand by his accent) comes toward me, and asks what I am doing and if I am working for the municipality. After I have explained what I am doing, he starts telling me of his life in Zona J, where he moved 14 years before. A white man from the group jokes: "why don't you go back to your country and stop stealing [referring to unemployment subsidies] from us?" The black man answers: "it's your fault! You Portuguese came and screwed my land!" Then, speaking to me, adds: "I was used to work, I have built several dwellings, here in Portugal, in the Expo [the 1998 world exhibition], in Campo Pequeno square. When I was working, the pneumatic drill would never rest!" All white men joins the joke, but are not serious, they are making fun of the former builder and of the second black guy. I ask them about the Zona J, and they all agree on the physical decay of their neighborhood, the need for the refurbishment of the dwellings.

Figure 4 – At the western edge of Zona J. Source: author.

Though Chelas is not particularly "diverse" in its overall composition, Zona J is.[9]

[9] In Portugal, census data about racial self-perception are not collected, so there is no way to actually calculate the "racial composition" of a given place. Being most black residents originals from former Portuguese colonies, nationality data can be used as a proxy—which does not include Portuguese

It is quite obvious that its "racial" diversity is not one of the components of the production of the discourse about the "marginal" and "dangerous" Chelas. The vignette above, however, encapsulates some specific characterisations of issues linked with racialisation in Lisbon metro, that is, the absence of explicit racial conflicts (cf. Malheiros & Mendes, 2007). At the same time, we know that racialisation plays indeed a role in the social fabric, for instance being at the core of territorial marginalisation and stigmatisation (ibidem) and of police violence (see Marcelino, 2018). At the same time, this vignette shows the intersection of race with class in social (re)production in Chelas. The settlement of people with African descent was part and parcel of the concentration, in Zona J, of extremely poor populations, which is itself one of the reasons for the absent establishment of a local economic fabric and the vulnerability of the social fabric to illegal activities like drug dealing.

The Zona J has been changing much since the "rough" 80s and 90s, and new populations, together with new challenges, settled in more recently.

> ***Zona J / Condado.*** *I am now on the eastern edge of the neighborhood, in an area overlooking the river Tejo toward the West and South. I am taking photos of a recently built, fortified dwelling, when an elderly woman approaches me. She keeps repeating: "The bunker! The bunker!" I ask what she means and she starts complaining with the building, for its fortress-like appearance, and with its inhabitants. She complains that the newcomers do not take part in neighborhood's life. Moreover, the management of the bunker obtained from the municipality to move the garbage cans from their side of the street to the other, right next were the woman lives. When I ask if she feels safe in Zona J, she first says so, but then reminds once she suffered and attempted robbery and says she is considering buying a pepper spray. Then she praises long-term residents for their care of public spaces. For instance, together with other neighbors, she takes care of the flowerbeds in the courtyard of their dwelling. However, the woman complains, youths are less respectful of public spaces and throw garbage on the flowerbeds.*

blacks. The parish of Marvila, overall, has a lower rate of foreign nationals than Lisbon, according to 2011 Census data.

Figure 5 – The "bunker", Zona J. Source: author.

In time, the statistical composition of the local social fabric has been changing, also because of the influx of different classes. However, this did not automatically fostered an actual "social mix". Quite the opposite, wealthier newcomers have in many cases preferred to live a separated life within the district, as exemplified by the case of the "bunker". I afterwards found out the "bunker" is not one of the *condomínios fechados* (the Portuguese version of gated communities) that have been built in Chelas (see below). Rather, the "bunker" is a co-operative owned dwelling. Indeed, during the 1990s the municipality has supported a number of housing co-ops, in Chelas (and particularly in Zonas J and L) and elsewhere in the city. However, these new groups, arriving in a deeply stigmatised area, have tended to seclude themselves and not take part of community life, confirming the doubts about social mix, *per se*, as a panacea for urban problems—at least in absence of strong strategies and policies for local development and urban regeneration.

So let us move toward the western side of Chelas for the next vignette.

***Zona M / Armador**. I am walking through the pedestrian area in between residential dwellings. The ground floors of the dwellings is pinpointed of closed shops, a butcher, a fishery, a fruit shop, a bar. The bad shape of the flooring contributes to the sense of abandonment of the area. Two women are sitting on a bench and, having seen me taking photos, they ask why. Once I have answered, they ask me to report the decay of public spaces, and especially the flooring, which have not been taken care of since the shops have been closing, that is, after the shopping mall in Zona O had been opened. I ask them why people of the neighborhood stopped buying from local shops: "In the hypermarket you can find everything in the same place", they say. Afterwards they will complain how hard is to go shopping to the mall, walking back home for hundred meters in slope, carrying grocery bags. I ask whether the retailers had tried to associate to face the crisis but the answer is negative. One of the retailers had asked the municipal company responsible for the management of council housing and of the commercial spaces to lower rents (around 400 euros per month, at the time over 80% of national minimum wage), but was unsuccessful.*

Figure 6 – Walking uphill toward Zona O. Source: author.

The Zona O, also known as Baixa de Chelas, had been imagined, in the original masterplan, as the hearth of the district, its " - ", where most public facilities and amenities would have been concentrated. However, when it was built (as late as the 1990s), Zona O became a privatised development made up of four introverted residential towers for the middle class[10] and a shopping mall with hypermarket.

[10] Once I met a young woman living in one of the towers, who admitted she has never in her life got out of the Zona O in Chelas, and that she would just move to and from other areas in the city by metro during the day (a station is located right in Zona O) and cab during the night.

Inevitably, the mall restructured the shopping habits of large portions of the district, offering a particularly stark example of the capacity of malls to harm local economic fabrics, bringing decay and abandonment in the process. At the same time, the Zona O is not really well connected to the surrounding neighborhoods. Most people would move by car throughout Chelas, but who has not access to one—including many housewives—ends up being forced walking steep slopes to buy the groceries.

So let us move slightly north, toward Zona N1, and particularly the so-called Malha H, an award-winning block of public housing made up of two belts of dwellings enclosing a semi-sheltered pedestrian area.

> ***Zona N1 / Flamenga.*** *I am walking in the pedestrian area. A group youths is chatting and relaxing next to the stairs that give access to the upper floors. While I am taking some photos, one of them asks me what I am doing. Once I have answered, he replies that I should figure out how to make their neighborhood better. In the meanwhile, he and some other guys get up and approach me. The boy who first talked to me – he looks like the leader of the group – makes more questions, he seems to want to be sure I am really not working for the municipality. For the first time in Chelas, I feel uncomfortable and even slightly unsafe, like I had entered a space I am not desired into: I go away, refraining from taking any more photos.*

Figure 7 – Malha H, Zona N1. Source: author.

In its simplicity, this vignette encapsulates many issues. First, the dislike of the "municipality" - I have lost count of the times I had to declare I did not work for any municipal service, in Chelas - is quite telling of the distrust toward institutions in places like Chelas. Second, Malha H is among the developments where the architectural design completely adhered to the idea of the masterplan to organize the entire districts around linear belts of dwellings enclosing pedestrian areas. This has created a dichotomy between the spaces used by visitors and passers-by (vehicular streets surrounding the residential areas) and those used by residents, and particularly youths (the inner pedestrian areas). Indeed, my feeling of being an intruder was multiplied by this architectural configuration; and had this same event happened in an area with passers-by, I would probably had felt differently.

It takes less than 100 meters to cross the nth "frontier" within Chelas and get to DueDomani, one of the *condomínios fechados* that have recently been built in Chelas.

> ***Zona N1 / Flamenga.*** *The condominium is not walled but surrounded by a 1-meter-tall fence, which seems to mark a boundary, a no-trespassing sign of sort, more than guarantee any sort of "security", which is rather provided by CCTV and private security guards. Indeed, I could get into the development, walk around the parking and then go out without been stopped. I am next to one of the "gates", when I met an elderly couple getting out to the street. They look askance at me. I approach and explain I am a researcher. The woman keeps gasing me as a danger, the man says they are in a rush. When they are out, she asks him "aren't you going to lock the gate?" He answers he is not and they walk away arm by arm, an umbrella protecting them from Lisbon's May sun.*

Figure 8 – Next to DueDomani, Zona N1. Source: author.

Though being advertised as a gated community, Due Domani is clearly not a hyper-securitised compound. This is a particularly explicit version of what seems however to be a defining feature of *condomínios fechados* in Portugal (see Tulumello & Colombo, 2018).

