

**COUNTERMAPPING MIGRATION GOVERNMENTALITY**

**Arab Uprisings and practices of migration across the Mediterranean**

**By**

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**I certify that the work presented in this thesis is my own**

## **ABSTRACT:**

This research work, conducted across the two shores of the Mediterranean, explores the spatial upheavals produced in the Mediterranean region by migrants' movements taking place in the aftermath of the revolutionary uprisings and the Arab Spring, teasing out their interconnections. Assuming a spatial gaze, defined here as a counter-mapping approach, this work investigates the ways in which migrants coming from Tunisia and from Libya in 2011 and in 2012 troubled the existing order of mobility, forcing the migration regime to reassess its strategies of capture. I mobilize some Foucaultian conceptual tools – as “governmentality” and “regime of truth” – in order to critically account for the instabilities that percolate the migration regime. The work takes into account the spatial transformations generated by the Arab Uprisings and by the migration turmoil both in Tunisia and on the northern shore of the Mediterranean: migrant struggles, economic projects of development and the migration crisis of the politics of the humanitarian are the three main axes along which the analysis develops. Also the Mediterranean Sea, as a contested space of mobility, is at the core of this work: I bring attention to the politics of (in)visibility that characterizes the politics of control in the Mediterranean and migrants' strategies, highlighting the transformations occurred in the last two years. This work is a contribution to critical analyses of migration governmentality that stress the spatial upheavals that practices of migrations produce into the politics of mobility and within the order of citizenship.

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## **COUNTERMAPPING MIGRATION GOVERNMENTALITY**

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## **INTRODUCTION :**

The Arab Uprisings and practices of migration troubled the Mediterranean order of democracy and mobility, producing spatial upheavals which reverberated also on the northern shore of the Mediterranean. This statement, far from being a radical/specific interpretation of those events, is shared by different political perspectives and actors –Liberal analysts, Left movements, policy makers and scholars: the European Union was taken by surprise by the sudden outbreak of the Arab Spring [Peters, 2012] which marked the reawakening of the Arab history and its “1848” [Badiou, 2012]; a wave of popular discontent of unexpected magnitude shook the Arab world and in the face of that Europe needed to change its approach [EC, 2011]; there was a tsunami of young Tunisians [Aita, 2013] and Tunisians struggling and fighting against unemployment [Boubakri, 2013; Carrera, den Hertog, Parkin 2012]. All these analyses highlight that both the Mediterranean and European spaces were shaken by the unfolding of revolutionary events and by the “domino effect” that they triggered.

This work investigates the political and spatial upheavals that took place across the Mediterranean, centring on the connections between practices of migration and revolutionary uprisings and looking at the resonances on the European space. Actually, it addresses events that are still underway, since despite the change of political regimes and the revolutionary uprisings which led to the fall of dictatorships, the political and spatial turmoil sparked off has still not come to an end. This research has been conducted across the two shores of the Mediterranean – in Italy, Tunisia and France –and assumes a spatial gaze, taking together the struggles for democracy in the Arab countries with practices of migrations across the Mediterranean. These two phenomena remain fundamentally disconnected in most analyses, where migration is seen as the troubling factor for a smooth transition to democracy that could take place (by Liberal analysts) or as the uprising of young precarious Tunisians (by activists). In this way, it could be argued that the migration turmoil is emphasized and regarded as a challenge to the stability of the Mediterranean region, but at the same time it is presented in total continuity with

previous migration movements and economic factors [Fargues, Fandrich, 2012]. What emerges is the image of an upheaval that, despite its recognized unexpected occurrence, is definitively reabsorbed and included into the existing economic geographies.

The linchpin which sustains this research on migrations and revolutionized spaces is the turbulence that took place in 2011 and in 2012 in the Mediterranean region and was characterized by what I call a “twofold spatial upheaval”. Indeed, migrations and political uprisings during the Arab revolutions should be both considered as practices of freedom that “disturbed” and broke the spatial and geopolitical stability of the Mediterranean. Although related and strongly connected, however, the two movements in question—migrations and the revolutionary uprisings – have their own specificity, so that it’s not possible to fully conflate Tunisians’ strategies of migration into the same narrative of the social unrest taking place in Tunisia against the regime. For this reason, a spatial gaze on the Mediterranean turmoil needs to explore the interplay between migration movements and revolutionary uprisings, paying attention to the ways in which migrations brought and disseminated that upheaval also on the northern shore. As I will show in the third chapter, the angle of the economic crisis could be a strong vantage point from which to analyse both migration movements and the uprisings in some Arab countries as struggles and practices of freedom against the government over lives and conditions of labour precariousness.

This work looks at Tunisians’ migrations taking place after the outbreak of the revolution as “strategies of migration” for enacting the freedom (in this case, the freedom of movement) that Tunisians won through the revolution, unsettling in this way the pace of mobility established by migration policies and by economic bilateral agreements [Mitropoulos, 2007; Sossi, 2012a]. By “strategy” I don’t mean a planned set of actions but a practice that is undertaken by some people for getting another space to live or for doing what “authorized mobile people” ordinarily do, namely getting round. However, the fact of situating this research on migrations in the frame of the Arab revolutions allows it to be shown that it is not migration *per se* that is a “strategy of freedom”, since migration is also a phenomenon largely included and

enhanced in the global economy of labour. Therefore, any migration movement needs to be grasped in the light of the political, geographical and social context in which it takes place, exploring to what extent it exceeds or disrupts existing economies of mobility and techniques of bordering. Thus, as far as the Tunisian revolution is concerned, undocumented migrants who left after the fall of Ben Ali could migrate just because of the revolution and their practice of migration could be seen as a way to enact and carry on the revolutionary demands of freedom and democracy, thus shaking the conditional and selected access to mobility set by Euro-Mediterranean agreements. Moreover, the revolutionary political framework in which these practices of migration is situated, requires that we shift from the border as an exceptional site and as a limit, investigating migrations in the light of broader social and economic issues, as I explain in the third chapter referring to projects of development.

The proliferation of Mobility Partnerships, economic agreements and Neighbourhood policies between the European Union and the countries of the Maghreb region in the aftermath of the Arab revolutions, signals the restructuring of migration governmentality in the face of those spatial upheavals. By migration governmentality I refer here to the multi-layered and heterogeneous set of technologies, discourses and policies, concerning the production of borders and their differential functioning, and at the same time the regulation of people's movements. Taking on a Foucaultian perspective, this assemblage of political technologies is however seen as a contested field, whose global dimension, as well as its stability, is constantly challenged by conflicting actors and interests and by migrants' turbulences.

A gaze on the transformations underway in the field of the politics of mobility and on the deep destabilization of governmental cartography of migrations makes it possible to *take in reverse* the migration regime, crumbling its supposed solidity. To take it in reverse means also investigating what - beyond the way in which migration governmentality narrates itself -it effectively produces: in this regard, one of the main arguments of this research is that the migration regime produces precarization and interruptions. In fact, it fragments people's journeys through administrative

measures or identification techniques, imposing indefinite stop-overs or putting them in a “bounce-game” – made up of bureaucratic hindrances, national boundaries, labor contracts and juridical decrees. And at the same time, it “precarizes” migrants’ lives, or better, it introduces differentiated forms and degrees of economic and existential precarization, according to a variable range of mobility profiles ranging from “economic migrants” to “mobile person/non-migrants”.

Focusing on migrants’ spatial upheavals, this dissertation tries to challenge governmental-based approaches, punctuating the way in which (some) migrant movements do not follow the governmental map and enact their own geographies, forcing power to invent new mechanisms of capture and to arrange new narratives. In this regard, the conceptual argument that sustains this research is that a spatial perspective on undocumented migrations enables us to concentrate on the effects of unauthorized mobility and border enforcements: what turbulences (some) practices of migration engender, what interruptions they produce in the mechanisms of governmentality, and how power invents new technologies and rationales of bordering. In other words, a spatial gaze on what I call the “migration strugglefield” [see chapter 1] in its contested and always changing frame, provides us with a fruitful insight on the huge ‘productivity’ of borders –tracing exclusive spaces of free mobility, or zones of detention – in the face of “disordered” practices of mobility and on their contested functioning.

Starting from this background, I mobilize two main analytical tools: governmentality and counter-mapping. As I illustrate in the first chapter, taking on governmentality as a grid does not mean assuming a governmental perspective. In the last decade the use of Foucault’s analyses of governmentality have blossomed in Migration Studies, in order to stress the multiplication of actors at play in the government of migrations [Bigo, 2002; Inda, 2005; Kurz, 2012; Lippert, 1999; Van Munster, 2009]. However, the critical and genealogical implications of Foucault’s reflections on governmentality tend to get lost in these analyses and what emerged are rather the proliferation of border controls and the existence of a global migration regime. In fact, Foucault’s analysis of governmentality cannot be detached by the task of making unacceptable the mechanisms of power he describes. Drawing on Foucault,

this work treats the grid of governmentality from a quite different angle, unfolding the constitutive dimension of struggles –and in this specific case of struggle over mobility – in the production of a field of governmentality. This latter is not the sum of governmental programs but the temporary outcome of a strugglefield formed on the one hand by mechanisms of capture, monitoring and containment, and on the other hand by strategies of migration that in part are managed and needed, but in part exceed or escape the conditions of authorized mobility. In the case of Tunisian migrations taking place in the aftermath of the revolution, they troubled and made a mess of the pace of migration governmentality, challenging, through their own movements, the “conditional spaces” of free mobility [see chapter 1] in the Mediterranean region and in the Schengen area. Further, taking a Foucaultian approach to governmentality means putting the shaping and the transformations of subjectivities within the frame of migration governance at the core of the analysis. Instead of taking for granted the subjects involved and subjected to the migration regime, such an approach questions both mechanisms of power and the production of subjectivity, bringing to the fore a subject that is not the subject of right [Foucault, 1996a].

The counter-mapping perspective that I undertake is part of the spatial vantage point that, as mentioned above, is a keystone of this work. And countermapping refers simultaneously to two orientations. On the one hand, it centres on some cartographic practices that have challenged governmental maps on migrations, bringing to the fore the struggle over (in)visibility upon which migration governmentality is predicated. On the other, it addresses a non-cartographic engagement which consists fundamentally of dislocating the analytical posture usually adopted for looking at migrations: firstly, it means gesturing towards the subjects and the spaces where mechanisms of governmentality impact, to see what are the effects and how they are resisted by migrants; and secondly, it implies seeing how migrants sometimes trace “another map”, performing unexpected geographies, that cannot be encoded into the cartography of government. Indeed, in order to trace its own map, migration governmentality needs to spy, hijack and capture the migrant’s knowledge.

The present changing political context in which this analysis is situated – the Arab Uprisings and their Mediterranean disseminations – requires problematizing how to deal with events underway. In this regard, Foucault’s suggestion of a history of the present represents a particularly useful insight for undertaking a close scrutiny of the “twofold spatial upheaval”, which is the subject of this work, to grasp the singularities and the “discordant” practices of freedom [see chapter II] that would not and could not fit into traditional political narratives [Foucault, 1984b]. To put it bluntly, unlike mainstream scholarship on the Arab Spring [Basbous, 2012; Benhabib, 2011; Peters, 2012], this work resists framing the Tunisian uprisings according to the script of the transition to democracy and the paradigm of the “Enlightenment of the Arab people”. Rather, this makes question what new kinds of practices of democracy are at stake, and to what extent they resonated far beyond those spaces, unsettling in part the tenability of the European model of democracy. Similarly, Tunisian migrations are not addressed as a massive flow of people in search of European wealth which accelerate the crisis of the new-born democracies through their disordered mobility. Instead, migrations are taken into account here as practices of movement that in some way push forward and enact concretely the freedom conquered in Tunisia.

Grappling with a history *in* and *of* the present means disengaging from the conceptual governmental grid on migrations, as well as from the teleological political narrative of democracy and secularism [Buck-Morss, 2009]. There is no exemplar model to apply or from which to learn: this could be the general formula for summing up the attitude that a history of our present requires. Instead of looking at political practices and events and searching for what we want to find there – something that confirms and is in continuity with the existing political frames – it should explore how current movements disrupt or drift away from established epistemic and political scripts<sup>1</sup>. Or it should be investigated how certain political

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<sup>1</sup>It is important to underline that Foucault didn’t go to Iran in order to search for an alternative political paradigm. In fact, his reports on the Iranian uprisings were not made for opposing an “exotic” model to the western political movements: instead, Foucault was interested in revolutionary events that could not so immediately “translated” into the grid of the western political thought. Thus, the Iranian context is not analysed by Foucault as an example to take; rather it needs to be understood in the wake of what Matthieu Potte-Bonneville has defined “an oblique relationship to politics” [Potte-Bonneville, 2004] that characterizes Foucault’s perspective, meaning by that an analyses and an

paradigms are deeply resignified by the events of the Arab Uprisings. In this regard, Foucault's writings on the Iranian uprisings constitute an important reference for thinking of a "diagnostic of the present" [Foucault, 1968a]: for instance, Foucault caught substantial differences between the Western revolutionary model, that "tamed" the events into a rational and progressive history, and the Iranian uprisings in which the revolution is not limited to the fall of the dictatorship, but includes another way of conceiving the political, deeply restructuring the relationship with modernity, religion and transformation<sup>2</sup>. In the case of the Arab Spring and migrants' practices in the aftermath of the fall of the regimes, this analytical posture in the face of the events makes us interrogate what kind of democracy is envisaged by those upheavals.

From this point of view, Foucault's history of the present enables us to disconnect the analytical gaze from the validation of established teleological narratives which fix in advance the future outcomes of those events [Foucault, 1978c, 1979a, 1979b]. Indeed, Foucault's use of history has a strategic and political function which consists in highlighting the disconnections and the discontinuities between what is happening and what we would like or we expect to take place: the concept of history which underpins a diagnostic of the present is not grounded on any permanent feature, rather it aims at locating and producing discontinuity within historical progressive and secular narratives [Foucault, 1984a]. And consequently, making a history *of* and *in* the present involves showing the opening of new political practices and narratives. To phrase it from a slightly different angle, migrants' spatial upheavals make us question the adequacy of the framework and the grammar through which we look at the instabilities that migrations produce [Asad, 2009]. Thus, the simultaneous challenging of Western political narratives for reading the Arab uprisings and of Migration Studies' Eurocentric epistemology, brings us to question what I call the "methodological Europeanism" that posits Europe as the blueprint for framing

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attitude that "forces" the reader to (re)invent his own use of that political referent. In fact, as Foucault himself remarks in an interview of 1981, Friendship as a way of life "There ought to be an inventiveness special to a situation like ours [...] the program must be open" [Foucault, 1996b, p. 312].

<sup>2</sup>In this regard, what Foucault highlights in the events of the Iranian revolution is the refusal of the Iranian people to play the game of politics, as it was traditionally structured, and to accept that regime of truth: "*Le peuple Iranien fait le hérisson. Sa volonté politique est de ne donner pas prise à la politique* » [Foucault, 1979b, p. 702].

migrations and as the yardstick for understanding the orientation of political struggles [Garelli, Tazzioli, 2013]. However, the attention to languages and practices that cannot and should not be encoded into ordinary political frames, does not require, and does not lead me in this work, to emphasize their irreducible distance and differences. Rather, by bringing out the “discordant” practices of freedom enacted by migrants in relation to existing orders of political claims, the challenge is whether those movements instantiate new languages and put into action new modalities for thinking of and enacting political practices that in part could respond to the crisis of traditional concepts and models of politics.

To come to grips with the discontinuities that strategies of migration and political turmoil enact in relation to the political narratives we are accustomed to, means also focusing painstakingly on the ongoing changes in the strugglefields we examine. This is particularly true in the field of migration, where the transformations and the multiplication of policies, law and technologies of bordering change rapidly— in order to keep up with practices of migration that try to dodge controls. Thus, in order to tackle the changing nature of borders and migration policies, in this work I use the technical device of chronologically situating the episodes that I take into account as well as the political strategies that I investigate. But this choice depends also on another factor, concerning migrations themselves. Undocumented practices of migration —or at least, those that are object of this analysis — tend to be quite elusive, since the possibility of staying on the public and visible scene is far reduced in comparison to other (political) practices. As I show in the first and in the fifth chapter, the temporality of politics also turns out to be deeply different from other struggles. Hence, it follows that the theoretical and political challenge consists in understanding what “traces” remain in the face of the elusiveness of some migrants’ practices. What lasts and what, in the end, cannot be fully recaptured by governmental strategies: this is the question to raise two and a half years after the “twofold spatial upheaval”, interrogating whether or not the “other maps” enacted by Tunisian migrants have been retraced by governmental maps. In other words, as I explore in the second and in the fifth chapter, what is at stake in the problematization of the temporality of migrant struggles is the possibility, despite their elusive

character, of not reiterating the existing thresholds of perceptibility and recursive political frames.

*Political epistemology and militant research: challenging migration knowledge-based governance*

If we concentrate on the strugglefield between migrants' practices and knowledges on the one hand, and the unceasing production of governmental knowledge and maps on the other, what is also needed is a radical questioning of the politics of knowledge about migrations. Indeed, this work inquires into the deadlocks and the difficulties of doing critical research on migrations that neither reiterates nor fosters the regime of truth and knowledge that shapes migration governmentality. This question underlies all the chapters, problematizing from time to time what "analytical posture" should be undertaken in order not to corroborate the same order of discursivity upon which the government of migrations is predicated. This broad issue concerns the political epistemology of migration knowledge [Davidson, 2013; Mezzadra, Ricciardi, 2013]. By political epistemology I mean an analytical perspective which on the one hand brings out the conceptual and the discursive field through which the "worldmaking" of migration governance is performed, and on the other makes clear that discourses and categories are the crystallized outcome of power-knowledge relations. As I explain in the first and in the third chapter, the productivity of the regime of truth of migration governmentality consists in a disciplining functioning, which partitions migrations into an array of "mobility profiles" which then correspond to different rights to move and stay in space –economic migrants/asylum seekers/rejected refugees/high skilled migrants. However, a political epistemology on migration knowledge should not stop at this task: it should aim at destabilizing the internal coherence of the existing regime of discourse, and not being complicit with its reproducibility [Butler, 2006b]. Instead of positing the all-catching power of categories in fixing and partitioning people into profiles, political epistemology brings to the fore the instabilities and crises that crack their functioning, generated by practices of movement that exceed clear-cut boundaries. But what does this actually mean and to what extent one could destabilize the epistemology of migration governmentality? As I argue in the first chapter, to ask this is to address the

possibility and the effectiveness of critique, questioning if a critical knowledge production could generate interruptions in some mechanisms of the discursive regime of migration governance. Critical accounts and radical theories of migration seem to be easily “accommodated” within the “disciplinization” of migration, which has been institutionalized through the growing centrality played by Migration Studies. Instead, if we follow what I call “the dislocation of the uses”, maybe a quite different perspective emerges. As the perspective of countermapping suggests [chapter 5], to shift from the paradigm of critique to a focus on the ways in which some knowledges could be “used”, acquired, or put at work in unexpected contexts and diverting their original function. This is not to argue a neutrality of categories and discourses through which migrations are narrated, but rather to point at the leeway that always exists for disrupting from the inside a given regime of truth<sup>3</sup>.

The invention of another language or narrative on migrations should not be limited to an oppositional gesture which produces new categories without challenging the “field of stabilization” and the “style of reasoning” that underlie the rationale of migration governmentality [Davidson, 2004; Hacking, 2004a]. It is the chain of equivalence through which some categories and discourses are linked one to the other that determines the consistency of the “migration regime” and the naturalized assumption that migration is a phenomenon to be governed. Moreover, it’s not even a mere question of vocabulary: in fact, if the overproduction of categories that fix people to a certain profile is certainly the most visible element, this nominalist inventiveness is associated with a specific regime of truth that frames the meaning and the boundaries about which subjects should be labelled and governed as migrants [see chapter 1]. And the discursive domain itself cannot be taken as a self-standing reality, but rather it should be always analysed in relation with non-discursive practices that influence its limits and conditions of emergence and of “truth” [Foucault, 1968b; 1980b]. Thus, in the field of migration the point is not to assume the narrative of migration governmentality as an autonomous reality, measuring its gaps with the realm of political practices: instead, the issue is to locate

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<sup>3</sup>This argument is predicated upon the idea that neither a critical attitude nor radical theories really “disturb” the governmental maps of migration, since critique could be easily integrated and valorised in the present governmental or academic knowledge setting.

the mutual reinforcements and to understand how to disjoin a politics of transformation from the regime of discourse and truth that is currently at play.

Against this background, this work engages with the issue of political epistemology following two directions. In the third chapter I bring into focus how at some points – in this case during the Libyan “migration crisis” – the mechanism of partitioning and categorizing misfires, since the complexity of practices of migrations exceed the sharp boundaries of categories and profiles “crafted” to regulate them. In the fourth and in the fifth chapter I frame the question from the standpoint of counter-mapping, assuming it as an example of a critical knowledge production within and against a given regime of knowledge – in this case, cartographic rationality – pointing at possible leeway for counter-acting some technical devices. However, the main limit of such an approach relies on the cartographic anxiety of making all visible [Gregory, 1994; Painter, 2008]: thus, what I suggest is that a counter-mapping gaze should resist filling in all the voids –see, the “silences” and the “shadow zones” – of a map, tuning in to migrants’ regime of (in)visibility. In a nutshell, a political epistemology in the field of migrations interrogates the possibilities of disengaging from the regime of truth of migration governmentality.

The other related point consists in problematizing the way in which critical analyses on migrations enshrine or are captured in a regime of knowledge that updates and improves governmental “maps”. In this regard it could be argued that in the field of migration an apolitical approach is precluded by nature; first of all because migration governmentality necessitates of an in-depth knowledge of migrants’ strategies and stories; secondly, because migrant struggles exceed the grammar of traditional political claims. Taking migrations makes us see the points of fracture and the reassemblages of power mechanisms.

Particularly, what is important to highlight are the main difficulties and issues at stake in envisaging a critical approach on migrations that, besides not fostering governmental knowledge, produces concrete effects at the level of the politics of knowledge. The specificity of a militant research approach consists in struggling over the knowledge production on migrations in the light of migrant struggles and political experience “on the ground” [Malo, 2007; Colectivo Situaciones, 2007;

Counter Cartographies Collective, 2012]. In other words, militant research doesn't aim at all to "make the law" on struggles. Instead, it involves making those movements and struggles resonate within the domain of knowledge production in order to unsettle and denaturalize existing political-epistemological pillars (for instance, migration as a phenomenon which has to be managed) and producing new cartographies to talk and engage with migrations. Nevertheless, a tricky issue that, I contend, characterizes a militant research approach on migrations concerns the theme of the distance that is at play, as I indirectly illustrate in the third and in the fourth chapter, between the dynamics and the political stakes of migrant struggles on the one hand, and the field of research on the other. Actually, what is at issue here is not the gap between theory and practice but, rather, the non-reciprocal position between undocumented migrants who are out of the "social contract" of citizenship, and others, including critical researchers, which complicates the concrete possibilities to tune in to the rhythms, the goals and the languages of migrants' claims. Without providing a solution to such a question, this work suggests that it is necessary to keep this impasse in the foreground, in order not to fully and immediately encode practices of migration into our own political vocabulary. And secondly, it gestures towards the crafting of a knowledge practice stripped of the "comfort of critical distance with regards to the object" [Colectivo Situaciones, 2003]. To put it differently, from this standpoint the question becomes not so much to get rid of these distances and gaps, but rather to put them to work to make visible how (some) migrations play in a discordant way in relation to dominant maps and languages. For this reason, in the fifth chapter I talk about "unspeakable maps" as migrants' enacted geographies that in part should and could remain "opaque" to the grasp of the cartographic gaze. Translating this into political terms, it means not flattening migrants' practices of freedom into pre-established and ordinary political codes, and instead letting appear how they destabilize and trouble those frames.

#### THESIS OUTLINE:

In the first chapter, I mobilize the Foucaultian concepts of governmentality and the politics of truth in order to grasp the functioning of the so-called European

“migration regime”, looking at how it has been unsettled and rearranged in the wake of the Arab Uprisings. The main argument of this chapter is that the very notion of migration governmentality cannot be taken for granted, and that the temporary crisis generated by migrants’ spatial upheaval during the Arab Spring, shows that the (migration) “regime” is ultimately a set of responses to practices of mobility. In order to develop this point, the chapter engages with a critical analysis of the Foucaultian notion of “governmentality”. Starting from this general background, the chapter interrogates the effectiveness of a critique of governmentality, whilst also examines how migrants’ practices ‘interrupt’ some mechanisms of the migration regime. In this regard, a critical account is made of the way in which migration and citizenship studies conceive of migrants’ political subjectivity. The chapter proceeds to explore the “politics of (un)truth” which is at stake in the government of refugees, focusing on the Tunisian refugee camp of Choucha. The thesis I advance is that an analysis of the (discursive and non-discursive) technologies governing migrations allows us to see the transformations at stake in the government of mobility at large.

The second chapter is formed of three analytical snapshots that map the “bank effects” of the Arab revolutions on the Northern shore of the Mediterranean, arguing that more than tracing similarities between those uprisings and European movements, we should highlight the way in which the former unsettled and impacted on the European space. It centres on what I call “discordant practices of freedom”, namely Tunisian migrant struggles and strategies of migration which enacted freedom in ways that are neither compatible with nor readable by the paradigm of representation. The first snapshot takes into account the so called “North Africa emergency” declared by the Italian government, focusing on the spatial transformation that it generated. The second snapshot refers to the multiplication of migrant struggles and escapes in Italian detention centres after the outbreak of the Tunisian revolution. The third snapshot turns attention to occupations of symbolic buildings and structures – a church and a crane occupied by migrants in Italy just before and after the Tunisian revolution. In the last section, the chapter reflects on the necessity of complicating and problematizing the spread discourse on freedom of movement that has also been largely adopted by migration agencies and the European Union.

The third chapter deals with the spatial economy and the new economic spaces produced or transformed in Tunisia and in the Maghreb region in the aftermath of the revolutionary uprisings. Democracy, crisis and transnational areas are the three central issues around which this chapter is structured. In the first section, the migration-development nexus is analysed in the light of the discourse on democracy and the script of “democratic transition” through which Europe looks at revolutionized Tunisia: the main thesis of the chapter is that democracy, promoted through economic projects of development, is functioning as a “strategy of containment” of would-be migrants. In the second section of the chapter, I explore the centrality of the notion of “migration in crisis” in the redefinition of the relationships between practices of mobility and economic crisis in the Libyan and in the Tunisian context. The final section addresses the ongoing project, proposed by Tunisia, of a Maghreb space of free mobility, a transnational area which would challenge Europe's leading economic and political role in North Africa.

The fourth chapter focuses on the politics of migration controls and the regime of (in)visibility in the Mediterranean. Starting from the general spontaneous strike that took place in September 2012 in the Tunisian village of El-Fahs after the shipwreck of a migrant boat close to the island of Lampedusa, the chapter focuses on the current political and academic debate on migrants’ rescue and deaths at sea. It brings attention to the politics of (in)visibility that underpins migration governmentality. In particular, by mobilizing a counter-mapping approach, I make a distinction between the production of “another map” and the practice of “mapping otherwise”, addressing both political campaigns against the deaths at sea and Tunisian migrants’ struggles: if the mapping otherwise relates to the counter-uses of cartographic or governmental devices – thus, acting from within the regime of discourse and knowledge that we want to challenge – “other maps” consists of counter-maps performed by migrants themselves through their “noisy” practices that do not respond to the same regime of (in)visibility as the former. The chapter proceeds to examine the issue of violence of/at the borders. The main theoretical argument is that migration policies, by referring to “life”, generate and implicate different meanings and forms of life. Indeed, the “right to life” that is claimed by humanitarian and governmental actors in the face of the deaths at sea, overshadows the different

degrees and conditions of life that subjects are “entitled” to live, since the selective politics of mobility - through the politics of Visa – fixes the boundaries and the thresholds of what is to be considered a “liveable life” for migrants and non-migrants. Finally, the chapter tackles the question of the violence at/of the (maritime) borders concluding through the struggle of the families of the disappeared Tunisian migrants and their discordant voices “off the map”.

The fifth chapter engages in a counter-mapping approach to some migration governmentality mechanisms (deportations, departures, border crossing, border controls, temporality of politics) looking at how they are acted and impact on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, taking as a case-study the Tunisian revolutionized context. The first part consists of a theoretical analysis of the most advanced governmental maps on migration flows (like the I-Map which has produced a reorientation in migration policies through a regulation of migrants’ routes, more than a government of borders); and at the same time it looks closely at the existing counter-mapping practices on migration, highlighting also the limits of a political practice based on “countering” the existing narrative on migration. The second part of the chapter consists of a non-cartographic practice of counter-mapping, which tries to unpack the five abovementioned mechanisms of migration governmentality, shifting the gaze to the southern shore of the Mediterranean and arguing that some events and issues related to those mechanisms cannot be grasped if situated in the European space.

- The conclusion is situated two and a half years after the outbreak of the Arab revolutions, and it tries to take stock of what has changed in the migration strugglefield with the twofold spatial upheaval, and what “traces” it has left. However, as I clarify in the conclusion, the end of this work does not correspond to the end of the political turmoils related to the Arab Uprisings; on the contrary, at the time of writing these continue to trouble the Mediterranean space. Starting from that consideration and from the “not-ended” character of the twofold spatial upheaval in the Mediterranean, I take into account the main theoretical issues that come out from the chapters. In particular, I focus on topics and problems that were not explicitly thematized in the beginning, but that have emerged throughout the chapters and that

constitute the main problematic stakes that arise from the analysis. The thematic of the regime of (in)visibility that underlies the counter-mapping approach developed in the fourth and in the fifth chapter, is here tackled from a slightly different angle, namely perceptibility. Then, the perspective of counter-mapping is reframed from the standpoint of Tunisian migrants' enacted geographies in the European space, interrogating what, two and a half years after the revolution, has not been recuperated by governmental maps. The third main point raised in the conclusion, concerns the reflections, developed especially in the first chapter, around the question of the exclusionary subjectivity and the exclusive political space that most critical analyses on citizenship and migration postulate. The theme of the "crisis" and of its articulation with the government of mobility concludes this work, drawing on the reflections made in the third chapter. In this last section I address briefly how the economic crisis is producing a reorientation of migration patterns in the Mediterranean region, with some European workers going to North African countries in order to find a job. This focus enables a pushing forward of the non-cartographic countermapping gesture staged in the fifth chapter and that consists in "decolonizing" Migration Studies, challenging the idea of Europe as the centripetal point of migration flows.

## CHAPTER 1

### **Interruptions of/at the borders. Working (with) Foucault between migrants' upheavals and politics of non-truth.**

*« Ce que je cherche. c'est le mouvement de remontée  
historique*

*avec projection sur un espace de possibilités politiques.*

*C'est le mouvement que je fais » (M. Foucault, 2012a)*

#### **Preamble:**

20th September 2011: The detention center of Lampedusa – the southern outpost of Europe – is burnt by Tunisian migrants refusing to be deported to Tunisia and pushing to move away, most of them towards France, others to northern Europe. Lampedusa's residents respond by sparking off a guerrilla campaign against migrants, and the Italian government moves Tunisian migrants into floating-prisons, while the island is declared a “non-safe harbour”. These striking events were part of what, on the European side, was designated as the “Arab Spring” or the “North Africa emergency”. Instead, as I explained in the Introduction, in this work I will talk about a “twofold spatial upheaval” referring to the political and spatial turmoil taking place across the Mediterranean in 2011 and 2012. I refer to the upheavals triggered by Arab Uprisings and to practices of migration, which represented the most tangible “bank-effect” of revolutionary uprisings on the northern shore of the Mediterranean: Tunisian and “Libyan” migrants troubled the pace of selected mobility, forcing governmental actors to invent new geographies of power and rearranging the geometries of the European space of free mobility. After the outbreak of the Tunisian revolution, thousands of Tunisian citizens left Tunisia by boat towards Europe and almost 27,000 of them reached the Italian coasts. Meanwhile, due to the Libyan conflict, nearly 1 million people crossed the border between Libya and Tunisia: many of them have since been stranded as asylum seekers in Choucha refugee camp at the Ras-Jadir post along the Tunisian frontier with Libya, while around 25,000 arrived in Italy claiming asylum<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.storiemigranti.org/spip.php?article1049>

This preamble could have started with another date, the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2011, when the Italian government signed a bilateral agreement with Tunisia to manage arrivals of Tunisian migrants, partitioning between those arrived by that date, who could obtain a temporary humanitarian permit and the others, who became “clandestine”. Or also three other dates could have started the chapter: the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, when Italy declared the state of emergency on the national territory and the 7<sup>th</sup> of April when, bizarrely, the decree was extended to the “territory of North Africa”, or finally the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August when, as a response to the spread of struggles, escapes and riots in migrant detention centers, the maximum length of detention was increased to eighteen months. But despite all these possible landmark dates to get the narration of this twofold spatial upheaval underway, I do not focus on the events created by governmental statements, juridical decrees or exceptional measures. Rather, I trace a map of those spatial upheavals starting from and following the migration turbulences produced in the Mediterranean space at the times of the Arab Uprisings. In other words, the map that I will try to trace in the next chapters aims at providing an alternative cartography of the Mediterranean instabilities to the map produced by governmental agencies. A map of snapshots that in some way retraces, fosters and runs after the spatial and political transformations triggered by those movements.

However, in order to trace “another map” of the Mediterranean focusing on the spatial upheavals produced by the Arab uprisings and by migrants’ practices, we should also look at how power counter-acted those turbulences. Migrants’ practices do not take place in a vacuum, hence bordering and containment responses cannot be overlooked. 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2011: all migrants detained in the center of Lampedusa are moved onto boat-prisons located in the sea off Palermo. A few days later, all of them are deported to Tunisia.

#### **Chapter structure:**

This chapter is formed by two main sections corresponding to the ways in which I *work with* Foucault and I *make Foucault play* in this analysis: a critical account of migration governmentality and an investigation of the politics of truth at stake in the government of migrations are the two main tenets against which I mobilize the Foucaultian tools. After specifying the way in which I conceive the use of a

Foucaultian approach in this work, in the first section I deal with the notion of migration regime, challenging its supposed stability and all-encompassing grasp: instead of dealing with migrations taking for granted the borders of the political and starting from the existence of a border regime<sup>5</sup>, I will reverse the gaze looking at migration governmentality as a complex and temporary assemblage of strategies for taming and channeling the migration turbulence [Papastergiadis, 2000]. Then, drawing on a Foucaultian perspective, I will move on by questioning the subject that most of the analyses on migrations and theories on radical democracy presuppose: in fact, a critical engagement with the issues of borders and migration should unsettle at the same time a governmental based approach and the normative assumption of a “lacking” subjectivity that implicates the perspective of the State – the migrant seen as a subject in search for political recognition. Grounding on the idea that migration governmentality rests on a regime of truth, in the second section of the chapter I do an in-depth analysis of the discourse of truth that is at stake in the government of would-be refugees. I will conclude by arguing that the specificities of the production of truth at stake in migration governmentality need to be taken into account also for complicating the genealogy of the citizen-subject.

Migrations and borders are topics that Foucault never tackled; although, especially concerning borders, many scholars draw attention to passages in *Security, Territory, Population* where Foucault stresses how the management of the circulation of goods and people plays a central role in the functioning of liberal societies [Elden, 2007; Fassin, 2011; Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013a; Walters, 2011a]. The lectures at the College de France on *The Birth of Biopolitics* where the figure of the migrant is framed in terms of human capital is assumed both in Foucaultian scholarship and in migration studies as an important reference [Cotoi, 2011; Nail, 2013; Read, 2009].

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<sup>5</sup> A similar move is undertaken by those scholars who mobilize a “regime analysis” of migrations, looking at the government of migration as a space of negotiating and conflicting practices [see among others, Hess, Karakayali, Tsianos, 2009 and Karakayali, Tsianos, 2010]. This works is in part situated in that perspective, assuming migration controls as the effect of conflicts and practices for taming practices of mobility; but at the same time it engages more closely with the Foucaultian notion of governmentality, through which subjectivities are not assumed as what power tries to capture or govern (postulating their substantial autonomy and their being-already-there) but rather as the outcome of that specific and strategic games between freedoms and power relations. Thus, more than taking migrants’ subjectivities as a starting point, this analysis explores “the ambiguous position of subjectivity”, meaning by that the complex articulation between how it is produced within the strugglefield of power relations, and how it is productive [Read, 2003].

However, the way in which I mobilize some Foucaultian methods and categories neither interrogates what Foucault said on the topic of borders and mobility, nor does it take the Foucaultian toolbox as a univocal analytical grid overcoding present events [Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Hindess, 1997]. Indeed, this work essentially grounds on the perspective of a history of the present(s); and this is the reason why one of the preliminary questions is to problematize what it means to *work with Foucault in the present*. However, the stake is not to justify using Foucault to come to grips with contemporary political issues and events, or to demonstrate that his tool-box is more usable than others. Rather, what is in need of clarification is the very notion of the “use” of Foucault that has gained ground in the last decade [Artieres, Potte-Bonneville, 2007; Barry, Osborne, Rose, 1996; Burchell, Gordon, Miller, 1991; Elden, Crampton, 2007; Potte-Bonneville, 2004]. Thus, before delving into the specific topic of this research, I linger both on the idea and on the practical engagement of “using the Foucaultian tool-box”.

*There is no grid for the present(s): “make the map, not the tracing”. Intermezzo on the “use”*

In the last two decades, a growing literature has mobilized Foucault’s work, making it travel in other spaces and contexts or deploying it to analyse social phenomena not discussed by Foucault himself [Bygrave, Morton, 2008; Dillon, Neal, 2008; Inda, 2005; Jones, Porter, ; 1994; Rose, 1999; Stoler, 1996; Young, 2001]. However, confronted with that, today what needs to be interrogated concerning the “use” of Foucault is the pertinence of a Foucaultian grid to travel across domains and spaces. Actually, the approach of a history of the present should refuse to instantiate a main signifier of intelligibility, turning instead to the tracing of a cartography in-the-making; a map produced from within the present and attentive to the discontinuities produced in the strugglefield of power relations. In addition to that, it should be considered that no single “grid” touches the complexity of economic processes, regimes of truth and mechanisms of subjectivation through which the current geographies of power work. To the contrary, as Foucault himself contends, the critical force of an analysis relies precisely on the refusal to superimpose another unifying grid or principle of intelligibility: actually, there is not a truth or a set of

principles to oppose to the present regime of veridiction, since it's not in the name of another constrain of truth that a real political transformation could be envisaged.

If the choice of the Foucaultian tools to put to work cannot be made other than case by case, a general orientation could however be suggested: especially in the analysis of migrations, what makes the difference between one critical reflection and another is the kind of gaze that is exercised, or better its orientation. For instance, some scholars tend to give prominence to the ordinary working of border mechanisms and their displacement before and after geopolitical boundaries – through the implementation of the visa system or techniques of control-at-a-distance - while others stress the violence of/at the borders and the production of a border spectacle. Both these perspectives bring out relevant aspects of the functioning of the migration regime: what makes the difference between these two approaches is, I suggest, the orientation of the analytical gaze that in one case focuses on the differential working of the boundaries, while in the other centres on the general mechanisms of control. In fact, any analytical gaze builds upon a certain regime of (in)visibility, partitioning between zones of invisibility and visibility that determine which subjects are in the focus of the analysis, who is left *off the map* and what mechanisms of power are visibilized. In the domain of migrations, the thresholds of visibility determine what practices are considered “political” and what are instead unheard or “noisy”; what techniques of b-ordering remain in the shadow and what subjects become visible on and off, according to the logic of labour migration.

I suggest that *working with Foucault* should avoid falling into what William Walters called the risk of “applicationism” [Walters, 2012]. Without translating Foucault's thought into a multifunctional task, such an analytical posture consists in detecting and troubling the thresholds of perceptibility and acceptability of power<sup>6</sup>, assuming as a vantage point the limits of power and its margin [Foucault, 1980a] to see how

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<sup>6</sup> This is an issue that recurs many times in Foucault's work for describing both uprisings and struggles – like for instance in the case of the writings on the Iranian revolution – and his own work. In an interview of 1978, Foucault defines his work as an attempt to “displace the forms of sensibility and the thresholds of tolerance” clarifying that “people should not find in my books some suggestions that allow them to know what to do. Rather, my aim is precisely to make it that they don't know any more what they are doing: that acts, gestures and discourses that until then seemed to go without saying, have become problematic, dangerous and difficult”. From this standpoint, also the meaning of critique comes to be radically redefined: “critique is a challenge in relation to what's there” [Foucault, 1978e p.851].

the “inside” is produced and sustained by processes of exclusion and by resistances [Foucault, 1995, 2006, 2008]. Getting closer to the issue of migration, I contend that working with Foucault on/at the borders firstly materializes into analyses that pay attention less to borders as such than to the practices of *bordering* [Balibar, 2004, Rumford, 2006, Walters, 2006] namely to the set of techniques that determine the “disposition of men and things in space” [Foucault, 2009] and, I would add, their conditions of mobility: in this way, borders are not epistemic and geographic codes through which the struggles between migration practices and governmental “captures” are read but, on the contrary, they are seen as the tangible outcome of governmental technologies<sup>7</sup>. Secondly, it consists in taking a step back from the narrative of governmentality and its supposed solidity, analysing it in relation with other discursive and non-discursive practices. Instead of assuming a functionalist approach, which assesses the success of governmental programs on the basis of the conformity between texts and reality, Foucault focuses on political technologies, suggesting a shift to the strategic reinvestments and to the unexpected effects of power’s mechanisms. This entails that “gaps” and “failures” in the mechanisms of governmentality are not due to occasional resistances or as side externalities; in fact, if the yardstick for assessing analytics of government is its effectiveness, this would coincide with falling into the trap of trusting in a progressive rationalization of technologies [Lemke, 2013; Murray Li, 2007; Patton, 1996, Walters, 2012]. On the contrary, *working with* Foucault requires us to take resistances, escapes and practices of migrations as constitutive part of the strugglefield of governmentality: the clashes and the frictions between governmental programs and their realization on the ground signal that governmental strategies are situated and respond to strategies of migration [Bojadzijeve, Karakayali, 2010; Mitropoulos, 2007].

### *Did Foucault decolonize politics?*

This analysis does not concern migrations *per se* but migrants’ spatial upheavals in connections with the Arab Uprisings. This makes arise the so widely debated postcolonial question about Foucault’s work: why and how to mobilize Foucault, considering that he was largely criticized for not taking into account the colonial

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<sup>7</sup> As Didier Fassin points out, “the government of immigration is thus an exemplary case study for an anthropology in the margins of the state” [Fassin, 2011, p. 217].

question and, more broadly, for not “complicating” its genealogies with non-Western modernities? It is indisputable that Foucault did not take into account non-European spaces and did not complicate the genealogy on the modern Western subject with other genealogies. However, his philosophical approach is particularly trenchant in order not to reiterate existing political cartographies to encode practices of freedom that resist being translated into the boundaries of democracy and citizenship as conceived by Western political thought.

Foucault has never directly coped with issues like colonialism, migration, democracy and the crisis of the nation state, but in some way it is precisely because he did not conceive a theory of democracy or a theory of citizenship that his analysis makes appear what exceeds and cannot fit into existing political coordinates. It is not because one names and addresses the issues that relate to the blurry domain of “postcolonial” that the Eurocentric posture is automatically challenged. In fact, in most analyses the scripts of citizenship and democracy are assumed for reading underway social and political phenomena by simply “stretching” the borders and rearranging the codes of the space of citizenship and democracy, without really questioning their political desirability. To put it differently, Foucault allows us to disengage from the political conceptual field through which heterogeneous practices are usually related each other – freedom and democracy, immigration and integration, cosmopolitanism and differences, representation and politics – by reformulating politics in terms of power relations and resistances. Both the assumption of common political referents – like the state or democracy [Foucault, 2009, 2010] – and the designation of a pure “political space” are excluded from the beginning. Or better, Foucault rethinks less politics through power relations than power itself, detaching it as much as possible from a supposed “pure” space of the political, framing it in terms of productivity, force and government over life, namely as economy [Macherey, 2013]. After all, Foucault’s incisive critique of the idea of a rationality<sup>8</sup> that works as the yardstick of practices and governmental technologies

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<sup>8</sup> The critical reference to rationality is a recurring motif in Foucault, as here he succinctly argues “the government of men by men involves a certain type of rationality. It doesn’t involve instrumental violence [...] so the question is: how are such relations of power rationalized?” concluding that “political rationality has grown and imposed itself all throughout the history of Western societies [...] Its inevitable effects are both individualization and totalization. Liberation can come only from

[Foucault, 1994d, 1980b] helps us avoid reading the Arab revolutions in terms of the route to democracy or according to the script of “secularization”. In this regard, as I mentioned in the Introduction, Foucault’s writings on the Iranian uprising are particularly illuminating. Foucault refused to look at those events by framing them through the existing political paradigms – in that case, the revolution’s normative historical narrative [Foucault, 1978a, 1978c, 1979]: what Foucault highlights is the non-exemplarity of the uprisings and the importance to read political transformations through the singularities of the events. Coming back to our topic, while political and philosophical Western thought framed and tamed the upheavals through an historical progressive telos, the aim of a critical gaze on the Arab uprisings, consists in bringing out what escapes, exceeds or does not fit into the existing political narrative and in the “thread of history”. This analytical-historical posture is what fundamentally characterizes a history of the present [Foucault, 1984b; Revel, 2013a]: the reference to events or singularities that outburst, wresting subjects from themselves and from the present where we are, indicates that an analysis of the present entails a constant dislocation from the space and from the coordinates that define the (political) reality to which we belong.

*Struggles over lives:*

Coming back now to the subject of this work, I start from a reflection that concerns not migrations but the forms of resistance and the practices of struggles that were underway at the time that Foucault was writing and that he considered to be worthy of consideration: “In the present struggles it’s no longer a question of taking part in the games of power in order to get one’s own freedom and rights. It’s not even a question of confrontations within these games but rather to resist the game and to refuse the game in itself: the game of the state with its needs and with its citizens cannot be played any more” [Foucault, 1978b, pp. 543-544]. To put it differently, these struggles convey a disengagement and a subtraction from the “civic pact” [Azouray, 2008] and together, a refusal in the face of “knowledges over lives” which produce subjects through specific technologies of individualisation and, we should add, dispositives of spatialization. Besides, what was at stake in those struggles was

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attacking not just one of these two effects but political rationality’s very root” [Foucault, 1994f, pp. 324-325].

not only the objectifying gaze of knowledges and powers but also the refusal of the effects of power as such, bringing out the illegitimacy which is behind any power [Rancière, 2004]. As Foucault points out, “the aim of these struggles is power effect as such”, and the fact that its exercise is unbearable [Foucault, 1982, p.780]. Without tracing hasty similarities between these different specific struggles, what Foucault tends to see as a characteristic matrix of these practices and refusals is, I contend, a radical disqualification of power’s legitimacy and of its obligation of truth<sup>9</sup>, as knowledges that categorize partitioning people into “mobility profiles” and that trace the spaces and the edges of the political. And it’s just starting from the essential reluctance to fit into “the sovereign and representational dispositions” [Mitropoulos, 2007] that strategies of migration should be read against the backdrop of governmentality.

#### *Governmentality: unpacking the conceptual linchpin of Migration Studies*

In the last two decades migration has become more and more a self-standing disciplinary domain – fixed within a proper “drawer of knowledge” labelled “Migration Studies” [Mezzadra, Ricciardi, 2013] while in the political debate it emerges always in refraction to other “social questions” (security, welfare, social integration, terrorism etc.) working as an underlying “hidden” sub-text and as an enchaining signifier of all these other issues of government. Migration comes out as a political issue situated *à la marge* of the salient themes and then re-emerging instead when an “emergency” is declared.<sup>10</sup> Starting from these premises, I turn attention to Foucault’s definition of “dispositif”, that has been then reframed in critical migration analysis in terms of “regime” [Hess, 2012; Karakayali, Tsianos, 2010]: “A dispositif is a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements [...] a formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function” [Foucault, 1980b, pp. 195-

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<sup>9</sup> Coming back to the present political debate, we could add the disqualification of the representative democratic forms.

<sup>10</sup> Referring to our topic, see the “tsunami” invoked by the Italian Minister of the Interior in reaction to the arrival of the Tunisian migrants, or the humanitarian and migration crisis in Libya jointly managed by Iom and Unhcr.

196]. In this regard, Foucault suggests that “What is needed is a new economy of power relations [...] taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point and using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application [...] Rather than analyzing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analysing power relations through the antagonism of strategies” [Foucault, 1982, pp.779-780]. It is precisely by hinging on “destituent” practices opposed to the state-citizen game that one could challenge the supposed solidity of governmentality, highlighting the ongoing instabilities upon which it is constituted.

The governmental paradigm has gained a growing and absolute centrality both in mainstream and critical analysis on migration. It has become the “encoding frame” to think of migrations, and in turn, migration is crafted as an object of government. In this regard, I would say that as far as migration is concerned, a univocal “politics of translation” is always at stake [Mezzadra, 2007, 2011d]: migration policies and critical analysis operate an immediate and full translation of some strategies of mobility into migrations to be managed and “migration” is the assumed as the natural genitive attribution of governing. And multiplicity of languages is used to “speak of” migrations as an object of research and government. Within this frame, the Foucaultian notion of “governmentality”, covering a wide range of perspectives, from the policy-oriented works and problem-solving approaches to critical knowledge and new reflections on citizenship and sovereignty [Aradau, Van Munster, 2007; Bigo, 2002, Fassin, 2011a; Lippert, 1999; Ong, 2006, Rudnycky, 2004; Haar, Walters, 2005, Walters, 2011a, Xavier-Inda, 2005]. Governmentality is definitely the most used Foucaultian tool in the domain of migrations and borders. What all these different approaches to migration that make use of “governmentality” have in common is the particular attention paid to the multiplicity of actors forming a supposedly coherent “migration regime”, and to the multi-layered structure of government together with its flexibility and capacity to re-adapt its strategies. In fact, the grid of governmentality makes possible a shift away from a sovereign-centred reading of migration – in which the nation state as the main holder of the monopoly of migration controls is inscribed into a broader “methodological nationalism” [De Genova, 2005, 2010; Giddens, 1973, 1975; Martin, 1974] and “state ontology”

[Truong, Gasper 2011]. Moreover, what comes to the forefront through the diagnostic tool of governmentality is the diffraction of borders and the non-coincidence with geopolitical frontiers, produced mainly by the politics of externalization [Boswell, 2003] and through the invention of “embodied” borders or technological borders working at-a-distance [Amoore, 2006; Ball, 2005]. Finally, migration analyses working with the notion of governmentality have closely dissected and unpacked the discursive regime of migration agencies, focusing on the processes through which some subjects or phenomena become governable. To sum up, reading the migration regime through the lens of governmentality means to bring together two dimensions: the plurality of governmental actors and the heterogeneity of technologies of government, and at the same time the unceasingly redefinition of borders and the complexity of a migration “strugglefield” in-the-making, as a provisional outcome of practices of migration and techniques of capture (bordering). Thus, while the expression of “migration governance” [Betts, 2011, Cassarino, Lavenex, 2012; Kuntz, Lavenex, Panizzon, 2011] encompasses the intermeshing of different and sometimes conflicting practices into a horizontal and compact image of the migration regime, governmentality alerts us to the friability of this regime, presenting its supposed consistency as the provisional outcome of conflicting discourses, strategies and border struggles [Lemke, 2012]. If we want to trace a cartography that shows reinforcements and discontinuities between practices of movement and techniques of bordering, we must keep together the two levels of governmentality as framed by Foucault. In fact, governmentality refers both to an historically determined configuration of power and to a diagnostic tool for setting fields of problematization and framing powers and resistances into what I call a “strugglefield”<sup>11</sup> [Foucault, 1996a, 2009]. In fact, migration controls and bordering

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<sup>11</sup> The notion of “strugglefield” designates the strategic configuration of power relations and resistances: it frames the very relationship between power and resistances not as a dynamic of action/reaction but as an *affrontement* between forces, and in this way power is nothing but the present and unstable “winning strategy” [Foucault, 1978b]. This implicates that a) resistances cannot be but internal to *pouvoir* relations and that b) powers and resistances relate each other according to a sort of permanent limit [Foucault, 1978b]. Secondly, the notion of strugglefield conceives of governmentality as a conflicting space in which, as Foucault contends, the interrelation between government of the self and government of others is precisely what makes it always possible to find leeway of resistances and points of fragility to invert, transform or break the existing configuration of power. In fact, the notion of strugglefield foregrounds that subjectivities are not eclipsed in the concept of governmentality but rather, are really at its core in the double meaning of « subject » (*being subject to* and *being subject of*).

techniques are constantly forced to reinvent themselves, and reassessing strategies and discourses in the face of practices of migration that do not work simply by “counter-acting” a border regime that is already there: rather they (sometimes) produce “voids” – for instance, crises in the functioning of partitioning categories and profiles of mobility – that cannot be filled by subject-positions and existing geometries of representation; or they make power respond “within the asymmetry” between the mechanisms of capture and migrants’ turmoil in spaces [Revel, 2008a, 2011; Sossi, 2012a]. It follows that the narrative about who needs to be governed as a migrant, and how, and what exactly “governing” means, constantly changes, and these shifts are precisely what should be the object of a genealogical approach. Instead, in migration analyses the paradigm of a global government of migration is posited in a trans-historical way: the displacements and the transformations of the meaning and the objects of “migration governance” have to be thoroughly sifted [Ong, 2006]<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, hinging on the considerations above, the formula of “migration government” should not be used as a trans-historical catchword for addressing different contexts, in order not to fall into the trap of “presentism”, namely to make an analysis that erases the historical “thickness” of concepts and practices. The emergence of migration government as an object of the discursive regime and as an overarching concept travelling across disciplinary domains is a quite recent phenomenon, dating back to the 1950s. It was only through a series of juridical and political steps that something like a global migration regime was shaped, reaching its current juridical frame and political spread only in the early nineties [Geiger, Pecoud, 2010; Ghosh, 2007, 2012]<sup>13</sup> even though a binding international legal regime does not actually exist, yet. Only between 2003 and 2005 migration definitively became a central issue on the global policy agenda [Kalm, 2008]. Instead, the starting of a global regime of

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<sup>12</sup> Addressing neoliberalism, Aiwha Ong contends that “new forms of governing and being governed and new notions of what it means to be human are at the edge of emergence” [Ong, 2006, p.4].