Condomínios fechados have long been more often about social (re)production than actual "security", that is, an advertising strategy to appeal certain classes, interested in acquiring a status as "middle" or "middle-high" classes, but without the means to access luxury property tenure. In this sense, the 1-meter-tall fence is more about emphasising a frontier than actually protecting—after all, Lisbon is one of the safest cities in the world. This is further evident in the advertising of DueDomani, which never referred to "Chelas", but to the "central" location, the accessibility via road infrastructures, or other toponymies such Bela Vista.

Fast forward a few years, and the name "Chelas" has disappeared from the communication about the events and the regeneration programs that the municipality has been promoting in the southern part of the district—the term used is systematically Marvila, which includes the eastern part of the parish, the former industrial waterfront at the core of recent gentrification.[11] After the "Zonas", also "Chelas" may disappear: (Stigmatising) names as the new urban frontier?

Close: running the border

Running is a unique way to experience the city—and this is why I have recently never travelled without running shoes in my bag. Not only does running give me direct experience of wider parts of the city than those I can walk, but the physical effort also forces me to sense the (im)material topography of space. For instance, suffering uphill and speeding downhill is an effective way to understand the hardship of having to walk hundred meters uphill to bring groceries home. Or, running in Chelas means to continuously negotiate with the dominance of car in space, forcing to feel, and understand, the way modernist urbanism has been privileging certain actors over others. More, feeling at every step the materiality of pavements, and through them the transition between built, unbuilt and green spaces, is a direct embodiment of the effects of the spatial configuration over life in Chelas.

[11] This has been confirmed to me by a researcher of the local team of H2020 project Rock – Cultural Heritage Leading Urban Futures. In Lisbon, a university-municipality partnership is developing a regeneration strategy for the eastern waterfront, including Zona L of Chelas.

I prefer to run at morning, before work, and so I have more often crossed Chelas in full light. Most times I enter Chelas from its western side, crossing the pedestrian bridge that connects with the neighborhood of Olaias, and into the Bela Vista Park. The first time I got there at night, I turned back: "Thou shalt not enter parks (especially in Chelas) at night!" Later, I did.

The first times, I must admit, I have been running while keeping all senses especially aware, trying to anticipate any unexpected movement in the bushes. I may have studied Chelas for years, learning it is not any sort of "dangerous" place, and humbly tried to contribute to overcoming the stigmatising rhetoric; but this does not make a totally rational, rhetoric-immune being of me, of course. No matter the only two times I felt unsafe in Chelas, except for the episode in Malha H I just recalled, were in full day, when unleashed dogs almost attacked me while running—once in Bela Vista Park, another time in between Zona I and J. Still, night *plus* park *plus* Chelas was a quite strong affective border to cross, and it took several runs to overcome it. Urban running, as Andrea Mughi Brighenti and Adrea Pavoni have poignantly suggested for urban climbing, "is not a reckless practice, but one that highly values security" (2018, p.77)—and is hence a particularly appropriate way to understand the nexus between space and feelings of safety. Paraphrasing again Brighenti and Pavoni (ibidem, idem), running is an art of thresholds, of negotiating at the border between different conditions of materiality and affect.

The same route I have depicted in six vignettes above takes less than half a hour to a decently trained runner. Of course, while running one cannot stop and talk with people—running ethnography seems at first to be less about the *ethnos* (the people) and more about the *graphía* (the description). Still, one can join the dots, crossing the thresholds among these very episodes and seeking a wider understanding of people (including the runner) in space and place. Running in general, and running in Chelas in particular, is in way running against borders, be they more affective ("Bela Vista Park at night, really?") or material ("Will this car really not stop?"). At the same time, running has meant, for me, progressively crossing those very borders, step after step, breath after breath. Of course, I am not advocating running is a *panacea* for stigmatised places—of, for that matter any oppositional action of sort (cf. Brighenti & Pavoni, 2018). I am perfectly aware I run taking advantage of my experience as researcher and my previous "rigorous" knowledge of Chelas. Still, it was through running that I was able to break the dichotomy between respecting the border and crossing the border: By running the border, I have eventually found myself *in* Chelas.

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Border Crossings in and out of Europe

CHAPTER 12

NETWORK-BASED APPROACHES FOR STUDYING MIGRATIONS

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Abstract

Recently the United Nations released an updated version of its Global Migration Dataset (UNHCR, 2017). We applied network science methods in order to uncover structural patterns within global migration flows observed in these data. Results revealed strong patterns in global migration, resulting from geographical and cultural constraints. Specifically, the Louvain community detection algorithm aggregated countries according with their linguistic, political, and economic affinities. Additionally, the Infomap community detection algorithm explored the distance and geography factors influencing migration flows. Both results weighted flow dynamics over a migration dataset related to the period from 1995 to 2017.

Keywords: refugees, global flows, algorithms network science

Introduction

Network science represents relations between objects within graphs, including a diversity of object properties and attributes, and allowing depicting the topology of these relations. The study of networks has emerged in a diversity of disciplines, as a way of analysing complex relational data, predominantly in Social Sciences. In network science, community structures emerge and reveal groups of nodes strongly interconnected such that we admit the existence of a set of similar characteristics between members of the group, interaction within the group, and some kind of collective sense of unit. The general definition of community, supporting community detection algorithms, is based on the principle that pairs of nodes are more likely to be connected if they belong to the same group/community, and less likely to be connected if they don't. Communities can also be revealed by selecting groups of nodes sharing common paths when assuming random hopping movement between nodes in the network (Fortunato, 2010).

Network science can be particularly useful for studying social dynamics, such as migration phenomena. Until recently, network science has not been used for characterising migration (Bilecen et al., 2018). This chapter contributes to overcome this drawback by presenting a quantitative study applying network science to migration data. The study is based on the Global Migration Dataset provided by United Nations (2917) and aims at characterising the structure of migration flows at global level.

Data

On December 2017 the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (UNHCR) released a global migration dataset named *Trends in International Migrant Stock* (UNHCR, 2017). This dataset, as many others on migration, is based on estimates. Mostly international migration flow data are poor. Therefore, is reasonable to assume that little is known about the annual flow of people between the circa 250 countries of the world (Dennett, A., 2016). Except for some developed countries, most of the countries do not provide reliable data about movements of populations. However, it's remarkable that the UNHCR dataset includes at least one data source for 92% of 232 countries, covering 93% of the world estimated migrant population. The dataset doesn't quantify the flows of migrants between countries. Instead, it gives snapshots of migrant population (foreign born, foreign citizens, refugees) at midterm year of a five-year interval, between 1995 and 2015, plus 2017, by destination and country of origin.

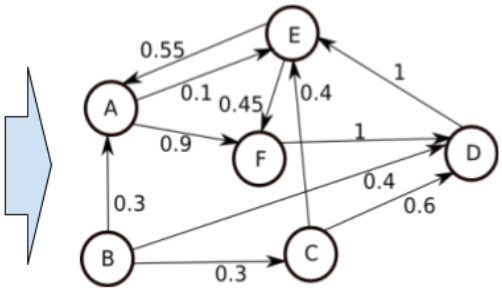
Even if the dataset isn't providing the actual flow of people between countries and regions of the world, it does however realistically depict the result of complex flows of people within the planet. People from distinct origins, as they settle in each country, determine the diversity of migrant populations.

Methods

Based on UNHCR's *Trends in International Migrant Stock* dataset, in which we have the total estimated population from each country living in another country, we defined a graph representing the probability for someone living in a given country to have moved from a different country:

Figure 1 – Example of a matrix of estimated population from each country living in another country, converted into a probability directed graph

0	Finland	France	French Guiana	French Polynesia	Gabon	Gambia	Georgia	Germany
Finland	0	2917	0	1	13	765	79	8246
France	3829	0	0	0	19780	1907	7584	233627
French Guiana	0	20934	0	0	0	0	0	0
French Polynesia	0	20918	0	0	0	0	0	360
Gabon	0	10403	0	0	0	0	0	57
Gambia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Georgia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1515
Germany	16290	145806	0	0	522	4419	22884	0
Ghana	0	216	0	0	0	36	0	0
Gibraltar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greece	771	6695	0	10	8	50	83388	114343
Greenland	13	14	0	0	0	0	0	58
Grenada	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guadeloupe	0	55739	1191	0	0	0	0	314
Guam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guatemala	0	258	20	0	0	0	0	640
Guinea	0	6459	0	0	0	3186	0	3335
Guinea-Bissau	0	110	0	0	0	1495	0	0
Guyana	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Being M_{ij} the matrix of citizens from country i living in country j in the middle year of 5 years intervals, the probability that some citizen of country i will emigrate to country j in this 5-year interval is given by:

$$P(\text{emigrate}_{ij}) = M_{ij} / \sum_i M_{ij} \qquad (1)$$

According with Dennett (2016), the measurement of the net flow of migrants should consider the number of migrants that already lived abroad in the destination countries by the beginning of the interval, the number that returned, the number of deceased, the number that transited, the number that were naturalised, and so on. However, for the general purpose of measuring interaction at global level, we claim that the value delivered by equation (1) is a good metric, since it provides the probability of interaction between two given countries within some time interval.

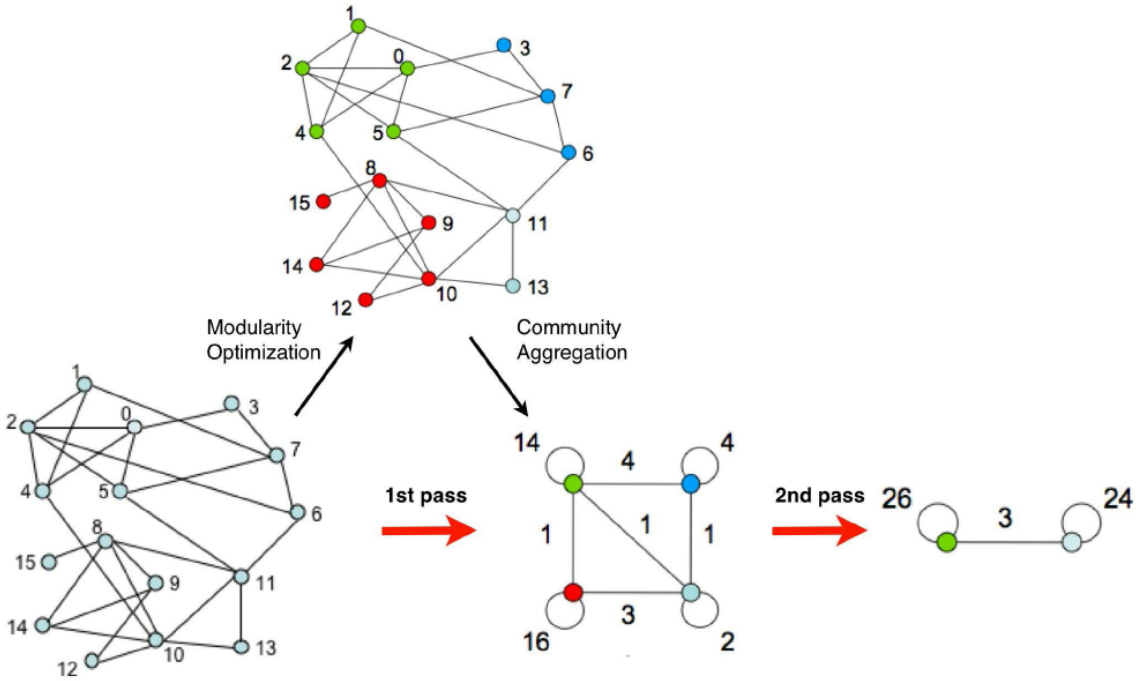
Having represented the migration interaction network as a graph, as depicted in Fig.1, we applied two distinct community detection algorithms in order to detect migration communities at global scale. Firstly, the Louvain algorithm (Blondel et al, 2008) provides community detection supported on the maximisation of a measure of modularity of the network. The interaction network is partitioned into a set $C = \{c_1, c_2 \ldots c_n\}$ of communities, in which each node i is attributed to one, and only one, community $c_i \in C$ of countries. The modularity measure of the network is defined as:

$$Q(C) = \sum_{ij} [M_{ij} / M - (d_i\, d_j) / M^2]\, \delta(c_i, c_j) \qquad (2)$$

were $M = \sum_{ij} M_{ij}$ is the sum of all migrants globally, $d_i = \sum_j M_{ij}$ and $d_j = \sum_i M_{ij}$ represent the number of emigrants and immigrants of each country, and δ is the Kronecker delta function. The Q measure quantifies the quality of the partition of the network, since the sum of inter-node weights is greater in communities with lesser outside connecting nodes, i.e. with lesser outside weighted degree.

The Louvain algorithm ingeniously aggregates nodes in the network, according to a iterative process depicted in Fig.2, in order to generate a partition C of the network maximising Q. Each pass is made of two phases: one where modularity is optimised by allowing only local changes of communities; another one where the communities are aggregated in order to build a new network. The passes are repeated iteratively until no increase of modularity is possible (Blondel et al, 2008). Modularity Q is thus a way of quantifying the interdependence between communities of countries when exchanging migrants.

Figure 2 – Visualisation of the steps the Louvain algorithm.



The second community detection algorithm used for detecting migration communities at global scale is the Infomap algorithm proposed by Rosvall and Bergstrom (2008). This algorithm processes data compression for community identification, by optimising a quality function specified for weighted and directed networks, called the Map Equation. This function depends on the probability that a random walker, in our case a person that randomly migrates between countries with the probabilities computed using equation (1), either stays within a community, or jumps between communities. The Infomap algorithm is implemented with a growing binary string that maps the trajectory of the walker (in our case, the migrant), concatenating code-blocks representing each country or community as they are visited. The function to be optimised, the Map Equation, indicates the length of the average string representing a walking on the partition C of the network:

$$L(C) = q\, H(Q) + \sum_i p_i\, H(P_i) \qquad (3)$$

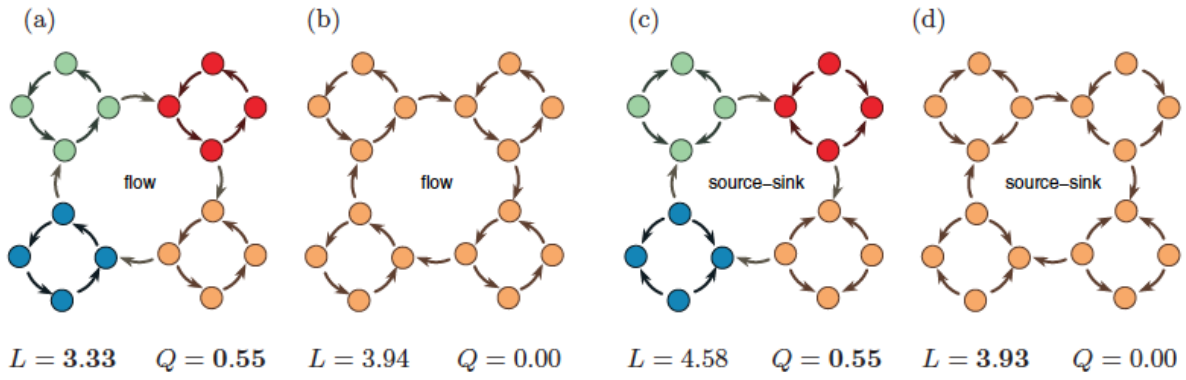
where H(Q) is the minimum code-length describing an average walk between communities, $H(P_i)$ is the minimum code-length depicting an average walk inside a community c_i, q is the probability of jumping between communities, and p_i is the probability of jumping inside a community c_i.

The core of the Infomap algorithm follows closely the Louvain method: neighbouring nodes are joined into modules, which are subsequently joined into super-modules, and so on. Firstly, each node is assigned to its own module. Then, in random sequential order, each node is moved to the neighbouring module resulting in the largest decrease of the map equation. If no move results in a decrease of the map equation, the node is kept in its original module. The procedure is repeated, each time in a new random sequential order, until no move generates a decrease of the map equation. This way, the network is rebuilt, where modules in previous level compose nodes in the actual level. This hierarchical rebuilding of the network is repeated until the map equation cannot be reduced further.

Both Louvain and Infomap algorithms return a partition of the network representing its community structure. However, we are looking forward to map migration flows, which is different from just assign individuals to some static communities. Let's consider the example in Fig.3, comparing two directed networks when the direction of flow is changed between some nodes. In each case both L(C) and Q(C) are calculated.