<sup>13</sup> In particular, the framing of migration government in term of “management” is very recent, as Geiger and Pecoud point out: “the notion of migration management was first elaborated in 1993 by Bimal Ghosh following requests from the UN Commission on Global Governance and the government of Sweden. In 1997 the United Nations Population Fund, together with the Dutch, Swedish and Swiss governments, financed the so-called NIromp project (New International Regime for Orderly Movements of People) [...] The idea was that, in the post Cold-War era, migration had the potential to generate real crises and that a global and holistic regime of rules and norms was needed to successfully address the phenomenon”.

border technologies through the implantation of common standards and identification systems and controls at distance traces back to the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as Adam Mc Keown put it: “the global system of migrant identification and control is not inherent to the existence of an international system. It was a fairly late development [...] most of the basic principle of border control and techniques for identifying personal status were developed from the 1880s to 1910s [...] Migration control did not emerge as a logical or structural necessity of the international system but out of attempts to exclude people from that system” [Mc Keown, 2008, pp. 2-3, see also Plender, 1972].

The quite recent emergence of migration as a stable and coherent object of government suggests that the migration regime itself can be framed in terms of a “strugglefield”, in order to stress its contingency and its contested nature<sup>14</sup>. Conceiving of it as a strugglefield means, paraphrasing Foucault, that migration policies and migrants’ practices “each constitutes for the other a kind of permanent limit, a point of possible reversal” [Foucault, 1982, p.279]. In addition to that, “strugglefield” refers to the idea of migration as the outcome of overlapping and conflicting social relations, or better as a practice and as a condition which involves a complex of social and power relations [Marx, 1990, 1991]. This refers simultaneously to two aspects: firstly, it means that being a migrant is not a natural condition but it is rather the outcome of political technologies, geopolitical asymmetries and class relations which come to “shape” the migrant condition as a social total fact [Sayad, 2004]; and secondly, it stresses the fundamental productivity of the migration regime in shaping and fixing identities. Nevertheless, it does not involve that migrants are merely produced: contrariwise, the strugglefield underlines precisely the strategic and conflicting dimension in which the migration game is played. Consequently, it is not a “field” perfectly distinct from others: on the contrary, as a set of social and power relations it influences and articulates with what is supposed to be outside of it. In other words, the notion of “strugglefield” avoids any binary division between migrants and non-migrants, complicating their mutual

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<sup>14</sup> In this regard, it is important to notice that, as Karakayali and Rigo contend, despite the intention by European politicians to establish a common regime of immigration “what has been strengthened was the common administrative body of combating migration” [Karakayali, Rigo, 2010, p.131].

and blurred interactions. However, if assumed as a field of social and power relations, it follows that what should be investigated about the migration strugglefield is its specific productivity.

In the field of migration studies, the “entry” of governmentality as a grid came to foster the logic and the discourse of government, envisaging and speaking of a space of managed mobility: the stress on the heterogeneity of actors has on the one hand flattened the conflicting dimension underlying the two main questions, “who governs?” and “at what price?”, and on the other enhanced the idea of a smooth functioning of the mechanisms of control grounded on the coordination of multiple agencies. In this way, the productive and troubling force of resistances and migration practices within the architecture of migration government is eclipsed: but in fact, practices of migration and resistance at the border trouble the tenability of existing geographies of power, producing considerable re-arrangements in the “migration apparatus” [Feldman, 2011]. By fully assuming the vocabulary of migration policies and leaving unquestioned the postulate of migration as a phenomenon to govern, the governmentality grid has played as a “reinforcement operator” fostering the scaling up and the multiplication of “mobility profiles” (illegal migrant, economic migrant, asylum seeker, bogus refugee, refugee, high-skilled migrant...). Against this backdrop, I propose to reverse the paradigm of government and its supposed consistency: instead of assuming the nexus mobility-government as a point of departure, I reframe the notion of migration government in the wake of Foucault’s definition of dispositive as a formation having a strategic function. By taking the migration regime *in reverse* and *by surprise*, critical analysis should crack the solidity of any border regime. It means to account for the frantic running-after of migration policies and knowledges in order to keep up with a spatial and political “mess”. Pushing this perspective forward, taking the governmental frame *in reverse* and *by surprise* allows us to see the “politics of pillage” which sustains migration governmentality: knowledge production *on* migrations is based on studying, capturing and hijacking knowledge *of* migrations. In fact, the “knowledge based governance” could not exist regardless of the (study of) migrants’ strategies and practical knowledges in order to invent new mechanisms of capture and for anticipating migrants’ border crossing [Karakayali, Tsianos, 2010]. In this sense, the

map of migration governmentality is always a “backed-up cartography”: a map that pillages subjected or invisible knowledges, in this case especially non discursive knowledges, corresponding to migrants’ strategies. Some knowledges and practices remain *off the map*, in part because they are disqualified by the epistemic and political thresholds of the “citizenship order” and in part as strategies of imperceptibility enacted by migrants to escape mechanisms of capture [Tsianos, 2007]. After all, the map traced out by migration policies is a counter-map, since it is based on the pillage of those imperceptible knowledges, setting the boundaries to transform and translate (some of) these practices of movement into migrations that need be governed. In this sense, the theory of the autonomy of migration [Bojadzije, Karakayali, 2010; Mezzadra, 2006, 2011c; Moulier-Boutang, 1998; Rodriguez, 1996] could be re-read along these coordinates: it refers less to the a temporal primacy of migrations over the politics of controls than to the fundamental “hijacking gesture” through which migration policies act. Indeed, in order to concretely produce “migrant subjects”, migration and border policies monitor, pillage and run after strategies of migration in order to produce governmental knowledge and migration cartography. It is just this *off the map* dimension that interests Foucault when he refers to the “subjected knowledges” that are objectified through human sciences and the production of knowledges on life. Off the map, more than silenced subjects to be heard or to make speak and to make visible, according to the logic of “counter-acts”: instead, subjects and practices *off the map* that produce breaking points into the cartographic order, cracking some thresholds of perceptibility or interrupting some mechanisms of capture. Moreover, as *off the map*, practices of struggle could take place without addressing the existing scene of political recognition, and in this sense they destitute the legitimacy of power. In this light, analyses which centre on struggles for being recognized as political subjects [Isin, 2012; Mouffe, 2005; Ranciere, 2006] or as subjects as such [Butler, 2006a] take for granted the space where one is supposed to make a claim, the desirability of such a (political) space and inadvertently validate the functioning of power.

*The productivity of the migration regime: precarization, uneven conditional spaces and interruptions:*

However, saying that knowledge *on* migrations pillages and responds to the knowledge *of* migrations, doesn't mean that governmental technology works only by reaction. In fact, along with that, the technologies of b-ordering and detention – indicating in this way the two main functions of borders, namely blocking/containing/filtering on the one hand, and disciplining/managing/monitoring on the other hand – are characterized by their high degree of productivity [Anderson, Sharma, Wright, 2011]. Most importantly, borders not only cut (across) spaces but also produce differences in spaces – differences of status, differences of mobility, differences in the ways in which borders are enacted and crossed. To put it otherwise, the substantial productivity of borders and their transforming nature go along with an unceasing proliferation of borders<sup>15</sup>. First of all, borders are traced through the current prolific discursive production of migration agencies which responds to the “migratory disturbance”, envisaging new spaces and times of governability [Hess, 2012] – externalized protection, circular migration programs, mobility channels, and humanitarian corridors. Nevertheless, this productivity of spaces should be better qualified: in fact, what is at stake is not only the proliferation of borders due to the tracing of spatial zones (zones of humanitarian protection, zones of detention and zones of free circulation) but also an even production of spaces. Or better, migration policies instantiate “conditional spatialities”, that is spaces that exist only for some categories of mobile people: the most pertinent example is the access to the European internal space of free mobility that third-country nationals could gain through the visa; and Mobility Partnership centres precisely on facilitating some categories of migrants to get it. However, beyond the selective nature of the visa – which depends on a labour contract – actually, even if third-countries establish Mobility Partnership with the European Union, migrants could not circulate freely in the European space, but only in the member states that signed the agreement. Or if we think about the so much promoted Euro-Mediterranean area of free exchange, it is quite evident that such a space, which has not any geographical coordinate, really exists only for a very small percentage of the citizens of the southern shore of the Mediterranean: migrants coming by boat are not part of that economic and political picture. Thus, first of all borders produce

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<sup>15</sup> As for instance the creation of the new European agency, Eu-Lisa, that I illustrate in the fourth chapter.

conditional and provisional spaces; but through migration policies and administrative measures of deportation and exclusion, they generate also exclusionary “secure” zones or spaces of citizenship that emerge as “the result of the restrictions” [Karakayali, Rigo, 2010]. But dislocating the gaze towards practices of migrations and taking them as a vantage point, the other fundamental issue to rise is that the migration regime produces interruptions and introduces different forms and degrees of precarization. In fact, as I will show in the second and in the fifth chapter, both collective migrant struggles and singular stories, reveal that what characterizes governmental technologies for governing migrants is a substantial fragmentation of migrants lives and journeys, imposing an uneven and unpredictable pace of (im)mobility. Such a fragmentation is produced through administrative measures or identification techniques, imposing indefinite stop-overs or putting them in a “bounce-game” – made of bureaucratic hindrances, national boundaries, labour contracts and juridical decrees. In this way, the consequence is an indefinite lengthening of migrants’ (interrupted) movements: thus, more and beyond blocking migrants’ movements, what seems to emerge is the “irregularity” of a protracted mobility in the twofold sense of the term “irregular”: both as a form of mobility “illegalized” and as a production of discontinuity in the movements. At the same time, as I said, the migration regime “precarizes” migrants’ lives [Neilson, Rossiter, 2008], introducing differentiated forms and degrees of economic and existential precarization, according to a variable range of mobility profiles which goes from “economic migrants” up to “mobile person/non-migrants”. Obviously this second aspect – precarization - is linked to the former – fragmentation - since the precariousness of the (heterogeneous) migrant conditions is made possible and fostered precisely due to the forced fragmentation of lives and journeys. The disposability of migrants’ time is coupled with labour policies which push for a constant turnover of migrant labour force and hampering instead any persistence on the European soil.

*Conditional spaces troubled by Tunisian migrants:*

Tunisian migrants’ spatial upheavals destabilized and also shook for some time such a logic: they enacted their freedom of movement through collective departures and

careless of the conditional spaces of free mobility traced by migration policies. But they troubled the differentiated regime of spaces not because they move illegally – this is the case on any undocumented migration, that is not “revolutionary” *per se* since illegalism is also part of migration governmentality; rather, their disruptive force relied in the fact of exceeding the expected terms of illegalism itself, arriving suddenly in a huge number on the tiny island of Lampedusa, without demanding any protection but only to be released for moving on<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, they mocked the pace of mobility established by Europe, that after the Tunisian revolution paved the way for “ordered” and selected channels of mobility to Europe to guarantee a “smooth transition to democracy”. Tunisian migrants troubled the uneven spatialities of free circulation because they did not come with the purpose to live in Europe or to find a job, as expected by migration policies: most of them, especially the youngest, left Tunisia just seizing the opportunity to visit Europe, and especially Paris where they had Tunisian relatives or friends. To put it differently, their subversive practice and their “scandal” consisted, after all, in inverting the direction of ordinary flows of *bona-fide travellers* – European tourists going to North Africa – by claiming their will to travel across Europe.

Thus, the productivity of borders should be grasped especially “outside and beyond the texts”, stepping back from the narratives performed by governmental agencies. One clear example of the “governmental phantasy” figured by migration agencies is how Iom, envisages scenarios of governability that are not limited to controlling frontiers, stepping forward for instance as the main actor of the reconstruction of the economic stability Libya: “As almost 11 per cent of the Libyan population, pre-crisis, was composed of foreigners [...] reconstruction efforts in Libya may encounter serious economic and social problems if they cannot attract both skilled and low-skilled migrants to return to help and rebuild the country [...] Given the situation of returnees, further migration is a viable adaptation strategy for many. Provided the

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<sup>16</sup> However, such a description could run the risk to corroborate the rhetoric of the invasion: thus, in this regard it is important to notice that the total number of undocumented migrants coming from North Africa did not considerably increase in 2011 - for instance, the total number of “irregular” arrivals by sea in Europe in 2006 was of 60 000 while in 2011 was of 54 000). Moreover, in 2011 the most of them came from Morocco and not from Tunisia or Egypt [Fargue, Fandrich, 2012].

current governments were amenable, migrants could return to Libya, to aid in reconstruction efforts” [Iom, 2012a].

On this point, Foucault’s analytics of power certainly brings into focus the essentially productive dimension of power’s mechanisms, without however denying or overshadowing the repressive local functions at play in a broader economy of power. However, the first Lectures of *Security, Territory, Population*, on the relationship between space, circulation and mechanisms of security, adds an important contribution [Foucault, 2009]: not only do the politics of migration incessantly produce and reproduce borders, but borders themselves are producers of differences,<sup>17</sup> as they complicate and fragment the geometry of spaces. However, beyond dodging or interrupting some mechanisms of capture, sometimes practices of migrations crack for some moments the governmental matrix and the pact between governors and governed, making tangible the unbearable nature of power over lives. These interruptions at times take place through the practice of an illegalized mobility that does not respect the temporal pace of the selected politics of mobility [Garelli, 2013], or mess up the very logic of belonging which tries to stretch the borders of citizenship, or make unworkable the partitioning between different “mobility profiles” (asylum seeker/ economic migrant/ bogus refugee/ high skilled migrant). All this was particularly evident with the arrival of Tunisian migrants in the European space in 2011 and 2012: what emerged was their will to come and move across Europe, practising the same free internal mobility earmarked for European citizens. Moreover, they didn’t ask for asylum or protection, rather they staged somehow “groundless” practices of movement, an “unentitled” freedom exceeding the channels of the expected forms of mobility. “We don’t want to stay in Italy, we want to move, going to Europe, to France [...] we don’t need anything from the Italian government, only to be released from this tiny island and a paper to move”<sup>18</sup>. And at the same time they didn’t see Europe as an idyllic space for human rights; on the contrary, they opposed the fake European democracy to the Tunisian revolutionary experience: “How is it possible that we are in Europe, the supposed place of human rights and we are left in these conditions? Is this Europe? We want

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<sup>17</sup> Social and economic differences but also differences at the level of the “pace of mobility”.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.storiemigranti.org/spip.php?article872>

just to remind that we hosted thousands and thousands of people escaping from Libya, and Italians are not able to solve this situation”.

If we look at these practices through the frame of rights, what gets lost is precisely the refusal to play within the space and the coordinates traced by power: in fact, more than claiming a right to freely move, Tunisian migrants made a space for themselves by taking it over, irrespective of its “legitimacy”, so sweeping away any conditionality and exclusionary access that the frame of rights necessarily instantiates [De Genova, 2010a; Honig, 2006; Sossi, 2012]. I would read this as practices of mobility that refuse to play the game of power – that refuse to make claims that are accommodated into the boundaries of visibility and acceptability, e.g. the claim to be protected as refugees. Moreover, the formula of the “claim” is in itself encapsulated within a regime of recognition that set the tone of what practices are audible or visible; thus, the structure of the claim involves that subjects are expected to demand in accordance with the terms and conditions set by the “governmental pact”.

*A politics of dis-charge:*

Thus far, I illustrated that governmental maps on migration hijack and respond to the strategies and the knowledges of migrations. Then, I stressed the substantial recalcitrance of migrations taking place in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings in fitting into the terms of political recognition and representational politics. Hinging on these considerations, I examine the ambivalence that is at play in the effective mechanisms of the migration. I would call this ambivalent tactic a “politics of dis-charge”, meaning by this a technique of government grounded on two simultaneous moves: on the one hand, politics of control and humanitarian assistance, and on the other a practice of letting people be undetected, stranded or at the mercy of fate (discharging). In other words, what I question is the idea that migrants are precisely the subjects that are governed more than others, assuming the notion of “government” as defined by Foucault but less in its more formal meaning – government means to structure the field of actions of others [Foucault, 1982, 1997] – than in this pastoral version [Foucault, 2009]. This involves that in addition to taking *in reverse and by surprise* the discourse of migration government as

“geopolitical phenomenon” – disengaging ourselves from the governmental phantasy that migration policies perform – we should question migration governance also as a government of conducts of mobility.

In fact, practices of movements are labelled, fixed and spatialized through “mobility profiles” and legal “geographies” [Basaran, 2011]. Categories that, as I will explain in the third chapter, in the case of the rejected refugees of Choucha have been assumed and then reversed in sign or altered in their function – “We all fled from the same war, we need the same solution. Give our lives back”. However, if to embrace of the same categories through which people are told and governed by power could be tactically useful in some specific moments – especially in the short run, when it is a question of claiming rights or protection – the time and the context in which we should try to “depart from” from those identifications is one of the main political stakes that Foucault suggests to address. In fact, referring to the feminist and homosexual movements of the seventies, the French philosopher notices that their political force lay not only in their claim to be recognized for their sexual specificity, but in going beyond it, disengaging from the very normative frame of sexuality. These movements invented and put into practice new forms of sociability and existence beyond the codes and the boundaries of the dispositive of sexuality. The category of “migrant” is certainly the first “mobility identity” to challenge, both on the part of those who write on migration, and by those who are labelled as “migrants”. If “*who is a migrant?*” undoubtedly represents the primary and underlying question to denaturalize the normative category of “migrant”, once we try to answer this question, we realize that it is almost impossible to abstract from the situatedness of specific times and contexts. This difficulty confirms the historical fluctuation of the meanings and of the objects of migration government: who is “made up” [Hacking, 2004b] and governed as a migrant it changes over time. Thus, we could try to sidestep, or better to reformulate the question through two other questions. Who today and in this context is “migrantized” (namely, *becoming migrant*) in the face of the current processes of impoverishment? And, jointly: Who, today, in this specific political context, is labelled and governed as a migrant by migration policies? In other words, the geopolitical location, the mechanisms of precarization and the political inscription of bodies into mobility profiles need to be

rethought together. Basically, we should take into account the sorting and labelling process enacted by migration policies which have the power to “transform” practices of mobility into migrations; and simultaneously, we should consider the migrant also as a social and economic condition related to an array of mechanisms of precarization that bring about a forced and restricted mobility. Forced mobility facing the high rate of unemployment, but also forms of mobility more and more subjected to binding conditions. Confronted with that, the stake becomes how to release from the normative production of mobility profiles; and, related to that, how to resist the translation of some practices of movements into migration flows. But in the meantime, the concrete processes that redefine the conditions of (im)mobility in the light of the economic crisis require an in-depth investigation. Indeed, it is by articulating these two interrogations that it becomes possible to disconnect the normative force played by the category of the migrant without losing its political value.

*Transformative critique and the making of interruptions*

Independently from the degree of friability of the migration regime, those who are labelled “migrants” come up against mechanisms of capture and selection. This is an order of the discourse which traces a “moral geography” by sorting people into exclusionary channels of mobility and corridors of layered protection. In a nutshell, migration policies work through the fixation of the “legitimate” (dis)locations of bodies in space. Translated in spatial terms, they operate through disconnections and displacements of subjects from their ways of being in the space: a set of interpositions between subjects and the space where they move on or stay, making some people not expected in some spaces. The effects of truth and power generated by the politics of knowledge of migration management need to be situated in the present scenario of a blooming of writings, videos and reports that denounce human rights violations and arbitrary treatment to which migrants are very often subjected. As McLagan, and McKee argue in *Sensible Politics*, “politics revolves around what can be seen, felt, sensed. These forms [the medial forms] have force in shaping people as subjects and constituting the contours of what is perceptible” [Mc Kee, McLagan, 2012 p. 9]. This is an important point, I contend, since it tries to sidestep the

primacy of the visible and visibility as the major stakes for a contested politics of mobility, reframing the issue in terms of perceptibility. Nevertheless, it remains to be questioned if perceptibility itself could be narrowed to and transformed by yet again visual practices. Secondly, we should question whether politics is only a matter of altering the codes and the thresholds of perceptibility or if such an alteration needs to go along with a radical unsettlement of the posture of the subject-spectator, and with struggles challenging the actual disposition of bodies and movements in space. It is undeniable that the strategy of unmasking power and entering spaces of detention to see how migration governance operates *beyond the texts*, had a considerable bearing in criticizing migration governmentality, in a different way from solidarity campaigns or humanitarian approaches: through this, violations and violences are shown as constitutive elements of the migration regime. In fact, administrative arbitrariness in detention centres or the non-compliance of the state with international law about rescue at sea, or with European standards of data gathering, should not be seen as a deviation from an ideal global migration regime but as its effective “economic operator” [Foucault, 1980a, p. 136]. Finally, if the mechanism worked as it was supposed to work in migration policies texts, there would not be “illegal” migrations at all. At the same time, if we remain at the level of the texts of migration agencies, some intents and cornerstones of the present migration regime become unquestioned common narratives: for instance, the aim to promote circular migration, in order to make migrants’ labour force disposable for EU member states, is at the core of the EU document that in 2006 introduced the concept of Mobility Partnership. And it constitutes the bulwark upon which the recent EU Privileged Partnerships with Tunisia (December 2012) and Morocco (June 2013) have also been negotiated. However, if circular migration is certainly one of the leading strategies on paper, it should be investigated which, among the strategies proposed in bilateral agreements, are really deployed – for instance, the fight against illegal immigration, or the setting of a “pre-frontier”, or the facilitation of visa for certain categories of migrants.

The broader question to raise at this point is the following: “what comes after (and alongside) the critique?”, and jointly, “what should a critique trigger?”. Concerning the first point, it could be suggested that the growing amount of images and critical

analyses that circulate nowadays has paradoxically produced a sort of anaesthetising effect, increasing the threshold of tolerance when faced with those images, and narrowing the involvement in struggles to a question of “disobedient gaze”. The second and related question – “what, today, should a critique of the migration regime stir up?” – addresses an issue that is central in Foucault’s reports on the Gip (*Group d’information sur les prisons*): how to make visible the intolerable character of power. Rephrasing Foucault’s reflections on the struggles over prisons, it could be stated that the goal is neither to make the prisons visible nor to make detainees aware of the injustice of the mechanism of detention but rather to make detention intolerable and to situate it in a broader economy of power that had to be challenged<sup>19</sup>.

These considerations on the function of critique lead us to ask from what position and in which way to resist techniques of bordering. These questions cannot be answered regardless of the specific historical and political conditions affecting migrants. Indeed, this point becomes more evident if we consider how migration categories impact on migrants in different ways, producing diverse forms of existence: migrants *off the map*, labour migrants, refugees, visa overstayers... And this variety upholds the importance of pluralizing and fragmenting the supposed compactness of the catch-word of “migrant” in our analyses, just because the “legal geographies” and the production of migration categories have tangible effects on migrants’ lives, shaping their conditions of mobility. As Foucault underlines, resistances to a certain regime of truth cannot come but from the inside of that regime, namely by those subjects who are produced by that system of veridiction [Foucault, 2009, 2010]. However, one could object that not only migrants but anyone is subjected to the politics of mobility, both on a global scale and at the local level. Moreover, many of the techniques of surveillance adopted to control migrant’s movements are also employed to monitor and manage, in a different way, the

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<sup>19</sup> As Foucault put it talking about the activity of the Gip, “our inquiry does not aim at gathering knowledges but to increase our intolerance transforming it into an active intolerance” [Foucault, 1971]. In short, the very strategic positioning of the Gip consisted not in raising awareness about how power works in the prisons or in denouncing its arbitrariness, but rather in spilling over the prison itself, overstepping the boundaries of that site stressing how that political technology permeates many others spaces. This practical-political positioning is related to what I call “a movement-towards-the-outside” of the prison itself.

mobility of the “non-migrants” [Bigo, 2005; Pickering, Weber, 2006]. Nonetheless, a distinctive factor could be identified: by translating some practices of movement into migrations, migratory policies have a concrete impact on the existence that people could effectively live once they are labelled “migrants” by states and governmental agencies; thus, it follows that the condition of being governed as a migrant finally corresponds to being involved in specific stugglefields that do not concern all mobile people. From this perspective, it is necessary to reiterate the question: “who has become/is becoming a migrant here and now?”, taking “migrant” in the double meaning of subject of migratory policies and subject of the real process of *migrantization*. Challenging, interrupting, criticizing, infringing, escaping, and subtracting: all these verbs signal strategies of resistance and different modalities of “counter-acting” that we find at play in the forms of struggle and existence *of* and *about* migrants. To what extent can a critique of the government of migration, as radical and troublesome as it could be, be effective in producing interruptions in the functioning of migration governmentality? Indeed, an interruption cannot be generated other than from within the regime of truth, and consequently by the side of those who, from time to time, are labelled as “migrants” or are migrantized [Plascencia, 2009]. To put it differently, for a temporary short-circuit to be produced, someone has to be in the condition of striving for escape, subtracting from that regime because of the unbearable impacts on his/her life. Instead, critique does not implicate that one resists, escapes or intends to do that: rather, the critical gesture involves keeping at distance. This consideration suggests that one is a migrant when, in order to move or stay in a place, needs to resist or dodge the politics of control. Take for instance the airport, that is a site of controls “at high density” where that fact of all being governed by a global regime of mobility emerges clearly; however, at the same time, it makes visible the unequal distribution of the “grip” of the politics of mobility as well as the different degrees of tolerance towards controls: despite the criticisms against systems of surveillance and forms of remote control, the ordinary gestures of showing the passport to national authorities or passing through the body-scanner are accepted by *bona-fide travellers*. In other words, people who have all the papers to move legally shift from a critique of the intrusive character of controls and their “desirability” as dispositives that make freedom possible [Bigo, 2011; Foucault,

2009; Mc Grath, 2004]<sup>20</sup>. The ambivalences of the desirability of controls should also be considered: controls appear not only useful but also desirable when it becomes a concern of public security, when controls are applied for sifting and selecting travellers in order to prevent acts of terrorism. If we refuse to take on migration as a domain *per se*, governed by exceptional self-standing laws, and we situate it rather in the global labour regime, it becomes perceivable that an ease of circulation in space is not necessarily index of a (high) degree of freedom and autonomy from the government of mobility [De Genova, 2013a; Mezzadra, 2006]. The relative mobility ease of high-skilled migrants all over the world is enhanced by economic actors; and thus, it is not so evident that less obstructive conditions of movement and the “softness” of controls stand for much freedom from mechanisms of exploitation and regulation. As Didier Bigo remarks, “under liberal governmentality, mobility is translated into a discourse of freedom of circulation, which reframes freedom as moving without being stopped [...] freedom has often been reduced to freedom of movement” [Bigo, 2011, p.31].

Actually, critique can be conceived not as a challenge to the power in place but as a critical attitude: in this way, critique is primarily a posture “which consists in seeing on what types of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based [...] Understood in this sense, criticism is utterly indispensable for any transformation” [Foucault, 1994b, pp.456-457]. Once posited in these terms, what remains open is the question that Foucault himself raises: “what to do then, with this evidence?” which in our case becomes “how to link the critique of the technologies of profiling with a possible struggle against them?” [Foucault, 1982]. Concerning the government of migrations, this could be translated in the attempt to speak of the practices of movement and “spatial insistence” [Sossi, 2012c] without translating them immediately into “migrations”, trying to break the chain of partitions (economic migrants/refugees/ clandestine migrant/denied refugee...) and the chain of equivalents (illegal migration =

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<sup>20</sup> As Didier Bigo stresses, “the advantage of smart surveillance is that [...] for these normalized individuals it would seem to be less of a problem. They appear to be free so long as they do not see those who are controlling their movements, so long as they are not stopped during their journey [...] This attitude in accepting surveillance is related to this sense that comfort is as important as freedom [...] reassured that they are like a community of travellers where all bad apples have been prevented” [Bigo, 2011, pp. 41-46].

phenomenon to govern = dangerous mob) [Laclau, 2007] that from time to time is reproduced and redefined. Such a critique could engender some crisis in the reiterative mechanism of the worldmaking of migrations [Walters, 2013] – namely, in the discursive and non-discursive production of the “world” of migration as an object of government. Such a critique shifts from the question “who is a migrant?” to the twofold question, always historically and spatially located: *who is said to be a migrant, here and now, by migration policies? And who has been migrantized by processes of precarization?* That is, we need to speak of and account for practices of movement without translating some of them immediately into “migrations” [De Genova, 2013b]. Critique and transformation go together. But practices of migration sometimes succeed in making interruptions at/of the borders, without necessarily transforming or challenging those borders. To put it concisely, migrants are not interested in exploding partitioning categories or in subverting the discursive regime, but rather in moving or persisting in some spaces. I think that this is an important point to bear in mind and that very often gets lost: by enacting practices of mobility, migrants misfire or make spin freely the spatialization of people’s movements that migration policies put into place: but they misfire it not because they contest its mechanisms or because they enact extreme forms of resistance, but for the simple fact of moving or staying. However, I don’t conceive here “interruption” as an event which suddenly breaks the political space creating a new order [Badiou, Zizek, 2009]. In fact, the association between interruption and event should be rethought in the light of what we mean by event: “it is not a decision or a fight but a rapport of forces that overturns, a confiscated power, a vocabulary that is appropriated and turned over against its users [...] the forces at play in history obey neither a destiny nor a mechanics but the hazard of the struggles” [Foucault, 1984a, p.1016]. From this standpoint, interruptions are seen as a force which at some point breaks some power’s functioning from within that field of power relations, that is as subjects governed by that regime. Moreover, the concept of interruption is posited as a central tenet in many philosophical analyses on the subjects’ agency and on the ways in which borders and norms are deeply challenged by unexpected acts of discourses enacted by those “who are not covered by those norms or have not entitlement to

occupy the place of the who” [Butler, 1997, p. 367; see also Isin, 2008, 2012; Laclau, 2005; Ranciere, 2004].

*The paradigm of the active migrant-citizen. A critical account*

What all these analyses share, beyond their specific formulations and approaches – acts of citizenship theory, radical democracy, performative acts – is the “script of interruption” through which they frame the relation between politics and subjectivity. By “script of interruption” I mean the bursting into the scene of the political by “claimant subjects” who perform “an act that does not exist or an act that already exists but that is enacted by a political subject who does not exist in the eyes of the law. Presences that defy where an act can be staged” [Isin, 2012]. From such a perspective, politics is designated as the action which transforms the space into a space for the appearance of the subject [Rancière, 2001]. According to this discourse, the moment of the interruption coincides with the emergence of political subjectivities. Thus, subjects who are “at the borders” of representative politics are supposed to lay claim in order to be counted into the order of citizenship, stretching boundaries and norms: migrants become the central figures of these analysis due to the “subject position” they embody. These readings have played an eminent function in reversing traditional political postures, by drawing the attention to the ways in which the “inside” – the space of citizenship – is defeated and rearticulated by the “outside” through the acts of those subjects who are excluded from that space.

The “interruptions” produced by Tunisian migrants in the time of the Arab revolutions were predicated neither on the possibility of transforming the regime of borders and visibility nor on a claim to be included in the space of citizenship. In fact, as Ranabir Samaddar remarks, the emergence of a political subject which is “out of place” or “unexpected” in a given political space (as migrants) “exceeds the rule of politics” [Samaddar, 2009, intro p.15]: it always comes out as a supplement regarding to that space, and it is “fundamentally a matter of non-correspondence with the dominant reality. Political subject exceeds rules of politics” [Samaddar; 2009, intro p.16] this is way the term of citizen cannot encapsulate the huge variety of material processes and practices through which (and against which) subjectivities are produced.

Instead, the script of the “scene of answerability” that underlies those analyses on citizenship and migrants’ subjectivity leaves a huge array of migrant struggles under the threshold of perceptibility, relegating them as pre-political languages. As in the case of Tunisian migrants, most of the time undocumented migrants who interrupt for some moments the functioning of borders neither engage in an outstanding visible claim nor do they perform creative acts: in this sense, the scheme of “agency” is grounded on a too “exigent” model of subjectivity, tracing out exclusionary borders of what can be defined a political practice and what acts produce political subjectivity. This is particularly evident in the case of Citizenship Studies, in which migrants’ strategies are generally framed in terms of agency [Coutin, 2011; McNevin, 2006; Nyers, 2006, 2011; Nyers, Rygel 2012]. This literature has contributed to reformulate the theory of the autonomy of migrations, stripping it of the conflicting dimension upon which this latter is predicated. To explain this argument I ground on the binary divisions that characterize critical Migration Studies, and on the individualism that underlies the category of agency. Migrations are usually depicted as phenomena taking place in-between an inside-outside political move: migrants are basically those who try to become part of a certain space or that stretch the borders of citizenship and belonging. By binary divisions I mean also the way of pigeonholing migrants’ practices of resistance according to clear profiles of subjectivities fixed in advance: claimant subjects, victims, vulnerable subjects, agent subjects. Moreover, such a classification contributes to partition between active migrant subjects and “vulnerable” migrants (as for instance refugees), tracing a moral cartography of migrations: if the latter are mainly the object of attention in Refugee Studies, “active migrants” are of concern in Citizenship Studies. This leads to the individualising character of agency: while the theory of the autonomy of migrations stresses the collective dimension of migrants’ strategies, framing them in terms of “movements”, to the contrary the focus on agency brings attention to individual abilities and will in challenging the border of the political, reproducing an image of subjectivity grounded on the liberal paradigm. As Papadopoulos and Tsianos point out, drawing on the autonomy of migration framework, “the concept of migration does not mean flattening out their differences; rather, it attempts to articulate their commonalities which stem from all these

different struggles for movement [...] The supposedly abstract and homogenising category of migration does not attempt to unify all the existing multiplicity of movements under one single logic, but to signify that all these singularities contribute to an affective and generic gesture of freedom” [Papadopoulos, Tsianos, 2013, p. 185].

In other words, two different ideas of autonomy sustain migration analyses on agency and the theory of the autonomy of migration: while the latter conceives of autonomy within the frame of collective movements, drawing on the workerist tradition, the former refers to agency for depicting autonomous subjects unsettling and addressing the scene of visibility. Secondly, the emphasis on agency and on symbolic gestures tends to overlook the material conditions in which many undocumented migrants live, and thus the deadlocks migrants can come across in enacting public protests. The third element of criticism concerns the temporality of struggles: in fact, agency is focused on the punctual disruptive moment of the act. Shifting from the moment of border crossing towards the “migrant condition” – as a concrete practice of living that (undocumented) migrants experience daily – makes it possible to dislocate migrants’ practices on a different temporality, a temporal dimension usually dismissed by activists. In fact, once a given discursive frame or a political space is cracked by migrants’ presence, what gets lost are the consequences of these acts on migrants themselves, given deportability is the primary weapon that states have [De Genova, 2010b]. Instead, by assuming “agency” as the prism to codify migrants’ struggles, the risk is to reiterate the theoretical gesture that designates as “disruptive” and “political” those practices which can easily be codified or understood through existing categories. Thus, to dwell upon what comes before and after the disruptive moment means to pay attention to the consequences of producing interruptions for those who are not part of the “citizen contract”: the detainability and deportability of undocumented migrants are the conditions upon which the fragmented temporality of migrants’ practices is predicated. Thus, the coupling of transformation and interruption can take place only when practices last in time: the challenge of the subject position that migrants are expected to fill does not necessarily correspond to the production of a different order. Quite to the contrary, the condition of being spoken and labelled by power, becoming visible

only in a clash with it – in its discourses or through its administrative techniques of identification – makes it difficult for destituent practices to transform into constituent movements [Balibar, Brossat, 2011]. And also the possibility for subjects to depart from migration categories is a quite wearing task. After all, the vanishing presence of migrants on the public scene relates to the lacks of traces that their presence leaves on the ground: in other words, how to account for subjects who can neither emerge on the “scene of address” nor be narrated if not after encountering power? In this regard, Foucault’s text *Lives of Infamous Men* stages this point very clearly: “In order for some of them to reach us, a beam of light had to illuminate them, for a moment at least. A light coming from elsewhere. What snatched them from the darkness in which they could, perhaps should, have remained was the encounter with power” [Foucault, 1994c, p.161]. Thus, by narrowing politics to the moment of rupture one fails to take into account the intense and more invisible activity of norms in shaping subjects. Foucault’s analyses on the production of individuals through the working of norms and knowledges, highlights that the focus on subjects making interruption of borders cannot be detached from a questioning of the “costs” and conditions to become a subject. In other words, the fact of being identified as “undocumented migrant” embodies in very concrete conditions of (in)visibility and exploitability which shape the leeway of the daily strategies of existence [Sossi, 2007]. And since a shared or homogenous migrant condition does not exist, the supposed subject position of “undocumented migrant” multiplies and corresponds to highly different “costs” and conditions of subjectivity.

*The exclusionary space of address:*

Mainstream analyses on citizenship and “its others” are grounded on the idea that migrants’ struggles can be ultimately framed as claims to integration within the political space of citizenship and to gain recognition as political subjects. Against this background, some scholars have started to challenge this paradigm positing that citizenship is constantly defeated by migrants that impose to redefine the boundaries and the conditions of “being political” [Isin, 2002, 2006; Mc Nevin, 2006; Nyers, 2003, 2011; Rygel, 2011]. Secondly, they put into motion and stretched the notion of citizenship, assuming it not only as a juridical status but as the result of acts of

claims. However, what remains unquestioned in these analyses is the validity of the paradigm of citizenship for speaking of a multiplicity of migrant struggles that actually neither claim for citizen status nor demand to be included in the boundaries of civil society. And, ultimately, they postulate a model of political subjectivity and of political movement shaped according to the coordinates of Western activism. Indeed, as Angela Mitropoulos remarks, migrants are ultimately seen as subjects who need to struggle to become political and “talking” subjects: “political subjectivity is invoked on condition of assuming the perspective of the State” and migration is assumed as “implying the absence of political decision and action” [Mitropoulos, 2007, p.11]. In this regard, let’s turn the attention to the presence of thousands of Tunisian migrants in the streets of Lampedusa. March 2011: migrants’ claim “we don’t want to stay here – in Italy – we want to move away and go to Europe” resounded on the overcrowded island in response to the cameras and journalists that were there to foster the “spectacle of the border” [Cuttitta, 2012; De Genova, 2011]; troubling at the same time the desirability of (Italian) citizenship – no demand of international protection or of institutional assistance – and European geography: Italy is not the real Europe. After all, as “sons of the Tunisian revolution” they did not come here to see what democracy is, but rather they often present themselves as those who made the revolution for democracy in Tunisia, displacing the common imaginary of Europe as the most desirable space and of migrants coming from nowhere lands to get in contact with the “advanced democratic societies” [Rose, 1996, 1999].

This episode raises the following question: is it possible to identify the claims that every struggle raises and its space of address [Rancière, 1995, 2004]? Or does it mean speaking in the name of the struggles of others? In fact, by deciding in advance and from the outside what these struggles stand for, we definitively trace the map and the borders of the space of their political movement, weakening their disruptive force. Encoding practices into a pre-established language of claims and into a given space of address means to translate the “noisy” migrants’ practices into the frame of recognition: the “scandal of democracy” [Rancière, 2004] cannot be grasped if interruptions of/at the borders are framed according to a centripetal move, that is envisaging a democracy-oriented move of migrants’ practices or a direction of their

demands given in advance. Indeed, many migrant struggles are not struggles because they challenge the discourse or the mechanisms of power, or because they address political institutions, but rather insofar as they crisscross and are involved in complex strugglefields, namely economic, administrative and discursive borders which migrants have to confront and by which they are shaped. Nevertheless, it is not only a question of breaking the pre-established set of claims- but also of taking into account the capitalistic economy and the international division of labour in which migrants are captured as living labour force [De Genova, 2010; Mezzadra, 2007, 2011c]. This means to reconsider the outside position usually attributed in critical literature to undocumented migrants who try to disrupt and stretch the borders of the “inside” – the political space of citizenship – as if they would be out of any economic-political relation of power: instead, the contested political space that both Migration Studies and Citizenship Studies focus on, is situated in complex economic relations that by now play at a transnational level, and intertwines with many kinds of spatialities – for instance, the economic space which, in turn, is not a homogenous space but is formed of different spatial economies. Hence, it becomes problematic to pose an “outside” where migrants would be before being “captured” or integrated. After all, the degrees of “inside” and “outside” exceed the official demarcation of a political space of citizenship: as Partha Chatterjee shows, there are citizens who are de facto excluded by the realm of civil society and that conversely are subject to the “grasp” of governmental power [Chatterjee, 2005]. Before and in simultaneity with struggles that crack the functioning and the legitimacy of the borders of the “political” space of citizenship, migrants (as well as non-migrants) are within the meshes of multiple powers, among which the economic mechanisms of extraction of surplus-value are certainly the most confining [Chignola, Mezzadra, 2012]. And Foucault’s analytic of governmentality allows challenging any inside/outside sharp spatial divide, not only displacing and multiplying the sites of power but also positing an inextricable interweave between the economics and techniques of government. In fact, in Foucault’s account of governmentality, economy is posited as the main knowledge through which governmental power works;<sup>21</sup> its emergence as a discipline corresponds to the affirmation of modern

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<sup>21</sup> As Foucault states in the Lecture of the 1st February 1978, “according to me, the fundamental stake

governmentality and the functioning of the mechanisms of security. At the same time, the economy that Foucault takes into account concerns power relations at large, namely the economy of power. In other words, economy stands also for the mechanisms and rationalities that determine the coherence of a technology of power. Talking about the liberalization of the circulation of grain in the 18th century, Foucault persuasively notes that juridical measures and proclamations are historically the result of major changes in the techniques of government, beyond and more than revolution in theoretical formulations.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, what is in question is not so much the articulation between the political and the economic but their mutual constitution and finally the possibility to read the former through the lens of the latter. In fact, if it is true that Foucault stresses the autonomy and the specificity of power relations [Foucault, 1982, 1994b], the economy of power that he sees intermeshed and constitutive of the political concerns the practical governmental reason that regulates bodies and phenomena – “the government of men is a practice [...] that fixes the definition and respective positions of the governed and governors facing each other and in relation to each” [Foucault, 2009, p.12].

Therefore, against the supposed exclusionary “pure” political space, a critical focus on migrations suggests looking at the articulation and at the multiplication of different spatialities, challenging the idea of spaces and subjects “out of” the political. This point relates to a broader salient issue that migrations foreground: the very concept of space requires not only to be pluralized but also “frayed” in its supposed homogeneity, especially regarding the differential access to mobility, which basically depends on how the “migrant condition” impacts differently on people’s lives. From this standpoint, migrations impose on us to shift the spatial gaze from the regime of visibility/ invisibility and circulation, towards a comprehensive investigation of the conditions at which flows and visibility are produced, highlighting “the inequalities of property and the process of labour exploitation”

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of government lies in the introduction of the economy into the political exercise” (*Security, Territory, Population*, p. 76)

<sup>22</sup> In the well-known passage of *Security, Territory, Population* on physiocrats Foucault argues “What led to the great edicts or “declarations” of the years 1754-1764, maybe through and thanks to the relay, the support of the physiocrats and their theory, was in reality a complete change, [...] in the techniques of government. In other words, you could read the principle of the free circulation of grain as the consequence of a theoretical field and also as an episode in the mutation of technologies of power” [Foucault, 2009, p.44].

[Tsing, 1997, p.336]. In other words, as Anna Tsing poignantly put it, in looking only at the political cartography traced by the liberal discourse on mobility, “we lose sight of the material components through which sites are constructed and from which convincing claims about scale units and scales could be made [...] A focus on circulation shows us the movement of people, things and idea, but it does not show us how this movement depends on defining tracks and grounds, scales or units of agency. Flow itself always involves making terrain” [Tsing, 1997, p.338]. Therefore, under what conditions and through what processes does a certain spatial configuration come to work as a baseline that posits the thresholds of perceptibility of practices and events? In his account of governmental reason and neoliberalism, Foucault addresses precisely this twofold issue: the economy of power in which freedom, and in particular freedom of circulation, is situated and predicated;<sup>23</sup> and at the same time the kind of subjectivity that is at stake in that economy: what subject is produced or regulated by a specific technology of power. Consequently, instead of positing a space – the space of free mobility, or the space of citizenship – as a bounded unit, and instead of assuming a subject that is supposed to claim for recognition an inverse move should be undertaken: one could look at strategies of migration investigating the material processes through which, from time to time, some people are labelled as migrant-subjects. Ultimately, governmentality as a grid for framing power relations brings out that the emergence of processes of subjectivation and production of subjectivity are at the core of critical analyses that aim at probing the transformations of power. Thus, in order to understand how the rationale of migration governance has changed over time, the issue of subjectivity – who is labelled as migrant and how migrants crack and exceed mechanisms of capture – cannot be left aside. In fact, far from being only the name of the liberal diagram of power, governmentality refers to the inextricable intertwining between production of subjectivity and power’s regulation: “talking about governmentality I refer the whole array of practices through which it’s possible to constitute, define, organize and play with strategies that individuals, within the scope of their freedom,

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<sup>23</sup> M. Foucault, *Security, territory, population. Lectures at the College de France, 1977-1978*. See in particular Lectures of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> of January : “Freedom [...] is nothing but the correlate element of the dispositives of security” (p. 48)

act on one another and on themselves” [Foucault, 1996a, p.448]<sup>24</sup>. And placing at the core the technologies through which people act upon themselves and on others, it makes it possible to come to grips with subjectivity beyond the subject of right, since “governmentality, I believe, enables us to account for the freedom of the subject and its relations with others; that is, what constitutes the matters of ethics itself” [Foucault, 1996a, p.448].

### **Politics of non-truth and « good » stories. The government of would-be refugees at the limit of the world’s history**

If we assume that migration governmentality is at the same time a laboratory and a litmus paper of wider economies and politics of movement involving also citizen-subjects at large, it should be investigated whether the government of conducts and the production of subjectivities still work mainly through a regime of truth which requires subjects to produce a discourse of truth (upon themselves). Or, rather, if in some spaces and strugglefields of governmentality there are also other regimes at play that do not postulate a subject of truth. In the inaugural conference of the Lectures held in Lovanio, Foucault stresses the proliferation of truth-telling as well as to the multiplication of the regimes of veridiction in our contemporary societies. In that case, the pronoun “our” addressed the European space and its corresponding form of subjectivity. However, despite the plurality of the regimes of truth mentioned by Foucault, his genealogical account concerns exclusively the emergence of the regime of truth underpinning the production of the modern western subject. In this regard, it should be considered that in order to grasp the emergence of a spatially and historically situated subjectivity it is necessary to intersect both the regime of truth and the process of subjectification against which, by refraction and through acts of radical or partial exclusion, that subjectivity has been shaped. In other words, processes of subjectivation cannot be analysed in the void, regardless of the “marginal” subjectivities against which the supposedly neutral European citizen-

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<sup>24</sup> A broad definition of governmentality, not narrowed to the historical emergence of the governmental reason in the 18th century, is given by Foucault in an interview of 1981, in which Foucault argues: “power is the exercise of something that could be named *government* in a broad meaning [...] if you want, it is governmentality in the broad sense, namely the array of relations and techniques of power that make possible for these relations of power to be exercised” (Foucault, *Entretien avec André Bertin, 1981* in *Mal faire, dire vrai*).

subject is built and fostered. Such a genealogy of the modern European citizen could be traced both at the time of the constitution of the national citizen and in moments of economic or social “crisis” – like during the Seventies – when the unity of the working classes is replaced by an exclusionary politics by which the immigrant is seen as an undeserved recipient of social benefits. It should be noticed that the very figure of the “immigrant”, as distinct from the foreigner, came to the fore along with the consolidation of the citizen’s identity [Noiriel, 1996, Wahnich, 1997]. Nevertheless, if a genealogy of the contemporary European subject requires complicating it with processes that crafted subjectivity from the “outside” of that space, it is not merely by refraction and against border identities – like the immigrant and the colonized – that the emergence of the citizen-subject should be grasped. Rather, at stake there are more subtle and complex mechanisms: in fact, what is interesting is precisely to see for instance how techniques of identification or of categorization devised for managing migrations are reorganized beyond their original scopes, becoming central tools for shaping and governing citizens’ mobility. More precisely, differentiated degrees of citizenship can be instantiated just through the production of inner “lacking” and “border” subjectivities. Besides, looking closely at the government of “untruth conducts” makes it possible to grasp transformations taking place also in the political technology which governs non-migrants. That is to say, situating ourselves “at the borders” of the regime of truth that is supposed to shape the space of citizenship, enables foregrounding reconfigurations of power that are at stake also within that space.

As Ann Laura Stoler remarks, questioning the discursive proliferation on sexuality in our societies stressed by Foucault, these discourses “were refracted by men and women whose affirmation of a bourgeois self was contingent on imperial products, perceptions and racialized others” [Stoler, 2002, p.144]. And the coexistence in present societies of subjects whose discourse of truth responds to very different injunctions, prompts questioning the pronoun “our” – “our space - bringing out the overlapping of heterogeneous but co-interrelated regimes of truth and subjectivation in which we are simultaneously entangled. To put it differently, we could rethink how mechanisms of truth's production are co-determined in such a way that a history of our present cannot carve out autonomous and separate regimes of subjectivation.

The plurality of regimes of veridiction goes with the differentiation of spaces, suggesting the inevitable plurality of histories that a history of the present involves.

This digression on the importance of complicating genealogies of subjectivities to stress the multiplicity of regimes of truth, introduces technologies for governing conducts that although located in “our” present are assembled through dissonant regimes of veridiction. The governmentality of refugees and the blurred lines between politics of protection, government of the undesirables and detention of undocumented migrants, constitute significant sites and mechanisms to tease out the coexistence of different regimes of truth; and where the very issue of subjectivation through individualization, namely through a discourse of truth of the subject upon itself, is at least partially unsettled [Vaughan, 1991].

In order to go deep into this issue, I turn the attention to a place that is at the edges of the Mediterranean space<sup>25</sup>, Choucha refugee camp at the Ras-Jadir frontier-post on the Tunisia-Libya border. Limits here invoke the constant production and realignment of borders insofar as a process of denomination takes place – in this case the Mediterranean space of free mobility – in the name of shared historical/cultural legacies. The European and the western space are the two other main bordered spaces defining by difference its “others”. But beyond the geographical location, I focus on Choucha refugee camp to analyse closely which mechanisms and obligations of truth-telling are at stake in the government of would-be refugees. Choucha is not a special place but, on the contrary, it allows us to highlight how a certain politics of (non)truth plays in the government of refugees’ conducts: thus, I take it as a “trans-local” space for looking at the functioning of certain regimes of veridiction. From this standpoint, Foucault's genealogy of the technique of confession and on its contemporary transformations– psychiatry and the juridical

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<sup>25</sup> In this regard, the very geographical referent of Mediterranean should not be taken for granted, and in particular the boundaries which delimit that space work, I contend, as exclusive-exclusionary frontiers that separate those outside the Mediterranean area from the cultural and political proximity that Mediterranean countries are supposed to have. In other words, it's in the name of proximity that European countries push for Politics of Neighbourhood with the southern shore and for politics of externalization. And at the same time, it implicates that “non-neighbourhood” are excluded from such a discursive and political frame. Obviously, the tracing of the border that posits where the Mediterranean space ends, has changed over time, and the Arab Spring was seen as a reason –or as a hope– of getting the Maghreb Countries closer to the political economy of the EU, as the EU Spring Program confirms.

system – works here as a set of analytical coordinates through which to read both the regime of truth and the production of subjectivity at play in the domain the government of refugees. However, the scrutiny into the production of truth in the government of refugees raises issues far beyond the specific field of migrations, disturbing the supposed self-standing genealogy of the “western contemporary subject”.

Therefore, the politics of (non)truth at stake in the government of would-be refugees operates here at the same time as a litmus paper of broader transformation of power, and as a laboratory of governmentality bringing into existence new or transformed political technologies.

*Good stories and the confession without truth:*

December 2011: “We are aware that we are not asked to tell the truth, to tell our truth story, rather we need to tell a good story”. People who fled from Libya in 2011, most of them third-country nationals working in Libya and forced to leave after the outbreak of the war, know this. It is not the truth, namely the effective events occurred in the lives of those would-be refugees, which really matters for Unhcr’s commissioners who decide whether to give them a space on the earth where they can legitimately stay. In some sense, there is an “excess of the real in their stories that cannot be symbolized” [Beneduce, 2008, p.507] – because it doesn't refer to any deferrable or “in place of” meaning to unfold, but rather it addresses lived experiences – is not required and cannot even be grasped by juridical categories. But what are the “good stories” that the refugees mention as stories to be told? In order to answer this question we have to delve into the kind of truth that is at stake in the partition between economic migrants and refugees [Good, 2004]: indeed, having in mind Foucault's description on the obligation for the subjects to tell the truth upon themselves, in the case of the government of the would-be refugees the speech of the migrant is postulated as untruthful in principle, or better as suspect of lying: “this

systematic suspicion regarding the asylum seekers transforms the inquiry on truth telling into a process of lie detecting”<sup>26</sup> [Fassin, 2013, p.54].

The reason why would-be refugees refer to a “good story” to tell as the only possibility to get international protection is that the discourse required by the territorial commission which processes asylum claims essentially needs to comply with a set of normative categories and conditions [Zetter, 2007]. In other words, the discourse required to the would-be refugee is supposed to comply with a truth that in some way is already-there – the truth actualized in profiles of mobility – according to which people are spatially re-located; then, the primary partition economic migrants/refugees is multiplied into a differentiation of conducts corresponding to a downgrading continuum going from protection to unprotection [Bohmer, Shuman, 2008; Squire, 2009]: vulnerable person, “ordinary” refugee suspect-fake refugee, denied refugee. Recalling Fanon’s considerations on the treatment of the “ill colonized”, what is important to notice is that the “conducts” of would-be refugees emerge only through the clash with “governmental truth”, namely with power [Fanon, 1994; Foucault, 1994a]: “the North African does not come with a substratum common to his race, but on a foundation built by the European” [Fanon, 1994, p.7]. In fact, Unhcr’s procedure for assessing asylum seekers is grounded both in the 1951 Geneva Convention and a countries scheme, much more variable over time, listing safe and unsafe countries. However, this geopolitical map of unsafety is not the only condition upon which the decision is made: actually, the articulation of personal stories and nationality is what in principle forms the ground for examining the reasonableness of asylum applications. And the yardstick for assessing the reliability of asylum seekers’ stories depends fundamentally on two criteria: the contradictory dimension and the inconsistency of the would-be refugee’s discourse, with the latter ultimately prevailing over the former<sup>27</sup>. To sum up, there is no discourse of truth that migrants and would-be refugees are considered able or willing to utter. Their speech

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<sup>26</sup> As Didier Fassin points out, the restrictiveness of asylum that has been in place since the late nineties has been accompanied “by a profound loss of credibility of asylum seekers within the institutions in charge of assessing their applications”; and “the generosity that prevailed in those years [the Sixties and the Seventies] was largely a consequence of economic needs for the reconstruction of Europe and the growth of North America” [D. Fassin, 2013].

<sup>27</sup> Interviews conducted with a lawyer in the city of Catania who works with asylum seekers in the biggest Italian reception centre for asylum seekers –CARA of Mineo (07/05/2013).

is judged on the basis of what I call an asymptotic adherence to the moral cartography of the regime of asylum [Malkki, 1992]: the national origins and the “degree of vulnerability” of the asylum seekers define the two main coordinates through which the “mobility profile” of the would-be refugee is shaped – rejected refugees, resettled refugees, vulnerable subjects, bogus refugees, internal displaced persons. Moreover, this discourse situates into a “downward” rationale that keeps the rates of the international protection low. That is to say, the examination process hinges on a sort of “defensive proof”: would-be refugees need to demonstrate against the moral geography<sup>28</sup> traced by Unhcr and designed to label them as non-eligible for protection [Bohmer, Shuman, 2008]. In this regard, no document is more explicative than this: when there are asylum-seekers coming from safe countries, “applicants are requested to rebut the presumption that the Country of origin is safe with regard to their particular circumstances [...] And considering the difficulty of refugees to prove persecution, the applicant's mere assertions of the facts can lead to the grant of asylum provided that they are credible in the sense they lead to the full conviction of the truth, and not just probability, of circumstances causing the fear of persecution” [Unhcr, 1991; see also Council of Europe, (1471)2005]. This document makes clear that the would-be refugee, or better still I would say “the non-refugee until proven otherwise”, is required to provide evidence for questioning the objective geopolitical narrative: the asylum seeker has to demonstrate that his/her personal story is an exception to the safety of people's lives coming from his/her country of origin attested by Unhcr. Thus, a mark of non-credibility sustains the discourse of impossible truth demanded of the “not-refugee until proven otherwise”; and it's up to the would-be refugee to undo the probable denial, by proving to be an exception to the geopolitical normativity.

*Untruth conducts and the moral geography of asylum:*

Nevertheless, what should be remarked is that in the government of would-be refugees is not a question of “silences” about those lives: in fact, while on the one

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<sup>28</sup> Through this expression I mean the “geography of the humanitarian” that Unhcr put into place, making a secret list of “safe countries”, whose citizens are considered not in need of protection. More broadly, the expression “moral geography” refers to the set of criteria according to which would-be refugees are “allocated” in spaces or resettled in third-countries.

hand the government of migration is characterized by a proliferation of discourses and of categorizing procedures; and this “high rate of discursivity” is the very mechanism through which would-be refugees are governed and encoded into an intelligible and standardized schema of conducts. Thus, despite the fundamental discredit which underpins the speech of would be refugees, it remains that an injunction to speak, to tell one's own story, percolates the technology of government of displaced people: the asylum seeker is demanded to tell not only the story of his/her journey but of his/her entire life. As Didier Fassin contends, “the paradox of the politics of asylum is that the person who has suffered a persecution in his/her country of origin, now is faced to a new proof, through which power wants to produce the truth” [Fassin, 2013, p.47]. However, what predominates is not the truth of the asylum seeker's speech on his/her life but, rather, the truth of his/her geopolitical location and at the same time of his/her singular story as part of that moral geography. Therefore, the truth is produced irrespective of the discourse of the would-be refugee. But it doesn't mean that the story told by the “suspect subject” is irrelevant: on the contrary, the story-telling works as a sort of normalizing technology demanding that the migrant comply with the geopolitical narrative provided by international agencies, humanitarian actors and states. Secondly, as I stated above, the subject could switch its impossibility of telling the truth into a process of self-victimization, narrating the “good” story to the Commission and arguing that its vulnerability definitively makes an exception to the rule. Therefore, it could be named a “confession without truth”; or better, a quite odd practice of confession that does not postulate any hidden thought to unfold but, rather, posits a reality that is already-there, envisaged by international criteria and treaties, and that the subject is demanded to embrace. More precisely, unlike the correspondence between discourse and subjectivity that the psychiatric confession requires of the individual [Foucault, 2012a, 2012b], in the government of would-be refugees it doesn't matter that the subject authenticates itself and its subjectivity by attaching itself to the discourse it formulates upon itself<sup>29</sup>. Instead, what is at the core of this regime of veridiction is exactly the dissociation between the speech of untruth – the

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<sup>29</sup> In this sense, the practice of the confession is not simply a statement of fact that the subject produces upon itself: rather, it involves a specific involvement (*engagement*) of the subject in relation to what it says, namely to its discourse of truth (see Foucault, 2012a, 2012b).

constitutive non-credibility – of the migrant and its juridical status fixed by normative international criteria: the very notion of truth is partially superseded by the idea of a statement of facts, namely an objectivity presented more as the result of an indisputable evidence graspable through standardized knowledges and practices of expertise than as an unintelligible reality to unfold. By scrutinizing the effects of subjectivation generated by this confession without truth, what emerges is a growing array of “profiles of mobility” that singular stories must fill in and that get troubled when juridical categories become unsuitable in keeping up with the heterogeneity of migrants’ practices. Unhcr acknowledges that in many cases both migrants’ conditions and practices of migration do not fall into existing mobility profiles and migration categories. Profiles are created both for individual conducts and for countries, proving that humanitarian government lies at the junction between a moral geography of conducts and a governmentality of scattered populations where nation-states still play an important role. Moreover, the overlap between the national and geopolitical scale on the one hand – safe/unsafe countries – and the spatialisation of singular conducts is enforced also by non-humanitarian actors like Iom delegated by the European Union to produce a constantly updated report on migration profiles, analysing the migratory situation country by country.

Coming back to the injunction for the refugee to tell one's own story, I compare it with confession as a “technique of government through truth” [Foucault, 2012a] starting from the hypothesis that in the governmentality of would-be refugees their speech is disqualified from the very beginning, and that definitively no discourse of truth is supposed to be formulated by asylum seekers. In order to make this comparison, stressing affinities and discontinuities, Foucault's work on confession represents a crucial reference. The main function of confession, also in its “secular” forms, is to attach the subject to its own truth; and this truth is not coming from the outside but it coincides with the very discourse that the subject is forced to produce upon itself. Now, if we shift to the examination process of would-be refugees, we see that the goal is not to tie the subject to its untruthful speech. Rather, “assessment of credibility” is the buzzword extensively used by the agencies of the humanitarian for postulating the discourse of the migrant as an “in principle contradictory” one; at the same time, would-be refugees are entitled to the *right to defend themselves against*

*the evidence of facts* and statements formulated in reference to their life/story and to their geopolitical location.

*When categories do not work anymore: the subtraction from the diagnostic grasp*

“So, by whom have you been threatened?” the commissioner asks.

“My cousin, as I said before.”

“But you also mentioned that your cousin escaped with you. So, your sentence is not tenable. Let's start again.”

This dialogue between the commissioner and a would-be refugee shows that the aim of the examination consists of making the subject contradict itself, playing with the incongruities that the examiner finds in the migrant's speech. This leads us to recall Fanon's descriptions on the difficulty for psychiatrists to make a diagnosis of the illness of the colonized due to his resistance to accounting for himself: “The refusal of the Muslim to authenticate through the confession of his gesture the social contract that is offered to him, means that his effective subjugation cannot be confused at all with the acceptance of that power” [Fanon, 2011 p.126]. On the one hand, the colonized refuses to authenticate his/her act, disengaging from the subjectivity to which the diagnostic knowledge tries to bind the colonized; on the other hand, this refusal is staged through an “orchestration of a lie” [Fanon, 2011]. Therefore, in some cases diagnostic categories fail to tell the truth about the subject, since this latter at some point resists the possibility that a diagnosis could be made; and this resilience is displayed also at the level of body: “the doctor would have to conclude that medical thinking was at fault [...] and he finds the patient at fault – an unruly, undisciplined patient, who doesn't know the rules of the game” [Fanon, 1994a, p. 8]. What Fanon enables us to see is the “regime of (non)truth”, that produces denied subjects – the rejected refugees – denying them also a space of belonging, is a regime that does not work in a smooth way. Rather, it is forced to constantly reassess its strategy in the face of elusive migrants' speeches. And the anxiety of governmental agencies to update both juridical categories and moral cartographies of migrants' practices shows their trouble in keeping up with the transformed causes of migration and with the changes of political context in their

countries of origin. But Fanon's reflections also remind us of the relevance of understanding the legacies between the present technology governing would-be refugees and the colonial governmentality. Perhaps, following Fanon's considerations, we could reverse the gaze on the government of would-be refugees from the standpoint of the governed subjects: in the place of the moral cartography enacted by the government of "untruth conducts", the persistent elusiveness of would-be refugees to make their biographies "readable" by the regime of veridiction, traces out another map. And such a map not only shows the resistances to diagnostic categories but it also stages these latter as "machines of translation", namely as the attempt to constantly keep up with the turbulence of migrations, traducing them into mobility profiles. There are biographies that cannot be fixed into profiles or narrated into stories. Or, stories that prove to be an exception to the unquestionable truth as evidence upon which the government of would-be refugees is grounded. Putting in conversation Fanon's analysis with Foucault's considerations on the politics of truth, it could be suggested that when the would-be refugee refuses to sign the "social contract"<sup>30</sup> offered by the moral geography of governmentality – making impossible to translate practices of mobility into "profiles" – he/she cracks the consistency of that regime of veridiction which seeks to make migrants' journeys intelligible. Nevertheless, it doesn't mean that the subject thoroughly subtracts from that regime; in fact, migrants' deportability [De Genova, 2010] and the stranded conditions of their existences living in a frozen-time dimension, tell us how power carves out their bodies and lives. Rather, despite the meshes of "diagnostic truth", would-be refugees (sometimes) do not authenticate that regime of veridiction, strategically playing with their untruth conduct and producing a strategic inversion of the "confession without truth" that is requested of them. To be clearer on this point, I make a detour into the mechanisms of confession as a discourse of truth of the self upon itself. As Foucault explains, the ordinary technique of confession in all its secular and religious varieties aims at disciplining and governing the subject through individualization. In fact, unlike the techniques of the self at play in ancient Greece, based on an unceasing

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<sup>30</sup> In fact, as Foucault stresses, the practice of confession "secularized" in the juridical context, implicates that the subject not only recognizes the crime but also the validity of the punishment and, consequently, the social pact in which it, through the act of the confession itself, asks to be reintegrated [Foucault, 2012a].

transformation of the subject – a subjectivation taking place via the relationship between the conduct and the production of truth – both Christian and contemporary relations to truth are basically hinged on the obedience to norms [Foucault, 1988, 2012b, 2012c]. But in any case, individualization still works as the main mechanism through which the subject is shaped and addressed. In the context of the speeches of the would-be refugees, despite the fact that they are demanded to go into detail on the narration of their life and their journey's experiences, the injunction to tell a good story is not grounded on individualization and, secondly, I suggest that it seems not involving a process of subjectivation in the sense illustrated by Foucault. Instead, biographical details and psychological examinations do not excavate the hidden truth of the “confessor subject” from itself but they are oriented to force biographies into a pre-existent moral cartography of migration categories and mobility profiles; b) and, simultaneously, they give rise to a new, updated “compound of unsettled existences”.

According to Foucault, secularized techniques of confession basically function as “therapies of truth” that the subject is compelled to engage in; in this way it could be stated that the couple coercion-therapy is at the very core of the injunction to speak and to tell the truth upon oneself. The peculiarity of the modern therapies of truth consists in postulating the dependence of our salvation – secular safety - on the obligation to know who we are: subjects must hold a thorough knowledge of themselves, and such a truth has to be regularly verbalized. This entails that the disciplinary function of the techniques of confession lies in a (true) production of knowledge that takes place through the discursive engagement of the subject.<sup>31</sup> But is this the case also for the good stories that would-be refugees have to craft? At close scrutiny it seems that any therapeutic function is excluded from the discourse of the refugees. In fact, the obligation to make one's own life intelligible and readable, doesn't aim to “care” or to “save” the suspect subject by integrating it into

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<sup>31</sup> Indeed, as Foucault explains in the conferences he hold in Lovanio in 1981, the obligation for the subject does not only concern the act of telling the truth upon itself but also the relationship of knowledge that it must undertake with itself ( see Foucault, *Mal faire, dire vrai. Fonction de l'aveu en justice*, Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2012, pp.5-7). In fact, the goal is to make the subject accept the diagnosis or the status attributed to it, in a way that could transform the relation that the subject has with its illness/guilt. To the contrary, in the speech demanded of the would-be refugees there is no the purpose of bounding the subjectivity of the asylum seeker to the categories or the profiles that migration governmentality invents. Nor the issue is to make the subject transform the relationship it has in regards to itself.

the order of citizenship: indeed, also the politics of resettlement which relocates people in third-countries assigning them a space to stay, is not conceived on the basis of a logic of therapeutic “salvation”, but rather as a biopolitical relocation of bodies and existences in space. Moreover, the asserted impossibility of care depends also on the colonial legacies that still pervade the body and the geographical origins of the would-be refugee: the colonial subject was depicted not only as a suspect subject but also as an incurable body, which escapes from all diagnostic categories. The “unreality” that, as Fanon illustrates, is judged in the colonies as the hallmark of the pain of the colonized underlies also the truth-telling of the would-be refugees<sup>32</sup> [Fanon, 2011]. In other words, in the absence of any possible “therapy of truth”, two distinct but overlapping levels are at play: on the one hand the individual level of conducts – where would-be refugees are assumed as vulnerable subjects to take care of, but whose latent vulnerability ultimately remains incurable; and on the other, the impossibility of the therapy is translated on a global scale, concerning the governmentality of migrants and displaced persons. In fact, the international regime of would-be refugees does not provide for a “therapy of citizenship” but rather it is embedded in fundamental political dissymmetry between hosting and sending countries, presenting the European space as a privileged and desirable place. Thus, the “impossible therapy” referred both to the life of the refugee and to the postcolonial order of mobility is enforced through the moral economy of resettlement.

*The twofold non-savoir:*

The supposed impossibility for the refugee to produce a truthful knowledge should be related to the radical *non-savoir* concerning the place in which the subject will be stranded or will be moved to – in other words, its future relocation. Going into detail, the produced “ignorance” concerns at the same time the relation to the space where people live and the effectiveness of the knowledges that migrants have on their rights as workers or as asylum seekers or as economic migrants. As far as their mobility is concerned, as I will show in the third chapter, it is highly monitored and controlled.

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<sup>32</sup> « The North African’s pain, for which we can find no lesional basis, is judged to have no consistency, no reality. Now, the North African is a man-who-doesn’t-like-work. So that whatever he does will be interpreted a priori on the basis of this » (Fanon, 1994a, p.6).

But more than that, the space in which would-be refugees are entitled to temporarily stay is ultimately “unusable” for them: in fact, both the rights they are entitled to and the possibility that in principle they have for getting economic autonomy are de facto excluded from any effective access. For instance, many migrants who arrived in Italy in 2011 from Libya have now found “informal jobs” working in southern Italy as day labourers: also those who know both their rights as workers and the possibility to regularize their juridical status through the “sanatoria” law, then having no formal contract their eligibility actually remains a mere abstraction. Concerning the abstract rights that refugees have in the hosting country, this knowledge finally turns out to be quite useless to the extent that the real conditions of the camp make those rights ineffective and not enjoyable. Consequently, the impossible true knowledge of oneself is combined with the fundamental *non-savoir* about their lives and about the space where they are stranded. However, if would-be refugees are not produced as subjects of knowledge, a politics of knowledge is in any case at stake: in the case of refugees, I would say that knowledge is posited *outside* the subjects to govern, nurturing and articulating with a regime of veridiction that is grounded on “evidence”; and against which the subject has to prove its exception to the norm. To sum up, the supposed impossibility of truth in asylum seekers’ speech indicates that the regime of truth is fundamentally external to the space of the subject’s formation. In this way, reflections of processes of subjectivation need to take into account this factor: indeed, if as Foucault remarks there is a direct implication between the regime of veridiction and the production of subjectivity – since the subject is required to attach itself to its discourse of truth upon itself – what about a confession without truth? That is to say, what are the effects of a regime of truth that is dislocated from the subject? Is it possible to talk about processes of subjectivation – starting from the idea that “all practices through which the subject is constituted come along with the formation of knowledges” and in turn that this knowledge is postulated to be produced by the subject? Nevertheless, the very partition between an inside and an outside of the regime of truth becomes unsettled by would-be refugees’ strategies: in fact, the production of “good” stories, that is the choice to craft and alter one’s own story and biography in order to meet the criteria for getting refugee status, involves a truth-telling to which the subject ties itself. Or, to the contrary, by

resisting any “diagnosis of truth”, would-be refugees undermine the functioning and the tenability of migration categories and mobility profiles.

*Politics of presence and the strategic play of a dislocated truth:*

The complex dovetail between the government of untruthful conducts and the biopolitics of scattered populations brings to the fore the ductility of the notion of technologies of government for unpacking the mechanisms through which subjectivity is produced. But no conclusion can be drawn from this analysis for thinking about an effective resistance to that regime of truth. In fact, one should bear in mind that in the government of would-be refugees two levels coexist and relate to each other: the government of singular conducts and the government of populations. However, interruptions and short-circuits of the regime of truth could take place from the inside of the “humanitarian corridors” where would-be refugees are placed or finally excluded from. After all, if we focus on the fact that truth is somehow dislocated from the subject, the detachment between the subject and the truth that performs its “profile” at times is strategically reversed by refugees into a foothold for refusing and challenging the grip of power. For instance, as Fanon's analysis highlights, the colonized, by troubling the functioning of diagnostic categories and making the therapy impossible, refuses both to sign the “social contract” offered to him and to confirm that regime of truth coming from the outside, in that case colonial governmentality. By the same token, would-be refugees (sometimes) succeed in making impossible their capture into profiles, forcing power to keep up with the heterogeneity and the undecidability of migrants' practices; or, conversely, they tell “good stories” for matching the protection criteria. Temporary strategies of resistance that are however quite easily recaptured and normalized by the constant redefinition of technologies of governmentality. But if we shift the attention to the spatial upheavals produced by migrants, or to the places migrants arrive as unexpected presences invalidating statistical expectations, it is rather the governmental technology which is forced to tame those unexpected turbulences. And no proof of evidence or truth could disregard those presences in space: a politics of the presence against a politics of truth.

This inroad into the government of would-be refugees has highlighted the exclusive and exclusionary boundaries through which the subject of truth, namely the subject investigated by Foucault's genealogy, is shaped and subjected – in the twofold meaning of “being subject to” and “being subjectivized”. At the same time, such a trajectory in the spaces of would-be refugees enables us to “complicate” the genealogies of the pronoun “our” (referring to “our societies”) focusing on spaces and lives “at the limits of the world's history” [Guha, 2003]: would-be refugees are not the mere reversal of the political subject or of the good citizen, rather they emerge from the primary partition between migrants and refugees and from the multiplication of different degrees of (un)protection, configuring an unstable moral cartography of legitimate or undesired presences. Thus, beyond the strugglefield over truth and subjectivity in the government of refugees, such an analysis could be turned into litmus paper and, at the same time, into a “troubling factor” in the light of which would be a rethinking of the genealogy of the modern Western subject. Ultimately, conceiving critical philosophy as investigation for “understanding how subjects are effectively tied into and through the forms of veridiction in which they are engaged” [Foucault, 2012a], a history of the present could not and should not be made “by writing in the comfort zone” [Stoler, 2002] or by positing a form of subjectivity yardstick of all the others.

A critical focus on the regimes of truth at play in the government of would-be refugees makes it possible to bring out the differential mechanisms of “governing through truth”: a gaze on the “working differently” of the mechanisms of power and truth in the government of would-be refugees could be used to investigate, starting from a marginal and specific location, the “production of truth” required to the citizen-subject. This is not to say that rationale and mechanisms governing migrants extend all over; rather, it is a question of drawing the attention to the transformations at stake in producing and governing subjects. In fact, as I have shown also at the end of the first section, from a Foucaultian point of view we cannot really analyse the transformations of power without questioning the regime of truth at stake and without a preliminary exploration of the forms of subjectivities in question – namely, how the subject of power has been transformed. Obviously, it is important to stress that it is never a question of a radical shift from one regime of truth to another one

but to complicate any univocal analytical grid, shedding light on the (different) impacts that the government of mobility has in “reworking of subjects”.

After having explained the angle through which I gaze at the “twofold spatial upheaval” that took place in the Mediterranean –suggesting taking the migration regime *in reverse* -, in the next chapter I will focus on the spatial and political turmoil that revolutionary uprisings and practices of migrations generated on the northern shore.

## CHAPTER 2:

### **Discordant<sup>33</sup> practices of freedom. Three snapshots on the bank-effects<sup>34</sup> of the Arab Uprisings**

*“Liberty is a practice. So the liberty of men is never assured by the institutions and laws. This is why almost all of these laws and institutions are quite capable of being turned not because they are ambiguous, but simply because liberty is what must be exercised” (M. Foucault, Space, Knowledge, Power, 1982)*

The Arab Uprisings and the others in connection. This could be a title for describing the general context in which the Arab revolutions have been read on the Northern shore of the Mediterranean and in the US, presenting the Arab turmoil as a forerunner of new political practices – for instance, the occupation of the Kasbah in Tunis and of Tahrir Square in Cairo that staged new ways of dealing with public space – and as the belated emergence of democracy. And the simultaneity of Occupy movements and the *Indignados* with the events of the Arab Uprisings has clearly fostered the easy connections posited by many critical analysts, activists and scholars: “From Tahrir Square to Oakland”, “From Cairo to Wall Street. Voices from the Global Spring”, “Egypt supports Wisconsin”, “Turn Wall Street into Tahrir Square”. An inverse and double contamination seemed to be envisaged in all these analyses: the “not yet” of democracy going South, and new fresh practices of political participation migrating from the Southern Mediterranean Countries northward. It is beyond the scope of this work to make a comparative analysis of the European and American Occupy protest movements and the revolutionary uprisings in the Arab region, as well as to investigate their mutual influences. Rather, without denying all of this recognized nexus, I will focus here on the spatial upheaval triggered by the Arab uprisings on the Northern shore of the Mediterranean and, in particular, on what could be named the “Tunisian upheaval in Europe”. And at the

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33 Many thanks to Arnold Davidson for suggesting this expression to me.

34 The term “bank-effect” refers here to the reverberations and the repercussions that migrations and the Arab Uprisings generated on the Northern shore of the Mediterranean.

same, I draw the attention on the politics of/over life that migration governmentality put into place to tame and regulate migrants' spatial upheavals that took place across the Mediterranean in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings [Hass, Sigona, 2012].

This chapter takes three snapshots concerning the “Tunisian turmoil in Europe”. The first snapshot is about the spatial rearrangements produced by the “North Africa Emergency” (ENA) declared by the Italian government in 2011 as a response in the face of the massive arrival of “Libyan” and Tunisian migrants on the Italian coasts; the second snapshot focuses on the multiplication of struggles in detention centers in Italy during the Arab revolutions; and the last one concerns symbolic occupations of buildings made by migrants in Italy. All these three snapshots draw the attention to new border spatialities as a result of power over/of migrants' lives<sup>35</sup>. I look at them not as the emergent outcomes of struggles, conflicts and negotiations between techniques of governmentality and migrants' movements, both relying not only on biological life but mostly, and in a broader way, on the wide materiality of existence, conceived as an historical construction [Foucault, 1996c] and as an hetero-normed condition [Butler, 1996]. Nevertheless, it doesn't follow that escapes, practices of migration and strategies of resistance are coextensive and isomorphic to power: rather, I would focus mainly on the unsettling unexpected nature of resistances that try at times to dodge and times to reverse the political technology aimed at capturing and capitalizing people's movements. In this account, if we certainly need to emphasize acts of refusal and flights from the mesh of power, at the same time I would make room for the asymmetrical dimension of resistances [Revel, 2011] conceiving that precisely as the capacity of transgressing and redefining meanings and uses of spaces, along with the invention of forms of struggles and survival strategies<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> In this regard, I argue that the notion of “life” is conceived here not in biological terms but as the material and complete existence of individual as historical subjects. As Judith Revel contends: “We have to account for life as an historical construction. Biopowers should not be conceived only as biological powers but also as dispositives of subjection., exploitation, capture and regulation of existence. Historical and epistemological determinations which produce life. It's necessary to think at the same time the determinations that make us being what effectively we are and the possibility to detach from ourselves” (J. Revel, *Identità, natura, vita. Tre decostruzioni biopolitiche*, in M. Galzigna, eds, Foucault oggi, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2008, p. 149).

<sup>36</sup> However, before starting, I have to define how I use here the notion of biopower and then, why I prefer to talk about the power over/of migrants' lives. At first, I would remind that Foucault makes

By mobilizing the technique of snapshots, turns the attention to the production of new spatialities as an outcome of these practices of migration [Massey, 2005]. Spatialities framed and enacted by political technologies through economic or juridical measures, to respond, to catch, to (re)frame, to neutralize and to profit from revolutionary events; but also spatialities subverted and produced by migrants crossing borders. The advantage of such a perspective is, as William Walters observes, that “the zonal allows us to map irregular spaces that are neither national nor global and it avoids the teleological assumption that developments in migration control have an inevitable direction or end point. A zone is an extended area of circulation, connection, mobility and flow that spans heterogeneous systems and contexts” [Walters, 2011b, pp. 53-54]. The interplay between these two movements of spatial production – and practices in space – is precisely what is at stake here, in order to account for the complex and conflicting regime of power over/of migrants' lives. Such a spatial gaze, I contend, could work as a litmus paper to scrutinize the subtle dynamics and the instabilities between power over migrants' lives and power of migrants. In fact, if political technology continuously plays in space and by making spaces in order to govern people's movements – creating special emergency areas, devising advanced techniques of bordering or externalizing frontiers – at the same time migrants' practices at times not only trouble those channelled spaces of mobility but they also put into place different modalities of enacting and persisting in space. The reorganization of the border regime in the face of migrants' spatial upheavals basically takes place through two main strategies: the “strategies of detection – improving surveillance systems and monitoring techniques but also

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reference to biopower in three specific contexts of analysis – Society must be defended, The will to knowledge, and Security, territory, population - and that according to the Foucaultian meaning it can't be separated by the historical production of population as an object of government. In this way, the assumption of this analysis is that we can't stretch the concept of biopower as an overwhelming and encompassing notion designating all forms of power over lives. Secondly, as I'll suggest in the first snapshot, it's the very notion of population that should be rethought in the light of the global current transformations occurred in our societies, mainly due to the redefinition of world labor force's composition on the one hand, and to the increase – of people's movements on the other hand. Thus, my argument here is that the government of migrations is at the very core of a broader government of populations, conceived today not as an homogeneous and national group but as a highly differentiated one, and therefore we could question how biopower works today; but at the same time, if we decide to focus on migrants' struggles and the government of migrants' practices, my point is that we should rather account for that in terms of a more general power over/of migrants' lives, since neither is it a population as a whole that is at stake, nor does it go without saying that the mechanisms of capture and government of migrants' lives form a specific and different modality of biopower.

displacing the border before and beyond the geopolitical line – and the “strategies of b/ordering” – that is, techniques and knowledges through which migrants’ conducts are regulated in their spatial persistence and in their mobility.

However, I do not bring attention to the political movements taking place on the southern shore to see how they resonated in the European space: rather, I take into account a kind of movement which is acted between the two shores, namely the practices of migration taking place in the aftermath of the Tunisian revolution. The goal is not to bring out possible connections with events, practices and movements currently at stake on the Northern shore but, on the contrary, to illuminate how migrants’ spatial upheavals have multiplied - triggering a sort of domino effect - and, most importantly, engendered political and spatial transformations unsettling the tempos and the conditions of the politics of mobility. Thus, it is not a matter here to trace similarities and influences but to follow the disruptive forces of those practices which troubled, more than connecting, the supposed stability of the Schengen space. The choice to not take into account the Tunisian revolutionary movements but migrants’ movements is because I see these latter both as specific and non-conventional practices that at times trouble the spatial and the political order, forcing power to govern their “intractability”, and as practices that pushed forward the Tunisian revolution on the northern shore and as freedom of movement. But I tend to resist the denomination of “political movement” to designate migrants’ practices, also in the specific case of Tunisian migrations during the Arab Spring: indeed, the risk is of overshadowing the specificity of practices of migration and of struggling as a migrant, encapsulating all that under the overcharged category of political movement and reestablishing the model of a collective homogenous subject-form. Then, what comes out as a subtext of this chapter and that I will better develop in the fourth chapter, is that one of the peculiarities of migrants’ practices is their complex game within and against the regime of visibility.

What is at issue in these three snapshots are the instabilities produced at different levels by migrants’ spatial upheavals discordant” practices of freedom that do not fit into the script of the insurgent democracy or of majority politics: they trouble the

“isomorphism of the surface” which makes different political experiences easily connect and influence each other.

Rather than tracing a spatial continuity between these snapshots, the aim is to bring to the fore the coexistence of different spatialities with their nature of “emergent-emergency spaces”, meaning by that the production of new political practices as correlative of, at the same time, a temporal and a temporary dimension. “Emergent” alludes to a temporal aspect, namely to spaces that arise suddenly, as the outcome of economic spatial constructions and juridical decrees, or of strategic struggles and spatial practices. Turning the gaze to these spatialities, this chapter highlights the production both of anomalous spaces of governmentality, and of spatial overturns which challenge representability and rights as the main axes of the political domain [Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos, 2008]. “Emergency” refers to the temporary dimension vested in these spaces as political responses to a disruptive and troubling array of events, subjects and transformations framed as threats to social and spatial order: “emergency”, in the context we consider here, is nothing but the name given to a space carved out by heterogeneous political technologies (administrative measures, knowledges, technical interventions, juridical statements). Power of bordering and migrants' strategies do not take place on a flat and smooth surface, but rather, all these heterogeneous and conflicting modalities of playing on and in space—to border and to manage people's movements or to burn spatial distances – often give rise to spatialities that, in their turn, form distinct (bounded) sites, partly working as a kind of “training-anomalous-terrains” of political experimentation, which then could spread to other domains or spaces. The second related point considers that we should bypass the form of the “camp” as the exceptional space *par excellence* [Agamben, 1998] to understand what is at stake in the power over/of migrants lives: rather, the spatialities I deal with are characterized at once by a specific economy of spatial practices, and by a movement which constantly encroaches on the outside.

### **North-Africa emergency and “Libyan” migrants scattered in Italy:**

March 2013: One of the most visible and politically immediate bank-effects generated on the Northern shore of the Mediterranean was the mobilization of actors, structures and spaces related to the so-called “North Africa Emergency” declared by

the Italian government in February 2011 and that ended in March 2013. The North Africa Emergency was officially designed as a program of aid and hosting addressed to people coming from the Libyan conflict: the program established that all asylum seekers arriving in Italy would be hosted in the *Centres of Hosting for Asylum Seekers* (CARA) until their demand of asylum was processed. Due to the sizeable number of arrivals in the first half of 2011, asylum seekers were hosted in alternative structures managed by cooperatives that had never dealt with migration, each of them receiving 43 euros per day per refugee. However, before entering into details of the functioning of the North Africa Emergency (ENA), I have to clarify from what point of view I take examine it: in fact the aim here is to sidestep any approach grounded on the logic of exception, focusing rather on the spatialization of the power's functioning and on the ways in which political technologies or administrative measures shape migrants' lives. Or better, "exception" here is not necessarily associated with politics of exclusion, since in the name of exception selected practices of mobility can be included into "humanitarian channels" or in protection programs and new "precarious zones" are built. Of particular concern here is the dispersion on the territory that the mechanism of the "modular hosting"<sup>37</sup> meant for migrants. And despite the many inefficiencies and the arbitrariness of the function of the "hosting machine", the issue here is not to criticize the infringement of law and argue a smoother functioning of the mechanism of asylum: it is not a question, for instance, of opposing the "anomaly" of the "Italian model" to a more transparent or efficient system, but rather of raising critical points both on the principle and on the effective functioning of the "asylum machine"

Mineo/Bari, August 2011. First of all, what should be noticed is the patchy arrangement of the system of hosting put into place by ENA: a variegated geography of centres and structures was activated, giving rise to highly non-homogeneous procedures and conditions of hosting. But most of all it's important to underscore the ambivalence of this mechanism of capture and strand of migrants, drawing the attention to the strategy of chasing away and leaving undetected migrants' presence.

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<sup>37</sup>[http://www.protezionecivile.gov.it/jcms/it/view\\_dossier.wp?jsessionid=2AFFBDF4FAE9E6A47A503ACB356059C0?contentId=DOS24091](http://www.protezionecivile.gov.it/jcms/it/view_dossier.wp?jsessionid=2AFFBDF4FAE9E6A47A503ACB356059C0?contentId=DOS24091)

“Parked” in improvised structures or instead in new durable centers, “Libyan” asylum seekers were kept substantially unaware of their future possible destinations. In fact, the supposed “facilitations to protection” – which should consist in informing asylum seekers of the whole procedure of asylum, and also in putting them in the best condition for obtaining international protection – actually materialized in a series of obstacles to asylum seekers, making them all appear as “economic migrants”. To the principal question asked in the C3 formulary<sup>38</sup> “why did you leave your Country of origin?” I realized in my visits to the Cara that most of them answered “to find a job”, an answer that means almost automatic exclusion from the “selective mechanism” of protection. In fact, the majority of them were not adequately informed about the criteria upon which the allocation of political asylum is predicated. Migrants were de facto left to their own fate despite being at the same time controlled in their mobility, and on the other hand they have been stranded in remote zones of Italy (in the Alps or in the middle of the countryside, in overcrowded centers or in small houses) without their demands being processed. In this regard, one can see the manifold riots that took place in detention centres as exasperated reactions to such a situation and this was obviously an important factor. However, riots and protests were also markers of the threshold of acceptability that people coming from Libya and Tunisia could tolerate.

Bari, 1 august 2011: asylum seekers coming from Libya started a riot in the Cara of Bari Palese protesting about the delays in the processing of their demands, and then they exited from the centre blocking the motorway and the railway, paralyzing traffic in the city. After violence by the police against the migrants, 29 of them were arrested for the first time. But despite the “cost” they paid for the insurrection, they launched an “ultimatum” to the territorial commission of asylum, arguing that if their demands were not processed in few days, they would rise up again. Thus their strong reaction was at the same time a way to put the Italian authorities over a barrel, demanding to be really taken into account as asylum seekers and not as negligible presences on the territory. But, again, the “costs” of the protest in the long run could not be overlooked: as in the case of the riots triggered by the Tunisian migrants,

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<sup>38</sup> It is the formulary that asylum seekers need to fill once they arrive in Italy before doing the interview with the Territorial Commission that processes their demand of asylum

especially those in the detention center of Gradisca d'Isonzo (24 February) and Modena (27 June), the Italian press talked about an “external and orchestrated organization. And some months later, in December 2011, 45 asylum seekers involved in the struggle were processed and then deported.

Mineo, Sicily<sup>39</sup>: the biggest Cara of Italy, detaining more than 2000 people, is situated in the middle of a desert of oranges, 10 kilometers from Mineo, the closest village on the top of a hill. Everyday asylum seekers receive an allowance of 3.5 euros that ultimately they cannot spend outside but only in the internal shop of the centre, where they can only buy cigarettes. Thus, this has generated a circuit of informal economy in the village of Mineo, where asylum seekers go to resell the cigarettes in exchange for money to buy everything else other than cigarettes – for instance, for women it was their only possibility to buy tampons, since the managing institution of the camp did not provide them.

However, the point here is not to show up the illegalities that institutional actors perpetrated within detention centres; since if one contests the very existence of migration detention institutions criticism of the opacity of administrative procedures doesn't hit the right target, and at the same time risks shifting the battleground over detention centers to claims for more human conditions or for legality. The violence and the power exercised in detention centres cannot be reduced to a question of legality/illegality [Benjamin, 1986]: if detention is illegitimate, there cannot be something like humane treatment in a condition of detention due to the “crime” of being an unwanted/irregular presence on the territory. Consequently, the focus here is not on the abuse and arbitrariness of power but on the resolution of migrants in carrying on their spatial presence and on the politics of stranding-and-discharging through spatial dispersion that characterized the North Africa emergency hosting machine.

The protests in August were not the first at Mineo camp: on 10th May 2011 200 asylum seekers living in the camp organized a huge blockage of traffic demanding, that their claims be processed; in that case, they obtained that the territorial

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<sup>39</sup> About Mineo see the report <http://www.storiemigranti.org/spip.php?article1024> and the interview conducted by Garelli and Tazzioli with the asylum seekers: <http://www.storiemigranti.org/spip.php?article1020>

commission started to work on that after a few days. And, after August, more unrest took place, since the starting of the processing of the demands by the territorial commission was finally only a partial victory. The work of the territorial commission was going ahead very slowly and most of the time people were examined only by one member instead of five, often without appropriate language translation; and secondly, in autumn 2011 the first rejections of protection started to come. “This is not an admissible decision, we all fled from the same war, the Libyan conflict, and we are here because of that war”, I have been told by all the rejected refugees I met out of the camp: as I will show in the next chapter, the same discourse was then strongly argued at Choucha camp in Tunisia by rejected refugees. In fact, through the statement “all of us come from Libya and escaped a war” which circulated in many borderzones and sites of the Mediterranean, “Libyan” migrants cracked the tenability of the Geneva Convention’s principles: in particular the confronted with the limits of its nation-based logic – namely, the primacy of the Country of origin – and of the settled-normativity – overlooking for instance African internal migrations, that is people who move for years and so who could find themselves in dangerous situations or contexts of persecutions that are not their country of origin.

All these protests unpacked and undermined the mechanism of “stranding-and-discharging” which actually underpins the politics of asylum, affirming the duty of humanitarian and governmental forces to finish their job. At the same time, more than practices of resistance they strongly posited the unacceptability of such a treatment, challenging and trying to interrupt the meshes of governmentality which exercise a specific government over their lives. In this sense, their refusal to being governed in that way shows indeed that migrations are always crisscrossed by and enmeshed into struggles; that is to say it’s not just when migrants engage in an organized struggle or lay claims that the conflicting dimension of migrations come out. This doesn’t involve a romanticism which sees migrants as struggling subjects: to the contrary, the idea that punctual struggles and resistances against specific non-functioning of the asylum system actually convey a broader disqualification and a refusal of the ways in which migrants’ lives are governed, enables us to downplay stress on visible and organized struggles. In fact, being called a migrant involves being captured and shaped by a complex set of policies, knowledges, techniques and

encounters that make migrants' lives governable, or better governable as migrants. Thus, the analysis of punctual struggles and riots –that shows how the humanitarian machine is constantly defeated by migrants– should go along with a consideration of the strugglefield of governmentality in which migrants are enmeshed [see chapter 1].

The big centres of Mineo and Bari should not be taken as spatial paradigms of the structures of the North Africa program: rather, what characterized that program is its uneven spatial distribution on Italian territory, which included alpine locations many hours away on foot from the closest village. The choice of these remote places was justified in the name of a more humane and sustainable arrangement for migrants, in place of living in overcrowded detention centres very similar to prisons. But, under close scrutiny, this spatial distance actually meant migrants experienced extreme difficulty in gaining access to the services and rights they were entitled to, so it resulted in a very scanty assistance<sup>40</sup> and finally it worked also as an anti-clustering factor preventing the possibility of coordinated or mass struggles. Many of them decided to escape in Milan or in other cities of North Italy, despite the official right to go out from the CARA during the day as stated by Cara regulations. Therefore, the remote locations of the North Africa emergency were little by little depopulated due to the flight of migrants that choose to self-organize in the cities, to occupy buildings and, in some cases, to find a job as hired men in South Italy (Foggia, Rosarno) or in the North (Saluzzo).

In May 2012 out of 54,000 people coming from Libya, the percentage of rejected refugees is around 70%, despite pressure by many groups of activists to provide all asylum seekers from Libya one year of humanitarian protection. December 2013: the end of the North Africa emergency was postponed to March 2013, due to the actual impossibility for the cooperatives that host refugees to discharge them and act as if they suddenly did not exist. “What to do with them ?”: this was the main unresolved question for governmental actors, a question that migrants themselves reiterated through their persisting in those centres, demanding that a sustainable solution would be found for them. This political impasse related to the difficulty of making people

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<sup>40</sup> Thousands of people (230 in Valcamonica, 118 in the village of Montecampione at 1800 metres above the sea level) were hosted in hotels and structures on the Alps, in locations that could not be reached even by the Red Cross

disappear into the void and not letting them circulate all over the Italian territory as irregular presences. It led the government give temporary humanitarian protection to almost all the asylum seekers from Libya and grant them 500 euros as a way of winding refugees up from the humanitarian regime. But, once they were supposed to have become autonomous subjects, entitled to the rights related to temporary protection and allowed to freely circulate in the Schengen space, “not-to-chase” migrants<sup>41</sup> found themselves not in a juridical impasse but in an existential one: the growing impact of the economic crisis made it impossible for migrants both to get any social protection and welfare assistance and to find even an informal job. Therefore, Cara and Reception Centers continued to be their main dwelling, and finally the possibility to have food and shelter became inevitably preferable to the perspective of being at the mercy of economic uncertainties and anti-immigrant raids made to defend citizens against migrant “job thieves”. For their part, the corporations that manage the centres have an interest in keeping the Cara open, in order to continue to get the 43 euros per day per person. Thus, the Cara of Mineo is more overcrowded than at the time of the North Africa emergency, with 3000 people living in the centre compared to the 1800 asylum seekers there in December 2011: a full speed machine, that nevertheless shifted from a humanitarian rationale to a dispositive to “park” people in an indefinite wait, when also the channels of informal economy are clogged up. Asylum seekers still continue to arrive in Mineo, transferred there as soon as they arrive in Lampedusa, as the two Eritrean guys I met out of the centre confirmed to me and then argued: “so, finally this is Italy, right? I didn’t imagine it like this; but we know that also here there is the economic crisis. We don’t want to stay here, maybe Sweden or Switzerland... and what about London? If you could just tell us what train we should take to get there... where there are not too many controls onboard”. So, Italy is neither for them a desirable place nor do they want to demand asylum to stay there. Or better, they do but only in order to be able to then move away and, in the meanwhile, take a rest there “at least

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<sup>41</sup> I use this expression to indicate all those people who were rejected as refugees but who were entitled of the temporary protection, which de facto means a temporary protection, both for the limited set of rights that it grants and for the arbitrary logic upon which it is predicated. In fact, it could be granted at discretion of the territorial commission, when the claim of asylum is rejected because of the criteria for international protection are not met, but “there exist grounded and serious humanitarian reasons”.

here [at Mineo camp] we can eat every day and going out of the centre, when you leave you don't know what you could come across"<sup>42</sup>. Differently from one year before, migrants' turmoil has been tamed through the normalization of the camp life: that is to say, on the one hand, the official end of the North Africa emergency has slackened the controls into and outside the camp, and at the same time the managing authorities have realized that a more indulgent regime will prevent new riots. And, migrants themselves now see collective struggles as wasteful and strenuous actions that could work to their detriment, and that do not actually correspond to the deeply different juridical conditions which every one of them is: for someone else has obtained international protection, someone has humanitarian protection but still needs to get the 500 euros as established by the Ministry of the Interior, someone is still waiting for the examination by the territorial commission, etc. Therefore, the working of the categories in the government of migrations and refugees basically generates a fragmentation effect, just due to the "mobility profiles" migrants are shaped by. Indeed, the juridical status, or better the juridical limbo, through which migrants are defined, materialize for migrants into forced temporal geographies: who waits for the result of the asylum process cannot but stay stranded in place; who is rejected moves as an irregular presence on the territory; who gets the temporary protection but doesn't have the permit to circulate in Europe, yet has to wait for an indefinite time before going. More broadly, migration governmentality works according to a "dividing through categories" rationale producing a precarization of lives – tracing out precarious transit zones in which economic migrants and refugees are differently allocated [Hess, 2012]. Or to put it differently, a mechanism of "categorizing for partitioning": the multiplication of juridical categories in which migrants' lives are situated - very often stepping out with their biographies and stories of the boundaries of those mobility profiles – works as a dividing-mechanism among migrants themselves. Beyond the full spectrum of migration categories and mobility profiles, we should consider how in practice the complexity and singularities of migrants' stories blur any clear distinction between the different juridical categories; and in this way, the multiple partitioning set becomes de facto an also more complex and blurred producer of different temporal geographies. In

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<sup>42</sup> Interview conducted out of the CARA of Mineo in May 2013

fact, one of the keystones of migration governance lies in the production of juridical differences through the multiplication of status, that then results into a differentiated regime of living depending on the different mobility profile through which one is labeled: actually, it is precisely in this sense that the governmentality of migration is primarily a government over lives. These differences are further sharpened due to the migrant experiences which never fully fit the existing legal bordered identities. This consideration raises a questioning about the drive to pluralize migration that underlies many critical analyses: indeed, if on the one side a political epistemology of migrations needs to unpack the migration catchword, highlighting the heterogeneous conditions and practices of mobility that the name “migration” eclipses, on the other side we should confront with the simultaneous multiplication and pluralization of profiles created by governmental agencies. And if one could object that it is not the same kind of multiplicity that is at stake, nonetheless it’s not enough to push for the multiplication of migration and the recognition of singularities: in this regard, the important criticism against the monolithic understanding of migration by governmental agencies and its objectification into an overwhelming category should take into account at the same time the “partitioning through differentiation” upon which the asylum politics is predicated. Coming back to the camp of Mineo, in place of setting collective struggles, migrants have started to mobilize in small groups, on the basis of their specific conditions and the claims to make. Most of the time their way of grappling with their existential impasse has actualized into the choice to leave and take one’s own chance, or to stay in the camp only “in half”, that is officially keeping a place there, but living de facto much of the time in nearby cities.