Following Rosvall et al. (2009), we seek to minimize L(C) and maximize Q(C) in each algorithm, so that partition (a) is chosen by both algorithms in the case of the 'flow' network, and partitions (c) and (d) are chosen in the case of the 'source-sink' network, as follows:

Figure 3 – Comparison between two directed networks when the direction of flow is changed between some nodes



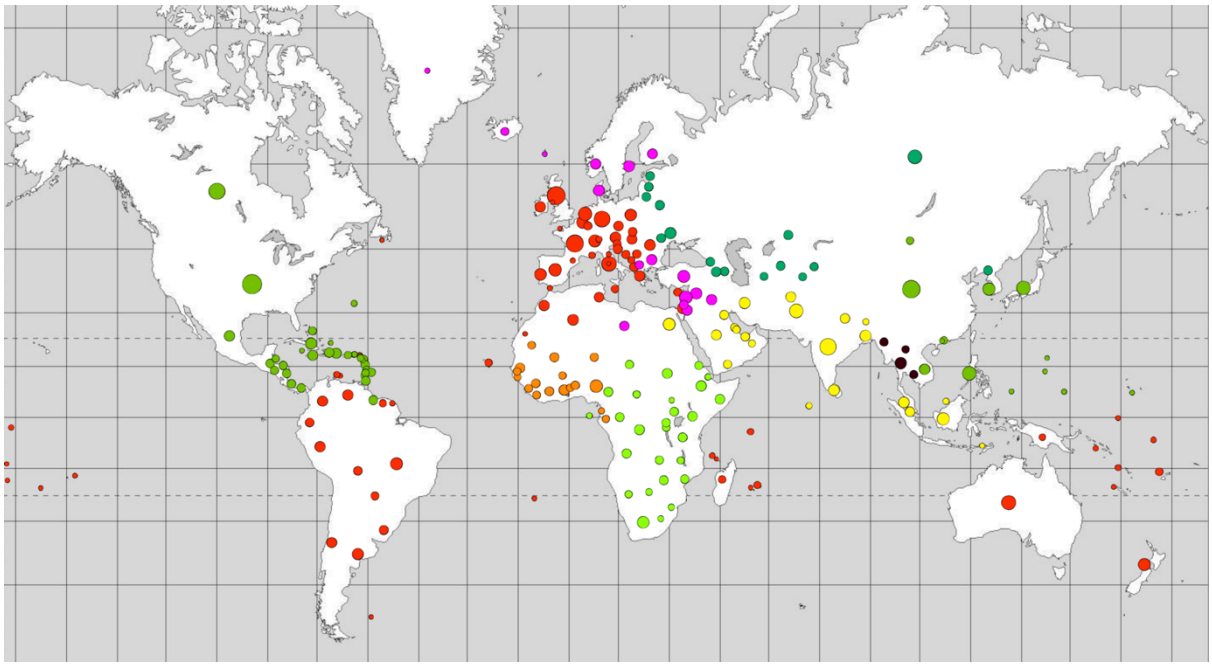
According to Rosvall et al. (2009), Infomap focus on system behaviour once the network has been formed, whereas the Louvain method is more focused on the network topology and its formation process. Both algorithms partition the network into four modules. In the (c) and (d) cases of source-sink network, as any random walker will not walk much more than a single step between nodes, the whole network is considered by the Infomap algorithm as a single module. Otherwise, from a flow-based perspective, (cases (a) and (b)), the two networks are diverse.

Results

Using the Louvain algorithm

The result of applying both algorithms to the UN dataset is the partition of the set including 232 countries into different communities (see details in Annex A). Fig.4 illustrates an example of partitions for 2017, using the Louvain algorithm.

Figure 4 – Countries grouped in the 8 communities represented by different colours and detected with the Louvain algorithm for the year 2017. The size of the circles is proportional to the migrant population.



Eight stable communities emerged from applying the Louvain algorithm, identifying different types of global migrations in data from 1990 to 2017:

Table 1 – Communities uncovered by the Louvain algorithm

Id	Community
1	Europe, North Africa, South America, Indic Ocean and Oceania
2	North and Central America, Caribbean and East Asia
3	Central, Eastern and Southern Africa
4	Southern Asia and the Arabian Peninsula
5	West Africa
6	Soviet Bloc
7	Scandinavia and Middle East
8	Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar

Each community mentioned in Table 1 can be enlightened using the main arguments found on literature for explaining migration flows, as follows.

Community 1 is geographically related to the European sixteenth century expansion, with the exceptions of Sub-Saharan Africa and North and Central America. Before 2010 some countries belonging to the British Commonwealth appear grouped in a different independent block (see Annex A). However, after that year all countries involved in European expansion, except for Sub-Saharan Africa and Northern and Central America which constitute groups by their own, emerge as a single group of countries were the exchange of population is more intense.

Community 2 includes Northern America, Central America and the Caribbean and its migratory exchange with East Asia. There are US migrants in Australia, and European migrants in the US. These were the first immigrants in the New World, but more recently a large share of population exchange flowing into the US and Canada, comes from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, with an extension to the other side of the Pacific were the Philippines have North America as its primary migratory destination. China is a vast country with major internal migration, but has also major migratory flows to North America, as well as to Hong Kong and Taiwan. This community is in line with the Castles (2013) explanation of US military presence in Korea, Vietnam and other Asian countries forging transnational links. Vietnam but also South Korea experienced long-term emigration to the USA after the Korean war. Japan has experienced considerable labour immigration since the mid 1980s and many migrants are *Nikkeijin*: descendants of past Japanese emigrants now admitted as labour migrants.

Community 3 represents Central, Eastern and Southern part of the Africa continent. From 1995 until 2010 the algorithm divides this large community into two distinct sub-communities grouping apart the Southernmost countries. Post-apartheid South Africa is the economic powerhouse of sub-Saharan Africa, drawing migrants from all over the continent, although primarily from the Southern Africa region. The bulk of African migrants move within the continent. Also, according to the UNHCR data, 'people in refugee-like situations' are here 14% of international migrants. Although this is a higher proportion than in other world regions, this means that still about 86 percent of international migration are not primarily refugees. Declining levels of conflict from 1990 led to a decrease in refugee migration in some parts of Africa. The number of refugees recorded by the UNHCR has declined from 6.8 million in 1995 to 2.4 million in 2010 (Castles 2013).

Community 4 concerns migration within Southern Asia, the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt, Malaysia and Indonesia.

All countries in the region experience both significant immigration and emigration, three of the top ten migration corridors include Asian countries: Bangladesh-India (3.5 million in 2005), India-United Arab Emirates (2.2 million) and Afghanistan-Iran (1.6 million). The huge construction projects in the Gulf oil countries caused mass recruitment of contract workers first from India and Pakistan, then from Indonesia and later from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Community 5 is related to migration within West Africa. Data represented in Annex A shows that this migration community has been remarkably consistent and stable. Despite the relatively high incidence of conflict-related migration, economic migration predominates in Africa. Intra-regional mobility in West Africa has been dominated by a movement from the landlocked countries of the Sahel West Africa to the relatively more prosperous plantations, mines and cities of the Coastal West Africa. There has also been considerable transversal international migration within the coastal zone of mostly seasonal workers to the relatively wealthy economies of Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

In what concerns Community 6, there is a very stable group of countries that exchanged populations along the three past decades. These countries are former Soviet Republics, with the notable exception of North Korea. After the II World War legal migration was restricted in the Eastern Bloc, it was in most cases only possible to reunite families or to allow members of minority ethnic groups to return to their homelands. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a wave of liberalisation revolutions, sometimes called "Autumn of Nations" swept across the Bloc. Millions of people moved within and between the successor states of the former Soviet Union and Russia thus became a major country of immigration, with around 2 million ethnic Russians leaving or being displaced from the Baltic States, Ukraine, and other parts of the former Soviet Union. Although there were also migrant flows into Europe, and particularly to Israel, and to the rest of the globe, Russia's political and cultural influence maintained the former bloc united. There were also refugees from various conflicts and some 700.000 ecological displaced people, mainly from areas affected by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Community 7, similarly to community 3, was composed before 2010 by two separate groups. One represents the Scandinavian Countries, Greenland, Bulgaria, and Turkey that before 2015 were included in the European community 1 referred above. The other represents the Arab countries of the middle East and Libya.

After 2015, the opening of Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Finland to refugees from the war conflicts involving nations with Islamic majorities, linked these two communities. In Middle East, current refugee issues remain centred on Palestinians and Syrians. Turkey and Egypt have evolved into central crossroads for refugee flows.