May 2013, Paris, Hamburg and Berlin. If the so called North Africa emergency was one of the most visible bank effects of the Arab Uprisings on the Northern shore of the Mediterranean, we should consider also how the North Africa Program has in turn resonated beyond Italy. In fact, as I argued above, by North Africa emergency I don’t mean here only the governmental strategy of intervention and the set of measures deployed on the Italian territory but, more widely, the spatial effects and the transformations of power relations that took place in relation to that system of

"spread hosting"<sup>43</sup>. Despite the changed political situation and the decline of organized struggles by asylum seekers in Italy, the scattering of “Libyan” asylum seekers and refugees coming from Italy produced “knots of struggle” in many European towns, in which they protested against any possible deportation or return to Italy and fought to get accommodation. 350 migrants from Libya entitled to temporary protection named themselves the “Lampedusa in Hamburg” group<sup>44</sup>, arguing “we did not survive the Nato war in Libya to die in the streets of Hamburg”; in this way they staged preeminently, as the marker of their present migrant condition, the geographies they enacted and the border-site in which they were blocked, identified or detained. “We are here and we will stay. No European country can evade the responsibility. We will not be played with anymore by the European policy. We were told that the only thing we would get is a ticket back to Italy. We think that the social and economic situation in Italy and other southern European countries is well known and that there is no possibility of livelihood for us”.

So we put the question again in the room, what should be achieved, if we get a document of humanitarian protection but at the same time every possibility to survive is denied?”. These sentences incisively describe the condition of being “not-to-chase” migrants”, that is the condition of those who have not been recognized as refugees but have been given temporary humanitarian protection. Ultimately, the very formula of “measures to favor exit patterns” for the “Libyan” migrants is quite ambiguous: in fact, more than programs of integration or of labor training, these measures have resulted up to now in ways encouraging people moving away from the hosting centers.

*Organized collective escapes and extreme resistances: the struggle for “the oxygen of freedom”:*

*April 2011, Lampedusa and beyond:* The second snapshot I take could start in the island of Lampedusa, where 25, 000 Tunisian migrants arrived in 2011, just in the aftermath of the Tunisian revolution, most of them aiming at going to France. The reason why I take this specific snapshot is that Tunisian migrants, through their

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<sup>43</sup> This is the official name given by the Italian government to the “hosting machine” deployed once that it declared the North Africa emergency

<sup>44</sup> <http://lampedusa-in-hamburg.tk/>

presence, produced turmoil at the level of both European politics and Italian law, and radicalized claims and forms of protest. More than that, the analytical lens that I would like to suggest, consists in seeing a specific articulation that needs to be grasped, between the political event of the Tunisian revolution, migrants' departures from Tunisia, and their unconditioned will to move once they arrived on the Italian territory. To put it differently, gazing at the unexpected arrival of Tunisian migrants all coming in the span of a few months makes us interrogate the juridical and political transformations and the spatial turbulence that their presence generated on the European territory. New temporary spatialities emerged as outcome of migrants' movements and, at the same time, as the effect of border enforcement at the level of European policies. In fact, as Federica Sossi persuasively argues, Tunisian migrants had immediately to confront techniques of bordering that were activated to respond to that “sudden and effective upheaval of the space” [Sossi, 2012a]. In this regard, instead of lingering on the island of Lampedusa, I move across the Italian territory, taking snapshots of the multiplicity of struggles that happened in Italian detention centers. The choice to focus here on detention centres ultimately depends on three reasons. Firstly, because looking at delimited spaces, it's easier than elsewhere to see all political transformations and issues at stake – considering the detention center as a kind of “thickener” and accelerator of political dynamics concerning controls over people's mobility. Power over migrants' lives acts in detention centers in such an invasive and encompassing way that people seem to be in a condition only to counter-act, that is to refuse the grip of power by subtraction. However, at the same time, the aim of this glance is to highlight how those practices of migration and strategies of resistance actually “knock down” the walls of detention centers, not only in a physical way but also politically. The third aspect to explore consists in understanding if the multiplication of Tunisian migrants' struggles in 2011 and their radicalism had an influence over other migrants' struggles taking place in the Europe. Nevertheless, this question makes much more sense insofar as it is placed within the articulation we sketched out between the political uprisings that happened in Tunisia in January 2011 and the practices of migration that occurred in the same period of time towards Italy. Indeed, what is at issue here is precisely to understand what kind of interconnections subsist between these two phenomena, namely between the

Tunisian revolution and border crossings. The will and the struggle for freedom that triggered and made effective the Tunisian upheaval, I suggest, has been retained and pushed forward by Tunisian migrants as people who took part in the revolution and then enacted that freedom as freedom of movement, in part breaking with the norms of their Country [Mezzadra, 2006] and in part presenting themselves as the “sons of the revolution” [Sossi, 2012b].

The first freeze frame of this snapshot refers to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011 – so, in the midst of the “Tunisian revolution in Italy”: it shows a group of Tunisian migrants clinging to the wire netting of a detention center in Sicily, protesting about being detained like criminals arrived from the other shore of the Mediterranean Sea. One of them screams “The world is not mine or yours, it neither belongs to Obama nor to Berlusconi, it belongs to everyone. So, if I want to breathe the oxygen of Italy, I can do it; if I want to breathe the oxygen of Canada, I can do it. No wire exists for me. I'm here not to steal or to rob; I'm here for the oxygen of freedom”<sup>45</sup>. What is stunning in these words, is on the one hand the insistence on an unconditioned freedom, and on the other hand, the inflection of freedom itself ultimately as freedom of movement, and at the same time as an unconditional right to stay everywhere, to trample the soil and to move on.

Moreover, this discourse displaces the spread discourse which sees migrations as the result of economic individual needs or of global market dynamics. Indeed, the sentences of the oxygen of freedom quoted highlight a very different point: the economic factor is only one among others which induced people to leave Tunisia, and most of the time it's not primary; rather, what they strive for is the effective possibility of moving, of living elsewhere. The claim about “the oxygen of freedom”, apart from the unconditional yearning to freedom that it reveals, also makes glaringly clear the persistence of a partitioning line that, at present, works as one of the main political technologies for the production of social inequality: in fact, it points at the crosscutting geopolitical gap between those people on earth who can move freely with their passport, and those who are not allowed to move without a permit. Thus it shows how this massive divider is the source of tangible effects: the

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45 <http://www.storiemigranti.org/spip.php?article922>

oxygen of freedom to which the Tunisian migrant makes reference, is precisely what he has been denied, first in Tunisia under the regime of Ben Ali – where the *crime of emigration* still exists, on the basis of the 1975 law, then reformulated in the 2004 law<sup>46</sup> – and then by European governments, that bridled his mobility and his desire to move on. That claim, I would argue, allows us to dislocate the gaze looking at the migration struggle filed “form below”, namely taking on practices of migration as the strategies around which the migration regime (re)structures itself, opening to the idea of migratory projects instead of complying with the paradigm of forced migration [Mezzadra, 2006]: I would reformulate this by saying that people migrate not only to get out of some social or economic condition, but also because of their will to do something different in a different country, of living their existences elsewhere. The fact that Tunisians' migrations occurred in 2011 did not fit in the traditional schema of economic push-pull factors, deeply undermines discourses and politics on poverty as the evil to relieve: “I don't want to be given any sandwich, I want to be left free to move away from Lampedusa,”<sup>47</sup> a Tunisian migrant firmly stated during the protests that took place in Lampedusa at the end of March 2011, when migrants shouting “*hurrya!*” (“freedom” in Arabic) asserted, as neither negotiable nor deferrable, their will to move. Yet, both the Tunisian uprisings and migrations across the Mediterranean were narrated by the mainstream media as struggles for bread and for finding a job. These two issues were indeed at stake and it is important to acknowledge the existence and the legitimacy of these aspects, in order not to fall into the error of detaching practices of freedom from any concrete concern, reiterating the gesture of seeing in events and practices what we are accustomed or willing to see. Nonetheless, economic reductionism cannot unfold the complex strugglefields in which both migratory movements and revolutionary turmoils are situated, exceeding through their practices any demand that could be addressed to the existing border or power regime and even less answered by governmental actors. In this regards, Sandro Mezzadra draws the attention to the connection between revolutionary uprisings and practices of migration: “Why” Mezzadra asks “should that scream [*hurrya*] be bordered within institutionally defined spaces ? Rather,

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46 This law provides for up to 20 years of prison for everyone involved or aware of irregular emigration

47 <http://www.storiemigranti.org/spip.php?article872>

practices and ways of bordering which gave rise to that scream bear the marks of continuous trespasses of existences taking place in other spaces” [Mezzadra, 2011a, p.116].

The fact of keeping the two spatial upheavals disconnected – viewing the revolution as a conquest of democracy and, inversely, the arrival of Tunisian migrants in Lampedusa as the marker of the risks and the crisis of such ungoverned democracy – led us to conceive of practices of migration exclusively in terms of “power over migrants’ lives” exercised by migration policies. Moreover, the image of Tunisian migrants crammed in Lampedusa or in the detention centers, waiting for a response from European Union or from the Italian government, portrayed migrants as people lacking in life’s projects or “worthy” political demands.

The redefinition of the Schengen space and of its principle of internal free mobility demanded by some European governments, along with the enforced blurring between politics of asylum and border controls<sup>48</sup>, represent the two pillars upon which the European space of mobility has been reshaped to respond to migrants’ spatial upheavals. In particular, some Countries (Denmark and the Netherlands) decided to reactivate national borders. In between the lines, it should be noticed how such spatial rearrangement signal less the enforcement of a European border regime than its uneven political geography and internal conflicts among member States.

Thus, in order to grasp the complex entanglement between the spatial troubles and transformations generated by migrants and the new geographies traced by power, I take a stock of the riots, escapes and resistance and struggles that took place in the Italian detention centers in 2011. The long series of struggles I report was “inaugurated” at the beginning of February, when about 60 Tunisian migrants exited the courtyard of the detention center in Modena, went up onto the roofs and protested, screaming “Freedom, freedom!!”, while also showing signs with the same words. In the meantime, 32 Tunisian migrants succeeded in escaping from a detention center in Brindisi, making a hole in the wall. From then on, it has never been more than 7 days in between riots, and I just recall here in passing the escape of

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48 See the European Commission Communication about the roles of Easo and Frontex: *On enhanced EU solidarity in the field of asylum. An Eu agenda for better responsibility-sharing and more mutual trust*, COM (2011) 835 final

hundreds of Tunisians that happened in Manduria on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April. It goes without saying that the high number of riots clearly depends also on the considerable number of migrants who arrived at once on the Italian coast that, in turn, produced a harsh response by governments. In particular, the Italian government put into place new sites of detention and renamed already existing detention centres, inventing an anomalous spread space of detention, in which people were not formally detained (“these are not detention centers”) but at the same time, the Italian vice-Minister to the Home Office Mantovano “they can't move away without becoming clandestine and losing the possibility to claim for asylum”<sup>49</sup> !

That said, we should not overlook the impetuosity and at the same time the irreverence of those riots and escapes, towards the b/ordering of their movements. What is noticeable here is that the unintelligibility of those movements through the lens of traditional democratic processes of transformation – readable through the grid of revolutionary models – inevitably colludes with the eradication of political fear that Tunisians experienced – “we do not have fear anymore” – and that they translated into the unacceptability of obedience to their confinement. Recalling Foucault’s formulation of revolts: “The impulse through which a single individual, a group, a minority or an entire people says: *I will no longer obey*, and throws the risk of their life in the face of an authority they consider unjust, seems to me to be something irreducible” [Foucault, 1994d, p. 449]. Ultimately, the sentence that Tunisian migrants passed along sounded like “we, who actively took part to the revolution; now we are here and we continue it” stressing the hypocritical position of European governments, addressing especially to France – “you, who acclaimed our democratic uprising and promoted the human rights rhetoric; you are chasing us away, the sons of the revolution”. Ultimately, the question is not if they effectively took part in the upheavals of the 14<sup>th</sup> of January or in the occupation of the Kasbah; rather, what is significant in our perspective is that they asserted a relationship between the two movements, namely the political uprising in Tunisia and their movements across the Mediterranean. In addition to that, my hypothesis is that something has changed after their arrival, in regards to the space of movement they

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49 A.Mantovano, <http://www.go-bari.it/notizie/cronaca/1900-bari-arrivano-i-tunisini-in-fuga-da-manduria.html>

traced out: they didn't ask to be settled and to become integrated in the Italian society, and their claim never referred to citizenship. Instead, they want to exercise the freedom gained in Tunisia, which made it possible to materially burn the borders, crossing the Italian border and moving on to France and to other European countries. In the meantime, something has changed also in relation to the intolerable nature of power, namely to the threshold of tolerance as regards the confinement of people's movements into wired places and, more widely, against their hampered mobility [Balibar, Brossat, 2011]. Over one year of riots and escapes in the Italian detention centers, what should be remarked on is the increasing radicalization of forms of struggles, and an overall shift from symbolic protests and easy escapes to engaged striving and physical fights against police. At this stage of the analysis, the related point I would like to raise concerns coexistence between on the one hand extreme acts of refusal and deprivation – like hunger strikes and self-mutilations – that even when not isolated entail direct physical engagement and attempt to subtract from the grasp of power – and on the other hand, organized and collective strategies of escape and riots orchestrated to get out of the camp and carry on the practices of migration. The presence of both these forms of resistance undermines the idea of the detention center as a place where strategies of resistance and collective actions are nearly impossible.

As the chronology of riots indicates, not only did migrant struggles take place also as organized escapes, but these latter proved to be the most successful strategies: the vast majority of flights succeeded because of the cunning strategies adopted, combined with promptness of action and coordination among people. Along with escapes, during the first half of 2011 we witnessed the occurrence of symbolic protests – often followed by escapes – that succeeded in bringing the echo of the demonstrations beyond the wall of detention centers. In fact, despite their juridical status of “irregular”, in the first period Tunisian migrants put into action a strategy of visibility, aiming at stressing their not being criminals and their will to move on. From this perspective, the most remarkable gesture has been the protest that happened in Lampedusa the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, when migrants took to the streets in a disorganized and peaceful way, crying: “we want to move elsewhere”.

On the same island, Lampedusa, a very different protest occurred in late September when, as I narrated in the first chapter, migrants burned the detention center, and the residents reacted, sparking off across the island a proper guerrilla campaign against migrants. These two starkly different snapshots bring to the fore a quite different context of struggles from that one of early 2011. Actually, the burning of the detention center in Lampedusa was in the last the most resounding event of a huge number of riots that stood in the background, remaining outside the spotlights of the media: we refer to very violent forms of protest, that confronted the containment of people's mobility, basically relying on two factors: sudden actions – taking police forces by surprise – a united-front of people who brave controls in the most overcoming way. How do we account for such a radicalization? In this regard, we should linger over two political steps that considerably changed the condition of migrants. The first one concerns the decree promulgated by the Italian government the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011, which extended the maximum time for detention from 6 up to 18 months. The second stage is the repatriation decree (2<sup>nd</sup> August) which stated the possibility of direct expulsion of undocumented migrants “who could be a danger for the public order”; then, that law was enhanced in September with the bilateral agreement signed between Italy and Tunisia on the “Extraordinary repatriation plan” – that provided for 100 daily returns, throughout three weeks. It's striking to see how, just days after the promulgation, many riots occurred, bursting in a sudden way. This is not at all to suggest that migrants' movements could be seen as mere reaction to power enforcement; the reverse is rather the case, since those juridical measures came out in an twofold attempt to stem the upheaval of ordinary space produced by migrants' movements, and at the same time to seize the opportunity of “political emergency” for introducing significant changes in the juridical regime of human mobility, and in the perception of migrations as a problem of public order to solve through administrative measures. Thus, the emergence of conflicting spaces should be considered in all its complexity: on the one hand migrants' crossings produced an upheaval of governed spaces, shaking the threshold of acceptability of power<sup>50</sup>; on the other hand, the “response” given both by the European Union and by the Italian government didn't simply enforce existing techniques of bordering but rather paved

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50 M. Foucault, *What is critique?* (1978) in M. Foucault, *The politics of truth*, Semiotexte, 1997, pp. 41-82, where Foucault defines critique as “the art of voluntary insubordination”.

the way for a deep reassessment of the European politics of mobility. In fact, at the European level the spatial rearrangement that followed the Tunisian turmoil consisted in a partial reconfiguration of the Schengen space<sup>51</sup> [Garelli, 2013], while in Italy, through the invocation of the “humanitarian tsunami”, the Italian government enforced special and arbitrary measures of containment. Finally, in the name of “humanitarian crisis in North Africa” new actors and international agencies entered the machine of migration management and, broadly in the “economy of development”, producing new economic exceptional spaces of intervention. The spatial upheavals produced by Tunisian migrants through their practices of movement and struggle pushed governmental forces to set new emergent-emergency spaces.

These riots and strategies of resistance highlight an overall inclination by migrants to continue their practices of movement, not backing down. They also convey a peculiar meaning to the idea of resistance to power over migrants' lives – and consequently to power over migrants lives, as well: this turmoil of escapes and protests does not only resisted the capture and the discipline of lives within the camp; rather, it also challenged the bridling of the freedom of movement, cracking the very distinction between “legitimate” and “ordered” migration and disordered mobility. In this sense, gazing closely at those struggles the unconditioned right that I mentioned above and that Tunisian migrants ultimately claimed – the right to trample on the soil and to cross all over – is actually an odd form of right, or better a sort of “non-juridical right” since as Nicholas De Genova points out it is not a question of migrants' rights but rather of the expression of migrant mobilization, “that is to say they erupt from mobilities which cannot be fixed into place, categorized and regimented. They refer us to practices and processes of open-ended

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<sup>51</sup> The first measure was taken by France, that in April 2011 closed the border with Italy, refusing Tunisian migrant who received the humanitarian temporary protection to enter the country, breaching the Schengen normative framework according to which migrants with a permit obtained in a member state could circulate in the European space for three months. Then, in May 2011 both Denmark and the Netherlands declared that for “security reasons” they would have reactivated internal border controls. In September 2011 the European Commission proposed a modification to the Schengen border code stating that “the reintroduction of controls at internal borders should be based on a decision proposed and adopted by the Commission” but “for unforeseeable events, Member States retain the possibility to unilaterally reintroduce border control at internal borders, if immediate action is needed. Such a decision enters into force immediately and it is notified to the Commission” (COM(2011) 560 final).

becoming, that actively produce and transform space” [De Genova, 2010a, p.115]. In fact, I would add, they do not claim rights in the strict sense, for two reasons. Firstly, because they don't demand anything: rather they directly enact movements that question and force traditional rights, while both critical scholars and political analysts frantically seek to absorb and to cage those practices in the language of rights. Secondly because their gestures and claims could neither find a place nor be narrowed within the perimeter of citizenship: they are unrestrained precisely because they are not in accordance with any given pattern or process of claim – and in this sense they are “discordant practices of freedom”. They “plunder” and make use of many political tools, reassembling them according to different and unknown strategies; but on the other hand, those struggles over life not only place themselves outside the register of rights, they are also excluded out of necessity, since it's the very status of “subject of right” that excludes undocumented migrants. What does it mean to struggle for rights insofar as it's not contemplated that you, as an undocumented migrant, would exercise rights?

However, rather than dismissing right as a tool and as a terrain of struggles, it should be acknowledged that struggles for rights, are inevitably overwhelmed and driven by the narrative of the nation State. And this latter tends to neutralize both political inventiveness and the political force of “discordant practices of freedom” which short-circuit the established realm of the political. In fact, first of all, the majority of them did not aim at settling in Italy but at moving away – so that the temporary permit<sup>52</sup> that some of them obtained, shifted away both from the narrative of integration and from the logic of a right kindly granted by the “hosting” society. Contrary to that, Tunisian migrants used also the special temporary permit as a way to move on.

However, this stress on freedom needs to be specified, asking what kind of freedom is at stake here. In fact, freedom in itself is nothing but an empty signifier which from time to time is filled with different contents and is addressed to different

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<sup>52</sup>A special six-months temporary permit, for “humanitarian reasons”, was given by the Italian government in April the 5th. The French government refused to recognize it as a valid document for allowing Tunisian migrant to cross the French border, giving rise to a fundamental quarrel not only between France and Italy but also at the European level, raising proposals for revising the Schengen area as a space of free mobility.

subjects. Moreover, it is the very form of freedom and its conditions of possibility that are constantly resignified<sup>53</sup>. In regard to the context here at stake, the reason why I so constantly made reference to freedom as at once a main stake in migrants' struggle and as a practice exercised by migrants themselves, lies in the idea that it's a very peculiar kind of freedom that is named, asserted and played by migrants coming to Italy in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings. Indeed, the freedom that they speak of – in protests – or enact – by crossing borders and escaping from detention centers – seems to designate an unconditional force/movement: not an external position to power relations, rather a radical questioning of the traditional political dialectic which establishes the conditions and the limits of freedoms. Beyond any “social contract” or representative model, Tunisian migrants simply act without regard to any condition/restriction to accept for making their claims legitimate. In a nutshell, they “place” their freedom without seeking to be in accordance with and recognized by powers and rules which fix both the contents and the borders of “legitimate” political practices: they don't look for any correspondence between their practices and the political order, they do not seek to fit into that. In this sense, I would suggest, freedom here is claimed as an “unfitting practice”. After all, it's important to remember that “the sheer autonomy of migrations, especially that of unauthorized migration, remains a permanent and incorrigible affront to state sovereignty” [De Genova, 2010b, p.39].

*The church and the crane: migrants' unsettling spatial struggles*

Massa, May 2011/ Brescia, November 2010. Through this last snapshot I take a step aside from the unexpected turmoil produced by the events of the Arab Spring and from Tunisian migrants coming from the Tunisian revolution. However, such a distance is taken on purpose, in order to interrogate the political resonance that the Tunisian migrants' upheavals eventually produced, supporting other struggles at a

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<sup>53</sup> In fact, drawing on Foucault, this analysis grounds on the idea that freedom is nothing but a practice, and thus it is not something that can be granted through rights, even if it is the right to freedom of movement. Freedom is always enacted: “Liberty is a practice. So there may in fact be a certain number of projects whose aims is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even to break them, but none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure the people will have the liberty automatically, that it will be established by the project itself. The liberty of men is never assured by the institutions and laws intended to guarantee them. This is why almost all of these laws and institutions are quite capable of being turned around- not because they are ambiguous, but simply because liberty is what must be exercised” [Foucault, 1994c, pp.354-355]

distance, through their revolutionary impetus. More exactly, migrants' strategies of resistance on the one hand, and political technologies on the other hand, gave rise to a spatial redefinition as well as a change in the ways of enacting movements and presence in spaces. In a certain way, such a resonance could be figured out as a kind of accelerator – producing a domino-effect – of existing social conflicts, leading to a radicalization of the ways of acting.<sup>54</sup> Radicalization here designates not necessarily an increasing use of violence, but rather the bringing to the fore of contradictions and paradoxical elements in the government of migrations. The short-circuit of power mechanisms was fostered especially by the symbolic dimension of some migrant struggles.

In this regard, the snapshot I take concerns two urban protests, whose force lay precisely in the way in which symbolic places are used, and are made to play, in the struggle. Moreover, both protests are characterized by a particular “spatial persistence” – by persisting in space I mean here not only the reference to space as a surface and a strugglefield, but also the unauthorized presence in a specific place and the claim to the possibility of staying there. However, this spatial persistence is not limited to the claim to stay in a certain space but it also entails a redefinition of that space itself. This persisting was put into practice also through the occupation of symbolic places: a church and a crane. In both cases, as I would show, it's noticeable how a juridical claim that ultimately accepts playing the game of power – demanding the residence permit for migrants workers<sup>55</sup> – has turned into a protest which, although starting from a punctual claim, spilled over that perimeter, encroaching on a broader range of political issues.

The occupation of the cathedral by migrants happened in the Italian town of Massa in May 2011. It started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May and it lasted for more than 20 days. What is very significant to our purpose are the considerations which led to the decision to

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54 Radicalization does not necessarily designate here an increasing of the use of violence but rather it points on the one hand to the exposure and at the direct involvement of subjects and, on the other hand, to how political stakes/claims become more radical than before.

55 In fact, the struggle for a residence permit does not challenge in itself the governmental logic which assumes as indisputable the idea that migrants need to ask for a permit to be recognized as subject of rights. To the contrary, it means to accept terms and conditions of that logic and to strive for obtaining what is due to you. Thus, more than forcing the borders of the political, it's a struggle which claims against State's violation of rights – in this case the right to be regularized as migrant workers as provided by the Italian law.

occupy the church, and the way in which migrants acted within the existing political conditions and framework, evaluating how to interrupt the functioning of the “governmental machine” – composed of different political agents, like local institutions, political parties, the catholic church, employers and trade unions – and making visible the absurdity which underlies the governance of migrants' lives. Every step of the occupation was adopted according to a strategic evaluation, grounded on the idea that the keystone of the struggle should be to make the different political actors –the Catholic Church, political parties, the trade unions and the local government - clash one each other.

First, the choice of the church<sup>56</sup>. Instead of occupying a trade union office, migrants opted for the church for two reasons. The first one is that they considered that traditional forms of occupation are by now empty of any political meaning: according to them, the factory work no longer represents the modalities and the extension of migrants work force exploitation. As a matter of fact, the blackmailing and the precariousness in which migrant workers live, is not reduced or bordered to the place of the factory; and besides, salaried work does not correspond any more to the forms of work they have to lend themselves to. The second point is that they were aware that the challenge was much broader than the question of legal permit, and thus they translated the juridical demand, ultimately based on a worker perspective, at a political level; or to put it bluntly, they claim the political dimension of that protest, refusing to be seen as struggling only to become regularized workers. Quite to the contrary, the place of the church would have enabled, at once, to put to the test the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church – which appeals to an unconditioned

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56 The first and most well-known occupation of a church by migrants dates back to 1996, when a group of *sans-papiers* occupied the churches of Saint-Ambroise and Saint-Bernard. Now, if it's quite evident that the *sans- papiers'* struggle has played over times as an point of reference for migrants - as it has been the case in Massa - it seems to me that even hinging on that experience, migrants in Massa came at put into place a quite different strategy of action: what they claim is neither to be recognized as belonging to our society despite the lack of a juridical status and exceeding the formal frontiers of citizenship, nor to recognize their presence as socially legitimate and economically necessary: what they put into practice is rather close to what Virno calls “a politics of exodus” which ultimately means refusing the very terms of the governmental regime determining the threshold of the political. This political practice “is not a negative gesture, exempt from action and responsibility. On the contrary, because defection modifies the conditions within which conflict takes place, rather than submit to them, it demands a particularly high level of initiative” [P. Virno, 1996]. In other words, it's less an act of outing on the public sphere that a radical act -of force- that states: ”we don't accept it anymore, we take the matters in our hands and we do not obey until something changes”.

welcome for migrants, unfailingly disappointing that principle in practice – forcing it to make a stand on that issue. Hinging on the centrality played by the Catholic Church in Italy, migrants looked at the church as a place from which to address all political forces. Nevertheless, they didn't ask for hospitality within the church, rather they overturned the space of the church as a sanctuary space: “we don't want to be tolerated or hosted: we know that this space is not a property of the Italian State, but we argue that it does not belong to the catholic Church too, since it is named – by the Church itself- as a universal space. So, we simply decided to stay here, without asking anybody to be hosted”. In this way, they strategically played on the ambivalence of the discourse of the Church, producing a sort of short-circuit of the regime of tolerance. If we think about the Tunisian oxygen of freedom – the episode that I mentioned in the second snapshot – it seems to me that we find a quite similar logic at work: in both cases, migrants are clearly careless of terms and conditions fixed by the democratic regime of discursivity, as for instance the insistence on rights' claim. In other words, the occupation of the Church in Massa – or better, not so much the form of protest in itself as the way in which it has been replayed – resounds the “discordant freedom” I mentioned in relation to Tunisian migrants. To qualify this expression in a slightly different way, I would say that it addresses freedom as a practice – more than as a content – which does not seek any correspondence or alliance with the conditions of democratic society as claimed by “liberal States”: “migrants are not the lacking subjects of freedom; quite to the contrary, just because they are not subjects of right of any pre-established citizenship [...] they deeply put into question its structural limits”, and therefore, compared to democracy as the normative order of our societies “migrants represent a contradiction on the move” [Mometti, Ricciardi, 2011]. The notion of “discordant freedom” focuses less on the unconditional exercise or on the non-complying nature of that, than on the will to bring to the fore the absurdity and the irrationality of the government of human mobility, bringing political forces into conflict with each other. For instance, migrants living in Massa contradicted the president of Tuscany's speech about the injunction to build up “humane” detention centers, “which would transform clandestine migrants into workers”, by pushing to extremes that discourse

and saying “so, we need to also put inside Italian people, since most of them are nowadays unemployed”.

Closely related to that, the occupation of the Church in Massa suggests to us also a creative dimension that is more and more at stake in migrants' struggles: in fact, as I argued before, what is really interesting is not the form of struggle they put into place – the occupation – but rather, the way in which they re-played and reworked it, asking people and institutions to come there in order to negotiate, and redefining the space of the church as a common space. As L.D pointed out, “we made visible, as in the back-light, the lack of inventiveness characterizing the Western political tradition and the weakness in producing practices which effectively short-circuit power regimes of discursivity”<sup>57</sup>, in order to open spaces for political agency refusing the well-known dance of political representation as the master ground for political action. In the same perspective we should read the gesture they performed in front of the main institutional buildings, showing at the same time a box of tomatoes and a residence permit: why, they asked, do we have fewer rights than a box of tomatoes? Far, if the certified box of vegetables could freely circulate all over Europe, this is not the case for migrants, who even though they get a permit for staying and working in Italy, cannot search for a job in France or live in Spain. That is to say, the freedom of movement, very rhetorically promoted by European Union and effectively asserted in international treaties, is allowed and enacted by governments through a deep asymmetry between people and goods. This is the reason why we should shift our political attention from the rallying call of “freedom of movement” to a questioning concerning the ways in which such a freedom is conceived, enacted and equally guaranteed. And this is also the reason why they refused to accept a temporary permit that the local government would have granted to them: indeed, what they want to sidestep is the logic of precarization underlying the concession of permit; and along with that, they refuse to narrow their struggle to a battle for getting a paper – the resident permit –and consequently to accept to play within the frame of claim of rights: indeed, “we use this targeted struggle for spilling over the very issue of permit, making clear that what we want to act is freedom of movement, and not juridical regularization. This last is nothing but the correlate of the violation of that

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<sup>57</sup> Interview conducted in Massa in December 2011

freedom we constantly undergo. In this sense, it's clear that we have never claimed rights, we simply assert that the practices we enact are hampered and consequently, what you call 'rights' is eventually what we are stripped of". It could be argued that the symbolic level of these struggles pushes to redefine the self-evident function of right, shifting it from a claiming question to a pick-lock or a tool-box to unhinge that regime of political epistemology traditionally legitimized by right. But despite the fact that a huge literature asserts the strength of outcast people to challenge and to reshape the borders of citizenship and political belonging [Balibar, 2002; Isin, 2002; Mc Nevin, 2011, Nyers 2010] it cannot be overlooked that what is at stake here is not a demand of belonging or "to be recognized as integral rights-bearing members of the polity despite lacking legal status" [Nevin, 2011, p. 131]. I suggest that it's rather the proposition "to belong to" which is actually challenged by the unexpected presence of Tunisian migrants in Europe – what I named the "Tunisian turmoil in Europe" -, thus effectively shaking the discursive framework of Western political thought [Arendt, 2001]. In fact, the idea of belonging necessarily entails a political space fixed in advance, towards which subject are supposed to address, sometimes stretching its borders: indeed, the space and the desirability of belonging are both taken for granted, while what is asserted is eventually the possibility to enlarge the range of subjects entitled to it. In this regard, I would say that the shift of focus from citizenship to belonging doesn't push the question on: in fact, the normative ideal-type is in both cases – citizenship and belonging – the "ethical" construction of the good citizen or at least of the good civic subject: civilization and (urban) civility overlap as the underlying frame of reference.

After considering the choice of the place – the church – we should dwell upon the day they decided to act: the 1<sup>st</sup> May. Again, we see how symbolic element and strategic evaluation are intertwined. In fact, strategically speaking the 1<sup>st</sup> May was a day in which a lot of people would have supported their struggles – as a non-working day, and as a bank holiday which conveys a specific political meaning, so that people are more inclined than usual to take part in workers' struggles. Then, on the other hand, hinging upon a very symbolic day, migrants ultimately aimed at unsettling and reversing the very meaning of 1<sup>st</sup> May: they stress that far from being a holiday to celebrate, it should be understood as a moment for recalling the precariousness of

workers' lives as the absence of work is a constant that people have to confront. In other words, the 1<sup>st</sup> of May sounded at once like a way of gathering as many people as possible, far beyond the communities of migrants – playing just on the political meaning of that day – and as a stage for rethinking its function.

Now I take a step back, turning to the occupation of a crane which took place in the city of Brescia in November 2010, when nine migrants decided to go up the crane and stay there to protest against the 2009 Italian law on legalization, as in the case of migrants in Massa. At this point, it's relevant to see how certain strategies of resistance could produce a sedimentation of knowledges and practices – I would say of ways of acting – that then are re-mobilized and replayed by other people, resounding in other contexts. What the occupation of the crane clearly staged is above all the overcoming of the fear to openly question the regime of clandestinization set by the Italian government and, more broadly, by the politics of migration control. Secondly, migrants actually broke with the condition of “being-spoken-by” – trade unions, political parties etc. – since they choose a highly symbolic work place, the crane – thus stressing the exploitation of migrants' labour force – but refusing to be represented by anybody.

The hypothesis that I would put forward is that migrants struggling in Brescia put into place a way of facing political forces, and at the same time a way of exposing their own precariousness, leaving a sort of practical-political legacy that is then very soon reused by others. Such a legacy, I would argue, has been reshaped and mostly radicalized in the aftermath of the political uprisings that happened in North Africa. Paving the way to a series of migrants' struggles playing on buildings occupations and symbolic acts, something however happened between the occupation of the crane in Brescia and the other struggles. The snapshot on Massa shows at once how much migrants reactivated and re-mobilized the practical *savoir-faire* put into place in Brescia, and how they actually revised that way of struggling in the light of a by then acquired fearlessness to face power; secondly, the extreme and dangerous exposure of lives – which most of migrants' struggles entail – came to be problematized; then, a shift from the domain of labor to a wider political issue was reckoned as crucial. Finally, it's important to stress that in the aftermath of the Arab

Spring, and at one and the same time that the struggle in Massa happened, the political movement in Brescia has been re-launched and spread also to other Italian towns like Padova<sup>58</sup>.

The methodological choice to talk about emergent spatialities taking specific snapshots comes out also from a radical questioning of the cartographic rationality which plays a fundamental role in migration governmentality –see for instance the codification of migration strugglefield in terms of governmental maps that I illustrate in the fifth chapter – and which represents spaces and events according to a flat overview and a timeless narrative. Through the technique of the snapshots I tried to take on the heterogeneity of border crossings, political technologies and struggles, running through space, that took place within a certain spatial framework [Pickles, 2004] Nevertheless, such a methodological ruse doesn't aim at freezing those practices: on the contrary, snapshots have highlighted the spatial turbulences generated by practices of migration across the Mediterranean, and provided a different slant on the ambivalences of power over/of migrants' lives. At the same time, they enabled us to keep in mind that techniques of bordering and practices of migrations are always crisscrossed by a complex strugglefield.

The resounding of the revolution brought by Tunisian migrants on the northern shore of the Mediterranean was triggered firstly by Tunisian migrants who burned all the frontiers of their own country, getting freedom there; and when they arrived in Europe not only did they self-nominate themselves as “the sons of the Revolution” but they also asserted the will to carry on that revolution far beyond Tunisia itself. In this regard I recall here the discourse of the “Collective of Tunisians from Lampedusa in Paris”, addressed to the French, that stated “you, the people flaunting universal human rights and democracy, now you refuse to let us live in this country”; and it could be continued saying “we, Tunisian migrants, we have just made the revolution in our country and we are now making a revolution here, intending to really burn the borders and to live here, to stay here”. Nevertheless, the bounce-

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58 After many sit-in in early May, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May migrants occupied the churchyard of the Dome in Brescia, while the 16<sup>th</sup> of June a group of migrants went up a crane in the city of Padova, and in Milan after the occupation of the tower in November 2010, they repeated the same action in September 2011.

effect is not merely a question of the legacy of the Tunisian revolution on the practices of freedom enacted by “revolutionary” Tunisian migrants: in a broader and maybe pretentious way, I would argue that the bank-effect has also impacted and resounded in other contexts or in regard to other forms of struggle – as for instance in the case of the occupation of the church in Massa or in the hired hands' strike in Nardò, or finally in asylum seekers' riots that happened in Bari in summer 2011 [Perrotta, Sacchetto, 2012]. But far from seeing there a revolutionary season/cycle of struggles, or the production of new political subjects, I would rather draw attention to the intensity and to the multiplication of riots, resistances and escapes that took place in Italy and France in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. More than a question of numbers, I would see the specificity of this bounce-effect in the motto “no fear anymore” that qualified and made possible the Tunisian revolution, and which seemed to be equally at stake in the strategies of resistance and in the practices of freedom we mentioned here. An ambivalent discourse, a constant tension, I would say, between the awareness that there is nothing to lose and a political force coming in a certain way from the borders burned during the revolution. Jointly with that, the bounce-resounding effect is visible also at the level of the ways of struggling, and more precisely of the inventiveness that is involved in most of them. By inventiveness I mean here both the experimentation of different modalities for making play one's own invisibility and the capacity to redefine also traditional forms of struggle according to the present political contexts/subjects, sometimes completely transfiguring their original meaning. Nevertheless, we should not fall into a romanticism of migrant struggles, or of envisaging practices of migration as forms of resistance in themselves: instead, the focus on the articulation between the revolutionary uprisings and migrations includes also shedding light on the strugglefield in which migrations are always situated, as also it's the case of political turmoil that in fact takes place in the turmoil of power relations.

*An intermezzo on migrant struggles and freedom of movement:*

The formula “migrant struggles” encapsulates at least two different meanings and refers to an array of different empirical experiences of migration. Firstly, “migrant struggles” is the name for saying the multiple concrete struggles in which migrants

are engaged: more or less organized struggles that defeat, escape or trouble the order of mobility, the regime of labor, the politics of detention and control or the space of citizenship. Struggles taking place at the border or before and beyond the borderline, struggles that gain the scene of the public space or that remain invisible. Assumed in this first empirical meaning, “migrant struggles” should unpack the catchword of “migration” highlighting the heterogeneity of migrant conditions and the different ways in which migrants are confronted with powers. Thus, “migrant struggles” makes as pluralize migration, suggesting that any possible common ground of struggles cannot be but built creating new alliances from time to time. However, taking migrant struggles in this first empirical meaning, we should resist seeing any practice of migration as deliberate agency or as challenges to the border regime. Rather, as it is well known, migration is strongly needed by capitalism and also if focusing on “illegal” migrations, it’s important to keep in mind the ambivalences that cross practices of migration: they could play as resistances against some mechanisms' containment or against the social norms of the Country of origin, but at the same time being the other side of the selected mobility that partitions channels of allowed and fast mobility on the one hand, and unskilled migrant labour force that is supposed to move illegally. From this point of view, the stake becomes to bring out what also in these irregular-but-wanted practices of migration exceeds the economic frame in which their presence is required and expected. But along with this first empirical meaning, “migrant struggles” could be framed also in a more structural way, starting from the consideration that every migration is situated in and grapples with a certain strugglefield, and in this sense is always crisscrossed by and involved in multiple struggles. It basically depends on the fact that practices of mobility that are labeled as migrations are captured, filtered and managed by migration policies and techniques of bordering. It follows that migrations are eminently grasped into relations of power and conflicting fields of forces; and consequently, any migration as practice taking place within such a strugglefield is immediately also a struggle for modifying, challenging or interrupting that configuration of power. And at the same time, migrations force the border regime to constantly revise its strategies, working in a way as a constitutive “troubling factor”. After all, by naming these migrants' struggles as “discordant practices of freedom”

what is highlighted is also the specific freedom that migrants enact when they move or stay in space despite the techniques of bordering that set the pace of the terms and conditions of mobility: that is to say, the freedom of movement they enact is not the same of that claimed and promoted by the European Union. Additionally, if the freedom taken on the Southern shore was seen from the European side as a paramount conquest, it was depicted with disquieting traits when translated into the freedom of movement acted by Tunisian migrants: in some way, it could be suggested that the Northern shore praises a politics of “connections at a distance”, while becoming troubled when the bank-effects of the revolutionary and democratic uprisings involve a spatial presence on the European territory. But coming back to the common watchword of “freedom of movement” that today spans from European Union agencies to NoBorder activists, I contend that only a much more qualified argument about freedom of movement and about its content could safeguard from being absorbed into the very discourse of governmental actors: in this regard, the practices of freedom played by Tunisian migrants make visible that there are multiple and conflicting ways of conceiving and enacting freedom of movement: the adjective “discordant” stresses precisely the uneasiness both of governmental forces and of European citizens in grappling with practices of movement that do not fit into the established frame of regulated mobility. In this way, Tunisian migrants have troubled the presumed universality of the paradigm of freedom of movement presented by governmental discourses aiming at managing and selecting practices of mobility. “The free mobility of whom and at what costs?” should be perhaps the question to pose at every time when one engages in a critical and a political analysis on the struggles over freedom of movement. An analytical posture that tries to redouble the same gesture of discordant freedoms enacted by migrants, resisting the assumption that the freedom of mobility proposed by European “liberal democracies” is the normative yardstick to judge the legitimacy of practices of migration. Moreover, it means to challenge the conflation of freedom of movement with free circulation, or better to reduce the former to a question of easily circulating in space [Bigo, 2011]: the freedom of movement I talk about and that Tunisian migrants glaringly staged does not concern the mere possibility of movement – which is actually one of the main present pillars of European politics – but the

effective and equal possibility to move and stay without playing along with the pace of the politics of mobility and its selective partitioning. However, if we keep at distance the narrative of the European migration governmentality examining rather how circulation of people has been historically managed, we see that capitalist economy, far from effectively enabling the free circulation that it promotes, is grounded on a substantial differentiation of access to mobility: free circulation of goods and people is posited by liberal democracies as the desirable and unachievable goal that, is actually sustained by exclusionary and selective rights to mobility.

The second point that I would raise in this regard concerns the relationship between “discordant” practices of freedom and the will of “not being governed at all or not be governed in such a way” that Foucault pointed out. This means to interrogate to what extent the practices of migration that I took into account here crack the going-without-saying of governmental rationality, its indisputable reality and necessity. Obviously such a question opens a field of problematizations that goes beyond the scope of this research. So, I delimit here the debate arguing that in order to grapple with such a question we should firstly distinguish two different meanings of government – and government over lives. In fact, if by government we refer to governmental rationality – and in this specific case to the government of people’s movements, it could be stated that these struggles undo at its very root the assumption that mobility is something that should be governed or managed. And the ways in which they discredited the governmental rationale was less for their acts of border crossing in itself (the practice of the “harraga”) than on the basis of what I called “discordant” practices of freedom: namely, migrant struggles that, despite sometimes concerning specific demands, exceed any specific address towards governmental actors of “liberal democracies”. Indeed, if we look at Tunisian migrants arriving in Europe, they didn’t claim any “reasonable” political solution – for instance the international protection or the will to become Italian residents/citizens – and, finally, it could be argued that they didn’t address power at all, since mostly during the first months of their presence on the Italian territory, they simply tried to move towards France or Northern Europe but were blocked by many State controversies. However, another level of government is also at stake, I believe, when we refer to migrants’ strategies of resistance. This second meaning draws on

the definition of power given by Foucault in *The Subject and Power*: “what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future [...]. Basically power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or the linking of one to the other than a question of government. To govern is to structure the possible field of action of others” [Foucault, 1982, pp.789-790]. Now, from this point of view, it should be stressed that, as I previously showed, practices of migrations always take place within a strugglefield of governmentality and that migrants are continuously “captured” in the meshes of power. Moreover, drawing on Foucault's definition of government, by challenging the techniques of bordering that constitute the migration regime, migrants put into place and enact different ways of exercising their freedom. In other words, insofar as there is a strategy of resistance at stake, however “intentional but non-subjective” it could be, the goal is to slacken the grasp of power, to interrupt some mechanisms of capture or to not be governed by those laws of mobility, and in this sense it is always a relational practice confronting and situated within power relations.

Ultimately, our main focus on emergent spatialities produced at once through practices of movements and time by politics, should be seen from just this perspective: if migrants' practices enacted a “spatial takeover” [Sossi, 2012a] namely a redefinition of spaces – and of the way in which spatial distances are conceived and crossed – forcing power to reassess its strategies and targets, then refusals and movements practiced by migrants disseminated ways of acting the spaces that do not fit within any previous logic of “legitimate” practices of mobility. Therefore, the discordant freedom, which does not find any correspondence and alliance in the normative democratic order of freedom, contests that order through the very practices, or better still it acts that challenge. Not an overwhelming “revolutionary” movement, but rather a multiplicity of turmoil – some acting behind the scenes, some more visible and disruptive – coming from “the margin”– of the city, of the European borders, of the social – which filter and penetrate into the “accepted space of mobility” opening fold-spaces inside it. That said, as I also pointed out regarding the intransitive freedom that Tunisian migrants strove for and enacted, we should be

aware that a critical political posture can't split or untie the discourse on the freedom to move from a rethinking of the very contents of the freedom that we have in mind and that we constantly mention. To put it briefly, it's not enough to praise freedom of movement as such, regardless of its content, precisely because it is as much asserted and promoted by the regime of governmentality that here is in question: in fact, the European Union is enhancing more and more a discourse on a free mobility not only for goods but also for people. For this reason, I would contend, in order to be really “discordant” these practices of freedom should be coupled with praise to social equality, revolutionizing terms and conditions so that everyone could effectively exercise that freedom.

However, all these struggles could be read also from a different vantage point, and instead of stressing the multiplication of riots across the Mediterranean linger on the elusiveness of migrants' presence in visible spaces and the evanescent existence of organized collective struggles. Two and a half years after the outbreak of the Tunisian revolution no trace has remained of the Tunisians from Lampedusa in Paris, no trace left of the groups of migrant workers in Italy, no trace even of their occupations. In fact, the choice of spatial and temporal snapshot comes from the importance of dating all these spatial upheavals without the ambition and the task of talking about the (eventual) persistence of those collective movements after their dissolution. They did not leave any trace but, in some way, the snapshots show us that they made a groove, in that space and at that specific time, temporarily shaking the geographies and the spatial bordering.

While Tunisian migrants were upsetting the spatial and political geometries of the European space of free mobility, the revolutionary uprisings and migrations from Libya troubled the politics of mobility in Tunisia and the narrative of “transition to democracy”. The next chapter engages with these spatial disorders and rescaling, turning the attention to the Tunisian revolutionized space and to the Maghreb region.

## CHAPTER 3:

### Democracy as containment and migration in crisis in revolutionized Tunisia

*“The events unfolding in our southern neighbourhood reflect a profound transformation process. The changes now underway carry the hope of a better life for the people of the region and for greater respect of human rights, pluralism, rule of law and social justice – universal values that we all share. Movement towards full democracy is never an easy path – there are risks and uncertainties associated with these transitions. The EU must not be a passive spectator. It needs to support the wish of the people in our neighbourhood to enjoy the same freedoms that we take as our right. European countries have their own experience of democratic transition”*  
[EU, COM(2011) 200 final]

In this chapter I bring the attention to the spatial upheavals produced in the Mediterranean at the time of the Arab Uprisings, focusing on the new spaces they produced and the spatial economies that they troubled. I situate the analysis at the intersection between practices of movement and spatial economies, interrogating how different regimes of government, truth and mobility have been created, transformed or resignified. In the first section I focus on the idea of democracy as a strategy of containment, analyzing how the politics of mobility and economic projects of development articulate in revolutionized space through the script of democracy. Then, I take into account the notion of “crisis” as a catchword used by migration agencies for coming to grips with the migration turmoil that took place in the Mediterranean. Finally, in the third section I turn to the project of a Maghreb transnational area of free mobility: what is at stake is to explore how these political upheavals produced new spatial configurations far beyond the national boundaries of the revolutionized Arab countries, tracing transnational spaces and challenging the “European referent” as a space of free circulation. Hinging on the fundamental openness that characterizes these political events, I talk about “revolutionized spaces” in the place of “post-revolutionary contexts” in order to mark the ongoing political turmoil taking place on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, stretching

the temporality of the revolution fixed by the European narrative of the Arab Uprisings and downplaying dates of migration policies.<sup>59</sup>

The political upheavals which took place in 2011 in many Arab countries were immediately depicted as the awakening of the Arab region, through the trademark of “Spring” as a sign of the “delayed” race to democracy that Arab people undertook struggling against dictatorship [Badiou, 2012; Eyad, 2012]: the “Arab Spring” was situated into the historical prose of the Enlightenment – in this case, the “delayed Enlightenment of the Arab countries- and within the tale of economic development, and the Mediterranean was presented as a space for a fruitful political dialogue between the two shores: “as a result of the recent Arab mass uprisings, a new Mediterranean is emerging. In fact, until only recently the dynamic northern shore appeared to have played a meaningful role in the evolution of good governance. The southern shore, in this view, is seen as an obstacle to progress.” [Ammor, 2012, p. 128]. At the same time, the “Arab” label encompasses different contexts of struggle through an indistinct signifier. The rallying cry of freedom and democracy resounded across the Mediterranean, with both liberal analysts and left-wing movements looking at those revolutions as a promising prospect for political change and as liberation from dictatorships.

The wave of upheavals was framed from different angles as a new open struggle-field for democracy. Nevertheless, this “pleasant smooth tale” was destabilized by the departure of thousands and thousands of Tunisian migrants towards Europe: the conquests of freedom and democracy became a more ambiguous concern, deeply challenged and troubled in the face of the “side-effect” of irregular migrations. Thus, while not yet put into place, the new democratic space was revealed as a very unstable region, subject to diverse possible continuations or future “crisis”: the migratory crisis, the crisis of just-born democracies, debt crisis, humanitarian crisis at the Libyan border, unexpected social remonstrations... The unexpectedness of migrants' departures was translated in the terms of a predictable failure of a still unstable political context to be headed towards an accomplished democratic system

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<sup>59</sup> For a critical analysis of the “narrative of the revolutions” and European history presented as a blueprint for reading the present events, see F. Sossi, 2013.

of governance. Migrations were seen as the undesired outcome and, at the same time, as the index of the political crisis springing in new-born democracies. Very quickly, the tale of revolutionary democratic upheavals slipped into “discontent and turmoil” triggered by social and economic inequality, laying the ground for presenting it as a phenomenon to be governed and finally tamed. Migrants' movements were depicted as the index of the political turbulence triggered by Arab Uprisings, requiring a structured response by the EU: migrations became the “side effect” of the revolutions and the troubling but inevitable outcome of undisciplined democratic uprisings, enhancing “deviant” impure models of democracy and “disturbing” processes [Chatterjee, 1993, p.3]. In such a context, the nexus mobility-democracy was mobilized simultaneously in two opposite directions. On the one hand, it was built on the concept of “good governance”: democracy is posited as a guarantee and an indispensable condition for managing ordered mobility, while (selected) mobility is seen as a fundamental phenomenon to propel in order that Tunisia could achieve a proper transition to democracy<sup>60</sup>. On the other hand, (disordered) mobility and (undisciplined popular) democracy were designated precisely as the causes of political instability in the Mediterranean.

*The slowness of the discourse and the frayed texture of governmentality:*

In this chapter I work through the gaps between regimes of discursivity and the effective way in which power works and fails: it involves investigating the function of such a discrepancy and the relations between discursive and non-discursive practices. The gap that I take into account consists in the partial non-correspondence between the governmental narrative and the complex texture of struggles and techniques of government taking place on the ground. Such a discrepancy between texts and the strugglefield of governmentality is at times the result of practices and resistances that constantly make governmental programs “fail”, and sometimes is used to the advantage of the functioning of power – for instance, producing a (huge) “residual” of people excluded from international protection programs. If on the one hand, as Foucault stated, governmentality always adapts and operates tactically, on

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<sup>60</sup> In fact, the logic of “learning best practices” which sustains most of the programs of selected mobility between North African countries and the European Union encapsulates the idea that a smooth transition to good governance requires an “apprenticeship” of practices of democracies.

the other hand something always escapes from and exceeds regulative mechanisms. It seems that this discrepancy reveals both the leeway and the interstitial spaces of practices that governmentality cannot wholly capture.

In particular, what I would like to stress is the constitutive discrepancy between the “slowness of the discourses” and the “unrest of practices”. In fact, without denying the performative function of the discourses, they need to adapt and respond according to the strugglefield of power relations; thus, the temporality of discourses is forced to keep pace with the underway transformations in the social field. In this regard, this hiatus resembles the distinction made by Guha between the “time of the event” and the “time of discourses” [Guha, 1988]. Actually, Guha refers to the constitutive gap between on the one hand practices and events, and on the other the representative and discursive dimension which inevitably fails to keep historical events alive. Translating his analysis in the domain of governmentality, governmental programs frame present events and political practices according to an anticipatory narrative which stages their future steps. The discursive regime of policies works as a yardstick for codifying noisy and discordant events into a grid of intelligibility which makes those practices manageable. In the face of the ambivalence of these gaps, what emerges is the “frayed” dimension of the migration regime [see chapter 1], its “patchy texture”: this refers to the uneven interplay among these heterogeneous elements; but at the same time concerns the slippery positions that subjects enact within the meshes of governmentality, complicating and “fraying” the borders between inside and outside. It follows that the possibility to resist, to dodge or to counter-act some mechanisms of capture cannot be resolved into a sharp opposition between an inside (“the migrants”) and an outside (the citizens or the mobile persons).

**Democracy as a strategy of containment:** Since the Nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century , the migration-development<sup>61</sup> nexus has been presented as the cornerstone of Migration Studies and policies, conceiving migrations as a factor constitutive of developmental policies [Castells, 2009; Faist, Fauser 2010; Ghosh, 2000; Hess,

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<sup>61</sup> The category of “development” is assumed here starting from the analysis of Arturo Escobar who shows that development discourse emerged in the Fifties as a political project to continue colonial domination in other forms and for taming social unrests in decolonized countries [Escobar, 1996].

2008; Pastore, 2007; Piper, 2009; Truong, Gasper, 2011]: migrations are managed as a developmental solution, and the main challenge of intergovernmental agencies becomes to “fix” subjects in space, preventing people from migrating in the name of developmental goals. At the same time, migration has started to be the clue through which redefining developmental strategies and discourses. However, this is only a side of the story of the “Migration & Development” blueprint, whose characteristic ultimately relies on the ambivalence of the question “development for whom?”. In fact, two simultaneous political orientations are encapsulated in the formula of “migration and development”: on the one hand, migration policies aiming at enhancing a selected and managed mobility towards Europe in order to counter the European demographic crisis –thus, order mobility at the benefit of Europe –and migrants’ networks are seen as “developmental agents” [Faist, 2008]<sup>62</sup>; on the other hand, developmental projects in migrants’ countries of origin in order to tackle the “root causes of illegal immigration” [Chaloff, 2007; Pastore, 2007]. Therefore, if the former is commonly recognized a “development through migration” strategy, I would call the latter a “non-migration through development” rationale. And if both are largely promoted by the European Union, the “non-migration through development” is by far more implemented. However, as many authors have contented, the strategy of “development instead of migration” that consists in undermining the “root causes of emigration” –promoting development in the countries of origin – is not effective: sociological studies demonstrated that an increase of development tends to generates more human mobility [Castells, Delgado, 2008; Tapinos, 1990]. In fact, the argument that I push forward in this chapter is that the proliferation of development programs for would-be migrants and returned migrants in revolutionized Tunisia, promoted under the banner of democracy, actually do not aim at improving economic autonomy and development: on the contrary, they “fix” would-be migrants in space through unskilled economic activities, making them fall into debt with international financial circuits. In this

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<sup>62</sup> This argument has been strongly remarked in the European documents and communication delivered in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. In particular, a milestone of the 2011 Eu’s strategy on migration (*Communication on Migration*) stresses that point: one of the most pressing economic challenges faced by Europe is the need to address the demographic decline in its working age population coupled with significant projected skills shortages in certain sectors [...] Europe must take concrete steps to meet its projected labour needs via targeted immigration of third country nationals” (COM(2011) 248 final).

section I will explore how democracy plays as the tenet through which the migration-development nexus was revised in the Tunisian revolutionized space. Following a current of literature that centered on developmental spaces [Brookfield, 1975, Bonata, Protevi, 2004; Sidaway, 2007] I frame the issue by taking on a spatial gaze, looking at the spatial transformations that the nexus in question engendered.

July 2012: I visited Tunisian villages of the inner regions of the Country (Kasserine, Sidi Bouzid, Tataouine and Sbeitla) in order to find the developmental projects in support of returned migrants that Iom, Eu and World Bank sponsored on their websites and in official documents: in fact, the overall picture of revolutionized Tunisia that emerges from those governmental strategies is the necessity to build the “new democratic Tunisia” by managing instabilities centering on two main pillars: good governance and rule of law. The transition to democracy is the main script through which the Tunisian uprisings have been framed from the northern shore of the Mediterranean [Amin, 2012; Bishara, 2012; Brynen and others, 2012]. However, in those villages only few people knew about Iom, and the reintegration projects for returned migrants I discovered consisted of quite unskilled economic activities, very reduced in numbers, promoted by local or international actors<sup>63</sup>. For instance, in the village of Zarzis the project for the reintegration of voluntary returned migrants promoted by a local association involved in the European Migration4Development network in cooperation with the French office for immigration and reintegration (Ofii), consists of supporting fifteen people of the southern regions of Tunisia<sup>64</sup> in starting up economic activities – like hairdresser, driver or restaurateur – which “best accord to the profiles and skills of the people concerned”. Among the criteria for allocating funds is included a “true will to stay in Tunisia and not to leave any more”. The actions of actors like Iom ultimately result in getting people into debt, allocating the amount of required money to ask for a bank loan. While Iom plans to govern post-war Libya – managing migration flows, job locations and public sector reconstruction – actually, this is not precisely what is going on. For instance, no

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<sup>63</sup> [http://www.tn.iom.int/activites\\_details.php?id=18](http://www.tn.iom.int/activites_details.php?id=18);  
[http://www.tn.iom.int/activites\\_details.php?id=9](http://www.tn.iom.int/activites_details.php?id=9)

<sup>64</sup> 15 returned migrants for the regions of Medenine, Tataouine and Gabes (2 people from the city of Medenine, 4 from Ben Guerdane and 9 from Zarzis). The maximum given to selected returned migrants is about 7000 euros, but it cannot exceed 35% of the total amount that a person is supposed to invest for starting the economic activity in question

official data exists about effective departures and temporary migrations and returns from/to Libya<sup>65</sup>: informal transports<sup>66</sup>, constant homeward journeys and no register of entries-exits makes the materiality of migration practices a multifarious phenomenon which cannot be fully readable and encoded by governmental programs. The complex texture of governmentality is constituted also by self-organized migration patterns and labor economies deployed in-between the folds of the governmental machine. This brings to say that in order to explore how a space is governmentalized, we need to take into account together practices of self-organization, political technologies and strategic embodiments of migration categories and identities. Practices of migration do not merely constitute the hidden foil or the sub-text of governmentality: rather, the notion of governmentality designates the overlap of decentralized sovereignty, battles of knowledges, market forces, people's strategies of movement, and informal "invisible" economies. Despite the deployments of many European projects of development in revolutionized Tunisia, the script of a smooth "transition to democracy" is far from encompassing the heterogeneous and complex reality of that space.

*Fixing people in space: the migration development- nexus in revolutionized Tunisia:*

In response to destabilizing social unrest and to the thousands of young Tunisians who migrated towards Italy and France, Iom launched a campaign funded by the

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<sup>65</sup> According to the Office de Tunisiens à l'étranger the number of Tunisians who fled Libya in 2011 is around ninety thousand people. The data was taken at the Libyan borders of Ras Jadir and Dehiba by international agencies which monitored the crossing of all people fleeing from Libya. Instead, the number of Tunisians who have come back to Libya in 2012 cannot be determined, since many of them did not register at the office of foreign workers in Libya, and so their presence cannot be surveyed, but according to the Tunisian Foreign Ministry by October 2012 more than 50% of them have come back to Libya, with an estimation of 200, 000 jobs for Tunisians in Libya for the following year.

<sup>66</sup> In summer 2012, the average cost to go from the Tunisian city of Sfax to Tripoli was of 50 dinars. More than ten vans per day leave to Tripoli bringing Tunisians who look for a job in Libya in the construction industry or in the hotels. The high rate of unemployment in Tunisia and the medium salary in Libya which is more or less twofold the Tunisian one (around 800/1000 dinars against 500) mean that Libya is one of the main economic space of migration for Tunisians. Most Tunisian women who go to Libya to work have already signed a job contract, while men leave and look for a job once in place. The opportunities offered by the Libyan labour market are clearly marked also in governmental projects: [http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Santi%20quarterly%20f%C3%A9vrier%202012%20\(bis\).Santi%20quarterly%20f%C3%A9vrier%202012%20\(bis\).pdf](http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Santi%20quarterly%20f%C3%A9vrier%202012%20(bis).Santi%20quarterly%20f%C3%A9vrier%202012%20(bis).pdf) After the outbreak of the Libyan war, the Tunisian government allocated 600 dinars for Tunisian citizens returning from Libya.

European Union addressed at “stabilizing at risk communities”<sup>67</sup>, namely the inner regions of Tunisia where the revolution started and which are at the same time zones with a high percentage of emigration. This campaign was put into action supporting local investments and facilitating would-be migrants who planned to start small businesses. But the project also targeted migrants recently returned from Europe, staging for them “reintegration paths”: the logic that underpins these projects basically consists in making migrants learn to be responsible citizens in the face of the “democratic challenge” and of the historical revolutionary moment. This complex and ambiguous entanglement between politics of mobility and politics of development shows clearly that migration governmentality largely oversteps the field of border policies, situating within broader developmental technologies governing populations and “would-be migrants”. In fact, all Tunisians coming from “at-risk communities” are considered would-be migrants, due to the possibility to migrate opened up by the revolution<sup>68</sup>. In the name of democracy as a stage to be fully achieved through transition, (some) would-be migrants are fixed in space: in response to the “risk” that most of the people could refuse to stay at their own place, the politics of selected mobility that the European Union promotes for specific migrants categories – students, high-skilled workers – is refracted into a complementary politics of “democratic containment” which playing with the migration-development nexus encourages the building of durable economic perspectives in the Country.<sup>69</sup> “Lack of economic opportunity is a primary reason for migration and underscores the close relationship between migration and development. Improving the underlying economic and social conditions in areas of high migration pressure – addressing these root causes of migration – is an important element in any comprehensive approach to migration management” [Iom, 2011].

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<sup>67</sup> [http://www.iom-tunisie.org/activites\\_details.php?id=17](http://www.iom-tunisie.org/activites_details.php?id=17)

<sup>68</sup> In fact, soon after the outbreak of the revolution, maritime border controls became softer due to the fall of the regime and the temporary interruption of the bilateral agreements with Italy.

<sup>69</sup> See Spring Program, *EU response to the Arab Spring: new package of support for North Africa and Middle East*, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-11-1083\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-1083_en.htm?locale=en) and *EU response to the Arab Spring: special measures for poorest areas in Tunisia*. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-11-642\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-642_en.htm?locale=en). This latter aims to “contribute to the creation of employment and to measures of social integration [...] focusing on short-term employment, for which the Tunisian Government has allocated 64 million Tunisian Dinar (TND) to the governorates of the poorest regions in order to finance 42,700 fixed-term jobs” and “to improve access to microfinance services for the population living in the most under-privileged areas by providing support to microcredit institutions”.

Since 2005 the International Organization for Migration put into place campaigns of sensibilization aimed at convincing people not to leave their own country in an irregular way, showing the risks of clandestine departures and the uncertainty surrounding their future in the country of destination [Andrijasevic, Walters, 2010; Georgi, 2010]. In a nutshell, Iom's campaigns of sensibilization consist in a set of activities (showing documentaries, organizing meetings in local communities and staging shows) with the aim of "demonstrating" the risks involved in migrating "illegally", convincing people not to leave the country and promoting local economic activities as incentives for staying. One of the most important campaigns was headed in Senegal, in 2006, against migrants' departures towards the Canary Islands. In Tunisia the main recent activities were led in the so called "at risk communities" of the inner regions of the country. It should be noticed that the expression "at risk" designates the geographical area where the revolution started: ultimately, the aim of these projects is at the same time to prevent people from leaving both the country towards Europe and the countryside toward the coastal regions of Tunisia, taming migrations and the social unrest at the same time. These mechanisms for managing migrations basically rely on a strategy aimed at "fixing people in places", or better at partitioning between selected channels of mobility and people as clandestinized migrants. The EU-Iom project called *Stabilizing At-Risk Communities* shows quite clearly the ambivalent role that democracy plays in migration governmentality discourses concerning revolutionized spaces: "the project provides alternatives to communities at risk, by promoting stability in a transition period through intervention on quick-impact income-generating activities [...] addressing youth un- and underemployment in at-risk communities, through activities to enhance their employability in local and foreign labour markets, and to promote local socio-economic development" [Eu-Iom, 2011]. The script of democracy works on the one hand as a supposed universal value that, after being conquered also in Arab revolutionized countries, is the pre-condition for promoting local development and ordered mobility; on the other hand, it is presented as a destabilizing factor producing social turmoil that needs to be managed through the implementation of regulative measures and projects of development. In fact, the Arab Uprisings are depicted by European analysts as a source of economic and political instability and,

simultaneously, as an opportunity to put into place new economic agreements: “political events experienced by Tunisia caused an economic and social shock which has disrupted Tunisia's economic growth. Return to economic recovery is a must and requires the launch of immediate new economic and social policies and reforms which meet the needs of the citizens; in particular those in the most impoverished parts of the country” [EU, MEMO/11/642].

In revolutionized Tunisia and in Libya the migration-development agenda found a fertile ground, and at the same time it was destabilized by practices of migration that could not be fully regulated through the logic of “development instead of migration”. The script of the “transition to democracy” was introduced through the developmental grid for “taming” the turbulence of peoples’ mobility and social unrest according to the logic of the “not yet”: the gradual conquest of democracy, the quest for secular values as well as the learning of the “best practices” are the three main pillars of Europe’s discourse on the conquest of democracy by Arab people. Liberal analysts read the Arab uprising in terms of the political awakening of the Arab people, following at a time distance in the footsteps of the European modern democratic age. However, if at a first glance the discourse of the European Union on the transition to democracy could be seen in continuity with colonial politics, this is not the reading that I embrace in this work: what I foreground is the way in which the blueprint of democracy has been assumed and (strategically) resignified in Tunisia, and at the same time it is mobilized by Europe and migration agencies for persuading countries of origin –in this case North African countries – of the importance and the advantages of a strong cooperation on migration management [Hess, 2008].

Following the reading of the Arab uprisings coming from Europe, the distance between the two shores of the Mediterranean is erased in the name of a cultural and historical proximity: the Mediterranean emerges as a homogenizing spatial signifier, functioning at once as a reducer of distance and as a boundary-fixing mechanism, in the sense that it (re)traces at every time the edges of what needs to be considered – culturally, politically – “close”. Consequently, in the name of proximity new exclusionary borders are traced out, excluding some countries and geographic areas

from the logic of partnership as well as from the discourse of a common space to share and develop. In this regard, the stress on the Mediterranean as an area of political relations and economic exchanges, necessarily involves the exclusion of people and countries beyond the Mediterranean boundaries. Moreover, these borders are essentially blurred and always changing, since the Mediterranean space itself, as an economic and political landmark, is ultimately the provisional result of the combination of different agreements and networks – the Union for the Mediterranean, Mediterranean dialogue 5+5, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Networks<sup>70</sup> ...

Nevertheless, as soon as the attention shifts to migrations, the distance between the two shores seems to increase: migrations are seen not as practices of freedom that are part of an effective democracy but rather as side-effects of ungoverned social unrest and deceitful practices which try to dodge the law.

#### *The production of teachable subjects*

Shifting the attention to the spatial transformations engendered by migrations' upheavals and revolutionary uprisings in 2011, it should be noticed that migration governmentality has been rearranged taking the migration-development nexus as its main lynch-pin. This is not at all an original agenda in migration policies, but what is peculiar is the way in which the strategy of “making the poor work” and politics of migration are articulated to govern political instability, economic discontent and practices of mobility, surreptitiously positing mobility as a symptom of unrests and troubles. Political upheavals in Tunisia were sized as the opportunity to revise bilateral agreements<sup>71</sup> and Mobility Partnerships; and conversely the migratory issue has become a constitutive part of the process of “transition to democracy”. In December 2012 a new Privileged Partnership was signed between Europe and Tunisia, in which the promotion of selected skilled migration – especially students –

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<sup>70</sup> What is important to notice is how the label “Mediterranean” actually designates very different spaces: for instance, the Union for the Mediterranean created in 2008 includes all the 27 European member states, while in the Euromed networks there are only the Southern European countries.

<sup>71</sup> For a chronology of the bilateral agreements between Italy and Tunisia from 1998 to 2011 see <http://www.storiemigranti.org/spip.php?article1004>

is a crucial point<sup>72</sup>. And if in that agreement there is no obligation for Tunisia to accept the repatriation of third-countries nationals on its soil, the sharpening of the two-sided logic – support of skilled migration/criminalization of illegal movements – paves the way for future readmission agreements implicating that clause [Martin, Haon, 2013].

Thus, more than setting autonomous developmental policies, international migration agencies place their interventions within wider economic projects of a “struggle against poverty” and “millennium developmental goals”<sup>73</sup>. In this way, an in-depth analysis of migratory policies necessarily needs to take into account the economy of people's mobility at large, meaning by that both the economic projects of development in revolutionized spaces and the relationship between people's economic productivity – labor force – and the territory.

In order to understand such an articulation, I focus on the way in which the migration-development nexus put into place strategies for fixing people in space, positing the migrant as a subject who must learn to come out from poverty remaining in her/his own space: in this sense, the economy of subjectivation in postcolonial revolutionized space cannot be straight and fully encapsulated into the logic of human capital, since many political technologies are simultaneously at play. After all, the model of human capital frames capital as a social relation within the kernel of the “human”, failing to account for the overlapping, and sometimes conflicting, processes of subjectivation as well as of exploitation [Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013a]. I refer for instance to the dynamic of qualification and disqualification of people's skills, that are subjected to the juridical and social position of subjects.<sup>74</sup> Broadly speaking, the model of human capital is not fully adequate for casting light on the different mechanisms at stake in the “moral geography”<sup>75</sup> of migration governance

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[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/documents/press\\_corner/plan\\_action\\_tunisie\\_ue\\_2013\\_2017\\_fr.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/documents/press_corner/plan_action_tunisie_ue_2013_2017_fr.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

<sup>74</sup> For instance, the value of a certain skill “embodied” by an individual changes if the person becomes a migrant, bringing with him/her such a qualification into another space. Thus, the processes of capitalization of the “human” depend on the social position of the subject.

<sup>75</sup> The moral geography refers in this case to the ways in which people changes in social, juridical and political status according to the space they are at some point, and conversely how people are differently allocated, moved or stranded into a certain space by migration policies. However, the

[Hyndman, 2000]. If the *homo oeconomicus* is a subject who responds only to its own interest, and for this reason he can be governed according to economic principles [Foucault, 2009], the would-be migrant in revolutionized Tunisia is shaped in a slightly different way: would-be migrants and returned migrants are addressed as teachable subjects – who need to learn practices of democracy and to engage into an entrepreneurial rationality - but only while remaining in their own economic and geographic context. Then, if the human capital is governed and self-disciplined through his own desires, what characterizes the government of would-be migrants is rather a more multi-faceted rationale, in which the entrepreneurial principle, the logic of learning –the learning of “best practices” of democracy– and the injunction to remain in one’s own place coexist. Therefore, the suggestion to profitably manage one's own conduct is rephrased into a migration governmental rationale that aims at producing a conditioned-autonomy, respecting the boundaries and the conditions of an ordered democracy and of a managed mobility.

However, it is important not to follow closely the governmental narrative, remaining at the level of texts. In fact, if we consider the kind of developmental projects and economic activities promoted by international and European agencies in Tunisia, we see that far from fostering individual autonomy: what is effectively sustained and funded is a set of unskilled economic activities. Thus, what should be acknowledged is the fundamentally unachievable character of the “learning autonomy” model, and the inevitable “failure” of would-be migrants in performing that model of subjectivity. Indeed, what Sanjay Seth argues in relation to the colonial context could to some extent be recalled within the present political frame of “democracy to learn”: “colonial governmentality functioned to posit the possibility of self-governance and incite the desire for it, while simultaneously declaring it unachievable” [Seth, 2007, p. 123].

But it is not only on the southern shore that the migration-development conceives of migrants as “teachable subjects”. For instance, in France the Office for Immigrants (Ofii) offers Tunisian migrants “projects for economic reinsertion” encouraging people to devise an entrepreneurial project to develop in Tunisia under the guidance

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expression originally means the significance of the geographic context for ethical principles and practices [Proctor, 1998; Smith, 2000]

of experts. At the same time, as observed for reintegration programs in Tunisia and in Libya, the relevance of these economic measures is quite scant (16 projects in total) and they consist of funding traditional activities reframing them through the enhancement of the private sector. Moreover, Tunisian migrants that Ofii took-in-charge were labelled as humanitarian assisted returns: all “illegal” Tunisian migrants not detained in a detention center could apply for the “humanitarian formula” that consists of 300 Euros plus an organized repatriation flight. What is striking is that 904 persons benefited from the repatriation program, while almost nobody left France through the assisted voluntary return: those migrants did not meet Ofii’s criteria to apply for assisted voluntary return, since they had not been in France for at least two years; secondly, the humanitarian label served to let pass in the name of humanitarian emergency a mechanism for getting rid of them, providing just 300 Euros instead of 2000 as scheduled for the voluntary return.

To sum up, revolutionary events in Tunisia were the occasion to situate migration policies into a wider economic rationality that address the stability and the reconstruction of a new democratic space and comprehensive obligations for third-countries [Cassarino, Lavenex, 2012]. In addition to that, revolutionized spaces allow us to see how the right to move freely is reframed in the light of the discourse on civic responsibility: after the revolution, migration and development have been rearticulated on the basis of the logic of “not migrating in order to develop your space” or “migrating according to the established conditions of selected mobility”. In fact, in the Tunisian public debate the widespread discourse which circulates contends that “young people should not leave the country just now: following the revolution we have the opportunity to build a different society and we also have the responsibility to work for our country”.

*Democracy as a strategy of containment:*

The logic of the “best practices” of democracy to be learnt by Tunisian would-be migrants highlights the function of democracy as a strategy for governing “unruly political upheavals”. In particular, having in mind the development projects for would-be migrants that I illustrated above, what I explore is the way in which the script of democracy is played in the Tunisian revolutionized space. Recalling Ranajit

Guha's reflection on the nation state as a “strategy of containment” [Guha, 2003], I suggest looking at democracy as a kind of strategy of containment precisely in the light of the migration-development nexus. My intention is not to superimpose a grid of intelligibility on underway events but to bring out the mechanisms of government at play and the effects that they triggered. Therefore, it's not the injunction to democracy as such that will be considered here but the rationale of the “transition to democracy” in revolutionized contexts, and how it articulates with migration governmentality and with developmental politics. According to European analysts, development is the precondition for the settling of a “safe” democracy and, conversely, projects of development require a minimum degree of social security in order to be able to really foster processes of democratization.

In order to tackle these issues I have focused on how Iom set its activities in Tunisia through two main strategies: democracy as containment and secured mobility through development. These two combining political technologies for governing revolutionized spaces center on would-be migrants and returned migrants to mobilize wider moral economies of development. Along with Icmpd (the International Center for Migration Policy Development) Iom functions as a “norms-making agency” and as a “governmentality storyteller”: actually, Iom contributes to implementing a specific regime of truth by making space for new discursive and non-discursive practices of intervention aimed at governing mobility. The government of would-be and returned migrants has today a paramount relevance in the construction of a “new democratic Tunisia”, in which migration policies that are less concerned with border management than with the migration-development nexus.

By encouraging people to foster local economies, both the EU and Iom seem to push for a national autonomous development to prevent unskilled would-be migrants from leaving the country. But actually, projects of privatization<sup>76</sup> and development show

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<sup>76</sup> The European Union is promoting Public Private Partnerships regarding public services like water and gas pipelines, and which consists in a contract between the public sector and a private party that becomes in charge of governing the service. In March 2013, the OECD, the African Development Bank and the International Finance Corporation supported the Tunisian government to implement a law on Public Private Partnership, while Mena granted 3.85 million dollars to Tunisia in order to introduce the PPP in the infrastructure sector.

that, far from promoting a real economic autonomy, European actors try to scale up and align Tunisian economy with international standards through the support of small economic activities dependent on foreign loans. In this way, safe-secured mobility is drawn upon the conditions of development and economic growth: those who don't migrate avoid falling into the circuits of smuggling and illegal migration, while skilled migrants are encouraged to go to Europe to learn good practices of development. The first thing to remark on about development projects is that they enhance an economy of debt –in order to start the project, returned migrants need to ask for loans from microcredit institutes or also ordinary banks– based in turn on the logic of “making the poor work”: after the revolution in the name of a democratization of the access to productivity and investments, many circuits of micro-credit have been activated addressing “the root causes” of emigration, that is poverty and unemployment. Secondly, those projects actually enforce a low skilled economy: despite the injunction for a developed economy of growth, at a closer scrutiny enterprise activities supported by the European Union and the African Development Bank via Iom mostly pertain to the so called economy of subsistence. In other words, it is an informal economy of needs that is ultimately enhanced through development projects which put would-be migrants at the core of the “construction of a new democratic Tunisia”. In fact, despite the injunction to privatize public services and to empower entrepreneurial attitudes, the activities effectively supported are part of the traditional economic sector. The starting of local enterprises like small restaurants or rural activities is presented by Iom as an innovative way of fostering regional development. Moreover, as Cassarino points out, “the majority of these so-called “development” actions generally take place in the form of short-term projects corresponding to priorities aiming to channel migratory flows (both on their departure from Tunisia and on their return)” [Cassarino, 2012].

However, far from reading this in terms of an economic backwardness enhanced by international actors, I suggest to draw on Kalyal Sanyal's considerations, bringing attention to the constitutive heterogeneity of capitalist economy and the simultaneity

of processes creating, restoring and destroying traditional modes of productivity. Secondly, as Sanyal notices, the basic need-based approach to development is grounded on two main pillars: on the one hand “the purpose of developmental interventions is to create and extend entitlements outside the capitalist space for the excluded and the mariginals” and on the other hand “the employment strategy promoted by these organizations is highlighting the prospect of self-employment” [Sanyal, 2007]. In fact jobs promoted by agencies like Iom in revolutionized Tunisia consist in unskilled activities that returned migrants need to demonstrate to be able to build by themselves, following terms and conditions of financial circuits as well as the best practices to learn from the promoters of democracy.

Such a perspective enables us to unpack the logic of transition to democracy: the politics of fixing (some) people in space and settling hybrid economies – private investments and unskilled activities – is also a strategy for taming revolutionary turmoil maintaining revolutionized spaces in a state of permanent transition. In reintegration programs sponsored by Iom and the European Union, migrants are depicted in counterpoint to the figure of the responsible citizen: returned migrants emerge, against the light, as subjects who irresponsibly fled the country in the aftermath of the revolution. In this sense, revolution is paradoxically reworked here as a counter-uprising force used to tame social disorders and political instabilities in the name of a smooth transition to democracy: the event of the revolution is posited as the main reason for engaging in the construction of the new democratic Tunisia. However, a further moral partition is made among returned migrants themselves, splitting them between the responsible citizens and the incorrigible ones: indeed, those who have been deported are excluded from any migratory or developmental program. In this sense, a sort of “corrective reintegration pattern” is envisaged for migrants who voluntarily returned to their country of origin, excluding instead those who came back as deported. But this doesn't mean that “irresponsible” migrants are out of the grip of governmentality: actually, if on the one hand they are left to their own destiny and no official institutional program is provided for them, on the other this mechanism works as a normative operative tool, a principle of distribution of moral and economic credits for taking part in democratic processes. In other words, the rallying-cry of democracy puts into place a normative matrix assessing which

conducts are suitable for the democratic standards. In a nutshell, European analyses and migration agencies envisage the process of transition as a laborious challenge and as a conquest that can be realized upon certain conditions. A great deal of effort is required, to paraphrase governmental documents, in order to get the democratic order stabilized. An effort in economic and in moral terms: the attitude (disposition) to work hard and to rationally plan economic strategies is part of the same organizing principle. Therefore, “moral development” and economic “unachievable” development are mutually entangled [Rose, O’Malley, Valverde, 2006; Watts, 2003].

The European Union has established the future directions of revolutionary uprisings according to the secularist political teleology: no room is left for the religious and political differential that is at stake in the Maghreb area. Do the rallying-calls of “freedom” and “democracy” have another connotation and meaning than in the European space? The secular and progressive narrative emerges in a quite outstanding way in the discourse pronounced by Cecilia Malstrom, the European Commissioner for Home Affairs: “I was impressed by the people’s determination to make their liberated country a success. Here, and throughout the region, we need to constantly assess whether our policies are providing an effective response to their historic challenges”.<sup>77</sup> Thus, democracy works by taming political unrest and ungovernable movements playing on a strong ambiguity: it is seen at once as the unexpected and delayed conquest of the Arab people and as a source of social instability and political crisis.

*Working at the margins of power and migration as a “decompression chamber”*

As many scholars have argued, migrations could play as a litmus paper [Mezzadra, 2006] to understand broader mechanisms of governmentality. In addition to this, a focus on the ways in which migration turmoil forces political technologies to redefine their strategies involves situating the analysis at the margins of power. By margins I mean the spaces and the subjects that function as elements of friction/resistance to power mechanisms. In this vein, Foucault's suggestion that to take the point of view of the reversal and of the limits of power, is essential to analyze its *dispositive*, is an important principle to grasp in detail the functioning of

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<sup>77</sup> [http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article\\_12133\\_en.htm](http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_12133_en.htm)

migration governmentality [Foucault, 1980a]. The limits of power also designate the edges where many *dispositifs* of government overlap and where they need to reinvent strategies in order to respond to migration turbulence. Taking the margins as an analytical vantage point means bringing to the surface mechanisms of governmentality that are particularly conspicuous at the borders, showing the uneven functioning of power –namely, how it works differently at the margins [Mohanty, 2003].

After this overview on the connection in revolutionized spaces between the democratic script and migration governance, I draw the attention to the discourse of the transition to democracy in its articulation with territory and the government of social disorder. Such an analysis requires a retracing of the colonial legacies of migration governance, avoiding perceiving this latter as a completely new diagram of power which mushroomed in the last decade.

I would start by remarking that migration governmentality in the Mediterranean is focusing more and more on migrants' countries of origin; indeed, if the political turn in migration management towards the southern shore of the Mediterranean started in 2003 with the British proposal to externalize frontiers, what I indicate here does not concern detention centers or border patrols against illegal crossing, but the government of returned-and-possible migrants within “their own space”. In this regard, the colonial heritage cannot be overlooked for a history of the present about the transformations at stake in the government of mobility. In particular, it is through the entanglement of territory and the democratic script that social unrest is tamed and governed. In fact, in the 19th century the French occupation of Algeria and Tunisia responded to many political and social issues, and here in passing I recall the most preeminent: the rise and the primacy of the United Kingdom in imperial conquests, the importance of finding new markets and the necessity to resolve internal social, demographic and political problems [Le Cour Grandmaison, 2005]. The colonial conquest in North Africa was led by the idea that French social turmoil and the revolutionary threat could be tamed only by making citizens flow abroad.

What took place in Tunisia with the outbreak of the revolution resounded in part that governmental script – with a reversal of the directionality of migration, colonial

migration in one case and contemporary “flight” in the other cases: just after the fall of Ben Ali, thousands of young Tunisians tried to leave the country “illegally”, by boat, making what Tunisian migrants call the *harraga* – the act of burning frontiers. That collective departure was seen by European and international agencies as a migratory impetus representing the side-effect of the democratic upset which shook political balances, giving rise to social disorder: in this regard, the European Union and Iom converge in saying that “turbulence and conflict have created vast new challenges which, unaddressed, threaten to derail transition processes”; and consequently migration-development programs rooted in strategy of “smooth and driven transition” to democracy “address and establish the pre-conditions required to enable smooth transitions and comprehensive and sustainable recoveries in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia” [EU-Iom, 2011].

In fact, revolts and turmoil produced slacker border controls, since many of the *Garde Nationale* deserted and a huge number were used to govern the riots in Tunisian cities; but at the same time the Tunisian government strategically seized the opportunity to stream out of the country many youths who participated in the revolution. Indeed, in the face of an ungovernable mob, the strategy of the “decompression chamber” appeared as a temporary solution, and the spontaneous practices of migrations that the revolutionary *elan* mobilized ultimately were facilitated by not obstructing departures by boat from the cities of Sfax and Zarzis. In this sense, paradoxically, the primary connection between revolutionary turmoil and practices of migration was established by the Tunisian government that depicted Tunisian migrants as the sons of the revolution: young people who could have provoked disturbances and the snowballing of social and political unrest should literally be encouraged to put out to sea. Thus, the “mob” shaped in the 19th century as an object both of techniques of containment and strategies of flight [Chamayou, 2010], nowadays has been reactivated in postcolonial revolutionary Tunisia towards the most unruly among Tunisians who could carry on social unrest and so prove not to be “responsible citizens”. In some sense, Tunisian migrants who left the country after the outbreak of the revolution resembled a “migratory mob”, namely an ungovernable social problem that it was best to let go away. Actually, it is in such a political context that the strategy of democracy as a mechanism of containment takes

shape, inflecting in a different manner the tactic which consisted in “throwing the mob out” practiced by colonial and postcolonial governments.

*The unceasing productivity of spaces:*

All these things considered, democracy as a strategy of containment has to be set as a complex response to practices of mobility which unsettled the normativity of previous spatial economies. At close scrutiny, what comes out is the reconfiguration of existing spatialities along with a conspicuous production of new bordered spaces and special zones that in turn multiply borders and frontiers: the differentiated access for people to borders and spaces is enacted precisely through the tracing out of temporary zones, special economic areas, regional cooperation and highly monitored spaces. For instance, in the case of Neighbourhood Policies, launched by the European Union in 2003, a shared political Mediterranean space is envisaged in the name of the proximity between the two shores of the Mediterranean. But such a commonality is actually based on an iterate asymmetry, as is clearly shown by the “principle of conditionality” which underpins the logic of neighbourhood [Cuttitta, 2010; Gregor, 2005; Hailbronner, 1997; Lavenex, 2008]: the “migration clause” is at the core of broader economic bilateral agreements, compelling North African countries to adopt measures of reinforced border controls against migrants’ departures, and to accept the repatriation of third-country nationals on their soil. Another important reference to talk about the multiplication of special zones produced by migration policies is the Regional Protection Programs activated by the European Union in 2005<sup>78</sup> based on principle of the redistribution of the “refugee burden”: these provide economic and political incentives to non-European countries for adopting a politics of asylum, in order to strand asylum seekers before arriving in Europe – by processing their demands in third countries. After all, the politics of asylum is also functioning in part as a politics of containment “by stages” and “through channels”. The leading logic is to predispose external spaces of protection,

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<sup>78</sup> The Regional Protection Program with North African countries started in December 2011 –while it started in 2005 for other regions -, as one of the main political changes in the politics of asylum “triggered” as a response to the Arab turmoil. Among the significant “responses” of migration policies in the face of the Arab revolutions, there is the revision of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) launched by the European Union in 2011 and that consists in a strong cooperation with third countries of managing migration.

encouraging partner states to activate systems of humanitarian protection with the supervision of European agencies [Afeef, 2006; Heddad, 2008]. The second pillar of this package is to create “safe environments” in countries of origin in order to make displaced people “voluntarily” returned there. Finally, the RPP include also the resettlement project aimed at resettling in Europe refugees stranded in third Countries lacking in a politics of asylum<sup>79</sup>: special zones and regional externalized spaces of protection overlap with humanitarian zones breached within the European space. However, if on the one hand it is important to critically stress the ongoing trend to externalize the mechanisms of asylum, on the other it is important to disengage from a Eurocentric vantage point, exploring whether and how, from their side, third countries could gain autonomy in setting a politics of asylum on their territory. In particular, the possibility of building an economy of asylum independent from Europe could challenge the dominant discourse on international protection which posits European democracies as the real model guaranteeing an efficient and abiding system of asylum.

This last point leads us to problematize the limits of a critique of the border regime done from the northern shore. How is it possible to resist European migration policies and bilateral agreements without gaining a (relative) economic autonomy from the European labor market? What are the margins for a politics of externalization could be strategically used by North African countries, reversing the “migration clause” at their own advantage?<sup>80</sup> In Tunisia the debate on a relatively autonomous development, independent from the European principle of conditionality, is considered as a pre-condition for thinking of democracy and improving participative politics. In some way, the Arab Uprisings troubled both the Eurocentric left-wing critique to development and the governmental discourse on

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<sup>79</sup> The project started in 2009 and after the outbreak of the Libyan war has gained more and more preeminence in the European migration policy field (COM(2009) 447 final). [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/justice\\_freedom\\_security/free\\_movement\\_of\\_persons\\_asylum\\_immigration/j10029\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/j10029_en.htm)

<sup>80</sup> As Sabine Hess explains, “countries of transit and origin themselves more and more play the “migration card” in international and economical negotiations [...] it is getting harder and harder to negotiate readmission agreements with African countries as they start to demand a real equivalent amount for the missing remittances” [Hess, 2008]

democratization through development, positing the necessity of reformulating it in the light of the specific Tunisian context. In meanwhile the high rate of unemployment continues to generate social protests throughout the country and movements demanding the cancellation of the national debt<sup>81</sup>. Thus, if migration is always encroached upon and encrusted in other domains, and must be situated in a broad government of conducts – as a government of the “mob” -, a critical analysis of migrations should rethink together mobility, economic and political struggles. For this reason, migration could hardly be assumed as an autonomous subject of analysis: as a catchword and as a site of struggles, it is the catalyst where a huge variety of economic and social issues converge and overlap. The migratory issue always gets a marginal position in political debates and it tends to emerge in an eminent way only if connected to and enmeshed in other thorny problems. This is also the reason why it is hard to distinguish and elucidate the specificity of migration’s troubling effects, since it is never a “pure” phenomenon.

Revolutionized Tunisia constitutes such a privileged space of investigation to grasp in detail the reconfiguration of migration governmentality also because of the multi-oriented migrations that cross its territory, constituting a sort of “migration hub”: Tunisians migrating to Europe, Sub-Saharan asylum seekers who fled Libya, Tunisians who came back from Libya and now are going back there or to the Gulf States. Besides, considering the length of time that almost one million Tunisians have been living abroad, the very construction of Tunisian citizenship cannot dispense with the presence of immigrants on Tunisian soil and the departure of many Tunisian citizens. For these reasons, a genealogy of the citizen-subject in Tunisia cannot disregard both the colonial legacies –Tunisian migrations towards France<sup>82</sup> – and the current considerable presence of migrants in Tunisia. The marginality that the migratory issue has in the Tunisian official political debate is quite astonishing: in fact, after the huge wave of migrations towards Lampedusa in early 2011, the migration topic then faded again into the background, promptly reactivated in the

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[http://www.google.it/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=tunisie+mouvement+contre+la+dette&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcadtm.org%2FTunis-Un-front-commun-d%2C8959&ei=4fbzUfagJ8WS0AWe7IDIAw&usq=AFQjCNHseiqHGGDjRoFG4KXE\\_-BLR8Nng](http://www.google.it/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=tunisie+mouvement+contre+la+dette&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcadtm.org%2FTunis-Un-front-commun-d%2C8959&ei=4fbzUfagJ8WS0AWe7IDIAw&usq=AFQjCNHseiqHGGDjRoFG4KXE_-BLR8Nng)

light of shipwrecks of migrants' boats or via the debate on the economic crisis, unemployment and projects of development. However, moving away from the institutional channels, in Tunisia migration is perceived instead as a socially rooted phenomenon: "at some point (many) young people decide to leave, to do the *harrga*, sometimes as a boastful act, sometimes with the desire of living abroad for a period of time, and sometimes looking for a job. There is nothing new in this, it's for ages that it has been happening".<sup>83</sup>

In such a context, the apparently extraordinary strategies of smuggling and migration actually also need to be situated at the level of the ordinariness of the strategies of existence: the "smuggler" I met in Sidi Mansour<sup>84</sup>, a village close to the city of Sfax, one of the most important departure zones for migrants, was introduced to me by one of the residents, whose son left for Italy by boat in 2011 and to this day is still missing. If the image of an outlaw man operating behind the scenes was outstanding in my mind, the meeting that I had with him and with the families of the missing Tunisian migrants definitively upset this imaginary, de-mythicizing the scene of "clandestine" migration as an extraordinary, "dodgy" realm. In fact, I met the smuggler in the frame of a political campaign concerning Tunisian migrants who "disappeared" in the Mediterranean in 2011. And the goal of compiling a dossier concerning the exact times and places of the departure of those migrants caused me to meet the "smuggler" and the families of the village of Sidi Mansour to get these details. The relatives of the missing migrants and the smugglers had a discussion with us about all this as if it was a question of an "ordinary drama" – not the "illegal" departure itself, but the shipwrecks that can happen at sea. "Young people here in Sidi Mansour leave in this way, we construct fishing boats on purpose" they told me pointing at one of the wood boats anchored near the coast, "and this is the only possibility, if you want to reach the other shore of the Mediterranean". That said, it should not be too striking that what links fishermen, migrants' relatives and smugglers to each other is a kind of commercial relationship.

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<sup>83</sup> Interview conducted in the city of Zarzis in August 2011

<sup>84</sup> Sidi-Mansour, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012. The encounter with the smuggler took place in the context of the inquiry coordinated by Federica Sossi (University of Bergamo) concerning the disappearances and the deaths at sea of hundreds of Tunisian migrants in 2011. I would greatly like to thank Federica Sossi for her special support in this work and for the strong collaboration we started.

This snapshot dismantles “exotic” analytical gazes on the informal network of migration strategies. The focus on Tunisia allows us to complicate the relationship between the outcasts and the production of citizens, as well as the stretching of the borders of the political community, precisely due to the disjunction between strangers and migrants: in the public Tunisian debate, the term “migrant” refers in a substantial way to the young Tunisians who take flight. Nevertheless, the presence in Tunisia of hundreds thousands of sub-Saharan immigrants cannot be overlooked, if nothing else for the social conflicts that this presence engenders and for the non-existence of a politics of asylum in Tunisia<sup>85</sup>. The story of “Tunisia and its others” cannot be bounded to these historically rooted racist attitudes: the opening of the Tunisian national frontiers after the outbreak of the Libyan war has to be stressed, as well as the practices of popular aid deployed by Tunisian people in 2011, definitively before the arrival of the humanitarian international agencies. At the same time, asylum seekers stranded in Choucha refugee camp have been harshly attacked by the habitants of the close village of Ben Guerdane and then exploited into unskilled and hard jobs, but at least in part finally integrated into the informal economy of the village.

Thus far I’ve analysed the developmental politics of the European Union and looked at how discourses on the democratic transition work as a strategy of containment for would-be migrants. However, the analytical gesture of criticizing the European narrative could fall into the trap of paradoxically fostering the grid of governmentality, taking for granting its consistency and assuming it as an all-encompassing grasp. The other related limit of centring the analysis within and against the European debate is to reproduce an internal reading of those movements, “taming” and encoding them through existing political grids and taking for granting Europe as the only actor involved in producing knowledge on migrations and

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<sup>85</sup> In the first place, it should be noted that in Tunisia both practices of emigration and immigration pertain to a quite ordinary dimension, but this does not mean that it is an idyllic context, especially for “Africans”, as Tunisians name migrants coming from outside of the Maghreb region. Sub-Saharan migrants become the figure of racialized economic migrants pushed at the borders: during the regime of Ben Ali, forced deportations of migrants made towards the Libyan border, making migrants cross the desert on foot and then be detained in Libyan prisons, were ordinary practices.

governmental policies. As far as democracy is concerned, if we focus exclusively on the discourse of the transition to democracy, we definitively remain entrapped in a critique which is internal to the regime of knowledge and truth we aim to challenge. Therefore, after the examination of European Union's programs and discourses, I undertake a gesture of disengagement from the cartography of the Arab revolutions traced by European actors, turning the gaze to the way in which democracy is signified from within the Tunisian revolutionized context. First, it should be considered that a debate on democracy has long existed in the Arab revolutionized countries and did not suddenly mushroom in 2011, as a follow-up to the "Arab awakening". Instead, if we follow the European narrative, the practice and the debate on democracy in the Arab states came out of nowhere and in some way against the "natural disposition" of the Arab people, historically prone to resist social transformations [Pollack 2011, Bishara 2012].<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, the point is not to quest for the original meaning of democracy in the Arab context, retaining a supposed authenticity of the signifier, but rather to highlight the complex affiliations and inflections of that political referent: the way in which it is moulded by colonial heritage, the resistance to the "importation" of the values of the colonizer, and a reworked-but-own meaning of democracy itself [Filali-Ansary, 2012; Ramadan, 2012].

Firstly, we should distinguish between what we commonly define as democratic values at large (freedom, human rights...) [Marzouki, 2011] – and democracy as a political regime. The political forces which resisted and opposed colonial domination in the early 20th century mobilized a series of values against the cultural invasion conducted by the French protectorate, turning over some of the same rallying-cries that French colonialists also used and promoted to legitimize the invasion. A possible reading of this is to think about freedom, equality and fraternity as strategically appropriated by Tunisian movements; but such an analysis would still configure Arab countries as spaces where the very ideas and practices of freedom and human rights came only as a consequence of the westernization of the area.

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<sup>86</sup> "Considering that the Arabic word for regime is order, any attempt to bring down the regime is equated with chaos. Over history this fallacy has been internalized by many, even by opposition parties that allowed themselves to be domesticated through blackmail and bribery. The result was stagnant regimes, subservient oppositions that acted as mere puppets" [Bishara, 2012, p.3].

Actually, one could interrogate in which ways those political referents were already in use in the Tunisian space well before the French protectorate, and how they were influenced by the colonial presence and finally revitalized against it. Instead, if democracy is narrowed to a regime of government, it is historically related on a major scale to the colonial project and venue. In fact, democracy as a regime basically refers to a new way of administering both the territory and the population, conflicting with existing political forms of rule. Even though Tunisia was a protectorate and not a colony, the transformations that occurred both at the juridical and at the social level were considerable: despite the formal sovereignty maintained by French protectorates and the status of “strangers” in the place of “subjects” recognized to the people, many obligations and restrictions - limitation on free mobility - were imposed on the population.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, a conditioned economy was put into place: Tunisia could not sign economic agreements before consulting the French protectorate. It should be noticed that the “indirect presence” of the French was justified on the basis of the narrative of “undesired autonomy”. In fact, on the one hand the main reason advocated by French for their intervention was the absence of modern institutions and of an autonomous government; while on the other hand the protectorate was presented as the viable solution for bolstering a “protected” autonomy, since Muslims were depicted as not able to desire and to strive to govern by themselves. Thus, the goal of autonomy, it was contended, could not be reached following the same patterns as the Europeans, and the supposed unconditioned and universal rights, claimed by the French revolution, are not actually enjoyable to the same degree by every nation. Or at least, according to French theorists and politicians of the colonial age, those rights could be granted under forms of domination which would instantiate the conditions for making up political subjects [Ganiage, 1959; Estournelles de Constant, 1891; La Nef, 1953]. This order of considerations led to a legitimization of the colonial presence: “colonisation has not violated the rights of the nations, since it didn’t run into true governments and what it found in those countries was a state of pure anarchy”; the disorganisation of those people, the lack of a national sentiment and the infantile stage in which the indigenous persist, indicate the absence of any national formation, and consequently

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<sup>87</sup> For instance, restrictions on free internal mobility; as far as economy and trade are concerned, Tunisia could not stipulate any agreement with other Countries without the approval of France.

the rights of the nations, French colonialists argued, is deprived of all meaning [Lavergne, 1948, p.151]. This last point deals with the place of migration in the colonial (discursive) economy: if since the second half of the 20th century the main orientation of migration was Tunisians migrating to France, before then the massive flow was the emigration of French people to Tunisia; and French migration was presented by the French state as a strategy for guaranteeing demographic superiority on the territory of North Africa. More interestingly, colonization itself was presented as the “modern form of emigration”, in which domination and migration overlap into a “softening regime”. To put it differently and following the French trajectory, colonization involves particular practices of migration instantiating and revealing asymmetric political relationships [Lavergne, 1948].

Later in the 20th century, and after the end of the French protectorate, democracy stood for a set of ostensibly liberal reforms that Ben Ali put into place and that on the contrary were seen by a huge part of the population as “liberal-impositions”, as for instance is the case for the prohibition on women wearing the veil in the name of a modern liberal society. During the colonial period, democracy as a governmental system was related also to the advancement of “modernity” as a political colonial project aimed at dismantling rooted practices of life in the name of a governable space. For instance, as Pierre Vermeren illustrates the Salafi movement in the thirties paved the ground for an Arab-Muslim nationalism forged in opposition to the colonial machine” challenging the Western field of political alliances - nationalism vs internationalism, secularism and anti-colonialism [Vermeren, 2011]. If we take the other moral pillar and political category promoted at the time of the Arab revolutions – modernity - it should be considered that Salafism defined itself in terms of “Muslim reformism” aiming at modernizing Islam within a process of reinvigoration of the Islamic principles. Therefore, it did not “import” the issues and the forms of modernization from the outside but rather this latter was envisaged as a pattern to undertake against the colonial presence: Islamic movements tended to remark on the betrayal and the failure of the Western project of modernity, which generated an unprecedented break-up of social bonds and was unsuccessful in creating a harmonious social development. The normative ideal of modernity was deeply contested for the damaging effects it triggered within the social fabric; and

modernity promoted by colonialism was considered as a failed project that instead of making scientific and technical advancements working for a real development, paved the way for moral and religious disintegration. Then, from the sixties onwards, with the beginning of the “development era”, the slippage of democracy into modernity became more evident: economic foreign investments allowed the regime to strengthen relationships with European States and to disqualify Islamic forces as main causes of Tunisia's backwardness, thus linking democracy and development as two mutual enforcing processes to embark on<sup>88</sup>. Nevertheless, despite Tunisia having lengthily been considered as an “example” for the entire Arab world for its economic growth rate, this latter does not correspond to the wealth of the population especially in the inland regions of the country, and the debt of the Tunisian state made it subject to the economic authority of the FMI.

Going back to the colonial age has enabled us to see that democracy was played there in multiple ways and that the “battle over democracy”, both as a resistance against the colonial power and as a debate about the construction of a new society, has a long historical trajectory. In other words, firstly it makes it possible to trace back the tale of the “Arab Spring” to its colonial legacies, without assuming the revolutionary uprisings of 2011 as a sudden awakening of the region. Secondly, such a move suggests undertaking a spatial dislocation from Europe as a unique standpoint of analysis and main epistemic referent for analysing the signification of political languages and categories than sometimes have the same name –for instance, how democracy is signified differently there than in the European political thought. The script of the democratic transition is almost entirely a vocabulary deployed by European discourses for describing what I call the “struggles of the others”, even though in the aftermath of the revolution, it has also been adopted by Tunisian institutions for dialoguing with international actors. In a similar way, if we take for granted nexus between democracy and secularism, struggles for democracy are immediately translated within Western political and epistemological coordinates,

The ambivalence of the “democratic conquest” as mapped in the European gaze is translated by migration and governmental agencies into the idea of a “complex

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<sup>88</sup> The Plan of Structural Adjustment with the FMI and the first agreement with Europe on free exchange were signed in 1995.

crisis”. This expression conveys the difficulty of “reading” those upheavals and to make them intelligible to the ordinary political narratives, and at the same time it postulates the necessity to frame a global political approach to that turmoil, encapsulating migrations and social conflicts within the label of a “socio-political crisis”. Consequently, migrations turn out to be a part of a broader “spatial re-arrangement” which is presented by governmental actors and migration agencies as a “coherent approach in the area of migration, mobility and security”<sup>89</sup>. The reference to the complexity of the Mediterranean “crisis” and the claim for a comprehensive approach to it should be read as a way for coming to grips with political space in motion – the space of the Arab uprisings- that is slipping out of the hands of governmental narratives. In the following section I bring attention to the Mediterranean “crisis”, focusing in particular on the way in which the catchword of the crisis has been mobilized by migration agencies and by governments for packing the “twofold spatial upheaval”, making of it a new space/object of government.