Community 8 is constituted by countries united by migrant flows to Thailand, mainly from Myanmar (80 percent in 2009). Thailand was before 1990 a typical emigration country. Fast economic growth in the 1990s lead to a transition. Developments in construction, as well as agricultural and manufacturing jobs, attract workers from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. According to Harkin et al. (2017), an estimated 3.25 million migrants were employed in Thailand in 2017, i.e., roughly 8.5 percent of the country's labour force. Historically, migrants crossed into Thailand through irregular channels, either on their own or through informal brokers. Many of the Burmese are also fleeing violence in their homeland and it is hard to distinguish clearly between economic migrants and refugees (Bylander, 2019).

Using the Infomap algorithm

The second phase for identifying communities concerned applying the Infomap algorithm to the UNHCR data. A different and more detailed set of communities was obtained through this method. In fact, twenty different communities emerged from the global migration dataset, representing a diversity of migration flows along the 1990–2017 time interval (see annex A). These communities are represented in the following table and its identification is straightforward:

Table 2 – Communities uncovered by the Infomap algorithm

Id	Community	Size
1	Developed Countries	118
2	Soviet Bloc	15
3	Middle East Arabian Countries	12
4	South Asia and Indian Subcontinent	9
5	Southern Africa	9

6	Central Africa	9
7	Sub Saharan Central and East Africa	8
8	Western West Africa	9
9	Eastern West Africa	8
10	Algeria and Western Sahara	2
11	Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar	4
12	Malaysia and Singapore	2
13	Indonesia and Timor Leste	2
14	French Caribbean	4
15	British and US Caribbean	5
16	Comoros, Mayotte and Reunion	3
17	Micronesia Archipelago, Guam and Palau	4
18	French Polynesia, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna	4
19	American Samoa and Samoa	2
20	Tuvalu, Kiribati and Nauru	3

Our interpretation of the partitions above is that two main factors determine global migrations. The first one has to do with cultural aspects. This is remarkable in the first half of the Infomap community list and mostly evident in the Louvain community list. On the one hand there is a large group, including most of the world population, mostly with Western influence. On the other, there are a diversity of groups with Soviet, Arab, Indian, or Pakistan and Bangladesh influence.

The second factor of segmentation relates to geography. Although the first community in the Infomap list is dispersed over the globe (i.e., "Developed Countries"), all the other communities are quite geographically localised.

In the second half of the list this proximity factor is apparent - i.e., different small island nations grouped not only by their cultural affinity but primarily by its geographic proximity.

Discussion and conclusion

The network analysis of global migration here performed, applying community detection, suggests alternative factors beyond the usual economic motives that primarily explain migratory flow magnitude. The communities detected showed both geographic proximity and socio-cultural affinity shaping migratory trajectories. Our methodology uncovered borders beyond normal borders, which constitute additional walls disconnecting world societies.

The Louvain algorithm presented a specific topology of the migration flow network, aggregating countries according with their cultural, linguistic, political, and most of all, economic affinities. Moreover, the Infomap algorithm allowed to explore the actual influence of distance and geography in determining population movements. Both results weighting flow dynamics over the migratory stock network of 1990-2017 confirm previous discussions on migration. One of the most pervasive empirical regularities in regional science is that any form of spatial interaction (migration, commuting, trade, information exchange, etc.) has the property of flows being positively related to stocks, whichever way measured, and inversely related to distance (Poot, 2016). Models like these are called 'Gravity Models' because they resemble Newton's 1687 law of gravity. Gravity-like properties of internal migration flows had been admitted long time ago by Ravenstein (1885) and can now be supported by analysing the recently available datasets.

The consistency between the communities found by both methods and the explanation for migration flows generally found in literature, validate the use of these approaches for future research on migration phenomena. A planned extension of our research using Social Network Analysis methodologies may, in the future, reveal interesting properties associated with migration. Social network measures, such as centralities or spectral measures, might be correlated with further data as linguistic distance, immigration policy, geographic distance, colonial relationships, gross domestic product per capita, average years of schooling, destination wages, relative population size, social welfare spending, shared land border, young population share, existing migration stocks, total commercial trade, cultural similarity, illiteracy rates, political stability, inequality ratio, source poverty rate, common currency or common legislation.

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Annex A

Louvain Communities

Country	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
Albania	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Algeria	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
American Samoa	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Andorra	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Argentina	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Aruba	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Australia	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Austria	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Belgium	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brazil	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cabo Verde	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Caribbean Netherlands	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Channel Islands	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Chile	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Colombia	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Comoros	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cook Islands	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Croatia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Curaçao	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cyprus	2	3	3	3	3	1	1

Czechia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ecuador	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Falkland Islands (Malvinas)	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Fiji	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
France	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
French Guiana	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
French Polynesia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Germany	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gibraltar	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Greece	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Guadeloupe	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Holy See	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hungary	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ireland	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Isle of Man	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Israel	6	1	6	1	1	1	1
Italy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kiribati	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Liechtenstein	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Luxembourg	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Madagascar	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Malta	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Martinique	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mauritius	1	1	1	3	3	1	1
Mayotte	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Monaco	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Montenegro	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Morocco	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nauru	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Netherlands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
New Caledonia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
New Zealand	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Niue	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Papua New Guinea	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Paraguay	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Peru	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Poland	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Portugal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Réunion	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Romania	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Saint Helena	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Saint Pierre and Miquelon	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Samoa	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
San Marino	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Serbia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Seychelles	2	2	3	3	1	1	1
Sint Maarten (Dutch part)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Slovakia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Slovenia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Solomon Islands	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Spain	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Suriname	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Switzerland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tokelau	2	3	3	3	3	1	1

Tonga	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Tunisia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tuvalu	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
United Kingdom	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Uruguay	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Vanuatu	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Wallis and Futuna Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Western Sahara	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Anguilla	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Antigua and Barbuda	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Bahamas	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Barbados	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Belize	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Bermuda	2	3	2	2	2	2	2
British Virgin Islands	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Canada	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Cayman Islands	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
China	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
China Hong Kong SAR	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
China Macao SAR	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Costa Rica	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Cuba	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Dominica	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Dominican Republic	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
El Salvador	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Grenada	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Guam	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Guatemala	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Guyana	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Haiti	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Honduras	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Jamaica	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Japan	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Marshall Islands	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mexico	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Micronesia (Fed. States of)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mongolia	6	6	6	6	6	2	2
Montserrat	2	2	3	3	2	2	2
Nicaragua	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Northern Mariana Islands	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Palau	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Panama	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Philippines	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Puerto Rico	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Republic of Korea	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Saint Kitts and Nevis	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Saint Lucia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Trinidad and Tobago	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Turks and Caicos Islands	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
United States of America	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
United States Virgin Islands	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Viet Nam	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Angola	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Botswana	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Burundi	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Cameroon	5	5	5	5	7	3	3
Central African Republic	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Chad	3	7	5	7	7	3	3
Congo	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Democratic Republic of the Congo	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Djibouti	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Eritrea	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Ethiopia	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Kenya	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Lesotho	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Malawi	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mozambique	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Namibia	3	3	7	3	3	3	3
Rwanda	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Sao Tome and Principe	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
Somalia	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
South Africa	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
South Sudan	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Sudan	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Swaziland	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Uganda	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
United Republic of Tanzania	3	7	7	7	7	3	3
Zambia	3	7	7	7	3	3	3
Zimbabwe	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Afghanistan	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Bahrain	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Bangladesh	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Bhutan	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Brunei Darussalam	2	4	4	4	4	4	4
Egypt	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
India	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Indonesia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Kuwait	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Malaysia	2	4	4	4	4	4	4
Maldives	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Nepal	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Oman	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Pakistan	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Qatar	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Saudi Arabia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Singapore	2	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sri Lanka	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Timor-Leste	2	4	4	4	4	4	4
United Arab Emirates	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Yemen	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Benin	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Burkina Faso	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Côte d'Ivoire	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Equatorial Guinea	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Gabon	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Gambia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Ghana	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Guinea	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Guinea-Bissau	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Liberia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mali	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mauritania	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Niger	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Nigeria	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Senegal	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sierra Leone	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Togo	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Armenia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Azerbaijan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Belarus	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Dem. People's Republic of Korea	2	6	6	6	6	6	6
Estonia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Georgia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Kazakhstan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Kyrgyzstan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Latvia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Lithuania	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Republic of Moldova	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Russian Federation	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Tajikistan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Turkmenistan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Ukraine	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

Uzbekistan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Bulgaria	1	1	1	1	1	7	7
Denmark	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Faeroe Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Finland	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Greenland	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Iceland	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Iraq	4	4	4	9	9	7	7
Jordan	7	4	4	9	9	7	7
Lebanon	7	4	4	9	9	7	7
Libya	7	4	4	9	9	7	7
Norway	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
State of Palestine	7	4	4	9	9	7	7
Sweden	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Syrian Arab Republic	7	4	4	9	9	7	7
TFYR Macedonia	1	1	1	1	1	7	7
Turkey	1	1	1	1	1	7	7
Cambodia	2	2	8	8	8	8	8
Lao People's Democratic Republic	2	4	8	8	8	8	8
Myanmar	4	4	8	8	8	8	8
Thailand	2	4	8	8	8	8	8

Infomap Communities

Country	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
Afghanistan	15	15	15	15	1	15	1
Albania	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Andorra	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Argentina	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Australia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Austria	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bahamas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Barbados	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Belgium	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Belize	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bermuda	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Botswana	7	7	7	7	7	7	1
Brazil	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bulgaria	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cabo Verde	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Canada	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cayman Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Channel Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Chile	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
China	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
China Hong Kong SAR	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
China Macao SAR	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Colombia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cook Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Costa Rica	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Croatia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cuba	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cyprus	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Czechia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Denmark	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Djibouti	12	1	4	12	1	1	1
Dominica	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dominican Republic	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ecuador	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
El Salvador	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Faeroe Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Falkland Islands (Malvinas)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fiji	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Finland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
France	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Germany	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gibraltar	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Greece	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Greenland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Guatemala	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Guyana	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Haiti	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Holy See	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Honduras	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Hungary	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Iceland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	15	15	15	15	1	15	1
Ireland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Isle of Man	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Israel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Italy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jamaica	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Japan	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lesotho	7	7	7	7	7	7	1
Liechtenstein	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lithuania	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Luxembourg	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Madagascar	13	13	13	1	1	1	1
Malawi	7	7	7	7	7	7	1
Malta	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Marshall Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mauritius	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mexico	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Monaco	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mongolia	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Montenegro	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Montserrat	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Morocco	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mozambique	7	7	7	7	7	7	1
Namibia	7	7	7	7	7	7	1
Netherlands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

New Zealand	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nicaragua	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Niue	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Norway	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Panama	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Papua New Guinea	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Paraguay	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Peru	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Poland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Portugal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Puerto Rico	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Republic of Korea	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Romania	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Saint Helena	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Saint Lucia	6	1	1	1	6	1	1
Saint Pierre and Miquelon	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
San Marino	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Serbia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Seychelles	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Slovakia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Slovenia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Solomon Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
South Africa	7	7	7	7	7	7	1
Spain	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Suriname	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Swaziland	7	7	7	7	7	7	1

Sweden	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Switzerland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TFYR Macedonia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tokelau	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tonga	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Trinidad and Tobago	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tunisia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Turkey	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Turks and Caicos Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tuvalu	18	1	1	1	1	1	1
United Kingdom	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
United States of America	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Uruguay	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Viet Nam	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Zambia	7	7	7	7	7	7	1
Zimbabwe	7	7	7	7	7	7	1
Armenia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Azerbaijan	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Belarus	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Dem. People's Republic of Korea	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Estonia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Georgia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Kazakhstan	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Kyrgyzstan	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Latvia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Republic of Moldova	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Russian Federation	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Tajikistan	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Turkmenistan	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Ukraine	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Uzbekistan	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Bahrain	3	14	14	3	3	3	3
Bangladesh	14	14	14	3	3	3	3
Bhutan	14	14	14	3	3	3	3
Brunei Darussalam	14	14	14	3	3	3	3
Egypt	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
India	14	14	14	3	3	3	3
Iraq	15	15	15	3	3	3	3
Jordan	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Kuwait	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Lebanon	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Libya	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Maldives	14	14	14	3	3	3	3
Nepal	14	14	14	3	3	3	3
Oman	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Pakistan	14	14	14	3	3	3	3
Qatar	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Saudi Arabia	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sri Lanka	14	14	14	3	3	3	3
State of Palestine	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Syrian Arab Republic	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
United Arab Emirates	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Yemen	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Angola	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Burundi	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Cameroon	12	4	12	12	12	4	4
Central African Republic	12	4	4	12	12	4	4
Chad	12	4	12	12	12	4	4
Congo	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Democratic Republic of the Congo	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Eritrea	12	4	4	12	12	4	4
Ethiopia	12	4	4	12	12	4	4
Kenya	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Rwanda	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sao Tome and Principe	1	1	1	1	1	4	4
Somalia	12	4	4	12	12	4	4
South Sudan	12	4	4	12	12	4	4
Sudan	12	4	4	12	12	4	4
Uganda	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
United Republic of Tanzania	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Benin	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Burkina Faso	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Côte d'Ivoire	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Equatorial Guinea	12	12	12	5	5	5	5
Gabon	12	12	12	5	5	5	5
Ghana	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Liberia	12	12	12	12	5	5	5
Mali	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Niger	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Nigeria	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Togo	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
French Guiana	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Guadeloupe	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Martinique	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Sint Maarten (Dutch part)	1	1	1	1	6	6	6
Indonesia	3	3	8	8	8	8	8
Malaysia	17	8	8	8	8	8	8
Singapore	17	8	8	8	8	8	8
Timor-Leste	1	3	8	8	8	8	8
Guam	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Micronesia (Fed. States of)	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Northern Mariana Islands	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Palau	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Philippines	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
Anguilla	8	1	1	1	10	10	10
Antigua and Barbuda	8	1	1	1	10	10	10
British Virgin Islands	8	1	1	1	10	10	10
Grenada	1	1	1	1	10	10	10
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8	1	1	1	10	10	10
United States Virgin Islands	8	1	1	1	10	10	10
French Polynesia	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
New Caledonia	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Vanuatu	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Wallis and Futuna Islands	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Gambia	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Guinea	12	12	12	12	5	12	12
Guinea-Bissau	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

Mauritania	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Senegal	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Sierra Leone	12	12	12	12	5	12	12
Comoros	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Mayotte	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Réunion	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Aruba	1	1	1	1	1	1	14
Cambodia	1	1	1	14	14	14	14
Caribbean Netherlands	1	1	1	1	1	1	14
Curaçao	1	1	1	1	1	1	14
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1	1	1	14	14	14	14
Myanmar	14	14	1	14	14	14	14
Thailand	1	1	1	14	14	14	14
American Samoa	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Samoa	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Algeria	1	1	17	17	17	17	17
Western Sahara	1	1	17	17	17	17	17
Kiribati	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Nauru	18	18	18	18	18	18	18

CHAPTER 13

SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS FROM INSIDE OF *WIR SCHAFFEN DAS* (2015)

Dirk Bustorf
District manager and team leader for a holistic project in a Hamburg Sinti

Abstract

This contribution is a narrative text written by an anthropologist who, after years researching and lecturing in Ethiopia, has now devoted himself to managing refugee shelter in Hamburg (at *Fördern und Wohnen AöR*). The text reconstitutes his personal memories and his growing involvement with this cause, in the early and hectic period of the 2015 German humanitarian response to the incoming flow of people fleeing conflict and disaster in the Middle East and Africa.

Keywords: refugees, emergency response, *Wir schaffen das*, personal account

Prelude: first half of 2015 (notes from my memory)

"My first 2015- refugee" is a young man from Eritrea. As I wait for my train at the Hamburg main station, I see him fall (or jump?) from the platform onto the rails and then lie there motionless. For a moment, I check if any train is approaching. Quickly, I climb down onto the rail bed. The young man is only half conscious and weighs almost nothing. I lift him up, and another passenger takes him from above and pulls him onto the platform. I guess the man is dehydrated and didn't eat for a long time. Maybe, he travelled unnoticed on a freight train on his way from Italy, or so; like in a certain story of John Steinbeck, I once read. I'm in a hurry climbing up because a train comes into view.

In the news I watch thousands of exhausted and displaced people, men, women, children, young and old, full of hope or almost broken. They run through the night, nearly without any luggage. They wait in overcrowded camps, sitting behind barbed wires. They pour out of trains and busses to be transferred further on the next day.