### **Migration (in) crisis and “people not of our concern”**

#### *The slippages of the migration crisis:*

July 2012: The two-year period 2011-2012 could be seen as the age of a “Mediterranean crisis” spanning from the edges of Africa – the Libyan war – to the countries of Southern Europe. This analysis centres on the Mediterranean, reckoned in many political analyses as the space in which two “crises” overlap: the “migration crisis” and the resulting economic backlash. As I explained in the beginning of the chapter, the migration crisis is figured as a flood coming from the southern shore of the Mediterranean: the spatial and political upheavals produced by the so called “Arab Spring” and brandished as the democratic awakening of the Arab Countries were very soon stigmatized as a social turmoil and as a migratory disorder, mostly when the so long-awaited bank-effect on the northern shore actualized into the presence of thousands of migrants on European soil. It is following the instabilities produced by the economic and migration “crisis” that I orient the reflection. Focusing on the politics of mobility, migration agencies have disconnected the relationship between the European governmental crisis and the crisis of the asylum

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<sup>89</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/1\\_en\\_act\\_part1\\_v11.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/1_en_act_part1_v11.pdf)

system – positing this latter as a humanitarian and securitarian problem. And at the same time they have seized the crisis as a floating signifier for setting up “migration in crisis” as an odd compound where different kinds and meanings of crisis collapse into one another and become conflated: the crisis in Libya, the humanitarian crisis at the Tunisian border, the crisis of the European states receiving thousands of migrants, and finally the crisis of the migrants arriving in Europe and now struggling with the economic recession.

The script of a “migration in crisis” has been recently promoted by the International Organization for Migration (Iom) in order to address the Libyan political turmoil and its “disseminations”, namely its impacts in other spaces – Tunisia and Europe – and in different domains such as the humanitarian regime, security and economics. However, it is certainly not the first time that the paradigm of the crisis has been introduced by states or international agencies as a keyword encapsulating an array of political technologies of migration governance – and the Iom was itself put into place in the Fifties precisely to respond to the crisis produced by the two-blocks politics in the aftermath of the second World War [Georgi, 2010]. That said, in the aftermath of the Libyan war, the catch-word of the crisis has been re-introduced as a multifunctional prism for framing a heterogeneous array of “mobility disorders” – namely, practices of migration that through their “spatial takeover” [Sossi, 2012] trouble the “b-ordering spaces”<sup>90</sup>. But what does “migration crisis” stand for? It is not a question of quibbling with words if we take into account the nuances of that formula, especially the swing between “migration crisis” and “migration IN crisis”. In fact, the use of the two expressions reveals a slippage in the meaning of the crisis when referring to migration: “a large scale, complex migration flow resulting from crisis and typically involving significant vulnerabilities for the individuals and communities affected [...] migration caught in crisis involves different categories” [Iom, 2012b; see also Iom, 2012d]. It’s noticeable that the crisis refers to the state of precariousness, vulnerability and restricted mobility which affects migrants crossing the borders of a third country due to a military conflict and people who became

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<sup>90</sup> The expression “spatial takeover” stands for practices of movements or presences in space that come as unexpected to migration policies and, more broadly, to the established order of visibility; Instead, by “b-ordering spaces” I mean zones of containment or places apt at filtering and decelerating mobility.

“migrants” because of the crisis; and at the same time, it addresses the economic backlash and the security issue affecting receiving countries. Migration as a “disordered practice of mobility” is staged as a turbulent and troubling factor in itself, triggering a state of crisis or fostering an ongoing crisis already there, irrespective of the nature of the crisis – humanitarian, economic, security ... What the regenerated formula of “migration crisis” made visible is that migration works precisely as a magic-tenet through which the conquests of democracy and freedom have suddenly translated into an unfulfilled democratic revolution with unpredictable fallouts for European democracies as well: “migration” plays as a transformative catalyst for re-codifying political struggles and spatial upheavals into a source of an undetermined crisis. Migration as the space-troubling factor, migration as the degenerative force of a favourable mobility, migration as the deviation from the road to democracy, migration as a plight for social cohesion and as a disobedient practice of movement.

*A parenthesis on the blurred catchword of “crisis”:*

In his genealogy of the variegated occurrences in which the term “crisis” has historically been used, Reinhart Koselleck shows the catch-word function of the notion of crisis and its blurred meaning, which covers a wide semantic range drawing on multiple domains – medicine, law, theology, philosophy of history: retracing the emergence and the uses of the term “crisis”, the political-economic signification emerges only in the late 18th century and still continues to encroach upon other domains [Koselleck, 2012]. Nevertheless, the political force of this notion is historically grounded on its plurivocal nature, evoking different and overlapping levels of meaning. From the second half of the 19th century, “crisis” has become one of the main key-words of the political vocabulary for legitimizing structural reforms as well as for marking points of no-return or critical moments of transition which impose a quick response or mutually exclusive choices. Ultimately, what relates the migratory issue to the notion of crisis from a theoretical and political standpoint is

the hybrid nature, namely “the qualities of creating connections and at the same time the necessity to connect itself to other terms” [Koselleck, 2012: 92].<sup>91</sup>

*The Tunisian migration cluster:*

Despite the term migration crisis being coined to address the Libyan political turmoil and its multiplicative effects, revolutionized Tunisia is an interesting space for interrogating the formation of what I would call a “migration cluster”: after the outbreak of the Tunisian revolution and of the Libyan conflict, Tunisia has become a space of “complex” migrations, which is a factory and at the same time a recipient of migrants and would-be migrants, sub-Saharan refugees and asylum seekers, young “Tunisian beggars” crossing the Mediterranean and Libyan nationals. But Tunisian citizens who left the country for Europe and the migrants who fled Libya were seen in Tunisia as two completely different phenomena: this consideration is in part true if we consider the different conditions and reasons for migrating, but at the same time it overshadows the commonalities that depend on the very mechanism of “selected mobility” from which both these practices of migrations are excluded. In this regard, the existence of refugee camp of Choucha and the crossing of the Libyan border by almost 1 million of people in 2011 after the outbreak of the war, have remained in the shadow in comparison to other political issues taking place in revolutionized Tunisia. Or better to say, the problem of migrants and refugees fleeing Libya was primarily tackled by the “popular chain” of hospitality set in place by the Tunisian people [Tazzioli, 2012].

*“Give us our lives back”: stranded migrants out-of-place in the space-frontier of Choucha*

Choucha is a tent camp in the middle of the Tunisian desert, nine kilometres from the Libyan frontier of Ras-Jadir and more than 10 kilometres from the closest Tunisian village – Ben Guerdane. And since the problem of the rejected refugees and of the not-resettled refugees arose– summer 2012 – the stranded people, waiting for

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<sup>91</sup> The notion of “crisis” has gained an economic significance since the middle of the 19th century, “conceptualising emergency conditions, or [situations] related to class relationships, or produced by the industry or by the market capitalistic economy and that are conceived in their complexity as a symptom of a disease or of an unbalance” [Koselleck, 2012: 81]

months like in a lottery, have remained in the shade of the Tunisian political debate centred on the construction of a “new democratic Tunisia”. The camp opened on the 26th February 2011, hosting people displaced by the Libyan war, those hundreds of thousands Libyan residents – almost all of them “third country nationals” – who fled the conflict towards Tunisia. The maximum number of people trapped in that space peaked at 22,000 between in March and April 2011; then, since late summer 2011 for one year the average number of asylum seekers stranded there was around 4000. At the time of writing this article (March 2013) an estimated 980 people are still there, despite the exact number, as I will explain later, being very difficult to establish.

January 2013: From the outset the main sorting at Choucha among war-displaced people was between those who decided to return to their country of origin and those who applied for asylum; then when Unhcr started to communicate the results of the demands for asylum the camp was soon split into two areas, the “official” camp and the areas of the rejected refugees: these latter were “kindly” invited to leave Choucha as presences “out of place”, since Unhcr takes into account refugees and asylum seekers but not those who “failed the trial” of the asylum process; those, I would say, incapable of proving their exception in the face of a mechanism that sees them as non-eligible for protection. In this regard, this document encapsulates well the meaning of my argument: “when asylum-seekers come from safe countries “applicants are requested to rebut the presumption that the country of origin is safe with regard to their particular circumstances [...] And considering the difficulty of refugees to prove persecution, the applicant's mere assertions of the facts can lead to the granting of asylum provided that they are credible in the sense they lead to the full conviction of the truth, and not just probability, of circumstances causing the fear of persecution” (EC, 2012). The document makes clear that, as I explained in the first chapter, would-be refugees are “not-refugees until proven otherwise”. If such a procedure represents the general standard adopted by Unhcr, the Libyan crisis and the claims of the would-be refugees brought into question the tenability of the very principles of the international protection determined by the Geneva Convention and the disregard for the reality of the international labour regime which causes people to move all over the world: due to the presence of more than 1 and a half

million migrant workers in Libya, the outburst of the war produced an unprecedentedly huge outflow of “third-countries nationals” in Egypt and in Tunisia.

The criteria for recognising the status of asylum materialized in the interview with the Unhcr Commission, in which people were asked “why did you leave your country of origin?”, instead of being asked for the reasons why they escaped Libya, which is their country of residence or in any case the country where they had worked for years. “All of us fled from Libya, from a war” rejected refugees stated during their sit-in of protest in Tunis “and so no distinction should be made among us, between those deserving of protection and those who do not”. If in the first period rejected refugees were sheltered and assisted by Unhcr, despite the spatial seclusion, since October 2012 no food and medical assistance has been provided to them<sup>92</sup>. Moreover, those who were employed by NGOs in the camp were dismissed from work so the only possibility of getting food comes from finding an informal job in the village of Ben Guerdane, where the rate of unemployment exceeds 30% along with the rest of Tunisia which is now experiencing economic crisis. Confronted by the protests of the rejected refugees and the political denunciation of some local and international groups of activists, the Unhcr replicated that “rejected refugees are not people of our concern, so we are by no means obliged to take care of them” adding that “in a time of crisis, we have to cut the costs for managing the camp and the assistance provided to denied refugees until October was not owed”. In other words, rejected refugees don’t meet Unhcr’s criteria of “eligibility” for getting the privileged status of refugee, as an exception to the rule within the humanitarian mechanism which produces rejected refugees; indeed, it is a mechanism which works leaving stranded the majority of would-be refugees, fixing them to a space and to a certain mobility profile – economic migrant/refugee/vulnerable subject, and person to be resettled or not – which however could be “revoked” at any point by Unhcr’s commissioners. “They are people not of our concern” stands for “those existences are not visible for us, and even less they are of our pertinence; to someone else must go the task of governing them”. In fact, rejected refugees exist precisely because the government of the humanitarian generates a “marginal” production: by labelling some as “rejected refugees”, the mechanism of asylum de facto makes up

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<sup>92</sup> <http://voiceofchoucha.wordpress.com/>

“illegal” migrants: “we do not say that denied refugees are illegal migrants. This is a question out of our domain of concern: we simply say that they cannot be protected under the criteria of the asylum system. Thus, we can say who they are NOT, while it’s up to the competence of nation-states to decide upon their juridical status”. In part, this is a strategy designed to chase away those “unplaceable” subjects, and that at the same time encourages them to do so. Nevertheless, the production of people “out of concern” goes along with the control over their mobility: in the case of Choucha, the passports of the rejected refugees are still in the hands of Unhcr, which releases the documents only provided the person returns to their country of origin. The logic of a layered protection combines with a substantial limitation of mobility: a unilateral pact is that set in place by the humanitarian regime, which locates an exchange of security-mobility at its core. Would-be refugees are allowed to become undetected presences in the Tunisian space, and Unhcr encourages them “to find a job here, to value one’s own skills as economic migrant”. Therefore, on the one hand the so called migration regime is actually composed of and fragmented into different and sometimes conflicting governmental agencies, research centres and states, each one with very specific tasks and domains of concern; on the other hand, despite Unhcr’s formulation that “they are not people of our concern” –which from a juridical standpoint is correct – the subjectivities they produce largely exceed their domain of pertinence: to put it simply, the figure of the denied refugee is the result of the partitioning mechanism of the asylum, and not of migration governance at large.

*The crisis of what? The spinning freely of the sorting mechanism of migration governmentality*

This snapshot on Choucha has unfolded the slippages and ambivalences at stake in the use of the formula “migration (in) crisis”: the crisis refers to the potential turmoil and the demand for resettlement in Europe in the face of the presence of would-be refugees on Tunisian soil, but at the same time it addresses the condition of being caught in crisis that migrants, denied refugees, asylum seekers, un-resettled refugees and a plethora of “troubling forms of mobility”. Nevertheless, I’m not suggesting that these impasses have been generated by the Libyan crisis: in the end, what I have mentioned here are not exceptions to the functioning of the government of the

humanitarian; and it's not in terms of violations of the rules of asylum that one could tackle both the sorting out of a "migration population" – the partition between refugees, denied refugees, economic migrants etc. – and the exclusion of some of them from the regime of protection/assistance. In fact, if we take into account the "moral geographies" traced by the regime of asylum, the way in which refugees and migrants have been classified into migration profiles is not too dissimilar from other contexts. In fact, Unhcr produced in Choucha an array of degrees of unprotection among which the denied are obviously those with no place at all, "a nowhere as their condition of existence" [Sossi, 2007]. Rather, the "Libyan crisis" has finally exploded the untenable-ness of the Country of origin-based logic of asylum; and it was made visible by the rejected refugees who carried on protests in the name of their common (forced) escape from Libya. They put into place a "politics of the governed" [Chatterjee, 2004;], stressing the fact of being all subject to the mechanisms of migration governance and, at the same time, withstanding the Libyan conflict. At a first glance, the claim of the rejected refugees, "we are not migrants, we are all refugees and victims", could be read as a reinforcement of the longstanding distinction made between the "beggar" migrants, who move in order to get a better life, and the displaced persons fleeing a country for political reasons. And in this way, such a discourse could ultimately strengthen logic of a "legitimate" mobility. However, in this case the claim-protest reversed and counter-acted the exclusive logic of partitioning which underpins the politics of protection, imposing their own meaning on that: in contrast to the mechanism of *partage* and to the country-based criteria (people coming from "safe" or "unsafe" countries) they demanded resettlement away from Tunisia. To the primacy of the safe/unsafe list and of the national origins [Noriel, 1991], rejected refugees impose the law of their spatial presence and of their condition of being governed by the "migration game of bouncing"<sup>93</sup> which strands people by fixing them in spaces or making them wander without a place. Moreover, they reversed the very logic of (un)safety, demanding "to be resettled into a safe country", thus excluding the possibility to remain in Tunisia also with a temporary protection status, as Unhcr is pushing for.

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<sup>93</sup> By that expression I mean the fact that migration policies and administrative measures generate a substantial fragmentation in migrants' mobility and bureaucratic mechanisms that make them forced to "bounce" back and forth from one Country to another.

The “Libyan crisis” and revolutionized Tunisia make it visible also that the economic crisis, the political upheavals in the Arab countries, and the epistemic crisis of migration categories, sharpened and transformed mechanisms of migration government. The multiple crises exploded the unquestioned functioning of the partitioning machine of the asylum system and, at some points, some of those mechanisms spun freely. But while in the case of the Tunisian migrants arriving in Italy in 2011 the temporary short-circuit of the partitioning system went also to the advantage of some of them – through the concession of a temporary permit – the “epistemic crisis” of governmental migration agencies and the juridical confusion produced by “complex migrations” [Iom, 2012d] went to the detriment of the would-be refugees in Tunisia, literally stuck in juridical impasses. In fact, the migration crisis is recognized by international agencies like Iom, Unctad and Unhcr as at the same time a crisis in “migration governmentality”, or better an epistemic crisis within the mechanism that sorts people, makes up juridical subjectivities and spatializes their conducts: “the difficulty to respond to complex crisis is that a complexity of mobility practices is also at play: mixed migration flows formed of people moving for diverse reasons and with different aims, generate challenge to migration management” [Iom, 2012c]. Thus, the economic crisis which dramatically impacts on migrants’ lives and further tightens the already restrictive European politics of asylum and resettlement is coupled with the crisis of the “migration sorting mechanism”. But at closer glance the “partitioning log jam” of the migration regime in classifying people in mobility profiles is at least in part, as governmental agencies recognize, the outcome of migration upheavals: practices of mobility which to some degrees exceed existing partitioning criteria, and cannot fit into those migration profiles. What the governmental lexicon calls “complex migration” resonating the designation of “mixed migration flows”, corresponds to the juridical confusion generated by migration practices that were not “expected” and whose combination of status, citizenship and country of residence makes it difficult to trace uncontested juridical profiles.

*The moral economy of resettlement and the secrecy of humanitarian knowledge*

The complex mechanism of resettlement, as a technology for governing the migration population, needs to be situated within a broader moral economy of states in a time of crisis: a system of economic incentives has been activated by the European Union which grants up to 6000 Euros per refugee to states accepting to resettle refugees; and countries like Brazil enter the program in order to promote themselves as democratic States on the world scene. Instead, the criteria that every country adopts for selecting and excluding people remain “secret”. Actually, if we could guess that skilled migrants are the most desired refugees, taking that logic for granted would mean to corroborate the governmental discourse which in principle promotes skilled mobility<sup>94</sup>. Conversely, going in-depth into the mechanism of resettlement, it becomes evident that this selection criterion is not really the main one. As the refugees in Choucha have understood while waiting for their turn, Canada accepts only francophone people, Portugal tends to take those refused by other Countries, Denmark the vulnerable cases, and Sweden and Norway prefer women... Among the recognized refugees around 150 people have been labelled as not eligible for the resettlement program: people with legal precedents, people taking part in social disturbances and people charged with terrorism. Following pre-selective screening carried out by Unhcr, nation-States interested in resettling people select the most suitable profiles among the refugees and refuse many of them on the grounds of “security reasons”. In this way, in Choucha some of the “official” refugees won’t be resettled, despite their juridical status. At the moment of writing, the “unselected” refugees come from Arabic countries, Palestine and Iraq.

The knowledge possessed by would-be refugees at Choucha camp involves a kind of lateral thinking here: perfectly aware of being stranded on the international chessboard of the politics of mobility, they are nevertheless able to work out their future location via a process of deduction, observing how despite the formal criteria the partitioning divvying up of people is really made. What is supposed to constitute a shared and standardized process, then under close scrutiny turns out to be a mechanism of “exclusionary knowledge”. And the fact of being wise to the rights and the formal procedures of the asylum system cannot be of help in this case:

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<sup>94</sup> This logic has been recently fostered in the communication of the European Union. See in particular COM(2011) 248 final, p. 13

despite their deep knowledge of the international law on protection and of the geopolitical context, would-be refugees realized that a huge discrepancy persists between the order of norms and the effective government of their lives. Who holds their passports, into what migration profile they have been fit by states, where their dossiers have been placed, and what is the list of safe/unsafe countries: all these information are unknown to the refugees. The list of safe and unsafe countries was established by Unhcr in the late eighties with the purpose of pushing through the procedure of asylum [Hailbronner, 1993; Achermann, Gattiker, 1995].

Would-be refugees fleeing Libya have to some degrees and for some moments poured the crisis into the logic of protection. The unexpected arrival of hundred thousands of third country nationals in Tunisia, and the rejected refugees' demand to give the international protection to everybody fleeing Libya, de facto undermined the tenability of the very logic of the asylum, which relies just on a partitioning rationale – economic migrants/refugees, bogus refugee/vulnerable subjects, denied asylum seeker/resettled person. Faced with the incorrigibility of their demand [De Genova, 2010a], Unhcr has adopted a “tactic of discharge”, producing rejected refugees which actually could neither move nor stay in any place except going back to their country of origin with the 700 Euros “offered” by Iom in exchange for their spatial fixation; in this way, rejected refugees have become imperceptible and undetectable presences in the Tunisian space. In this regard, the elusiveness of numbers concerning the denied refugees in the camp (312 according to Unhcr estimations, but only 200 have been officially “counted” since November 2012, and also this number actually oscillates) depends on the tactic of “chasing away” deployed by humanitarian actors that pushes some people to abandon the camp to get informal jobs or move to some Tunisian towns or finally go back to Libya. “To discharge the many in order to care of a few”: this is not a novelty coming out of the “migration (in) crisis” script but rather the underlying logics of the international politics of asylum. However, as I stressed above, this rationale became more tangible in a space of “crisis”. Meanwhile, the “twofold spatial upheaval” made the mechanisms of partitioning spin freely: in the Libyan case the “migration (in) crisis”, unlike other historical forms and times of crisis, has not worked as a moment for radically reassembling power relations or for transit to another regime of

government. Rather, the spatial and political disorder, along with the multiplication of “precarious” spaces— like zone of humanitarian crisis – have been played as means and object of government [Sidaway, 2007].

*The politics of presence: the refusal to stay in one's own place by taking one's own space*

What this snapshot on Choucha highlights are the limits of a hyper-governmentality grid for analysing the politics of mobility and the mechanism of protection. In fact, the tactic of “discharge” largely prevails over the logic of managing the lives of all would-be refugees; but at the same time, their mobility is highly monitored – as the custody of their passports by Unhcr confirms. In particular, one episode which happened to refugees on the route to Tunis highlights very clearly their conditioned and monitored (im)mobility. Ben Guerdane, 26 March 2013: on their way to the World Social Forum that takes place in Tunis, a group of 96 refugees from Choucha camp traveling on three buses were blocked at Ben Guerdane by the Tunisian national police. “You are not allowed to circulate in Tunisian territory” the policemen argued, disregarding the special permit that the refugees obtained from the Defense Ministry to go to the Forum. They had seized the opportunity of the Social Forum to make their voices heard, as the name of their blog also suggests ‘Voice of Choucha’ , and to demand that Unhcr “finish its work”, acknowledging their status as Libyan war refugees and resettling them in safe countries. After their confrontation with the police, eight of them succeeded in reaching the Tunisian capital by a collective taxi sneaking away from the police blockade. The next day, only half of the people who had been stopped by the Tunisian police would manage to arrive at the Forum. There, non-resettled refugees and rejected refugees split into two groups choosing to set up two different protests: the former would start a hunger strike lasting for twenty days in front of Unhcr headquarters, while the latter decided to stage demonstrations at the entrance of the World Social Forum.

The decision by rejected refugees and non-resettled refugees to stage two different protests because of their different juridical status draws our attention to the ambivalences surrounding the issue of pluralizing and differentiating migrations. In fact, if on the one hand the splitting of the Choucha refugee group was the result of

their strategic consideration that two different demands should be addressed to Unhcr, on the other hand such a decision highlights the appropriation by refugees of the partitioning categories of the asylum, limiting any possible broad alliance or common ground of struggle among migrants. In a nutshell, the epistemology of the humanitarian regime is predicated on the multiplication of mobility profiles that ultimately fragments migrant struggles. The important task to pluralize the migration catchword, stressing the heterogeneity of migrants' conditions and of their stories, should however take into consideration the strategies of fragmenting-by-differentiation that migration agencies and put into place. In the face of that, the stake is how to keep together the necessity to unpack the catchword "migration" staging the multiplicity of migrants' conditions, and envisaging a pluralisation that does not work in the direction of dividing and weakening possible common struggles by migrants stranded in the same space<sup>95</sup>.

December 2012- July2013: "They are not people of our concern, any more" repeated the Unhcr officer in Zarzis "so it's not our problem what they do with their lives. They are not vulnerable or at risk, it's their life, we are not responsible for them and it's not our fault if they die going to Italy by boat". This is was the clear-cut explication that the responsible of Unhcr Tunisia gave me in the Unhcr's office in Zarzis, in December 2012, and through which she excluded any institutional solution for the rejected refugees. And a quite detailed knowledge of the "rules of the game" of the politics of asylum led me and other researchers involved in the Choucha case, to deduce that, effectively, there was no room for further developments and reopening the dossiers of the rejected refugees, since according to Unhcr they did not meet the criteria of the international protection. Therefore, it seemed that only a non-institutional solution could be envisaged, out of the formal recognition of protection, or that some European state could accept to resettle them in an exceptional way. Instead, the argument of the rejected refugees was very clear: "Since they govern us, they must take care of us. And they need to comply with the principles and the work they are expected to do: they should take decisions based upon the rights they talk

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<sup>95</sup> In fact, the production of "innovative" concepts and categories to analyse migrations is also at the core of governmental approaches, see for instance M.Jandl, eds (2007) *Innovative Concepts for Alternative Migration Policies: Ten Innovative Approaches to the Challenges of Migration in the 21st Century*.

about; human rights”, while “humanitarian forces that in principle should defend our rights mock us and strip us of those rights”. Therefore, following this discourse the governors become the truly “bogus” to be opposed and unmasked: “we know our condition is an international affair, we are part of an international problem which concerns also Palestine and Iraq. So we don’t leave the camp, we do not accept their game and we stay here as long as the work of Unhcr remains unfinished”. And the “occupation” of the camp continued until the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, when the camp was expected to close, but the rejected refugees resisted to be evicted, demanding that a solution would be founded for them. Most of the rejected refugees have chosen to stay at Choucha imposing on the law of their presence: “they cannot but see us, they want to make us invisible but we are here”.

17<sup>th</sup> July 2013: the Tunisian government has declared to give them a temporary permit for staying and circulating in Tunisia<sup>96</sup>, providing also some accommodations in the city of Medenine and Ben Guerdane<sup>97</sup>. Such a decision has not fully satisfied the request of the rejected refugees, who demanded to be recognized as refugees by Unhcr, but for the first time the “rule of the game” of the asylum system have been eluded by a State. And it is not irrelevant, I contend, that Tunisia, which officially has not a politics of asylum, has taken such a measure, in a time of political and economic crisis, showing in some way that the supposed “good model of asylum” of Northern Europe countries is based on an exclusionary and selective humanitarian logic<sup>98</sup>.

The insistence of the rejected refugees in obtaining a form of protection, despite they were declared by Unhcr out of the “rules of the game”, indicates a quite peculiar way of endorsing the condition of “being governed: on the one hand they could not but

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[http://www.social.gov.tn/index.php?id=7&L=0&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=1892&cHash=d8c83f99dbaa4f0c9e3a323315a94e20](http://www.social.gov.tn/index.php?id=7&L=0&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1892&cHash=d8c83f99dbaa4f0c9e3a323315a94e20)

<sup>97</sup> Actually, according to what officially stated by the Tunisian government, both the rejected refugees and the non-resettled refugees will be granted of the temporary permit to stay and circulate in Tunisia. However, only the non-resettled refugees will have access to the established 700 job offers, while the document is unclear about the possibility for rejected refugees to get an accommodation. However, it is important to notice that Tunisia’s decision to give the temporary protection is not in contrast with Unhcr, since this latter made pressure on the Tunisian government to take in charge the refugees that have not been resettled abroad.

<sup>98</sup> In this regard, it should be reminded that in 2011 Tunisia left open its Southern border with Libya, allowing people fleeing from the war to enter the Country.

playing within an institutional horizon, claiming to be recognized as refugees, appropriating and make use of the same vocabulary and the same partitioning categories of migration governmentality; but on the other hand, they “expropriated” and “hijacked” the rules of the game of the asylum, pushing for an “impossible demand” –“protection for all”. As a matter of fact, that demand was “impossible” and also paradoxical if the follow rules of the game of the asylum, that, in the end, both activists and critical researchers take for granted in thinking about political strategies.

Coming back to the question “what does the crisis stand for?” in the Tunisian revolutionized context and in the European space “disturbed” by migrants’ upheavals, I showed how different orders of crisis overlap and get confused: migration crisis, migration in crisis, the crisis of the international regime of asylum, the economic crisis impacting on migrants’ lives, the epistemic crisis of migration profiles...In the face of all that, the “crisis” of the rejected refugees in Choucha and the way in which they misfired the governmental mechanisms of partition which for two years encapsulate well the slippages of the crisis and its multiple sides. By “occupying the camp”, despite their condition of subjects “out of place”, and instating with their “impossible” demand out of the “rules of the game”, the rejected refugees in Choucha refused to stay in their own place [Fanon, 2007], the paradoxical place of being without a “legitimate” space.

### **The transnational Maghreb area of mobility in the making:**

As I posited at the beginning of the chapter, the main concerns of this analysis are spatial effects triggered by the Arab uprisings and migration turmoil: how spatial economies and economic spatialities have been produced or transformed in “revolutionized” spaces. In this regard, it should be interrogated if those “spatial upheavals” have unsettled the national frame. Did those spatial upheavals challenge the “methodological nationalism” which commonly underpins political analyses? Starting from this point, the shift that I propose to undertake here consists in turning the attention to the spatial outcomes that the “twofold upheaval” – migrations and the Arab uprisings – reinforced, stretched or generated at a transnational level. The Maghreb space of free circulation that I talk about is neither properly a “new zone”

nor to this day a “real” space; however, the Arab uprisings have pushed for the enactment of an area of free mobility despite running into very conflicting positions. In fact, the Maghreb area of free circulation was proposed as a space to be realized in 1989 and it was then actually put into action as a space of free circulation of goods, but not of people.<sup>99</sup> Or to put it better, the facilitations for internal migrations within the geographical area including Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya has mostly depended on bilateral agreements [Perrin, 2008]. The reason why this space in the making is of particular interest for this analysis on migration is that it intersects migrations across the Maghreb region and human mobility on the one hand, and economic spaces and political economy on the other: the free mobility of people and the making up of an economic space relatively independent from the partnerships with the European Union need to be analysed together. Secondly, the transnational space in the making that I address does not correspond to the area in which the Arab revolutions took place, tracing instead a potential new cartography of the entire Maghreb region as a bank-effect of the uprisings: indeed, neither in Morocco nor in Mauritania did people take to the streets in 2011, and in Algeria despite protests in January and in February 2011 against the regime for the rising of the price of bread, the political regime was not overturned. The project of a Maghreb area of free mobility needs to be situated into the broader African debate about politics of mobility: what is criticized by many African scholars and analysts is the lack of a common African regime of asylum and mobility, as well as the incapacity and the incoherence of the States to cope with inter-African migrations setting for instance a labor politics of free mobility between those States [Likibi, 2010]. In particular, they raise the need to establish concrete conditions for a politics of mobility independent from bilateral agreements with the European Union. In fact, as Romoulad Likibi questions, “according to the present conditions, is it possible to talk of political partnership in the full sense of the term?” arguing that in order to negotiate with the European interlocutors “no important decision about the future of the African continent should be left to others” [Likibi, 2010].

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<sup>99</sup> Actually, the first negotiations for establishing the *Union du Maghreb Arab* started in 1964, with the main economic aim of coordinating the development plans of Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia and the relations with the European Union. However, this plan never came into force until 1989, with the signature of the Treaty that officially established the existence of the UMA.

Meanwhile, it is precisely at the crossroads of these two aspects that some pressing stakes arise around the so called migration-development nexus: to what extent should a quest for no borders and free mobility take into account radical changes in political economy, in order not to be merely a liberal rallying cry? And conversely, how could a new economic space not run the risk of reproducing the same script of the European economy – privatizations, neoliberal investments, and financial power – and build at the same time a space of people mobility not based on the logic of market? In this way, the focus on this contested space in the making allows us to problematize a discourse on free mobility that does not complicate the political analysis on borders and mobility with the economic issue: in particular, those perspectives reveal their limits in the light of political uprisings which made it visible that “the centre cannot hold” [Dabashi, 2012], namely that Europe and the West as epistemic and political referents are no longer tenable. Neither the vocabulary of the uprisings nor the patterns of current migrations from North Africa address the European space as a dreamland, especially after the outbreak of the economic crisis which contributed to dismiss the desirability of Europe. Secondly, migration policies in the Maghreb region need also to be analysed in connection with the political project of an area of free mobility, depicting a spatial economy of revolutionized spaces that goes largely beyond migratory patterns going to Europe. Thus, one of the main outcomes and impacts of the multiple uprisings taking place in 2011 is just the necessity of revising the relationships between a radical critique of borders and a reflection on alternative economy. But before unfolding this point, I refocus on the Maghreb contested space of free mobility. In January 2012 the Tunisian President Marzouki proposed to the other countries of the Maghreb area to build a common space of free circulation not only for goods but also for the citizens of those countries. The political debate around this project wavered between two ambivalent orientations: the possibility of setting a productive economy, in order to gain some independence from the agreements with the European Union, and the goal of fostering the circuits of free circulation of people and capital to entice also investors from abroad are posited at the same time. The leading opponent of this proposal was Algeria, which cautioned against the possible illegal traffic of weapons that such a measure could have facilitated, and warned of the risk of losing national

identities. Nevertheless, what has to be highlighted is that the space of free mobility in part already exists, due to bilateral agreements. For instance, this is the case of the agreement between Libya and Tunisia, signed for the first time in 1974, allowing both Tunisians and Libyans to freely move, work and stay in the two Countries. It is noticeable that the agreement was signed just in the aftermath of the oil crisis of 1973, which marked a considerable turn of Tunisian migration routes from France to Libya, since this latter experienced a period of economic growth and consequently of labour force demand due to the increase in oil prices. And if the Arab revolutions have been an opportunity for some states to revise these treaties,<sup>100</sup> more or less informal flows of people, most of all between Tunisia and Libya, have never ceased. However, we should not overstating the smoothness of this space or the porosity of the borders: quite to the contrary, ongoing conflicts and harsh obstacles characterize the political relationships between those Countries and their migration politics; above all, the Moroccan-Algerian dispute which started in 1994 after terrorist attacks in Marrakech led Morocco to close the frontiers with Algeria and to introduce visa obligations for all Algerian citizens. Despite the period of formal restrictions ending in 2004, today the two countries are far from coming to terms about a liberal politics of mobility: the burning political issue of the annexation of the Western Sahara region to Morocco and the independence of the Sahraouian people that has been going on since 1975 are still at the core of the present quarrels. Moreover, the frontiers are de facto still closed for Moroccan citizens. But the reverberations of the Arab uprisings is for many aspects resonating also in those Countries, where no revolution took place: the current processes of reassessment of the political balances between Algeria and Morocco hinge considerably on mobility issues, with the proposal of a Maghreb area of free mobility at its core. The first step of the Tunisian government was to revise the conditions for the Visa and the residence permit for the

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<sup>100</sup> Tunisia and Libya are revising the agreements on military and economic cooperation; Tunisia and Algeria signed in December 2012 an agreement on border controls and anti-terrorism collaboration. Then, in 2012 Tunisia signed many programs of selected mobility with France and an agreement with Italy about tourism (July 2012), while Morocco revised the bilateral agreements with France concerning economic development. As I explained above in the chapter, since December 2012 Tunisia has become a “Privileged partner of the EU”, while in June 2013, after months of negotiations, Morocco and the EU signed a Mobility Partnership which includes readmission agreements according to which sub-Saharan migrants who transit from Morocco before arriving in Italy will be deported to Morocco. The agreements signed by Maghreb Countries are not only with Europe but for a considerable part also with the Gulf States – Qatar and Arab Emirates – concerning most of all labour migration (see for instance the Tunisia-Qatar agreement signed on January 2012).

citizens of Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania (but not for Libyan citizens, since Libya is now considered a politically unstable country).<sup>101</sup>

However, the attempts to construct the Maghreb as a free space should not be regarded automatically as a positive resistance to the Schengen area as an economic space and a space of mobility. In fact, despite the relevant political gesture of (partial) *detournement* from Europe that some North African countries are making, the economic and the political agenda of those countries is essentially based on many neoliberal measures and that more than envisaging an economic system which completely revises the mechanisms of production is turning to the Gulf States.

Besides, it would be misleading to think that countries like Tunisia renounce the funds of the European Union: on the contrary, it must be stressed that while negotiations about the Maghreb space of free circulation were going on, important summits between European Countries and the Countries of the southern shore took place – such as the Euromediterranean summit, which was held in Malta in October 2012<sup>102</sup> – as well as many bilateral agreements between European and Maghreb Countries, or the European Neighbourhood Policies which were strengthened just in the aftermath of the uprisings.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, other transnational spaces of free mobility – for trade, and not for people – are supported by the European Union: the “Arab Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement” signed in Agadir 2004 between Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt with the approval of Europe is now promoted by the European Union as an example of the “experience transfer” – the European economic integration model “is now transferred to the Arab Mediterranean Countries”<sup>104</sup>.

Nevertheless, the ambivalent political issues underpinning the Maghreb space of free mobility compel us to largely rethink both the discourse on free movement and the migration-development nexus in the light of an alternative economy, interrogating what a critique of the developmental paradigm could mean in revolutionized spaces.

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<sup>101</sup> <http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2012/06/46118/moroccans-can-enter-tunisia-with-id-card-only-minister/>

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.5plus5.gov.mt/malta-summit>

<sup>103</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2012\\_enp\\_pack/delivering\\_new\\_enp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2012_enp_pack/delivering_new_enp_en.pdf)

<sup>104</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/arab-mediterranean\\_fta\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/arab-mediterranean_fta_en.pdf)

In fact, as I previously stated, what stems from the context of the Arab uprisings is the inadequacy of a “liberal” critique that merely advocates for no borders and free mobility, without taking into account the economic factor. All these questions are not the result of the Arab Spring, and actually most critical approaches to migration governmentality have taken them seriously. Rather, what I would like to highlight is that the Arab revolutions have brought to the fore and sharpened the necessity to think and act together a critique of borders and a critique of the productive system. In fact, unlike other practices of migration, migrants’ practices taking place in 2011 in the Mediterranean space need to be situated within the “revolutionized spaces”: that is to say, from the standpoint of a long-run analysis, the temporary interruption and short-circuit of the migration governmentality mechanisms that Tunisian migrants enacted has to be articulated with the debate about the construction of a “new Tunisia”. To sum up, the gaze on migrants’ practices occurring in the context of the Arab uprisings makes us see the limits of a “liberal” critique of the border regime. Or in broader terms, migrations at the time of spatial and political upheavals – and considering migration itself as part of the turmoil – force us to relocate critical discourses on migrations and borders within a radical and wider economic analysis that tries to think together the removal of borders and an economic perspective which neither posits Europe as the most esteemed space, nor considers every “variation of tune” to that economy as a real and good alternative in itself. In this sense, the Arab uprisings and migrants’ practices suggest that a reformulation of critical discourses on migrations<sup>105</sup> from the southern shore of the Mediterranean involves dismantling the colonial and the post-colonial imagery which underpins the narratives on democracy.

Ultimately, if on the one hand the issue is to bring into relief the “bank effects” that the Arab revolutions produced on the mechanisms of migration governmentality, on the other the political economy of mobility represents an important angle to take for an in-depth analysis of the Arab uprisings. In fact, as some scholars suggest [Dabashi, 2012; Kanna, 2011] migrants’ movements and migration politics are crucial elements of the cartography of the Arab revolutions. And at the same time, they have played an important role in workers’ struggles that historically have

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marked the forms of dissidence towards the dictatorships in Arab countries in recent years. In turn, as Hamid Dabashi points out, “the Arab Spring is very much implicated in this tracing of the patterns of labour migrations”. This is the reason why, as I introduced earlier in the chapter, the opening of a space of free circulation of people that the Arab revolutions could generate in the near future must be read carefully in the light of “the proliferation of borders that cut across and exceed existing political spaces” and the related multiplication, see differentiation, of labour regimes as new mechanisms of hierarchization through the “multiplication of control devices” [Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013b]. In particular, focusing on the “migration roots” of the Arab revolutions, a huge number of migrant workers’ struggles took place in the Gulf States in the last ten years, in the form of protest against the exploitative conditions of the labour system. In some sense, migrant workers’ protests have been the “sidelong force” of the revolutions. This does not mean that they have played a marginal role in the unfolding of the events; on the contrary, as it is well known, migrant labour force represents seventy per cent of the whole population in the Gulf States; rather, by that expression I want to stage the different position and claims of migrant workers in comparison to the more narrated protests and political unrest of citizens (in Tunisia, Egypt, Barhein, Syria, Yemen) demanding the end of the dictatorships and a real democracy. In fact, as Ahmed Kanna suggests, while migrants did not ask for social or political integration within the perimeter of the polis, citizens made claims and gained their freedom from inside the borders of the space of citizenship. However, both these vectors of the revolutions have shaped the ground for social protests, but the struggles of the migrant workers bring to the light some limits of citizens’ political demands and more broadly of uprisings that still centre on a national framework as ultimately is the case of the Arab Spring.

The Mediterranean space, which has been shaken by the “twofold spatial upheaval”, does not include only national or land boundaries but also the Mediterranean Sea as a contested space of mobility and as a sea of deaths. The next chapter mobilizes a counter-mapping approach to unpack the politics of control in the Mediterranean, looking at the ways in which practices of migration upset the humanitarian and the governmental discourse on migrants’ deaths at sea.

## CHAPTER 4:

### **Mediterranean patchy (in)visibilities: undetected movements, “noisy” practices**

*“At stake in every politics of border controls  
is control over the borders of the political”.*

*(A.Mitropoulos, 2007)*

6th September 2012: Twelve miles off the coast of Lampedusa, and very close to the little island of Lampione, at around 4 pm a boat with 135 Tunisians on board sends out an SOS to the Italian Coast Guard; after more than nine hours 56 of them are saved while the others “disappeared” in the Mediterranean, despite the tiny dimension of the island of Lampione. The Italian authorities do not believe the version of the story told by the surviving migrants, suspecting that they have been dumped in the sea by the smuggler, since no sunken ship was found. This shipwreck of a migrants’ boat was not an extraordinary event in the Mediterranean sea: according to Unhcr, in 2011 more than 1500 migrants drowned or “disappeared” in the Mediterranean, although the real number could not be exactly estimated, since when shipwrecks are not attested by national or international authorities it is almost impossible to count the losses at sea from the Northern shore of the Mediterranean. On the Southern shore these uncounted “disappearances” are much more tangible, since people know who left by boats and never arrived.

However, the tragedies of migrants dead at sea is not a phenomenon that started in 2011: since 1988 more than 18,500 people have died in the Mediterranean<sup>106</sup> - an unreliable number that comes out from the assemblages of many data sources; and Unhcr started to count deaths at sea only in 2007. Nor is the Mediterranean the only area where migrants drown, as mortal shipwrecks in the Australian waters attest. Thus, the anomalous shipwreck of 6th September 2012 is only one among many cases in the last decade. Nevertheless, it must be noticed that, for the first time, in

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<sup>106</sup><http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/pdfs/listofdeaths.pdf>

Tunisia in 2011 and in 2012 the families of the disappeared self-organized in groups, setting up protests and political campaigns to know what happened at sea, and demanding that both the Tunisian and the Italian government respond. In some way, the “mood” of the Tunisian revolution spurred multiple struggles positing the unacceptability of power. These were struggles characterized by what I would call a “fundamental intractability”: namely “noisy” practices that could not be easily recaptured by institutional or humanitarian discourses and that staged an unprecedented radicalness, refusing to be represented by any human rights association, political party and international organization. Two days after the shipwreck of September in the village of El-Fahs, the families of the twelve migrants who disappeared in the shipwreck of Lampione proposed to the other resident of El-Fahs to declare a general strike: all economic activities were blocked, as well as the arterial road out of the city. Neither the main trade union (Uggt) nor a political party organized the strike, but rather it was the result of a self-organized network set up by the parents and the relatives of the disappeared migrants: the day after the shipwreck they summoned up all citizens for a collective response to the silence of the Tunisian authorities, since both the national and the local government did not communicate any news to the families about the incident, and they drew up a wrong list of the missing people. The general strike represented a gesture of radical distrust towards the governors and it was a way to clear them off: “we blocked the production in order that the government was obliged to see us; and at the same time through that protest we discredited it of any authority”<sup>107</sup>. The words of the parents of the missing migrants addressed the unresponsiveness of the Tunisian government, which did not investigate the circumstance of the shipwreck and which still criminalized “illegal” emigration. The general strike was the culmination of one and a half years of protests made by the families of the Tunisian disappeared migrants, that pointing the responsibilities of migration policies in letting migrants die at sea, upset the largely spread humanitarian discourse which denounces the deaths at sea<sup>108</sup> as “tragedies” that require a more efficient system of rescue.

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with the one of the parents of the missing migrants, El Fahs, December 2012

<sup>108</sup> It is important to stress that in parallel to these analyses focused on the Mediterranean “border zones”, Critical studies of migrants’ deaths at the borders are growing also concerning other areas. In

The reality of the deaths at sea in the Mediterranean is today acknowledged by European agencies and governments, which prompt for a better and more coordinated system of security and rescuing in the Mediterranean. If on the one hand the denunciation of the deaths “at the borders” of Europe is certainly an important step in order to bring out the effects of the “border spectacle” [De Genova, 2011c], on the other its capture and translation into the humanitarian discursive frame, has “tamed” somehow the troubling impact of that “disobedient gaze”. In fact, counter-narratives, critical reports, video and maps which showed the “dark side” of border controls have been, at least in part, incorporated into the human rights discourse promoted by European agencies [Dembour, Kelly, 2011]: this latter has tended to shift those “counter-maps” of the border regime from a critique of the very mechanisms and rationales of migration governance to denunciations and legal claims against the incoherence of European States in rescuing people or for pushing them back. However, this political mobilization which started in the beginning of the twenty-first century, was then turned by humanitarian actors into a claim against the violations of human rights. The appeals to International Law, which obliges to rescue people distressed at sea, campaigns that claim more secure journey conditions for migrants and discourses on the risk to migrate unsafely, see “illegally”: these have become the main pillars that define the codification of the strugglefield on migrants’ deaths at sea by humanitarian agencies and governmental discourses. On the contrary, the protests in El-Fahs and the many demonstrations of the families of the disappeared migrants that took place over 2011 and 2012 both in Tunisia and in Italy, could not be easily captured by the humanitarian script claiming for a “safer Mediterranean”. In fact, through their “impossible demand” – which asked the Italian and the Tunisian authorities through digital and biometric traces if those migrants arrived to Italy<sup>109</sup> – they touched the kernel of the two-sided mechanism formed of illegalized movements and selected mobility, which instead is commonly

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particular, the US-Mexico frontier and deaths at sea in Australia [see for instance, Cornelius 2001 and Stephen 2008]

<sup>109</sup> In fact, when undocumented migrants arrive on the Italian coasts they are fingerprinted, and then the digital data are put in a national database (Afis). And in Tunisia digital fingerprints are taken for the ID cards. Therefore, it is possible to check if among the fingerprints archived by Italy there are those of the disappeared migrants. However, it is important to say that in the first half of 2011 the law which establishes the duty for the Italian police to take fingerprints to migrants has been “disobeyed”, due to the sudden arrivals of thousands of Tunisian within few weeks.

taken as disjointed. Moreover, in the specific context of the Mediterranean crossings the human rights “equipment” which sustains most of the claims against border controls, has put migrants, I suggest, in the condition of making themselves vulnerable, as the only (non)choice they have in order not to disappear and not be stripped of any right to stay. In fact, the claim of asylum seems to be their only concrete manner for not being pushed back<sup>110</sup>; and similarly, the fact of being in danger and becoming detectable by sending an Sos and made one’s own position localizable, paradoxically increases the possibility for migrants to reach European shores (being rescued and not pushed back).

This chapter focuses on the Mediterranean Sea as one of the Earth’s most monitored spaces, and on the ongoing improvement of technologies of control by European States. Against this background, the chapter aims at fraying and flaking the Mediterranean space of mobility, refusing to assume it as a surface where politics’ implementations and border enforcements take place: on the contrary, the Mediterranean is seen here as one of the main reference points and constructed object of the politics of mobility of the European Union. Secondly, this chapter gestures towards a de-articulation of the safety-and-control paradigm, pushing not for a more effective functioning of the mechanisms of control, but on the contrary seeking to undermine the assumptions upon which it is built –the overlap between humanitarian and security concerns – and to disentangle/unpack the all-monitoring logic that underpins the European politics of mobility [Pugh, 2001, 2004]. Finally, the chapter stresses that migration controls are neither based on a specific rationality nor implemented through specific techniques realized on purpose for monitoring and capturing migrants; it suggests that, in order to grasp the functioning and the specificity of migration government one needs to shift from a focus on controls and securitization, situating all these techniques within a broader rationale of governing movements, in which economic, political and administrative issues overlap. The narrative of migration governmentality as an encompassing and well-coordinated

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<sup>110</sup> Also in Unhcr’s discourses the main criticism to push back operations at sea is that on the vessel there may be people claiming asylum. See for instance UNHCR( 2007), Response to the European Commission’s Green Paper on the Future Common European Asylum System, [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/public-consultation/2007/pdf/contributions/ngo/unhcr\\_un\\_refugee\\_agency\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/public-consultation/2007/pdf/contributions/ngo/unhcr_un_refugee_agency_en.pdf)

regime needs to be deflated and then scrutinized into its specific orientations and mechanisms, as well as in the conflicting instances and interests that cross the supposed horizontal coherence of the international border regime. The first counter-mapping move that I undertake in this chapter interrogates to what extent a politics that counter-acts the rationale of migration controls could effectively interrupt and disrupt the mechanisms and principles of migration government – both at the level of its discursive narrative and in its functioning “on the ground” [Feldman, 2011]. In order to take a distance from the image of a self-standing and coherent migration management, I will focus on the effective fragmentation of the European border regime, and will linger on what I would call the “frantic management” of the European borders, that is to say the tactic of “running after migrants” that, ultimately, the agencies of border management are forced to enact, in order to monitor their routes or in order to produce then statistical reports and to shape “risky mobility profiles”. The supposed coherent and prefigured set of strategies forming the so called “migratory regime”, I will show, actually turns out into a patchy governmentality of “overlapping technologies”. Nevertheless, I don’t want to suggest that something like a government of migration does not exist. Nor do I wish to point at the “failures” of such a governmental regime, simply stressing the discrepancies between the discursive regime and the effective functioning of those techniques. Rather, what is at stake is to understand what these “failures” indicate and stand for: on the one hand, the conflicting interests between different actors – states, private companies, European institutions – and on the other hand the way in which, despite “failures”, a government of migrations is in place. The same point is made about the singular actors involved, like states that in part oppose the decline of their sovereign prerogatives, but at the same time try to take advantage from time to time of some specific measures and standards established by the European Union. The plurality of political and economic actors leads to increasing difficulty in understanding, case by case, what specific powers or actors need to be addressed to stake a claim, insomuch it seems that the migration regime is a self-standing smooth machine and that no nameable subject could be identified as actively involved (and interested) in governing migrations. In other words, the multiplicity of interests and actors involved in governing migration results in a substantial blurring of political

responsibilities. Nevertheless, beyond this crucial point, the argument that I would like to raise concerns the inadequacy of studying the government of migrations by focusing exclusively on migration policies or techniques of control: the “migration strugglefield” – meaning by that the struggles around governing migrations – cannot be fully grasped if we do not overstep the boundaries of migration as a political and disciplinary field, locating it at the crossroads of multiple economies of power, including the international labour market, the politics of citizenship, biopolitical powers and the government of conducts [Foucault, 2009]. To put it differently, the migratory regime is neither formed solely by the articulation of national and international migration policies, nor does it act according to the same logic on every subject and in every space: to the contrary, what characterizes bordering technologies is precisely the differentiation of status and conditions of mobility of migrants, as well as the ways in which the violence *of* and *at* the borders differently impacts on subjects. Drawing on Foucault, it could be argued that there is no unitary dispositive, or better, that what a critical analysis has to do is just to make visible the non-unity of such a regime, the multiple levels at which it exercises and the impossibility of assuming a single logic through which to read the functioning of the government of migration [Foucault, 1998]<sup>111</sup>. It also cannot be overlooked that if all mechanisms of identification and control run in a perfectly smooth way, the result would paradoxically be quite counter-productive for states and, especially, for economic actors: the guarantee of a degree of illegality production [De Genova, 2002; Haas, 2008] would be paralyzed. From this standpoint, an engaged analysis on migration governmentality should be wary of pointing out or denouncing the “failures” of governmental mechanisms, in order not to fall into the trap of unintentionally fostering the improvement of monitoring systems.