Asylum applications in Germany in 2015: 441.899
Refugees who came to Hamburg in 2015: 40.868
Refugees assigned to stay in Hamburg for their asylum procedure in 2015: 22.315

In Germany, the atmosphere is kind of electrified. For a brief historical moment Germans turn into enthusiastic citizens, again. They greet the newcomers at train stations as if they were from another part of the country which had been locked behind an iron curtain for decades. The wave of voluntary support and political backing from the public is extraordinary (and still hasn't ebbed completely in 2021). The administration is under a stress test on all levels. Sometimes even administrative rules and procedures are shortened (in Germany!) to be able to organize accommodation and infrastructure for the support of the masses of refugees. However, in the shadow of these developments, destructive powers are preparing for their time to come.

I feel a strong inner need to do something meaningful in this situation. This is history in the making. I don't want to be just an amazed couch potato in front of the TV. Shall I start an anthropological research project on this? No, the administration needs practical support. They will not manage these numbers without a strong engagement of the citizens. We must do everything to facilitate a smooth welcome process. Then, we need successful integration to prevent the xenophobic mob to take over.

Some days a week, I go to the big exhibition halls of the Congress Centre which serve as temporary central refugee accommodation. One of the halls is filled with cartons and plastic bags stuffed full of cloths, hygiene articles, toys and bits and pieces donated by the citizens of Hamburg. One would just go there and would immediately find something practical to do. The main task is to bring order into the chaos: cloths must be sorted by type and size, boxes must be carried and labelled, corridors through the storage piles must be established or cleared, and useless things are to be identified and put into the garbage.

Amongst the garbage I find a necklace made of huge ambers, beach finds, perhaps donated by an old lady. I am proud of her and of all the donators who took the opportunity to clear their wardrobes and at the same time to do some charity. I will sell the amber later and donate the money to some refugee-related project.

There is not much talk in the hall. Volunteers are busy and concentrated on their task. From the other exhibition halls, which function as provisory accommodation, we hear the litany of the announcer: "Mr. Ahmad Muhammad Ahmad, please come to section A.; Mr. Parviz Haidari, please come to section D; Mr. Abdurasaq Abdullah Muhammad, please come to section C; Mr. Gebre Hailemaryam, please come to section E; Mr. Ali Abdel Fattah …; Mr. Hajji Ali Umar…."[1] The announcer is to become my colleague later in the year. At this very moment, however, I have no clue that this could ever happen.

Emergency accommodation (subsequent notes from November and December)

On 1 November 2015, the so-called refugee crisis in Europe is at its peak, I start a new professional life. Before, my last proper job was teaching social anthropology in Gondar, Ethiopia. After that, I had some assignments as a freelance anthropologist. Now, I enter the foggy terrain of the academy of the fire brigade with a small bunch of yellow flowers in my hands, a thin folder with basic information on my new employer (including a very important list of abbreviations) and a very vague idea about what to expect next.

After having passed the seminar buildings of the Centre, I surround burned-out car wrecks and Potemkin houses for firefighter training purposes. Then, I discover the building with the huge training hall made available by the fire brigade to host an emergency accommodation unit for 300 refugees.

[1] All are names in this paper have been changed to protect the anonymity of the data subjects.

My new colleagues recognise me immediately because only some weeks before they as well had been welcomed in their new positions with such yellow flowers. My colleagues seem to be very likeable but there is not much time to talk. They are surrounded by crowds of people with needs, questions and complaints of all sorts. I find my way to our office alone – a small container with one chair, two tables, a drawer, and a laptop without internet access. I cannot find time to put my flowers into a non-existing vase but immerse myself immediately into the reality of *Wir schaffen das*.[2]

We are so busy that we hold urine for hours. We forget to eat. We run into the hall in search of someone whom we usually do not find. In the hall there is always a crowd around each of us. Everybody wants to be heard, tell his or her story, ask about anything, complain, or – above all – urgently demand "TRANSFER" to a better accommodation. Sometimes the crowd loses patience. Some people shout at us or come physically much too close. For this reason, we do not go into the hall without security guards in the background. In case we would find the time for a cigarette or coffee break, we would stand together in the cold, behind a corner, in the fog, and report to each other. If we do not miss the time, we can get food in a garage together with the refugees. We are exhausted, we care for each other, and we sometimes burst into laughter like crazy – laughter of exhaustion, of disbelief, of despair, of compassion, of doing something great.

Most of the refugees in the hall are very friendly. They have time to observe us working, and they understand how difficult it is to organize the camp[3] and to listen to everybody. They try to support us by translating; by trying to find the people we are searching for, or by helping to move bunk beds and mattresses. They try hard not to complain. They are wonderful.

There is an Iraqi architect who built skyscrapers in Bahrain in his former life. When he reached Germany, he decided to go to Hamburg because he saw photos of its interesting architecture. There is a young man who lost his mother, father, and siblings just a few weeks ago. They drowned in the sea on their way to Greece. Now, he sits on his bed the entire day and tries to learn German with his smartphone.

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[2] Wir schaffen das, Engl. "We can [or will] do it", "We'll manage it", "We'll make it". The complete sentence of Angela Merkel on 31 August 2015 was, "I say very simply: Germany is a strong country. The motive with which we approach these things must be: We have achieved [managed] so much – we can do it! We can do it, and where something stands in our way, it must be overcome, it has to be worked on. The federal government will do everything in its power – together with the states, together with the municipalities – to achieve just that"

[3] Informally, everybody uses the English word "camp" for such a place in order to avoid the historically spoiled German word "Lager".

He puts all his grief and all his energy into it. There is an old man from Aleppo who sits on a chair at one of the entrances, constantly praying with his *tesbi*. He greets each of us whenever we pass him with his hand at his heart and with a friendly smile – *as-salāmu ʿalaikum*, grandfather. There is the lady from Aleppo who suddenly lays down on the floor at the entrance in protest. Her family had a big house with servants and two cars. Her husband was a businessman. Now, her house is in ruins, and everything is gone. She acts as if she has a mental disorder, but I think her reaction is pretty normal under such circumstances. People show us photos of their homes in Syria on their smartphones, photos of their relatives in the UK, in Sweden, or still in Afghanistan. Children play everywhere in the hall and on the square in front of the garages of the fire brigade.

> *Note: A resident received a call this morning. He told his friends that his uncle called him and said his mother and brother were hit by a land mine in Afghanistan and were torn to pieces. The resident went into shock and had a spasm of the whole body, similar to an epileptic fit. The cramp lasted almost 30 minutes.*

The social managers open an "office" in the hall, two tables and some chairs. The parents of one of our team members were refugees from Afghanistan in the 90s. Now, she is our translator. We may also use the security guards as translators into Arabic or Turkish. But we prefer to communicate without intermediary. Each team member has some special language skills and experience in communicating without common language. I start collecting important Dari vocabulary from the people but never find time to learn more than a few phrases. The Eritreans know some Amharic. My more-than-half-forgotten four semesters of Turkish turn out to be helpful. Even my Portuguese is of some use.

> *Note: Mr. M. is psychologically stressed. He also suffers from diabetes (see note by the Red Cross). The doctors at our facility examined him: it was found that he had severe back pain (chronic). He also suffers from tinnitus (see file).*

> *Note: Mr. H. has an aunt and cousins in camp XY. He would like to be moved to this place so that he can be with his family. He is already on an internal waiting list there. Our contact person at camp XY is Mr. X. It would be great if you could establish contact with Mr. X. (see file).*

> *Note: Mr. A. has a diploma from a university in Afghanistan. This would have to be translated and recognised. I think, at this stage of his procedure it is too early to focus on such a question,*

but we could send him to the university welcome centre for general information – I guess they are quite busy at the moment ;-)…

Note: Mr. J. has received his rejection letter regarding the asylum application (unfortunately there is no copy of this in the reference file). According to his own information, he already established contact with a lawyer which he would prefer to use. So far, no feedback from Mr. J. regarding the current status of his affairs.

Note: Mr. Y. states that he is only 17 but was estimated to be 18. Maybe you can follow up on that.

Our biggest problem is not losing overview of who stays with us. Many people try to move forward to Sweden, but they do not give us a note when leaving.[4] People regularly move their bunk beds when we aren't present during night-time. Every morning, the beds are arranged in a different way. The only method to find somebody is to shout the name as loud as possible. I'm good at this.