*The Mediterranean as a border: the production of an “insecure” Sea*

Following Foucault’s genealogical approach and the idea of a history of the present that is not flattened on “present-ism” [see chapter 1], it is important to trace back the moment and the ways in which the Mediterranean Sea started to be moulded as a space of monitored mobility and, at the same time, as an (in)secure space. In fact, the

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<sup>111</sup> On this point see the chapter the *Dispositive of sexuality*, in particular the section on *The unity of the dispositive*.

production of the “Mediterranean (in)security assemblage” dates back more than two decades: the shift from the perception of maritime space as a space of rescue and free movement to a zone of interceptions, monitoring and *refoulements* clearly depends on the flourishing of the visa system in the Nineties that strongly limited access to a free and unsanctioned mobility [Cutitta, 2007, De Haas, 2007b; de Wenden, 2010]<sup>112</sup>. Thus, the spatial redefinition of the Mediterranean Sea as a border zone, or better as an assemblage of borders, went along with the redefinition of its legal geography [IMO, 1980]: Mediterranean controls intensified in parallel with migrants’ journeys, setting new legal borders and geographies. In this sense, the Mediterranean Sea is one of the zones in which the dislocation of borders from territorial sovereignty and the current spatial restructuring and multiplication of borders is particularly salient. High sea was historically considered a space of free mobility, exempt of any form of sovereignty, and this hampered states to intervene for intercepting boats in that area. In the last decade, the Mediterranean has become a highly governmentalized space and a contested zone of states’ interventions. In fact, the quarrels among States over the areas and the vessels of competence in rescuing people or intercepting boats on the high seas determine a reconfiguration of sovereignty. As Karakayali and Rigo put it, “borders become normative devices that can continuously be reproduced. They do not trace the limits of any given space but reproduce a territorial authority [...] every time that migrants’ rights remain anchored to their authorized or unauthorized movements” [Karakayali, Rigo, 2010, p. 138]. In fact, both the operative competences and duties of intervention and vessels themselves become “mobile” borders<sup>113</sup>, activating even the possibility for a

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<sup>112</sup> As Hein de Haas stresses, the first visa restrictions concerning North Africa Country were introduced by sending countries in the Sixties and in the Seventies, to prevent people migrating to Europe. In fact, the crime of “illegal emigration” that Tunisia introduced in 1975 and that is still now in place, was a measure for controlling and reducing the huge outflow of Tunisians citizens towards France, since with the oil economic crisis of 1973 and the consequent crisis of the European labour market, Tunisia turned its economic interests to countries like Libya. In fact, in the Seventies it started the first big wave of emigration towards Libya.

<sup>113</sup> “Mobile borders” in two senses: on the one hand, because a vessel of a member State in high seas if detect a “suspect” boat is allowed to exercise the sovereignty of the state, although outside its territorial borders; and on the other hand, because the vessels of the member states are allowed to pursuit suspect boats beyond the moment of detection, thus reiterating a “mobile” border against them. Actually, the “right to pursuit” a vessel was already established in The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 and which definitively came into force in 1994. [http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/UNCLOS-TOC.htm](http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/UNCLOS-TOC.htm)

State to apprehend “suspect” migrants’ vessels and then dislodging its sovereignty: according to the most recent regulation of the European Parliament on the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation, intercepted boats could be diverted by the ships of a member state towards the territorial sea of a third country, and rescued people should be disembarked to a “place of safety”, namely “discharging” them to another state [2013/0106(COD)]<sup>114</sup>.

The Mediterranean as a border zone stems from specific techniques of bordering, namely technical, and juridical measures that trace out discontinuities in space and produce interrupted migrant geographies. From this perspective, borders are not the demarcating line of political strategies and of spaces of exception, but result from technologies that select, monitor and capture mobility. And at the same time, borders do not work only by containing and blocking movements but also as regulative technologies [Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013; Soguk, 2007; Sparke, 2006; Walters, 2006]. The Mediterranean maritime area is at once an anomalous space— because of the indistinct and overlapping border regimes giving rise to controversies between national and international actors— and a spatial lens for enlightening political technologies in which borders and (national) territorial sovereignty are disjoint. In fact, the territorial division between national and international waters overlaps and partially clashes with the operating of mobile or punctual borders —like for instance nation states’ patrolling in international waters or in the national waters of another state, as established by many bilateral agreements; or through the functioning of electronic monitoring systems dislocating the border out of sight —radar and satellites — or finally tracing zones of blurred sovereignty — for instance, making it hard to understand who is in charge of controlling and rescuing migrants at sea in certain areas (Frontex, nation states, Nato boats). Non-territorial borders and spatialities have been produced through two main border displacements: firstly, bilateral agreements and the externalization of frontiers and controls; secondly, technological monitoring and identification systems.

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However, according to that regulation, the pursuit is allowed only if it starts in territorial waters, and then can eventually continue also on high seas.

<sup>114</sup><http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0197:FIN:EN:PDF>

May 2007: A quite renowned longstanding controversy concerns the Maltese and the Italian zones of competence in rescuing people at sea in Searching and Rescue areas (SAR). The most famous case took place on the 29th May 2007, involving also the Libyan authorities, when 27 migrants were found by a Maltese tug boat and rescued “at distance”. The migrants were not allowed to get on the boat but only to hang on to the tuna cages, where they remained for more than 24 hours; after that time the Italian Navy “Marina Militare” brought them into the detention camp of Lampedusa. Malta had refused to embark the migrants since the national authorities claimed to have found them in Libyan national waters. A “politics of deferral”<sup>115</sup> is put into place by European States when it is a matter of spending on rescue operations or taking political responsibility for people left dying at sea. However, the “costs of the borders” and of border enforcements spent by states in operations of sea patrols and in the “fight against illegal immigration” is quite indicative of the “economy of borders” activated around the migratory issue: between 2005 and 2012 Italy spent 1.3 billion Euros on border controls, deportations and detentions, of which 283 million came from European funds. However, this number does not include the money paid by Italy to fund Frontex operations at sea, since that cost is kept secret by national authorities. Border conflicts are reanimated among States when they come to dispute the boundaries of their sovereignty at sea: for instance, in May 2011 Malta refused to rescue migrants drowning in its Search and Rescue area and Italy complained about saving them; and in August 2011, the Italian Minister of foreign affairs Franco Frattini, quibbled with Malta over a wider Maltese sovereign Search and Rescue zone. It seems that the political game of national authorities consists in not being encroached upon by other sovereign States and not acting in their area of competence: they tend to informally dis-charge tasks and responsibilities to other national and international actors, turning a blind eye to costly operations at sea.

Questioning the war paradigm and highlighting the “patchy visibility” regime:

June 2011. It is important to remark that the advanced systems of surveillance were not set into place with the specific purpose of leading a “war at low intensity” on migrants [Mazzeo, 2011]: most of the technologies for controlling coasts and high

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<sup>115</sup> Through that expression I mean the quarrels among states over the competences and the duties in rescuing people, so that each State tends to “dump” its tasks on other authorities.

seas were originally devised for other goals such as fishery and illicit trafficking of drugs. That said, many of these systems have been “hijacked”, enforced and used also for migration monitoring, or at least, combined with more targeted instruments specifically created for detecting small vessels like migrants’ boats. European research studies like Bortec (2008) investigated the feasibility of integrating already existing technologies of surveillance with new systems of detections [Kasperek, Wagner 2012; Wolff, 2008]: migration controls often depend upon other governmental mechanisms and strategies. In this regard, while it is of great salience to shed light on specific forms and contexts of a war on migrants, the paradigm of war is not a true grid to catch and explain the effective functioning of migration governmentality [Peraldi, 2008]. This doesn’t mean at all to deny the violence that takes place at the borders, or to point to deaths at sea as mere “side effects” of the politics of mobility. Nor does it entail embracing an idea of governmentality as a set of frameworks grounded on non-coercive forms of power and operating through freedom and subjects’ agency [Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2010]: on the contrary, and as explained in the first chapter, this work conceives of governmentality as a strugglefield. The issue here is to question the adequacy of the model of the war as the characterising style and functioning of a governmental rationality that is eminently grounded on controlling and managing flows and routes and their temporality –the “pace of mobility”. And the blurring of the functions of many governmentality technologies encapsulated under the generic label of “fight against illegal trafficking” heterogeneous political objects, among which is immigration. In this work the point is not to unfold migrants’ cunning strategies for dodging controls and patrolling at sea, since it would mean to unfold their strategies of resistance: rather, in the place of making migrants’ journeys and routes visible, I bring to the fore the array of technical means and knowledges deployed for detecting and counter-acting migrants’ practices. Nevertheless, it is important not to follow through and through the descriptions of the Mediterranean sea as an all-monitored and “transparent” space: indeed, between the supposed overall technological eyes over the Mediterranean and the effective coverage of the Mediterranean area there is a huge discrepancy that does not depend simply on failures in the mechanisms of visibility – especially if we consider the “disturbances” produced by weather

conditions and the so called “shadow zones” where radars and satellites cannot see. In fact, this uneven visibility in the Mediterranean depends in part on the impossibility to “map and see”, all movement and presences in space, thus bringing to the fore the limits of representation and mapping [Cobarrubias, Pickles, 2011]. Indeed, “Undesired” migrants’ movements are part of the selected politics of migration that contemplates that many arrive out of the established channels: thus, the “disappearance” of some migrants’ traces and their undetectable presence is outside of what is of interest to see and monitor.

The limits of the monitoring systems are revealed also by those who devise radars and satellites at high visibility: “the time for achieving the global coverage is approximately 3 months” for the four satellites of the Cosmo-SkyMed constellation that are installed in the Mediterranean, while “they take 5.7 days to cover 90% of the area” [Topputo, 2009]. The other element to notice, proving that migration governmentality tends to lean on other governmental domains and regimes of visibility, is that the possibility to get a satellite or a radar image of a migrants’ boat is higher if the boat moves close to a war zone –for instance, Libyan waters in 2011 – since in that case the whole array of technologies of monitoring is being deployed by states. Then, if a suspicious boat is detected, it might take more than 35 hours to obtain a new useful SAR image of the same boat; or in any case the resolution capacity largely depends on the weather conditions, so that the range for a second possible snapshot could span from 12 to 70 hours; and given that the average time for a fishery boat to get to the island of Lampedusa from the Tunisian coasts is about twelve hours, it is very likely that the boat would arrive in Italy without being detected again. But the Italian Coast Guard admits that also during the best conditions of visibility the possibility at detecting an “irregular” small vessel is no more than 80%, also when Frontex missions are in place as in the case of “Hermes” operation in Lampedusa in 2011. Something always escapes the technological eyes deployed by concurrent actors that, in any case, fight each other to get the best of the control over a given Sea area. For instance, if in principle real time information on “suspect” vessels and on the position of the patrol boats should be shared by all the Italian forces – Marina Militare, Guardia di Finanza, Guardia Costiera and Carabinieri –in reality they frequently quarrel over who needs to undertake the

rescue. Taking on the vocabulary of military authorities, once migrants' vessels are detected at sea, in principle they are "tracked" at a distance along their path – "tracked by shading" is the technical term used by Italian authorities – but actually this would require a huge deployment of costs and forces, especially as in the "trafficked" first half of 2011, when the number of migrants' boats per day was considerable.

The scene becomes more complicated if we consider the "secrecy" under which some patrols are expected to act: with regard to Italian forces, Marina Militare has the right to maintain secrecy regarding the location of its patrols from the other Italian corps, while the details of Frontex patrols are known only to the states taking part in the mission: Nato boats do not reveal their position to national forces. On the other shore of the Mediterranean, Tunisian patrol boats are in part provided by European States – according to the *do ut des* logic of bilateral agreements, in which the fight against "clandestine immigration" plays a pivotal role – but they are very scanty in comparison to the advanced technological means in possession of European actors. Thus, the "fight over visibility" – that is, the striving of migrants to remain undetected, and the attempts of multiple actors like Frontex and national corps to detect them – is enacted by governmental forces on the basis of an essential asymmetry between the States involved: North African countries are required to patrol their coasts and to prevent people from migrating, but de facto they act in a condition of enduring dependence on the European forces, since the means provided from the Northern shore are not adequate for detecting and then registering into a database all "suspect" movements. Indeed, fishermen are often questioned to understand if a shipwreck has occurred, since their constant presence at sea makes them sometimes more abreast of what happens. In this way, the support of the European actors remains unavoidable and, at the same time, the property of (technological) knowledges is played by European states as a political weapon that is mobilized every time for reiterating the "conditionality" of the economic and political partnerships (Neighbourhood Policies) and confirming the non-autonomy of the politics of mobility of African states.

The European Surveillance Border System (EUROSUR) promoted in 2008 by the European Commission, and that will officially start in October 2013, is the most prominent attempt to establish a plan of visibility and "visibilization" of migrants' vessels. This project is presented by the European Union as a sort of "coordinator" tool that will put to an end the lack of coordination and information sharing among member States, private actors and international agencies in providing a live map of the movements in the Mediterranean [Jeandesbodz, 2011]. This project is based on a logic of spying and hijacking migrants' routes, in order to trace out a "refractive" and "reactive" cartography of people's movements, in order to block and filter them. Therefore, the alleged "pre-emptive actions" and anticipative risk analysis promoted by agencies like Frontex are actually the result of frantic practices that run after migrations trying to hijack, deviate and when possible anticipate their moves. It suffices to cast a glance on how expertise and research centres try to set new strategies for overcoming the limits and the failures of the "systems of capture" and detection at sea: "beyond piracy, also for a wider maritime safety: illegal fishing, immigration, pollution etc." the Joint European Research Centre declares, and in this way the migratory issue is conflated within a range of other "criminal activities" which disturb good maritime governance. In other words, it seems that, more than the direct control on specific "illegal" movements, what is at stake is the enactment of a complex regime of (in)visibility, articulating zones of shadow and subjects at high visibility. At a cursory glance, it could be argued that a "fight against opacity" underlines all the researches and operations aiming at "enhancing the Maritime picture". Thus, what is envisaged by research centres, national authorities and international agencies is an unveiling map catching migrants' "tricky" movements and spatial strategies, not simply for detecting but, rather, for detecting in order to predict vessel positions and to trace a risk map. However, things are more complex than this, and the image that I suggest of an uneven regime of (in)visibility is useful to unfold the ambivalences and the nuances of the "battle over visibility" that characterizes migration governmentality: in fact, the real time cartography of the movements in the Mediterranean envisaged by international agencies and States ultimately results into an impossible transparent map, namely a map with opaque patches and spaces "out of sight". In fact, as the "watchers" of the Mediterranean

confess, a considerable quotient of invisibility is always at play due to the external interferences. At the same time, the governmental real time map of the Mediterranean, far from aiming at a full-spectrum visibility is built on the secrecy of border dis-location. To explain this last point I draw attention to the exclusionary knowledge of the mapping gaze and to the ongoing transformations of the border regime. Firstly, the integrated systems of sea monitoring are based on restricted access, and only the Automatic Identification System is based on an open platform mechanism. Concerning transformations of the border regime, we should look at the dislocation of borders produced by monitoring technologies, as well as by techniques of remote control, biometric data storage (Eurodac, Sis I) and mechanisms of government at distance like the Visa system: as many scholars have long contended [Bigo, 2005; Bigo, Guild, 2010; Cuttitta, 2007,] borders are more and more less reducible to linear edges and tend to get point-shaped and mobile, frontiers attached to the body [Sossi, 2007] and multiply far beyond the geopolitical line [Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013]. To sum up, what emerges from an in-depth analysis of migration controls, monitoring systems and spaces of (in)visibility in the Mediterranean, is that it's not through the dichotomy visible/invisible that the "migration strugglefield" could be fully grasped. Rather, what is at stake is on the one hand the strategic ways in which visibility and invisibility are arranged and played, both by governmental actors and by migrants; and on the other, the limits of power and technologies in effectively providing a full-spectrum of monitoring.

Starting from the multiplication of borders, it should be asked, as Cuttitta does, if one could take on the new borders as vantage points from which to observe and interpret the dynamics of power [Cuttitta, 2007]. In this regard, the ongoing dislocation of borders from the national territory should not make us overlook the still considerable impact of state sovereignty in violently blocking people at the borders. But all these analyses are useful in highlighting the way in which the exercise of state sovereignty and territorial authority has been increasingly detached from each other. For instance, the patrolling of the Tunisian frontiers is made in conjunction between Italian and Tunisian forces. Secondly, techniques of surveillance at distance and biometric controls have considerably contributed to displacing the border before and beyond the geopolitical and the territorial frontier.

Against this background, the map of the Mediterranean migrations traced by monitoring systems and governmental agencies makes difficult to understand the dis-location of borders: in fact, what is in place a technology of tracing and traceability– the traces of migrants’ passages, the traces of their bodies – which keeps the secret on the location of the border; and in this way one could speak of a “sneaking” power working underneath the threshold of visibility, which does not indicate in advance where mobile borders are. The fight over knowledge is well illustrated in the secret location of radar stations and the positioning of marine patrols: the map of *Guardia di Finanza* representing the Italian radar stations is not in the public domain, only researchers and lawyers can demand the permission to see it. And this is just one layer of invisibility, since other integrated systems of patrolling and monitoring remain at the moment untraceable, as with the new drones against-immigrants and Frontex operations. Nevertheless, as I stated before, the migration strugglefield over (in)visibility should not be posed along binary or clear-cutting partitions: it is neither a question of making visible all silent struggles and movements that remain beneath the threshold of visibility traced by power nor of overemphasizing hidden practices or invisibility as such. It is likewise important to underscore the variable geometry of visibility at which power works, alternating politics of detection and non-traceability: the impossibility of attesting to many shipwrecks of migrants’ boats, of reconstructing what exactly happened at sea or accounting for the “disappearance” of thousands of migrants cautions against assuming migration governmentality as a politics of overall visibility enacted by power.

*Soft borders? The deceptive hype of transparency and accountability:*

*March 2013.* Since 2011, both human rights organizations and European Union’s agencies have produced a huge amount of critical analyses and documents about migrants’ deaths in the Mediterranean. Denunciations by activists and human rights advocates of the *refoulements* of migrants’ boats in international waters have considerably increased over the last decade: the images of Fortress Europe and of the Mediterranean as a sea of deaths have circulated in the European public debate, at least in its most politicized milieu. However, the impact of all that is not clear. Let’s

bring the attention to the warnings of the European Council about migrants' vessels and the "tragedies at sea": "Europe's leading human rights watchdog has called for an overhaul of policy on migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean following an incident [...] In an effort to prevent a similar tragedy from happening again, the Council of Europe has now endorsed a thorough review of existing protocols regarding migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean. The Council's recommendations include better clarification on the demarcation of search and rescue obligations between states, improved communication between national coastguards and military vessels, and an end to any ambiguity over what constitutes a distress". This quote refers to the document, "Lives lost in the Mediterranean Sea: who is responsible?", released by the European Parliamentary Assembly after investigation into the shipwreck of a migrant boat leaving from Libya and the accusation that a Nato boat did not rescue those people in distress: "there were failures at different levels and many opportunities to save the lives of the people on board the boat were lost. In the light of the information available, it has become apparent that NATO was not very accessible with regard to requests for SAR operations. Although it was known that many refugees were leaving Libya by the Mediterranean Sea route in order to reach Europe, there seemed to be no working agreement between the SAR authorities and NATO headquarters in Naples. This non-communication contributed to the situation in which help was not given to those on board". This admonition highlights some frictions at stake among European institutions – mainly between the European Commission and the member states on the one hand and the European Council on the other hand – but at the same time it also reveals to what extent critiques and denunciations of migrant "disappearances" at sea are reabsorbed into a governmentality discourse. Nevertheless, "pillage" or "appropriation" are not useful terms to read the translation of the critical discourse on migrants' deaths into the institutional domain: the discursive field set by human rights advocates is fundamentally grounded on a firm critique of states and European agencies like Frontex which are responsible for not complying with international standards and for the violations of human rights. Their discourse claims for the accountability of the governors' conduct and for a better transparency on operations at sea. This sounds like a kind of "watching the watchdogs" strategy, which points to

the “failures” of the governmental machine in providing a coordinated system of rescue. To better explain the political stakes of the discourse on deaths, I try to articulate the three main overlapping points. Firstly, both institutional documents and human rights advocates claim for “filling the void of responsibility”: this implicates to set up a more effective coordination system among the different actors, aiming, in some way, at a smoother functioning of border controls. In other words, it brings out the “double-side of visibility”: the claim for a more efficient and legislated system of rescue could easily slip and reverse into the strengthening of the mechanisms of capture.

In this regard, also the discourse made by human rights groups tends to reproduce and foster the logic of “by the rule and against opacity”. Actually, disappearances and deaths at sea are neither natural tragedies that governments must prevent nor the dark side or the side effects of migration governmentality [Grant, 2011a, 2011b; Spijkerboer, 2007]: envisaging them merely as the consequences of the harshest European watchdogs –like Frontex – one overlooks that the fight against “illegal immigration” is one of the main tenet of the European border regime. Pushing this argument forward, it follows that a critique of the border regime which aims at producing some effective interruptions or disturbances, should move from a focus on migration controls – that many scholars charge with the “human costs” they implicate – towards a challenge of the partitioning mechanism which sorts out between migrants and non-migrants, as well as between migrants and asylum seekers. If we certainly cannot equate political campaigns against deaths at sea made by No Borders groups or by networks like Boat4People, with the humanitarian or governmental discourse on the “tragedies at sea” –nevertheless two points need to be considered. Firstly, governmental analyses pushing for a “humanitarian border” and for softening the “side-effects” of migration controls [Lutterbeck, 2006, 2007], easily override, retrieve and absorb activists’ political claims into a “watching the watchdogs” logic or into a humanitarian discourse that points to the states’ obligations at sea established by international maritime law [Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2008; Lisson, Wienzierl, 2007; Tondini, 2010]. In Tunisia the critical discourse about deaths at sea and the border regime after the revolution has been centred around a more radical instance: the existence of the visa regime is precisely what

needs to be dismantled, since migrants' risky journeys depend on the exclusionary and exclusive conditions established by the European politics of mobility.

At the same time, governmental agencies have replayed the script of security and rescue at sea along two lines: by enforcing technologies of monitoring, as a part of the ongoing militarization of the Mediterranean, made in the name of a "secure" and "safe" sea; and by partitioning between people taking the risk of leaving in dangerous conditions (economic migrants), and people in need of protection (asylum seekers). These ways of sorting people out, charging some migrants with the responsibility for risking their own lives and presenting others as people to save as asylum seekers, emerged quite blatantly in the Italian context in 2011 with the arrivals of migrants from Tunisia and Libya: during the first months of 2011, when only Tunisians arrived on the Italian coasts, the debate swayed between a humanitarian discourse on people fleeing political turmoil, to worry over an unexpected "wave" of migrants and their unjustified escape. But with the increase of Tunisian migrants on the island and the first arrivals of people from Libya the "moral" partition became more clear-cut: on the one side there were the "beggars" Tunisians seizing the opportunity of the revolution to escape their country and on the other side the "Libyans" claiming for asylum. More broadly, the "twofold spatial upheavals" upset and force to rearrange both the order of discourse and governmental technologies of monitoring and capture. In June 2011 the European Council stated that "the surveillance of Europe's southern borders has become a regional priority. The European continent has to cope with the relatively large-scale arrival of migratory flows by sea from Africa. Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and others risk their lives [...] These journeys, always undertaken illicitly, mostly on board flagless vessels, putting them at risk of falling into the hands of migrant smuggling and trafficking rings, reflect the desperation of the passengers". In this way, the crisis of migrants reaching Europe is framed from the outset as the crisis of the European democracies in the face of migrants' upheavals. People leaving North Africa are portrayed as desperate migrants risking their lives in unsafe vessels or through smuggling circuits. And the starting point of these analyses is always that irregular movements take place: the incorrigible irregularity of migrants is assumed as the condition on which any politics of mobility should hinge, so that "deaths are

nothing but the outcome of irregular movements and unsafe routes” [Grant, 2011a]. In other words, the absorption of the strong criticisms against deaths at sea by governmental and humanitarian discourses, makes that the condition of being a migrant – or better, an undocumented migrant – posited as a primary given; then, it is recognized that, despite everything, migrants are human beings that have rights as such [Betts, 2010]. However, by saying that techniques of migration governance “respond to” practices of migration [Walters, 2012] it does not mean that there is a mere reactive strategy at play. In fact, “responding to” and drawing on the turbulences of historical events – in this case the Arab uprisings – techniques of border controls and migration governance actually seize the opportunity for reassessing or stretching both the rationale of government, and the techniques for partitioning and capturing migrants. Let’s take for instance the so-called regime of humanitarian protection: the “migration mess” which took place in the Mediterranean fostered and accelerated transformations in governmental technologies that were partly already in place, like the blurring of the international protection framework and the depoliticization of the logic of asylum. The stress on the category of “survival migrants” and the recognition of the necessity to “stretch” the borders of protection also to non-refugees emerged with a particular vigour just after the Mediterranean migration turmoil, pushing forward a trend that was already underway. However, it is important to stress that this already-underway process, which consists of broadening the “space of protection”, actually leads to a substantial weakening of international protection, making harder to get refugee status. Often this is replaced with “surrogates” like the humanitarian temporary protection, which lasts for one year and can be given once the asylum seeker has been rejected as a refugee but when there are “serious reasons, in particular of humanitarian concern”.

*Counter-acting the monitoring systems: the primacy of disobedient gaze in migration activism*

Starting from the patchy spaces of visibility in the Mediterranean, political campaigns and actions against migration controls and deaths at sea tried to come to grips with the visibility regime set up by the mechanisms of migration governmentality. Political or juridical actions and critical analyses of migrations are

largely predicated on a dissident gaze *at* and *on* the borders: a dissident gaze *on* the borders which assesses the impacts and the tangible effects of borders and shows the “side-effects” of migration management, looking at the border from a different standpoint; a dissident gaze *at* the borders that assumes the border as a privileged vantage point for reversing the discourse on migrations and unsettling the order and the thresholds of visibility/invisibility set by migration policies. Thus, this political approach is basically grounded on a demand for more visibility and transparency, about the ways in which power operates. From a theoretical point of view, the production of a different and dissident cartography of the visible is the main gesture that political campaigns undertake.

In order to unfold this argument, I take into account the political campaign Frontexit against Frontex, the European border agency, and then the so called Left-to-die case, a political and juridical action concerning the shipwreck of a migrant boat coming from Libya in March 2011. The campaign against Frontex started in March 2013 and demands accountability from the European agency in the respect of human rights standards in Frontex operations. “Disproportionate, opaque, dangerous” are the watchwords of the video entitled “Europe is at war against an imaginary enemy” which launched the campaign. The lack of transparency in the operation of Frontex, and the critique of the “border spectacle” seem here to overlap, finally reinforcing the image and the discourse of the migrant as the external enemy that national and European institutions try to chase out. What the platform of the associations involved in the campaign demands is that Frontex needs to be transparent regarding its operations and that more political and juridical boundaries have to be set limiting the autonomy of the agency. Advocacy, litigation awareness and investigation are the four areas of intervention covered by Frontexit, aiming basically at monitoring Frontex activities. Through these political claims they demand the agency to reject its present guidelines, while the juridical action consists in appealing to the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights “using the legal avenues to bring to light Frontex’s responsibilities as regards the violation of migrants’ fundamental rights”. In this regard, it is to be stressed that while the first campaigns

against Frontex, like *Frontex explode*<sup>116</sup>, strikingly targeted the existence of Frontex as such, promoting and undertaking actions to sabotage its activities, *Frontexit* centres rather on the necessity to limit and oppose the autonomy of Frontex's actions, demanding transparency from the agency: assessing the (human and economic) costs of Frontex operations, advocating an external monitoring of its operations and the imposition some limits to the excesses of its actions, mirroring the European Union principle of proportionality – “with Frontex, Europe is therefore deploying disproportionate measures to fight an enemy who is not a real enemy: the migrant”. The second axis of intervention –the demand for transparency and visibility – aims at tracing out a clear cartography of Frontex operations, contesting at the same time the map of migrant invasion that the European agency updates every year. To phrase it differently, the principle of the “democratization of the borders” [Balibar, 2004] seems to qualify the campaign, translating the protests against the very existence of the agency into a redefinition of its boundaries of visibility, pushing for what I would call a “democracy of the visible”. In the end, the logic of “controlling the controllers” animates this mobilization, overshadowing the untenable principle upon which the agency is predicated. The violation of human rights perpetuated by Frontex is obviously to denounce, but what remains in the shadow is the very mandate of the agency and its tasks. If on the one hand the multiplicity of European institutions allows campaigning against an agency created by the European Union itself – appealing to the European Court of Justice – on the other hand, it remains the fact that Frontex is not an exceptional entity generated by Europe but an agency conceived for realizing the lacking cooperation on border controls among member states. Or better, what characterizes Frontex is precisely the blurred line between the relative autonomy of its conduct and the independence of its legal personality, and its status as a European cooperation agency. And as I will show in the next chapter, this political and juridical ambiguity leads to a factual impossibility of determining the legal responsibility between member states and Frontex about human rights violations and “deficit” in the implementation of the duties of rescue people at sea [Lisson, Weinzierl, 2007]. Now, if one opposes the tasks and the mission of Frontex as such, as well as the broader border regime in

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<sup>116</sup><http://frontexplode.eu/>

which it is situated, it could not be a question of proportionate or fair use of the measures deployed by the agency.

*“Illiberal practices” within the liberal law and the banality of out-of-law procedures:*

The call for transparency needs to be framed into a broader political and juridical rationale: the politics of visibility for fighting human rights violations at sea hinges on a supposed sharp division between the domain of the rule of law on the one hand, and “illiberal practices” or arbitrary powers on the other. In this way, the “watching the watchdogs” gaze is basically grounded on a liberal political horizon that assumes the boundaries of the law as the guarantor of power’s legitimacy; and consequently it presupposes that liberal law can re-instantiate a space of fair governmentality [Basaran, 2011]. Indeed, if analyses of exceptional zones and states of emergency have been useful in providing insights into spaces of detention, they tend to obscure recognition of the fact that the functioning of migration controls responds to uneven legal and administrative regimes, in which illiberal practices sustain the existence of ordinary laws. Border and temporary zones are seen as compensatory mechanisms of the liberal regime and conditions of its possibility – securitization working for freedom, as Foucault poignantly noticed [Foucault, 2009]. A gaze focusing on exceptional measures, and attentive to the abuses of sovereign power, tends to overlook the “banality” of border controls and the ordinary low-tune measures through which migrants are identified, classified and subjected to “illiberal” techniques of detention and deportation. The “inequality of treatment” firmly condemned by humanitarian actors and NoBorders activists, is actually the unconditional premise in order that a government of migrations could exist: in fact, in order to set a moral partition of practices of movement (non-migrants/regular migrants/refugees/illegal migrants) borders must substantially work by producing differences and spaces of differential exclusion.

*Countermapping governmental “eyes” and knowledge:*

*July 2012:* The “Left-to-die boat” case is considered here as one of the most effective practices of political countermapping of the shipwrecks of migrant boats in the

Mediterranean. On 27th March 2011, a boat with 72 people fleeing the Libyan war ran out of fuel and remained for 14 days at sea without being rescued. Eventually the migrants landed back on the Libyan coast, but only nine of them survived. An investigation made by a group of researchers and activists related to the Migreurop network led to the conclusion detailing “an aircraft that flew over them, the distress call they sent out via satellite telephone and their visual sightings of a military helicopter which provided a few packets of biscuits and bottles of water and a military ship which failed to provide any assistance whatsoever” [Heller, Pezzani and Situ Studio, 2012; Heller, Pezzani, 2013]. Starting from the testimony of the surviving migrants, researchers mobilized a forensic (oceanography) approach to retrace what exactly happened at sea. The forensic approach entails that when a politics of witnessing and testimony is lacking, facts are reconstructed resorting to the material traces produced by those events: in this case, the weather conditions of the days of the incidents, the SOS calls sent out by the migrants and the images of the radar located in that area were used as elements to combine to provide a quite detailed picture of the event. From a countermapping standpoint, what is of particular interest here is that the forensic method consists in a counter-use of the watching technologies conceived for monitoring, controlling and blocking migrants: radar and satellite images, and the location of the distress calls were turned into source of information for reconstructing a map “on the move” usable for appealing to the European Court of Human Rights, demanding the legal and political responsibility of national, international and European authorities – in this case, Italy, Malta, Nato and Frontex. The countermapping strategy here, lies at the junction between a practice of visibilization and a strategy of “mapping otherwise” –that is, the production of a different map compared to the governmental cartography– actualizing in this case in the reconstruction of the events. In the wake of the left-to-die boat case, a web platform called Watchthemed has been created in order to provide a) an alternative map of the Mediterranean, highlighting the “dark effects” of migration controls and the consequences of the visa regime , b) and a constantly updated cartography of the Mediterranean Sea, a sort of real time map – based on the principle of crowd maps – reporting all distresses at sea, in order to alert the national coast guards and thus obliging them to intervene. The claim for political

responsibility –who is responsible for those deaths? –and the logic of a “disobedient” watching gaze orient all these practices.

*“Mapping otherwise” and making “another map”:*

Against this background I would like to address these forms of disobedient gaze, questioning the possibility of producing interruptions in the mechanisms of power [Pickles, 2004]. To what extent do they effectively disrupt the cartography of calculated bodies/practices? Or, rather, do they claim for a “stretch of the border”, reassessing the limits of power and “mapping otherwise” migration governmentality? Drawing on the idea of politics as the breaking of the ordinary and expected location of bodies in space, the question is whether or not a practice of “mapping otherwise” finally plays within the borders and the game of visibility set by migration governance. In fact, even the logic of “countering”, namely a practice which envisages a counter-narrative or a counter-map of the migration regime, situates within the space of the accepted codes and languages in order to subvert them. More concretely, on the one hand the strategy of demanding states and international organizations account for their political responsibilities is crucial for reversing the position of “being governed” [Chatterjee, 2004, Foucault, 1997]: demanding that advanced technologies that monitor mobility make their images available to us, means trying to reverse the logic of securitization that is commonly presented as a guarantee for securing our lives. But on the other hand, this gesture tends to take for granted and reinforces pre-established political frames, addressing the European institutions as guarantors of the respect of human rights standards, shifting the focus from the politics of securitization [Huysmans, 2006] and invisibilization produced by migration policies to violations of international norms and standards to sanction. In fact, a “counter” approach coupled with a battle over visibility implies that: a) these political entities are recognized as the interlocutors for stretching the borders and thresholds of tolerability of power, and b) that national or international authorities are to be denounced for their “failure” to fairly govern migrants. Meanwhile, European agencies stress the need for a real time “situational picture” of the Mediterranean area – with the aim of more efficient border surveillance and to intervene in rescue operations [COM(2011) 873 final; FRA,

2013]. This focus on the visibility strugglefield at sea, raises a broader question: what could it mean to trace a counter-map, once governmental actors also promote real time updated maps in order to get a thorough plan of visibility? Secondly, the idea to build an informal network of assistance proposed by some platforms of activists – like Boat4People –should take account of the ambivalent strategy promoted by some European agencies. According to what I called a “politics of discharge”, which avoiding spending money or taking responsibility for rescuing lives at sea [see chapter 1], European expertise recommended that fishermen and private shipmasters should not be sanctioned for providing assistance to migrants [FRA, 2013]. In this way, a “politics of deferral” along with a discourse of civic responsibility are played at the same time: on the one hand, institutions, most of all in a time of economic crisis, try to minimize the costs of border controls, while on the other hand they reverse the social and moral responsibility of the “tragedies” at sea on “humanitarian” civil society. A clarification is however needed on this point: the struggle against opacity that governmental agencies seem to promote in the name of security and safety at sea, does not mean that everything is made visible by power. On the contrary, the most illegal measures, like *refoulements* on the high sea, remain imperceptible to the “civic eye”. As Foucault incisively remarks, the opacity, namely the “secrecy” of power, and I would add also the *non-savoir* about its effective functioning is one of the main levers of power’s mechanisms and conditions of its acceptability. Interrogating the reason why analyses on power tend to remain within the juridical paradigm of the interdiction, erasing the productive dimension of power and its multiplicity of subtle and capillary mechanisms, Foucault concludes that the success of power is proportionate to its capacity to partially conceal its effective functioning [Foucault, 1998]<sup>117</sup>. A critique of the border regime which plays at the level of law risks downplaying the constitutive sabotage and bridle of mobility, namely the function of capture and disturbance that borders enact<sup>118</sup>; and it overlooks

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<sup>117</sup> In *The Will to Knowledge* Foucault explicitly points out that “power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms [...] For it, secrecy is not in the nature of an abuse, it is indispensable to its operation. Not only because power imposes secrecy on those whom it dominates but, perhaps, because it is as indispensable to these latter” (Foucault, 1998, p. 86).

<sup>118</sup> Reframed from a slightly different angle, it could be argued that the legal gaze downplays the “violence of the borders”, narrowing it to the moment and the dimension of the infringement of the law on the one hand, and to the exercise of a direct fight against immigration.

mechanisms through which bordering technologies work and impact on migrants, in a less blatant manner than the exercise of arbitrary power.

Therefore, the argument that I advance here is that humanitarian and governmental discourse put on the stage the reality of the deaths at sea, establishing a conceptual enchainment between the losses of lives, the danger run by migrants, and the risky choice to migrate clandestinely. Techniques of surveillance are postulated in the humanitarian-governmental narrative as deterrents against the circuit of “illegal” migration: in this way, the humanitarian domain spans rescue operations to the fight against the smuggling economy, since the act of saving migrants’ lives is posited as a way to subtract would-be migrants from dangerous circuits.

*The violence of/at the borders:*

The denunciations of the violence of/at the borders are part also of the “counter” approach that I examined above. Both the production of counter-maps marking the “dark side” of border controls, and the discourses which counter-act the narratives that depict migration as a threat for nation states, centre around the twofold paradigm of violent borders and a violence at the borders. This entails that the border – which could be also a “border zone” - is assumed as an exceptional site of blurred sovereignty, where the political responsibilities of governmental agents become confused and the standards of human rights and international laws are very often infringed. Secondly, the respect of norms and international standards is played as the yardstick to evaluate the tenability of migration management technologies, introducing the possibility to think of migration governmentality as a set of mechanisms which need to be acted fairly and by the rules. In other words, focusing on the “supplement” of violence exercised at the borders, and denouncing the violation of the laws that governmental institutions are expected to abide by, the constitutive sabotage exercised against undocumented migration eclipses at the advantage of a “convertible violence” [Balibar, 2010a]: namely, an exclusive focus on the “excessive” violence, consisting in human rights violations, overshadows the violence that is constitutive of the very act of tracing borders and instantiating differential rights to mobility. That kind of violence, which does not necessarily requires the use of force, can be easily “converted” into accepted technologies of

bordering, political statements and humanitarian-securitarian measures. In this regard, Balibar's reflections in *Violence et civilité* can be addressed for disentangling the question here at stake, bringing attention to what Balibar calls the transformations of violence. According to Balibar what characterizes present societies is a form of violence that cannot be translated into political codes and that, by its nature, exceeds all antagonisms and conflicts, working rather as a permanent horizon and a condition of their deployments. In this sense, political philosophy shadows what exceeds the boundaries of the convertible violence, revealing its irreducible character. This unconvertible kind of violence, Balibar contends, assumes today two complementary forms: on the one hand, ultra-objective violence consists in mechanisms of de-individualization, reducing human beings to "things"; and on the other hand, ultra-subjective violence, which "represents some individuals and groups as the personification of the evil" [Balibar, 2010a, p. 86]. Coming back to migration governmentality in the Mediterranean it could be argued that the violence *of* and *at* the borders is to some degrees comparable to the unconvertible dimension posited by Balibar: far from being only a transgression of norms and laws to be re-codified, the constitutive sabotage of migrants' practices represents the frame and the horizon of migration management. In other words, in the government of migration there is something which resists any codification in terms of violations of norms and rights, since the turbulence of migration reveals precisely the untenability and the illegitimacy of the cartography of temporal and spatial borders against which migrants are supposed to move. It is not in terms of "failures" that migration policies should be challenged: the failures in keeping up with migrants' rights, the failures in rescuing people in distress at sea, the failures in setting up fair mechanisms of government... All these "failures" are not voids to fill up, rather they need to be read in the light of the "patchy visibility" of the migration regime, in part because of the technical limits of monitoring technology, and in part because the fact of "not-seeing" is definitively one of the ways for "selecting" migrants.

However, the constitutive sabotage and violence acted by governmental forces doesn't work solely through exceptional, disproportionate and illegal exercises of power. Or better, these aspects are certainly at play, both "on the scene" of the border spectacle –as in Lampedusa– and "offstage", letting migrants "disappear" in

the Mediterranean [Sciurba, 2011; Sossi, 2007, 2012]. The unconvertible dimension of sabotage and violence of migration governmentality consists rather in the very principle of a differentiated and selected politics of mobility, which partitions people's movements into degrees of (un)legitimate mobility and profiles of (un)accepted subjectivities. It follows that a critique of violence or a political struggle against the violence of and at the borders, should be situated less within the broad paradigm of a war on migrants than in the ambivalent and exclusionary mechanisms of the politics of selected migration. At the same time, the challenge could not be simply to produce a detailed map, in which the failures and the violences of power are made visible. To put it differently, a counter-mapping approach should not fall into a circular critique of violence, assessing the legality or the illegality of power's techniques or the proportionate correspondence means-ends [Benjamin, 1986]. As Judith Revel rightly stresses, the real issue in talking about violence "is to tease out how violence plays within a specular configuration of power". That is, to tease out how the paradigm of violence forces powers and resistances into a dialectical schema – "the mutual inducement of powers and resistances [...] doesn't mean that they are of the same nature". The challenge consists in breaking the circular movement between powers and counter-powers that the matrix of violence instantiates [Revel, 2013b].

The challenge to realize "another map" thus cannot be reduced to the practice of "mapping otherwise", that is, to the goal of illuminating what power let in the shadow or to shift the gaze to the dark side-effects of the border regime. To trace another map involves what Revel calls the production of an asymmetry between the violence of tracing borders and the practices of resistance. Thus, "another map" does not mean only to shift the gaze to unheard or invisible practices, or to the violent effects of borders: instead, it also means refusing to assume in advance the meaning of struggle itself, instead of testing it in migrants' strategies [Mezzadra, 2013]. Therefore, critical analyses on the violence *of* and *at* the borders need to be coupled with a challenge of the partitioning logic upon which, I contend, migration governmentality is predicated. Coming back to the point I raised in the first chapter, tracing another map entails making surface and locating movements which produce interruptions in the functioning of the mechanisms of capture and in the thresholds of

the acceptability of power. To sum up, if the practice of “mapping otherwise” makes us see the “other side” of border management, the production of “another map” refuses to be in step with the configuration of borders as such. Secondly, a rupture in “the general law that defines the forms of part-taking by first defining the modes of perceptions in which they are inscribed” [Rancière, 2001] – is framed here as the possibility to envisage another map refusing to work through the established borders and fixed cartographic coordinates. To put it in figurative terms, the possibility to enact “another map” depends on the discrepancy between countermapping practices and the cartographic space of address. That is to say, another map could be produced only when there is no space of address fixed in advance, since both the legitimacy of the configuration of borders and the borders of the political are dismissed from the very outset. From this perspective, no void-position or “discordant” practice is allowed into the space of address postulated by critical reflections on citizenship and democracy; everyone is supposed to fill a certain subject-position in order to appear on the public and visible scene of the political; and the scene is made of a balances and counter-balances. Instead, some practices of migrations – and in our case, the migrants’ upheavals that took place in the Mediterranean – cannot be located into the existing political diagram, such that their noisy is translated into the frame of claim.

Coming back to the violence *of* and *at* the borders, one could say that it consists of tracing maps, namely disposing bodies and movements in space, establishing their degree of “legitimacy”. The deterritorialization of borders and the increasing differentiation of their functions and topology should not be considered in itself in terms of a smoother circulation and less constraints to freedom of movement [Karakayali, Rigo, 2010]. To the contrary, the stake here is precisely to disconnect the question of the violence *of* and *at* the borders from the geopolitical matrix as well as from the exercise of a sovereign arbitrary power based on exceptionalism or on the violation of law. In fact, far beyond the acting of power at the borders, what I mean by violence *of* and *at* the borders is also the temporal management of migrations—the production of an anticipatory cartography of movements, and the efforts to spatially trace, register or disturb some specific forms of circulation and presence in space, like “irregular” migration. In fact, the border regime is an assemblage of knowledges and techniques for tracing and disturbing some people’s

movements and the persistence of subjects in certain spaces. From this standpoint, the technological systems of monitoring at a distance and the mechanisms of digital traceability do not involve fewer bordering effects: rather, they contribute to the twofold operation of multiplication (differentiation) and invisibilization of borders.

Nevertheless, coming back to Balibar's argument on the coexistence of hyper-objective and hyper-subjective mechanisms of violence, an analysis of the transformations of the b-ordering practices should not disregard violences perpetuated in certain spaces or upon specific "mobility profiles". A violence that could take the form of de-individualization processes, as Balibar suggests, producing a surplus of unproductive monitored (im)mobility that is exercised by leaving some subjects "off the map" [Neocleous, 2003]– for instance, letting them die at sea.

*The contested "right to life" and the broadening of the notion of surveillance:*

The humanitarian-security script blurs the constitutive violence of the mechanism of selected mobility, which makes people "disappear" in the Mediterranean while allowing some others to leave safely, stressing instead more evident forms of violence. It also focuses attention on the violation of international norms and human rights that the "good face" of migration governance is prompt to condemn. The current debate on deaths at sea constantly refers to the "right to life" enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The right to life of migrants as human beings (before becoming migrants) is commonly presented as a universal right, while the condition of "migrant" is implicitly envisioned as a "fault"(defect) that doubles and reconfigures the human condition. In this regard, the first thing to notice is that the floating meaning of "right to life" embraces and blurs at the same time the multiple occurrences, forms and meanings of "life" shaped and governed by migration policies. To put it differently, the general notion of "life", constantly mobilized for invoking humanitarian obligations, tends to cover an array of meanings and forms of life that every subject is expected to embody [Douzinas, 2007]. In particular, the floating meaning of "life" as used in the specific context of migration policies, plays as a sort of "redux factor", assuming life as a "life on the edges": migrants arriving by boats are narrated as risky subjects, meaning by "risky" both the hazard through which they "choose" to jeopardize their own life, and their

condition of life in the country of origin that facilitates their being trapped into the circuits of smuggling [Parliamentary Assembly, 2011]. As Ruben Andersson convincingly points out, “sea surveillance depends upon a framing of boat migration as dangerous by definition, a ‘risk to life’” [Andersson, 2012]. But more than that, migration policies shape forms of subjectivity and involve specific meanings of life: migration policies instantiate selective and filtering borders by enacting sorting mechanisms – partitioning between profiles of mobility –that produce forms of differentiated subjectivity, corresponding to different meanings of life that subjects are “entitled” to live. Ultimately, as Judith Butler argues, “the frames that work to differentiate the lives that we can apprehend from those we cannot not only organize visual experience but also generate specific ontology of the subject” [Butler, 2009, p.3]. We can similarly suggest that migration policies differentiate among forms of lives that different migrant subjects are expected to live. However, under close scrutiny what seems to characterize the discourse and the measures of the humanitarian-securitized politics of mobility [Balibar, 2013] is not so much the lack of recognition of the precocity of migrants’ lives, than a use of precariousness as a tenet for turning down the conditions of life that certain subjects are considered as deserving to have guaranteed. The production of differential borders and rights to mobility implicates by design a differentiation among conditions, levels and forms of life that migrants, non-migrants, refugees etc. are said to have right to. After all, the politics of “humanitarian securitization” of the Mediterranean Sea – based on the right to watch-and-control – stresses that the only indisputable right that migrants are entitled to, irrespective of their juridical status, is the right not to be killed by the same politics that designates their “migrant condition”. In other words, the empty signifier of “life” shadows the different regimes of life in which migrants are situated. And it is not a question of philosophical conceptions of life. Rather, this question brings us to a broader concern which I unfolded in the first and in the third chapter: the migration regime is characterized by “working through partitioning”, tracing and multiplying profiles of mobility, defining the spaces of allowed mobility fixing the thresholds of what is a liveable life. Beyond the violence *of* and *at* the most visible borders, a notable example consists in borders through which would-be migrants are fixed in space, in the country of origin, both by the visa regime, by

unemployment or by “legal geographies as powerful instruments in locating people in space” [Basaran, 2011]. Thus, migration politics contribute to sort among different forms of liveable life that are then translated into different degrees of “legitimate mobility” – e.g., the so called bona fide travellers are entitled to favourable conditions of mobility and are also supposed to have the right of moving by choice: they are not required to demonstrate humanitarian or economic reasons for their movement. The general invocation of a right to life for migrants in distress at sea, orients the gaze to see migrants as subjects saved from natural accidents and from their own risky choice, overshadowing the fact that the danger they are in is actually the effect and the marker of their migratory status, and of their temporary position on the chessboard of the migration regime [Balibar, 2013; Pugh, 2004]. As William Walters has nicely captured it, the life that becomes an object of the humanitarian-securitarian government of migrations cannot be addressed in terms of pastoral power as described by Foucault [Walters, 2011]<sup>119</sup>: indeed, pushing forward Walters’ analysis, it could be suggested that the humanitarian discourse can be truly understood only by taking into consideration at the same time the securitization of lives –namely, the spreading of bordering techniques in the name of more security and safety – and on the other the a politics of “dis-charge” that intervenes selectively and discontinuously. In some way, the floating signifier of the “right to life” is mobilized neither according to a rationale of “care” nor on the basis of a logic of individualization.

April 2013.The strengthening of the nexus between humanitarian and securitarian operations at sea has redefined and broadened the notion of “border surveillance”; displacing the border-line before and beyond the site of border crossing, and reframing surveillance in terms of prevention and dissuasion. The last proposal of the European Parliament and the European Council on the surveillance of the external sea borders, underlines this point very clearly: “surveillance not only encompasses the notion of detection but extend to steps such as intercepting vessels,

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<sup>119</sup> “The ways in which NGOs and humanitarians engage in the governance of migrants and refugees today have changed quite significantly from the kinds of networks of care, self-examination and salvation which Foucault identified with pastoralism [...] the pastoral care of migrants, whether in situations of sanctuary or detention, is not organized as a life-encompassing, permanent activity. Instead, it is a temporary and ad hoc intervention [Walters, 2011, pp.158-159].

as well as arrangements intended to address situations such as search and rescue [...] border surveillance should be effective in preventing and discouraging people from circumventing the checks at border crossing points” [COM(2013) 197 final]. In such a context, the humanitarian issue is mobilized for legitimizing and at the same time broadening politics of control at sea, playing on the double sided of surveillance: in fact, surveillance is posited simultaneously as an encompassing function which goes far beyond the monitoring of/at the borders, and as an unpleasant enforcement of detection and control measures for saving lives at sea.