We start to give numbers to each bed place and ask people not to change beds, but in vain. Changing beds and moving beds is the best way to avoid conflicts between the different characters and the different nationalities in the hall. Therefore, the security guards – against our will – are involved in this constant rearrangement. During night-time they try to manage conflicts in this way.

Our new system is to climb up to a kind of balcony directly under the high roof of the hall. From there, we take a picture once a week. From this picture we produce a rough map and fill in the numbers of bed places, hoping that most people didn't move to other beds.

The Arabs and Afghani people tend to arrange the bunk beds of their families in a way that they each form a kind of yard. These yards are connected to each other according to kin ties or places of origin by narrow pathways between veiled bunk beds. From above, the clusters of beds resemble the layout of Oriental bazar quarters or the backyards of Merkato in Addis Ababa. The Eritreans have pushed together all the bunk beds to form a large continuous sleeping area. They entirely shield this area from the outside with cloths. They sleep on the lower bunks using the upper slatted frames and mattresses as a kind of roof. It is easy to find an Eritrean because they tend to stick together in this sleeping area or "tent". For security reasons, we arrange beds near the exit of the hall for the few Eritrean women and African single mothers with their babies. At least we should keep the emergency escape routes free.

[4] Refugees were permitted to temporarily leave the camp.

Note: This week a shisha was pulled in by the security personnel after residents had glowed coal on a stove under(!)the bed. There was heavy smoke development.

For the refugees the only thing to do is to wait for their registration. Some have already applied for asylum when they entered Germany, others where directly transferred to Hamburg without a proper procedure. The authorities near the border are overstrained. Thus, things are driven forward by the Hamburg immigration authorities who are supported by soldiers. The Latter would come to the "camp" for some hours from time to time. After registration one must wait for the day of transfer to the next category of "camp" or accommodation unit. Some people must wait ages for their being registered others get their papers ready at an instance. The same is true with transfers. No matter how long or short one must wait, it is too long, anyhow. The hall is not an acceptable place to stay for more than a few nights. However, it takes weeks for most until they are declared "ready for transfer". The provisory heating doesn't work well, it is too loud to find sleep, and there is almost no private sphere.

According to the distribution key that defines the number of refugees to be distributed among each of the German states, some people are transferred to other places in the country. Some are happy about such a transfer because they expect to meet relatives in the other place. Most people, however, seem to prefer to stay in Hamburg. They expect that it is easier to find work and support from countrymen in a big city. In any case, it's not their decision and it is not ours. There is nothing they, or we, can do about it. Still, we are urged to discuss it repeatedly with most of them. Especially the Eastern German states aren't popular among the refugees who are already informed that – in tendency – the East is more racist than the West. Those who get a transfer within Hamburg do agree most of the time.

The atmosphere in the hall is thickened with emotions. We have such an intensive contact with many of the refugees. Therefore, it is important to us to say goodbye to each and every one of our "guests". We would wish them luck, shake hands, and wave after them. In December, the camp must be closed down because the provisory heating of the hall doesn't function well enough. After all the refugees left and the hall is empty, we ourselves are "transferred" to other "camps" to support other colleagues.

Final remarks (2021)

In retrospect, the question if Chancellor Merkel's statement *Wir schaffen das* could hold water is a matter of perspective and interpretation.

On the ground, during the initial phase of refugee management this paper is dedicated to, the main task was the practical management of, and primary care for, people who entered the country in masses during a relatively short period of time. The basic assignment for refugee managers was to facilitate a sufficient quantity and quality of accommodation and basic medical as well as social services. Additionally, from the beginning onward, it was important to give refugees orientation in their first steps in Germany and to support their cultural learning. They had to be directed to institutions that would support them in their legal affairs and asylum procedures. Furthermore, it was crucial to generate public acceptance and to attend the forming of supportive local networks around accommodation facilities newly stamped out of the ground. In Hamburg, a relatively well organised city state with a public social enterprise with great expertise, I suppose, *haben wir* das *geschafft* or "we *did* manage this". After the initial phase of refugee management other phases follow. They include facilitating and maintaining a relatively higher standard accommodation, supporting integration into the standard welfare and educational systems, giving orientation concerning language and integration courses, professional training, and jobs. Unfortunately, from the side of the immigration authorities, these phases also may include structural chicane and/or deportation, sometimes even into war zones.

To many Germans of different political backgrounds, but most explicitly among conservatives and right-winged people "the 2015-refugee crisis" became synonymous with a temporary loss of control of the state over its borders. On the one hand, successful integration processes strengthened the general acceptance of immigrants and Germany as a country of immigration, on the other hand anti-migrant as well as racist sentiments were "refined" and politically "better" organised. On both sides, there are voices claiming that Germany "did enough and now it is the turn of other European countries". During the 2021-election campaign, politicians of centre-left as well as of centre-right parties stated that "2015 must not be repeated". This sentence had a calming effect on the electorate which already felt overstrained by the challenges of the pandemic and by anticipating the drastic measures that are necessary to mitigate climate change. However, while the so-called "2015-refugee crisis" may have become history already, along both sides of the EU borders as well as in many refugee camps, on Greek islands and elsewhere, or on tiny boats on the Mediterranean Sea, a terrific humanitarian crisis proceeds for hundreds of thousands of refugees until today and challenges all claims of "European values". Anyway, I'd guess if one would ask my colleagues of 2015 if we would be prepared to "manage it again", their answer would be "yes, sure".

AFTERWORD

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To the reader who has reached the end of this admittedly heteroclite and fragmentary electronic book:

As we have indicated in the Introduction, the chapters gathered and aligned here are a reflection, a window so to speak, of a multidisciplinary and multipronged approach to the (*kaleidos*) topic of migratory fluxes into, within, and out of Europe, and to the dialogic dynamic of bordering and border-crossing. We take the set as glimpses of a of an ill-categorised and concerning issue that is daily negotiated between peoples, nations, and individuals.

This eBook also reflects what academia is and isn't today, what it permits and what is refuses, what and how it engages and is challenged by what and those who lie within and beyond its borders. A by-product of a ten-year serendipitous adventure involving students, lecturers, researchers, activists, artists, and more, it was being readied when the Covid19 pandemic struck, and for indescribable reasons its publication process was suspended for a while. The sanitary, economic, and political impacts of this sudden global crisis, and the short-term and long-term changes in migratory and mobility patterns it induced, will be a matter for others to discuss and to study. Suffice to say that our academic routines were drastically challenged by the imposition of quarantines, the recourse to virtual classrooms, online teaching, etc.,

and as further securitisation and bordering set in, disrupting travel, work, and the illusions of certainty. What came out of these strange times in what we, as editors, are concerned was a rather depressing and nihilistic feeling that many of the fine threads whereupon the concept and practice of *The University* hangs were broken. The pandemic made the implicit explicit, the hidden obvious, and we are yet to learn this lesson. Now, as it seems to wane (future days will tell), the academic edifice seems to recompose, and their inhabitants look intent on believing that normalcy is about to return just because in-presence classes, academic meetings, and research programs restart. The risk here is that of self-inflicting denial: denial of the profound crisis of legitimacy and meaning of the market-driven University, and its current reliance on part-time, precarious, low-wage jobs; denial of the ensuing commodification of knowledge, the dismantling of specialisation, the loss of academic freedom, the irrelevance of intellectual debate, the suppression of internal criticism.

The pandemic period could have been a time to prepare ourselves to answer an important question: will the ruined University be able to reinvent itself? We sense that the late Bill Readings' appeal (Readings, 2000) will stay unheeded, as will the late David Graeber's caution against the iniquity of "bullshit jobs" (Graeber 2018), It is yet too soon to know. As to the matters, the topic, and the people that this book addresses, they will still be here when the virus finally, hopefully, becomes endemic among humans. Wars and drought won't magically vanish from "troubled" areas. Migrant networks and paths will reconstruct themselves, and "they will still come" to an even more sanitised Europe, to an even more Orwellian continent (one that is equipping itself with Covid passports, digital certificates, pre-tastes of a coming Minority Report environment nurturing crimmigration). The pandemic seems to have momentarily halted the irrevocable demographic trend that is the ageing of the European population, and the concomitant appeal for injections of external young blood. But "they will still come".

Publishing a book that pictures what was before 2020 is a plea to the restart of a suspended conversation, and hopefully to search for ways to renew the relationship between academia and the world outside.

References

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