*The “noise” of the Tunisian families<sup>120</sup>:*

*June 2011... and still ongoing.* The struggle of the Tunisian families of the missing Tunisian migrants, who left Tunisia after the fall of Ben Ali and “disappeared” in the Mediterranean, has cracked the principle of a “proper space” for the critique [Assad, Brown, Butler, Mahmood, 2009]. Moreover, this struggle showed what I would call the “intractability” of its demands and of its “noisy” practices: both political institutions and humanitarian organizations failed in translating that struggle into their epistemic codes and the movement resisted being represented by any political instance. In other words, the struggle could not be delegated to any other subject. Indeed, the way in which these families have obsessed the Tunisian and the Italian authorities with their impossible demand to account for the disappearance of the Tunisian migrants– “tell us where our sons are” – is not a political campaign in the traditional sense, since families neither fight against the migration regime, nor deliberately challenge the politics of control in the Mediterranean. Rather, they have struggled to know what happened to their sons. The radicalness of their discredit towards any political institution relies in the asymmetry of their demand, in the “other map” that they enacted through their reiterated refrain: “our sons cannot have disappeared. Where are they? Are they in Italy or somewhere else? And if they are dead we want to know, to see their bodies”. But let’s take a step back in order to situate this struggle. If on the one hand, as I stated at the beginning of this chapter, migrants’ “disappearances” and deaths in the Mediterranean Sea are not at all recent phenomena, it is likewise important to stress that during the two-year period 2011-

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<sup>120</sup> For a detailed account of this struggle, see F. Sossi, 2013a.

2012 the number of deaths was dramatically high because of the huge number of departures from the coasts of North Africa. This picture emerges very clearly in Tunisia, where awareness of the “Mediterranean’s trap” –namely, the risk of leaving by boat - for migrants who cannot obtain a visa to go to Europe is widespread among Tunisians. However, only the direct involvement of the families of the missing migrants has raised such a phenomenon at a national issue, putting it on the political agenda of revolutionized Tunisia. The political movement started in summer 2011, and it gathered the families of four “disappeared” migrant boats – March 14th, 29th, 30th and May 5th 2011. At the end of 2012 also the families of three other “disappearances” joined the campaign – April 28th, September 6th and 21st 2012. I talk about “disappeared boats” in the place of “shipwrecks”, since the strangeness of all these events is that no shipwreck has actually been attested, and because parents and relatives have never accepted the version of the facts presented by the Tunisian and the Italian institutions – “we don’t know where they are, probably they died at sea but in any case there is no trace of their presence”. Or better, the families refuse the substantial non-answer given by governmental authorities, and their tactic of dodging the inquiry in the face of the insistent pressure of the parents: they recognize some of the missing migrants in the videos of Italian newscasts of Lampedusa and consequently they demand to know where their sons are. But this is not the context for describing in detail the steps and the difficulties of this struggle. Instead, following the conceptual coordinates along which this work orients, what is of relevance for us is to highlight how this struggle actually mobilized “another map” which refuses the established borders that the “mapping otherwise” practices try instead to stretch, limit or make visible; and at the same time they showed the radical “intractability” of those forms of protests and of their demands, are not grounded in a militant approach against migration policies. So, in what sense did they enact “another map”? The answer can be situated at two levels. Firstly, the specific request of the campaign that started from a basic assumption: since the Mediterranean is highly monitored by advanced techniques and governmental agencies, these latter must have seen the missing persons. Moreover, since Italian authorities take the fingerprints of migrants in the detention centres, and these fingerprints are then sent into the European central database (Eurodac) they should know if migrants arrived in

Italy. In this way, the families fully staged a counteracting practice, demanding power's technologies to account for those disappearances. Secondly, besides the stakes of the campaign and beyond the strategic counter-acting struggle, they have exceeded the very order of the "counter" – the logic of "mapping otherwise" – by imposing their "other map". In fact, pressured by their demands, national authorities replied by stressing the technical impossibility of counting and identifying all people crossing the Mediterranean. In the face of the governmental cartography of borders, families have staged a different order of visibility and knowledges: "the Italian coasts are quite close to Tunisia and people cannot cross undetected", they argue. "We know that the police in Italy are racist against migrants, so they must be detained in some exceptional prison"; "the result of the fingerprint check is negative, but we do not trust Tunisian institutions, they mock us by not sending the right fingerprint data to Italy".

If one considers the "proper space" that the governmental script establishes and traces out– the proper space of the political, the proper space of the country of origin, the proper space of a regulated mobility, the proper space of political subjectivity – the struggle of the families of the missing migrants was somehow reduced by activists to a humanitarian concern, – parents and mothers as vulnerable subjects – or as a protest that finally lacked political awareness. The troubling effect they generated on the official map of borders resulted also from their persistence in disturbing the political scene, imposing to be heard without being translated into a more codified political language but rather through their visual vocabulary and their "noisy" presence. At the same time, their battle revealed also that a political gaze on migrations cannot overlook the "class question": all the missing migrants and their families come from poor and populous neighbourhoods and this element became visible both in the attitude of the Tunisian government, which tried to mock the families by trying to formally satisfy their demands, and in the subordinate position that Tunisian activists earmarked for that struggle in the aftermath of the revolution in comparison to other more traditional political issues. This episode seems to suggest that another map could be envisaged when subjects in question disregard the boundaries of the place they are expected to stay in [Fanon, 2007]: thus, it is the illegitimacy of power as such and a transformation not in terms of knowledge but of

the position of the bodies [Rancière, 2004a, 2004b] that could produce interruptions and disruptions, more than a critique, in the taken for granted cartography of selective borders.

*Eu-Lisa: the shrinking of the European borders in the IT database:*

*12 December 2012:* The turbulence of migration that upset the Mediterranean region in the year of the Arab revolutions has transformed the already variable geometry of mobility and controls, forcing the European Union to reinvent new mechanisms of capture and to redefine the conditions of an internal European space of free mobility [Garelli, 2012; Hein de Haas, Sigona, 2012; Mezzadra, 2011; Sossi, 2012]. See for instance the newly-born EU agency “Eu-Lisa”, charged with the central management of the European IT systems and databases (Eurodac and SIS II) which was created as a response to “the political instability in certain North African Countries and the Middle East, the mass influxes of persons from these Countries to the EU”. In the face of such turbulence, the European Commission concludes the necessity of having an “effective IT system in place to manage the external border and enhance cooperation of relevant authorities”. The response of the European migration apparatus [Feldman, 2011] followed a twofold trajectory: on the one hand it has resulted in the redefinition of the rationale and the tasks of existing agencies, like Frontex (see for instance the cooperation agreement with Easo, the European agency of the Common Asylum System); and on the other hand, new agencies in charge of governing mobility or of setting new mechanisms of migration governance have been established, pushing forward the dislocation of monitoring and controls of the Mediterranean outside its perimeter, through the implementation of the coordinate mechanism of digital data gathering. This cursory gaze on Eu-Lisa, the new European agency “for the operational management of large-scale IT system in the space of freedom, security and justice”, does not aim at an ethnographic research of the nth European actor. Rather, drawing on Foucault’s triple methodological displacement (see chapter 1), in place of positing the institution at the outset of the analysis for understanding the functioning of migration governmentality, I turn the attention to the spatial and political redefinitions that migrants’ upheaval engender, forcing power to reshape its rationale and its techniques [Foucault, 2009]. However,

this approach should not be translated into the idea that migration turmoil automatically triggers political or juridical responses and that migration policies are set according to a “doubling process” of migrants’ movements, namely as a direct reactive response running after migrants. As the case of Eu-Lisa shows, most of the new European directives and new policy orientations do not suddenly mushroom from nowhere; to the contrary, in order to fully understand their rationale and their operative function they need to be situated in a broader political spectrum –e.g. the freedom-security mobility paradigm promoted by the European Union. Looking at the consistence of the migratory regime as a (temporary) configuration stemming from migration strugglefields means to stress the “propelling effect” of migration in speeding up, diverting or exacerbating processes underway and political transformations. In fact, if we take on the Stockholm Program, the creation of EU-Lisa was not explicitly recommended in the final text; but the stress on the necessity to develop new watching technologies for monitoring the external borders of Europe and to foster cooperation among states, connecting the national systems, was the prelude to the creation of the new European agency, along with the note on the importance to skimp on European economic resources on border controls.

*“Faulty” data and the production of “trans-individual” subjectivity profiles:*

As I illustrated above in this chapter, migrants are detected through different systems of control at distance and, once captured, they are identified more and more through biometric mechanisms. However, as I will show in the fifth chapter, in order to critically and deeply scrutinizing mechanisms of migration governmentality, unfolding their real effects of capture on migrants’ lives, we need to undertake what I call a non-cartographic countermapping gesture. As I explain in the fifth chapter, it consists in taking mechanisms of governmentality backward, that is looking at them turning the gaze on spaces, subjects and aspects that usually are not focused by critical analyses, with the purpose to grasp their effective functioning, limits and “failures” beyond the governmental narrative.

Digital fingerprints are by far the most used devices for identifying migrants in order to deport them and for recording and “marking” their entry in the European space, then archiving the information in Eurodac, the European database. A huge literature

has extensively dealt with the “becoming-border” of the body with the advent of biometric technologies [Amoore, 2006; Muller, 2011; van der Ploeg, 1999]; at the same time, these analyses have thoroughly explored how the shift of the border towards bodily-borders de facto corresponds to a substantial desubjectivation, due to the “becoming digital trace” of migrants’ physical presence. In other words, to be stored is the digital information about the time and location of the presence of migrants in space (when and where fingerprints are taken). Against this background, and engaging into a Foucaultian perspective on production of subjectivity, I suggest that in order to grasp how forms of subjectivity are accounted for by power, we should shift from a direct relation between the subject and the biometric technologies of identification. In fact, instead of looking at the processes through which subjects are translated into digital traces, we could try to scrutinize the forms of “trans-individual” subjectivity produced beyond the capture of migrants at the borders, and that are functional not so much to the identification of singularities as to assemblage of risky “mobility profiles” [Aradau, Van Munster, 2007; Van Munster, 2005]. Through this argument I don’t deny the individual capture that biometric mechanisms perform; rather, the issue is to bring out the multi-functional aims and techniques that migration controls enact. Moreover, the shift towards trans-individual subjectivities comes out also from the necessity to play down the myth of a smooth and pervading functioning of advanced technologies of control: in fact, quite similarly to remote monitoring systems (radar and satellites) also the mechanisms for fixing and taking migrants’ identities are far from being flawless. For instance, the many variables that come into play to give a proper image of the fingerprint on the screen of the policemen at the border-post make it difficult for the quality of the fingerprint to be good and usable for being transferred from the national database to the European one. “It really depends on the will of the policemen that day to do the job, then on the collaboration of the migrant (for instance if he/she “boycotts” the test by pushing in a bad way on the screen), but also on the similarities that exist between different fingerprints and finally on the capacity of the person who is in charge to “read” the fingerprints and compare them with those included in the European or in the national databases. In other words, when we try to check a digital fingerprint with the data of a specific database it is much easier

to exclude any matching than to prove that there is a correspondence. As I will explain in the next chapter, the compatibility between the national and European databases is not so evident as it could seem. Therefore, while it's true that deportations are made on the basis of biometric identification at the borders – checking the fingerprints taken with the database of Third Countries –it remains that the probability that the fingerprint could be read again in the future or used to compare with other information stored in the European database is not high. So, instead of focusing on the functioning in making the migrant' body readable, I suggest that the uses of all these data beyond the time of the data storage and beyond the capacity to track migrants down should be explored. As I have said, what should be the object of concern is the huge the production not only of statistics upon which the “anticipatory move” of the migration regime is predicated, but also of migration profiles: the assemblage of millions of individual data multiplying and transforming the still existing migration categories. However, the possibilities the productivity of power in generating subjectivity-profiles starting from traces results less in a generalized ban-opticon [Bigo, 2008] division between bona-fide travellers and migrants than in more articulated multiplication and partition within the domain of migration profiles: in other words, the very figure of the “migrant” is fragmented and multiplied far beyond the quite binary division of economic migrants/asylum seekers. Moreover, as the “migration crisis” that I illustrated in the third chapter shows, migration profiles are not posited as discrete entities. Rather, they are played as “blurred subjectivities” that sometimes in part overlap, making difficult for the subject itself to fit properly into one category or another one, in this way limiting for instance the possibilities to benefit from a specific protection. What happens once fingerprints are stored in Eurodac for five years? Ultimately, if migrants could always try to “cheat” the digital reader of the body and to misfire the “truth” of their bodily information, the “governmental phantasy” [Feldman, 2011] in creating governable subjectivity profiles is not bounded to the truth and falsity or to the effective readability of data.

## CHAPTER 5:

### Unspeakable maps and migration strugglefield. A (non-cartographic) countermapping gaze

*“Tunisian migrants caused the crisis also of each figure or word that, despite its “counter”, still aims at re-state and re-present them”*  
(F. Sossi, 2013a)

**November 2011:** “There was a kind of big wave which started to organize the way of leaving, it's [known as] the *harga* (to burn). This wave comes from Zarzis: the *Quatre Chemins* métro station in Paris has been well known for twenty years for being the meeting point of people coming from Zarzis [...] At the beginning it was like wandering, they didn't know anything, they came across many difficulties but they have a *savoir-faire* and by that they started to occupy the zone of *La Villette*”<sup>121</sup>. Through the voice of M., a Tunisian in Paris, the odd geographies imagined and acted by Tunisian migrants bring out a complex intertwining between invented new cartographies and historical colonial legacies, tracing out unspeakable maps that at least in part unsettle the migration governance mapping narrative.

Taking into account some mechanisms of migration governmentality – like deportations, border controls and temporal politics of migration – this chapter puts into practice a counter-mapping approach, looking at the effects, impacts and resistances engendered both in the spaces where they act and on migrants themselves, with a specific focus on the southern shore of the Mediterranean and on the Mediterranean Sea at the time of the Arab revolutions. In the first section there is an overview of the different practices of “dissent cartographies” concerning migration maps, teasing out the main theoretical and political stakes of counter-mapping. After addressing the limits of counter-cartography in the domain of

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121 “Vieni qui al Metro Quatre Chemin”, Interview conducted by Federica Sossi and Martina Tazzioli with a group of Tunisians living in Paris (November 2011) in F. Sossi eds, (2012), *Spazi in migrazione. Cartoline di una rivoluzione*, Ombre Corte, Verona.

migration, I turn to a non-cartographic practice of counter-mapping, taking on counter-mapping as an analytical posture through which to gaze on and engage with migration and border issues. The non-cartographic practice is staged here through a counter-mapping analysis of the mechanisms of migration management. The goal is not to trace a counter-map of the migration routes across the Mediterranean, but to undo the regime of the visible at play in migration governmentality –forcing a remaking of it [Mirzoeff, 2011] - and to problematize the possibility to represent migrations’ turbulences through different languages– narrative, cartography, images. Resisting and opposing the goal of making visible “another map” of the Mediterranean as a space of movements (in some way opposing the Mediterranean of the politics/the Mediterranean of movements) I would rather insist on the constitutive opacity and elusiveness which characterizes practices of (undocumented) migration.

The unspeakable maps that I talk about here are sorts of prismatic devices reflecting and at the same time amplifying the spatial-political outcomes of migrants' practices in the Mediterranean space that took place in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings. Maps that seek to bring to the fore, follow up and foster the “spatial persistences” [see chapter 2] and the “spatial upheavals” enacted by migrants. Unspeakable maps because they don't aim at unfolding migrants' strategies at length, producing an overall grid of intelligibility: to the contrary, the counter-mapping approach that I mobilize here, brings to the fore the impossibility of making the “turbulence of migration” [Papastiergiadis, 2000] fully readable and visible, both to the governmental mechanisms of capture and to the ordinary codes of political perceptibility [Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos, 2008]. To put it in cartographic terms, this counter-mapping approach posits a fundamental margin of “not-representable” that characterizes migrants’ practices and that, at the same time, characterizes their “discordant” practices of freedom [see chapter 2] and their troubling the boundaries of the political space. Thus, there is a margin of “not-representable” and a constitutive opacity that a counter-mapping perspective should respect. In this regard, we immediately reach the limits of cartography itself: there is something that necessarily remains out of any representation and plan of visibility [Deleuze, Guattari, 1975]. And, consequently, it could be argued that migration

counter-maps figure as quite paradoxical forms of mapping, at the limits of representation: among the many practices of dissident cartography, migration is an issue that involves and raises problematic stakes and limits that concern mapping at large. In some way, the choice to start from “impossible and fuzzy maps”, namely migration counter-maps, means to gesture towards the Foucaultian gaze to power from its limits [Foucault, 1980a, 1982]. Such counter-mapping resists translating into the ordinary codes of visibility, movements acted out of the spotlight of the “allowed” mobility channels. “Unspeakable” is the term I use here for naming such a remnant, all that remains outside of the map and outside of the existing codes of the political language. Unspeakable migration counter-maps emerge just at the intersection of the concrete practices of migration – as movements in space or as spatial persistence – on the one hand, and in-between the folds of what cannot be said or seen about them on the other. At the same time, a counter-narrative on migrations is also possible only by keeping the “intractability” of some migrants’ practices in being grasped or translated into the usual regime of visibility. Migration counter-maps should highlight how the “noisy” or the “silent” practices of migration that enact a “discordant” freedom, unsettle the given codes of political perceptibility forcing a reinvention of the boundaries and thresholds of the political. Secondly, instead of reproducing the “cartographic anxiety” [Gregory, 1994; Painter, 2008] or unfolding all the “silences” and the “blind spots” of maps, or their “blank spaces”, as Conrad puts it [Conrad, 2007] this counter-mapping gaze makes a claim for the constitutive incompleteness and partiality of migration counter-maps. In this sense, they act as a counterpoint to the very cartographic rationality that postulates an overall readability of phenomena and works as their grid of intelligibility. If by their nature maps locate in space all spatial movements and presences, unspeakable maps on migrations do not really provide a counter-narrative of the migration governmentality discourse: indeed, they don't envisage offering a comprehensive narrative but crack the governmentality map along its instabilities, without replicating its vocabulary. The meaning of “counter” is tackled by displacing the terms of the question in favor of the refusal to comply with the taming rules of visibility/readability. Therefore, if on the one hand radical cartography could unsettle the regime of what can be said and what can be seen (see the distinction made by

Foucault between *régime de l'énonçable, régime du visible*), on the other hand migrations make untenable the cartographic presumption of fixing-and-catching not-allowed presences in space. Related to that, the analytical gesture of counter-mapping strives to foster and push forward the unpredictability and instabilities of migrants' spatial turmoil, ultimately playing the part of an amplifier of struggles; a kind of magnifying glass apt to shed light on located and specific movements which dislodge the supposed stability of political concepts and spaces.

*Unspeakable maps do not follow the footsteps of the “order of borders”:*

The stress on the limits of representations, the vanishing character of migrants' enacted geographies [see chapter 2], and their resistance to being translated into the existing political codes, need not and should not lead to a romanticism of the elusiveness and the imperceptibility of migrants' practices. Rather, what this work brings to the table is precisely the subtle and complex games of visibility and invisibility, always at stake in migration strugglefields. If, by design, maps are devices for organizing the priorities of the visible, migrants' “unspeakable maps” raise the issue of power, embodied in all maps, displacing the cartographic focus on transparency and whole visibility to the field of rapports of force: in other words, migrants' geographies undermine the supposed binary relation between map and territory – or image and reality – highlighting that maps do not (merely) represent but produce spaces and territories, trace or challenge boundaries and they are the temporary result of strugglefields of power relations [Harley, 2001; Jacobs, 2006]. And the reference to the spatial upheavals triggered by Tunisian migrants underlines precisely that, in this case, migrants did not simply move along pre-established borders and paces of mobility, reproducing the existing cartography of the Mediterranean: on the contrary, they performed other geographies of that space. They did not produce other maps, since they did not map space, but they enacted space differently from the cartography of movements traced out by migration policies. Even if vanishing or hardly readable, nevertheless at the same time migrants' unspeakable maps have carved out and left long-lasting effects or “traces”: indeed, enacting the Mediterranean space in a different way from the map fixed by migration policies and upsetting for some time that cartography, they forced us to

change both the point of view and the vantage point for looking at the border regime. They make us change the point of view insofar as they highlight how some practices of migration do not only challenge existing configurations of borders, in some way counter-acting and mirroring the existing map of borders, but rather they also definitively displace that cartography, forcing power to reinvent strategies of bordering. But power's reconfiguration does not mean that after migrants' turmoil everything falls back into place: those displacements and upheavals produced by migrants have marked and transformed the European cartography. And, as I said, they make us change the vantage point for gazing at the border regime: they suggest to us to take on the standpoint of migrations, that is to say looking at migrants' practices not in terms of responses to the maps put into place by bordering techniques – opposing migration regimes following in its footsteps – but instead as movements that the politics of mobility is up against, forced to trace out other maps of capture and bordering. To sum up in a formula, migrants' unspeakable maps do not simply play “by counterpoint” to the cartography of power, and their disturbing effect cannot be fully recuperated by the cartographic reason of migration governmentality.

Working within this frame my question is “what kind of gaze should we exercise? Where should we turn attention to, taking on a counter-mapping perspective?” In this chapter I engage in a twofold move, looking simultaneously at the spatial and political upheavals produced by migrants' practices and at the effects that migration governmentality engenders a) on migrants, b) in their Countries of origin, and c) in the Mediterranean space as a space of high-monitored mobility. The space that is the object of this analysis is neither restricted to a nation state nor does it correspond to areas of controls and selected mobility charted by bilateral agreements: rather it is a space that corresponds not to the Mediterranean area as designed by European politics but to the space coming out from the spatial upheavals generated by the Arab uprisings and the practices of migration taking place in the aftermath of the Tunisian revolution. Counter-mapping the mechanisms of migration governmentality means at first to shift the gaze from the Northern shore of the Mediterranean to the other one, getting rid of the European vantage point by drawing the attention to the ways in which migration policies impact upon and are seen from the Southern shore. But it's

not only a question of decolonizing the gaze and the migration narrative [Le Cour Grandmaison, 2005, Mignolo 2009]. Rather, the issue should be to unpack some mechanisms of governmentality, highlighting and challenging the orientation that is implicated in them. For instance, deportations and departures tend to be accounted for and analyzed from the European standpoint – no attention is paid to the impact of the deportation regime in the country of origin, while migrants’ departures are always considered by deduction, that is to say by focusing on the arrivals on the European coasts; and the impact of border controls could not really be assessed if we remain on the northern shore, since for instance, as shown in the fourth chapter, “disappearances” at sea become fully perceivable in the Countries where lost people come from.

*The cross-cutting routes of migration government: mobilizing (counter) mapping tools:*

Before coming to grips with the topic of migration and border controls I dwell upon the forms of visualization and the cartographic representations of migrations made by international agencies, arguing that they perform and reveal important transformations in the rationale of migration governmentality. In fact, while migration maps have been largely criticized for staging the invasion of the European space by migration flows, representing arrows directed from Africa and Asia towards Europe and reproducing a state-based gaze on migrations [Walters, 2009], nowadays the most “advanced” maps ground on a quite different blueprint and rationale. In this regard, I take into account the *I-Map*, the interactive map created through the cooperation of European countries, some third-national countries<sup>122</sup> and agencies like Frontex, Europol, Unhcr and Iom: if on the one hand Europe is still envisioned as the space towards which most migrants’ routes converge, on the other hand it is quite noticeable that at the very core of the map there are migrants’ routes and not geopolitical national borders. This cartographic shift is a marker of a quite significant shift in the logic of migration management: indeed, the “map-text” is at the same time productive and revealing of a sub-text, formed by mechanisms of migration governmentality, knowledges which have gained the status of “sciences”,

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<sup>122</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Senegal, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

and the strugglefield between migrants' practices and techniques of b-ordering. Or better, more than a text, the cartographic tool resembles an inter-text, in which different layers of meaning and intelligibility overlap, and different epistemic orders of truth combine [Deleuze and Guattari, 2004]<sup>123</sup>: the order of representation and the order of an envisaged spatiality to-come; geopolitical boundaries and social spaces; migrants revolutionizing spaces and borders producing spatial differences.

Moreover, the map as an inter-text refers also to its constitutive heteronomy: far from being a self-standing language, maps intersect and are the result of multiple texts and languages – juridical texts, governmental narratives, and geopolitical imaginations and so on. Therefore, in order to be fully readable, maps have to be unpacked through a cross and in-depth gaze, attentively scrutinizing their manifold layers of truths and languages. However, this does not mean to unfold the “secrecy of maps” – as if a hidden layer of meaning was at stake – or to make audible the “silences of the maps”. This second move is certainly one of the possible and most common counter-mapping approaches, but the point here is rather to account for the composition of different orders of truth and languages which are not concealed elements to disclose but already there. This is, after all, the gesture and the task that Foucault suggests we pursue: “the aim is not to unfold what is hidden, but rather to make visible precisely what is visible; that is to say, to make appear what is close and immediate, what is so much related to ourselves that, because of that, we cannot perceive” [Foucault, 1978b, pp. 540-541]. Finally, the inter-textual dimension of maps gains an additional meaning if referred to recent migration maps, where the mechanisms of knowledge production deeply influence the very nature of maps: migration maps reflect the knowledge-based governance upon which migration controls are predicated. That is to say, these maps show in-between the folds that migration governmentality is basically grounded on a socialized knowledge – it necessarily needs the combination of a variety of actors, approaches and specific

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<sup>123</sup> According to Deleuze and Guattari the map has multiple entries. However, it's important to notice that the qualities of the map that they posit in opposition to the tracing can be indeed indistinctively associated to what we call “counter-mapping” practices – which strive for the “counter”-acting of the regime of representation but remain inside the cartographic rationale – and a refusal of map making in itself, for the reasons that I explain here in the text.

knowledges. This aspect gets a visible application in the so called “crowd-maps”<sup>124</sup> or in the *I-map* itself, which is definitively a collective product, constantly updated by different expertise. But most importantly, the peculiarity of the knowledge-based character of migration governance emerges in the hijacked nature of migration maps: as I argued in the first chapter, migration governmentality hinges on and produces knowledge *on* migrations which requires and hinges on a knowledge *of* migrations. In fact, the knowledge mobilized in the mechanisms of migration governance is primarily a knowledge which needs to spy, observe, hijack and capture migrants’ strategies and routes, in order then to produce its own map. In this way, migration maps follow the footsteps of migrants’ practices, to get a plan of visibility and then to realize an outguessing cartography, which spies for playing ahead of time, tracing present and future expected migrants’ routes in order to manage them. Therefore, the spatial snapshots on migrants’ movements that the knowledge *on* migrations captures for producing its own cartography, is then translated into a temporal map; a map statistically forecasting evolutions and directions of migration routes with the twofold purpose of anticipating/managing movements and providing a specific “economy of gazes” [Azoulay, 2008].

In fact, the “cartographic reason” [Olsson, 2007; Pickles, 2004; Turnbull, 2000] establishes the thresholds of visibility/invisibility of phenomena and subjects. Maps carve out and inscribe borders, thus telling us as much about spaces as about the tracing of boundaries. In the domain of migration this is translated in the tracing of spaces of governability – that is, migration maps posit how and to what extent people’s movements can be managed. And in the entanglement of different regimes of truth and languages and the overlapping of many layers of knowledges, unlike other kinds of maps, migration maps not only stage the narrative through which power situates subjects in space [Crampton, Krigyer, 2006]: they complicate such a narrative, intersecting and including different epistemic codes and political sources. Obviously, we should not disregard the “power of maps” [J.Black, 2002] in shaping the real, as well as their double function of legitimation and enforcement of power’s

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<sup>124</sup> Crowd-maps are interactive collective maps built on the model of open platforms, which allow people to constantly update a certain map concerning a specific phenomenon. See for instance, <https://crowdmap.com/welcome>

strategies [Gregory, 2007; Harley, 1992, 2001; Wood, 1992]. But what it is relevant to stress at this stage of the analysis, is the difference between maps and other texts with respect to the narrative made by governmental actors: the gesture of teasing out the “text-map” allows us to see conflicting or overlapping knowledges at play in producing the “migration regime”, unpacking the apparent compact and solid notion of governmentality. To put it differently, a critical reading of the “text-map” is not equivalent to reading and sustaining the narrative on migrations produced by governmental agencies: could the map be a useful text –not as a neutral tool but as a strugglefield of visibility - to understand the effective functioning of power, both in its actual mechanisms and in its imagined developments? This question would require further investigation that goes beyond the scope of this work; however what can be suggested here is that the map as an inter-text is situated at the juncture between the effective functioning of power and the way in which the “governmental imagination” envisages working in the future. In fact, the political dimension of maps does not concern only their direct application into political strategies; it depends also on the regime of visibility that it structures, supporting pre-existing geographies of power and framing specific relationships between subjects and space. Maps, differently from other governmental texts on migrations, are operational tools of power which do not only narrate a “governmental phantasy” [Feldman, 2011] but also refract the transformations at stake in political technology. The edge between what a map is an expression of, and what it contributes to enact, cannot be fixed in advance, since the mutual reinforcements between the two factors are always at play.

*The government is not at/of the border: the I-Map and the real time updating of migrants' routes*

Starting from this theoretical background, it becomes easier to assess what transformations in migration governmentality are marked and fostered in the *I-Map*, as well as in some other recent cartographic productions on migration flows. As mentioned, the first aspect to underline is that what matters in the *I-Map* is less borders as such, than migration routes and their orientations: “migration routes management is reoriented from a focus on a moving front-line to a series of points along an itinerary” redefining “ a new architecture of migration management”

[Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, Pickles, 2013]. Conversely, the traditional mindset of border thinking vacillates: borders come to coincide with migration routes on the one hand, and with the spatialities of economic and political intervention on the other hand – for instance, through the implementation of regional and Neighbourhood Policies and economic agreements which involve “migration clauses” that contribute to creating an “EU at a distance”. In this regard, it could be questioned whether or not the persisting imaginary of Europe has in part been displaced, not getting lost but diffracted, expanding through regional areas outside conventional Europe and scattering into multiple sites. What appears in-between the folds of governmental maps is a “scattered Europe” and a diffracted European space, which resemble in part the pace of migrants’ movements based on a “patchy” geography – characterized by space at high and low density of control. At the same time, such a scattered Europe is deeply redefined by migrants’ spatial upheavals in a twofold manner. On the one side, through their uneven geographies, Tunisian migrants demonstrated that no democratic revolution for freedom could exist without freedom of movement. On the other, once in Europe they have moved back and forth across the European space, with regional and Eurostar trains becoming the most concrete scattered and moving borders of Europe – migrants were blocked on the trains and let off – and at the same time spaces for sneaking off and places for staying – “This is Europe, this is my Europe”<sup>125</sup> it’s the comment made by a Tunisian “*harraga*” who arrived in Italy in 2011 and who narrated their fragmentary backward and forward journey across Europe by rail. This is not to fall into a romanticism of practices of migration, but instead to stress their capacity to move across Europe enacting another pace of mobility than that established by migration policies. Meanwhile, they envisaged their own European geography, corresponding to the experiences they had of/at the borders: “Lampedusa is not Europe, and neither Sicily. Here we are treated as animals, Europe starts northward”. Nevertheless, stressing the spatial redefinition acted by migrants’ geographies does not mean to state the primacy of their European border displacements over the transformations produced by politics of externalization and migration routes management: rather, in order get to grip with the reality of a European diffracted space, we need to investigate

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<sup>125</sup> “This is Europe, this is my Europe”, interview conducted by Lucio Guarinoni, in Garelli, Sossi, Tazzioli (eds.) *Spaces in migration. Postcards from a revolution*, Pavement Books, London, 2013.

processes of “border scattering” and border displacements crisscrossing these two mutually responsive spatial practices – migration turmoils and politics of regional re-bordering. On the basis of this “migration-based” counter-mapping approach, one of the main issues to raise consists in interrogating to what extent Europe remains the “sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories” [Chakrabarty, 2000], or whether migrants’ reinvented geographies have, at in least in part, shaken the tenability of that narrative.

What seems to be of relevance is less the directionality of flows than the patterns themselves, namely the (transnational) spaces that migrants cross, irrespective of the orientation of the arrows: to put it differently, the governmental gaze is turned to migration spaces on the move, instead of focusing on the states “affected” by migrants’ flows; moreover, it’s the regionalization of the area to govern which prevails on the state spatiality or on the continental dimension – West-African routes, East-Mediterranean routes, Central-Mediterranean routes and so on. At the same time the distinction between Countries of emigration and Countries of immigration is definitively blurred since what becomes paramount are the spaces of transit and movement, and the space of “spatial insistence” [Sossi, 2012] of migrants. (Indeed, the towns marked on the maps correspond to the places of transit, departure and arrival, so that the small island of Lampedusa and the city of Oujda are visibly signalled).

Let’s try now to take on a map that does not exist, yet: a map charting the impacts of developmental politics on non-European countries, and mainly on the Neighbourhood countries, which targets the so called “would-be migrants” stopping them migrating abroad. In some sense, it could be named as a map of would-be migrations that includes the spaces addressed by techniques of bordering. Following this undrawn map, and combining it with the uneven geography of the European space enacted by migrants that I illustrated above, the result is that, finally, no map of the European space could be properly traced from the standpoint of the migration issue. In fact, on the one hand migrants’ movements (sometimes) succeed in misfiring the capture of borders and in acting irrespective of the pace of mobility established by migration policies; on the other hand, Neighbourhood policies show

in a quite glaring way that Europe starts where migrants' journeys are hampered by bordering technologies, breaking up the possibility of maintaining Europe as a spatially well-bounded referent.

However, although the border cannot be the exclusive site of analysis for grasping migration issues in their complexity and despite a map of the European borders being hard to trace for the reasons that I sketched above, it nonetheless remains that the (fragmented) government of the borders is one of the main mechanisms through which the image of a coherent European space of free circulation is effectively shaped according to the "very particular way the actual levels of cross-national cooperation in border legislation and policing are producing the material effects of a 'united Europe'. These include instruments such as cross EU cooperation on border patrolling and the standardization of many visa norms and customs controls" [Cobarrubias, 2009, p.70]. The problem is to understand what and where the (European) borders are at this time, challenging the traditional cartographic gesture of tracing a European well-bordered space. Perhaps it could be stated that a map of Europe cannot be traced any more, or that at the very least it would result in a patchy space, made up of special channels – economic and mobility channels. The spread of borders is the most direct outcome of migration controls, blocking some routes diverts migrants elsewhere, instantiating another border to cross, and displacing other frontiers: "Stronger controls at the EU external borders far from solving the problem they seek to solve, actually result in a movement of the border instead" [Rodier, 2006 p.4]. Besides making borders, the border management regime, both as political technology and a coherent image, produces tangible effects; and one of these consists in materially positing where the border is located in a certain space. But what is important to remember is that the multiplication of borders generates more than borders, it generates a multiplication, (see differentiation of spaces) and essentially it produces distances [De Genova, 2013b]. Indeed, the tracing of regions and zones where certain politics are implemented – see for instance the Economic Trade Areas – and the creation of Regional Protection Programs for refugees (in non-European countries) overlaps with national sovereignties. And in the case of migration governmental strategies, both cartographic representations and discourses envisage a migratory regime grounded on migration patterns and, jointly, on

regional/zonal spaces of interventions and monitoring – sub-Saharan migrations, West-Mediterranean routes, east-African Countries.

*Maps of migration (in) crisis:*

Another map playing as a prism of migration governance transformations is the map of “Migration crisis from Libya”<sup>126</sup>. This map is of particular relevance in the frame of this work if we consider that it was launched just at the time of the Libyan conflict and the Arab uprisings. The “live” map provides updated snapshots on the “migration crisis” triggered by the Libyan war, showing a multi-layered surface of visibility on “migration factors”: border movements, repatriations, humanitarian assistance and people locations are the entries forming the reality of “migration crisis” as a composite phenomenon to govern. If the *I-Map* illustrates the government of migration centering on the management of migrants’ routes, the “Migration crisis” map plays through situational risk analysis, creating what I would call “migratory compounds” that become objects of government. By migratory compounds I mean the outlining of a migration crisis situation, whose critical aspect relies on the difficulty of governing “mixed migration” flows, partitioning them in different mobility profiles. The multiple “crisis”, following the text-map and articulating it with IOM’s texts, requires as much complexity in the governmental approach to the migrations-situation, including all dimensions of migratory crisis – border management, humanitarian interventions, and identity checks. Therefore, instead of lighting up and following migrants’ movements, the “Migration crisis” spotlights critical border-zones: it locates and marks complex-migration phenomena; and migrants’ movements come to be included in a much broader object of government, namely the border-zone of a migration crisis as a complex phenomenon. The production of critical border-zones and the tracking of migration routes are two coexisting mapping rationales, revealing two governmental gazes and operational measures in which the border as a pre-established (geopolitical) line loses its eminence in framing the cartography of migration governability.

In the face of maps like the *I-Map* and the *Migration in crisis* map, counter-maps of migrations need to take stock and closely scrutinize the cartographic rationality that

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<sup>126</sup> <http://www.migration-crisis.com/libya/>

they try to “counter”. However, at this stage it is worth briefly taking a step back and casting a glance on the first migration counter-maps produced in the early years of the last decade. These maps are traced against the backdrop of the Fortress Europe imaginary that in the late Nineties and in the early 2000s was dominant both in critical academic analysis and in the activist debate. Starting from the assumption that mainstream migration maps “silence” the dramatic consequences of border controls and the regime of detention of migrants, the first migration counter-maps made visible the “dark side” of migration governmentality, showing a “Europe of camps” or marking migrants’ deaths at the borders<sup>127</sup>. At the same time, other migration-counter maps started to bring attention to the multiplicity of actors and layers of government involved in managing migration and in the chaotic migration regime they generate. In this case, the focus is on the functioning of power itself more than in its violent effects<sup>128</sup>. A third group of counter-cartographies of migrations is formed by those maps that shed light on migrants’ practices and on border struggles – namely the ordinary battle at the borders between migrants and bordering techniques – showing the complex of practices, conflicts and technical tools through which borderzones, like for instance the Straits of Gibraltar, are produced<sup>129</sup>. Then, a huge variety of more artistic counter-mapping practices try to make migrants trace out their own counter-map, hinging on their journey and singular experience of migration<sup>130</sup>. Leaving aside this last group of counter-maps, which does not respond to a traditional cartographic rationale, the common mark of all the other maps that I briefly mention here is their inside position in relation to the cartographic epistemology itself, gesturing towards a strategic counter-use of that epistemic regime. The question to raise thus concerns the effective leeway for engaging in such a “counter”-use of the cartographic tools. In fact, if we take into account migration maps, two different critical issues overlap. The first one, that critical geographers and NoBorders activists are concerned with, relates to the regime of (in)visibility that official migration maps impose – shadowing the impacts of border controls and

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<sup>127</sup> [http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/pages/map\\_FortressEurope\\_OWNI.htm](http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/pages/map_FortressEurope_OWNI.htm) ;  
[http://www.migreurop.org/IMG/jpg/map\\_18-1\\_L\\_Europe\\_des\\_camps\\_2011\\_v9\\_FR.jpg](http://www.migreurop.org/IMG/jpg/map_18-1_L_Europe_des_camps_2011_v9_FR.jpg);  
<http://blog.mondediplo.net/2010-06-01-Les-camps-d-etrangers-symbole-d-une-politique>;

<sup>128</sup> <http://www.transitmigration.org/migmap/>

<sup>129</sup> [http://mcs.hackitectura.net/tiki-browse\\_image.php?imageId=580](http://mcs.hackitectura.net/tiki-browse_image.php?imageId=580)

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=him1yL5YTCw>

portraying migrations as flows threatening the European territory – as well as to the political effects that those maps generate. Thus, taking on this criticism, dissident cartographic practices [Cortes & others, 2008] can effectively use the same language and technical tools for showing “another map”. But as I suggested earlier in this chapter, there is another substantial aspect of maps to sift: the problem of mapping migrations does not concern only the “battle” *on* and *at* the borders, but the cartographic rationality itself, which fixes and freezes a space of visibility. Indeed, dealing with migration through a cartographic approach implicates more pitfalls and political stakes than with other topics. Secondly, the knowledge produced by maps is inevitably coded through the language of representation and signification [King, 1996; Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos, 2008] resembling actually what Deleuze and Guattari define as an act of tracing more than mapping: “the tracing has organized, stabilized, neutralized the multiplicities according to the axes of significance and subjectification belonging to it” [Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p.15]. For these reasons, the visibility paradigm of cartography and migrants strategically playing with (in)visibility clash with each other, with the former encroaching upon the “silent” mode of the latter. Thus, related to this problematic issue, do we need to envisage a counter-narrative of migrations or should we let this “map” be produced by migrants’ spatial practices? (In fact, the act of mapping is at the least a way of narrating the lives and the practices of others, making them speak). What is the usefulness of realizing “another map” and to what extent could it be detrimental for migrants themselves, by revealing their strategies of movement<sup>131</sup>? And finally, to what degree is a strategic use of mapping tools possible, given that the cartographic technique is a normative tool which spatializes subjects and practices?

*“Spaces in migration” map: traveling with migrants’ uneven geographies*

Taking all these critical questions together, the map “*Spazi in migrazione*”<sup>132</sup> undertakes a triple displacement of the mapping gaze, troubling the order of the cartographic (in)visibility. First of all, the map tries to account for the spatial upheavals generated in the Mediterranean space by Tunisian migrants who left

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<sup>131</sup> As Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos argue, migrant struggles force us to rethink a politics out of representation [Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos, 2008, pp. 48-53].

<sup>132</sup> The map is included in Sossi, 2012 and in Garelli, Sossi, Tazzioli, 2013.

Tunisia in 2011, and the responses of governmental actors for re-stabilizing migration governability. In this way, the focus shifts from the functioning of power in tracing borders to the spatial effects and the spatial upheavals engendered by migrants, thus subverting the order of space production and suggesting a different gaze on the migration regime: spatial upheavals are triggered by migrants and *then* national and international actors are forced to respond and reassess their strategy. Secondly, as I sketched, what is made visible are not migrants' routes but rather these latter are fragmented and translated into a patchy map of the spatial impacts and effects of migrants' practices: the Southern European space is troubled and recomposed through the discontinuous presence of migrants and their intermittent (in)visibility, and consequently uneven "mappability". Thus, far from providing a full-spectrum of visibility or accounting for all the subjects at stake in that space, the *Spazi in migrazione* map attentively selects what to highlight and what strategically to leave as "unmappable". The third displacement concerns the movement and the location of the mapping gaze: the map is not static but on the move, since it follows the movements of Tunisian migrants, not charting their routes but travelling through the same spatial circuits as migrants to grasp the upheavals they produce. In this way, borders are no longer the landmark through which movements are gauged: by making the gaze travel with migrants' movements, borders are rather what is shaken and transformed by practices of migration. Tunisian migrants, the map tells us, have unified the space between Tunisia and Europe and, through their practices of movement, have wiped out national boundaries. This counter-mapping gesture is notably strengthened by the location of the gaze: turning traditional maps 45 degrees left, the reader is forced to follow the same direction of migrants' movements, through a south-north orientation –from Tunisia and Libya towards Europe.

**Towards a non-cartographic countermapping approach:**

In the second part of the chapter I engage in a non-cartographic counter-mapping practice assuming counter-mapping as an analytical approach and a critical gaze on migration governmentality. In fact, bearing in mind all the limits of tracing dissident cartographies on migrations, I broaden the concept of "counter-mapping" to an analytical posture that unpacks and cracks self-standing categories of migration

governmentality. Translated in more concrete terms, this means to effect a triple displacement of the gaze: a) turning to the impacts and the effects on spaces and subjects of border controls and migration management; b) highlighting how some of these governmental mechanisms and many migration issues cannot be fully grasped if we remain located on the northern shore of the Mediterranean; c) peering into the ways in which migrants' turmoil constantly force national and transnational actors to reinvent a map of migration governability, and more broadly how migrants' practices make us see the friability of the migration regime.

Departures:

The term “departure” does not actually pertain to the discursive regime of migration governance, since the “count” of migrants is done looking at the arrivals of people in the “hosting” Countries. And also when official European statements mention how many people left Tunisia or Morocco, they index departures through the arrivals, without considering those migrants who never arrived. If “departures” can be deduced only via the arrivals this is not only because of the clandestine condition of those migrants' departures but, I would argue, it is precisely due to the irrelevance of that data both for migration policies and for the narrative which replicates the argument of migrant “invasion”. That said, the vagueness about departures seems to exclude the very possibility of reframing that notion “from the bottom”, or to put it better reversing the gaze and placing it on the other shore. For instance, during my fieldwork in Tunisia, when asking national institutions about the number of Tunisian migrants who left in 2011 by boat towards Italy, I realized that, definitively, such a number could never be reconstructed nor tracked down, due to the “clandestine” and therefore hidden nature of the departures. No archive of “illegal” emigration could exist, by definition. In order to find the numbers we necessarily need to move to the northern shore, where the Italian government counted 27 000 Tunisian migrants as having arrived on the Italian coasts after the Tunisian revolution. This entails that migrants become visible subjects – to be taken into account – as and to the extent that they are identifiable. However, this consideration obviously doesn't mean to denounce the failures of Tunisian government in counting for migrants who left their countries. Instead, the crucial point to bring out is that visa requirements along with

the 1975 Tunisian law stating the “crime of illegal emigration” make people *de facto* forced to devise strategies of invisibility and consequently to disappear – or because of shipwrecks or in the sense that they can “reappear” as subjects only to the extent that they are identified and captured by biometric techniques and identity checks. Nevertheless, they “reappear” once in the European space as governable and countable migrants, in the form of electronic data which trace their presence on the soil. Thus, the impossibility of reversing the gaze on migrants' departures finally comes to reframe the terms of the problem, highlighting that a counter-mapping approach should insist on emigration as a practice that, in the case of Tunisian migrants, was not claimed as a right but forcibly taken by them through the revolutionary uprising. Thus, the practices of migration acted by Tunisian migrants after the outbreak of the revolution could be seen in some way as an extraordinary practice of migration, strongly linked to the political uprising in which they had been involved. But these practices of migration were at the same time also non-extraordinary if we consider the attitude of Tunisian migrants in leaving the country and the collective dimension of those practices: “I left just because many friends of mine took that decision, all together; indeed, after the fall of Ben Ali it had become so obvious to take one's own chance and make the *harraga* – the act of burning frontiers – Europe is so close and I had always desired to go and wander there, also only for a while”. To focus on departures, not at all in terms of numbers but as practices that for many migrants is a “flight from” [Mezzadra, 2006] or an act of refusal, while for others is related to the desire to change or improve one's own social condition, enables us to recall Fanon's observation that “the first thing the colonial learns is to remain in his place and not overstep its limits” [Fanon, 2007, p. 15]. It's just when people refuse the injunction to respect the assigned geographical, economic or social place that colonial governmentality could be effectively disrupted. And in fact, it could be explored how the refusal to comply with the criteria of selected mobility is played through migration.

#### Border crossing:

Both in critical Migration Studies and in the field of governmental politics, border crossing has a paramount relevance to the extent that all issues concerning people's

movements finally coalesce around the nexus migration-borders. From a genealogical point of view, such a nexus is to be questioned, dismantling the idea of its trans-historical and evident nature [McKeown, 2008; Sassen, 2006] since it has become the tenet of both mobility politics only in the last three decades. But most of all borders work as vectors of meaning and resignification for migrations: indeed, practices of migration are framed and approached through the grid of borders, with the latter conceived as sites of control, conflict or negotiation. In this way, border crossing functions as a sort of *redux factor* packing and narrowing migrations into the very moment and act of crossing frontiers. In this regard, Tunisian migrations displaced the emphasis on borders, by putting into place what I call a “politics of presence”. By that I mean their unexpected persistence in some public spaces and their peripatetic moving (using transport, devising strategies of survival and leaving material traces of one's own presence, but no trace to be counted or caught in statistics and research studies). In other words, it refers to the concreteness of their “staying there” (“being there”) and at once the ephemeral and opaque character of their presence, since they constantly need to move away, to change place or to live in public spaces in a concealed way, causes us to think about migrations far beyond the act of border crossing. Paris, Rome, Milan, Padova, Bruxelles, Marsiglia and many other European towns are the places where Tunisian migrants trampled and stayed, sometimes moving from one place to the other, or moving by train; however, what is focused on here is not so much the places where Tunisian migrants have lived for months as their modalities of staying in those spaces, playing on the edges of invisibility. Thus, also mobile sites like trains have become places where Tunisian migrants insisted, as hidden passengers, to go across Europe over a time-span of a few months. Therefore, the very act of *harraga* (the burning of frontiers) that Tunisians themselves mention as a brave challenge, represents only a delimited moment of migration: in fact, practices of migration do not consist only in spatial displacement but, in addition to that, movement itself is acted in multifarious ways, way beyond the act of border crossing. – And for instance, the borders “to be secured” are getting to be more and more the “mobile borders” like trains or the ferry-boats.

**December 2012:** The second counter-mapping gesture to trace basically mirrors the displacement of frontiers acted by Tunisian migrants who, by moving in large numbers towards Libya and Qatar, cracked the map traced by European governments which depicted post-revolution migrations as an exodus towards Europe, completely overlooking the multi-directionality of migrants' movements. According to the Tunisian government estimations, 100,000 Tunisians workers have come back to Libya after the end of the conflict<sup>133</sup>, but since a lot of people do not register at the Tunisian Consulate the real number is around 200,000. Meanwhile, the new economic agreement signed between Tunisia and Qatar made out that more than 25,000 Tunisians are moving to Qatar to find a job, both in the non-qualified sector – such as construction and hotels – and in technological ones. While European Countries are still tied to a strict politics of quota, since the end of the Libyan conflict Tunisian migrants have started to migrate there again, aware of the economic crisis which is lashing Europe. Looking in the opposite direction, that is migrants' movements from the South to Tunisia, we should consider the Southern Tunisian border: 1 million people arrived last year fleeing from Libya, and Tunisia decided to leave the border open in order to let people enter. Today very close to the border almost 2600 refugees and asylum seekers are still there, in Choucha refugee camp, waiting for resettlement or stranded in the camp as undesired presences because they have been rejected as asylum seekers.

The Eurodac database, created in 2003 for fighting against so called “asylum shopping” –meaning when a person demands asylum in different European Countries<sup>134</sup> – is actually used as a system for also monitoring illegal crossing of European borders: everybody who enters Europe “illegally” should be fingerprinted and biometric information is sent to the European central database. In this way, all

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<sup>133</sup> Instead, according to a research realized by Iom and the African Development Bank, in 2011 and in 2012, 40.000 Tunisians have left to Libya, corresponding to the 39% of the Tunisians who worked in Libya before the outbreak of the Libyan war, due to the high rate of unemployment in Tunisia <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Migrations%20des%20Tunisiens%20en%20Libye%20Dynamiques%20d%C3%A9fis%20et%20perspectives.pdf>

<sup>134</sup> “A system known as ‘Eurodac’ is hereby established, the purpose of which shall be to assist in determining which Member State is to be responsible pursuant to the Dublin Convention for examining an application for asylum lodged in a Member State, and otherwise to facilitate the application of the Dublin Convention under the conditions set out in this Regulation” Council Regulation (EC) No 2725/2000 *concerning the establishment of ‘Eurodac’*.

border crossings are in principle detected and stored, and the European perimeter and its borders are thus re-underlined *by refraction* through the detected presences of the migrants. Or better, digital borders allow the tracing of a map of Europe built on migrants' digital traces. Nevertheless, if we depart from the descriptive narrative of power, focusing instead on the effective functioning of that data-capture and data-store [Kunster, Tsianos, 2012; Schuster, 2011] we realize that a highly fragmented map of Europe comes out. The data stored in Eurodac does not so much trace migrants' spatial routes than the pace of their movements. In order to explain this point, I take the Eurodac annual report: Southern European states such as Greece and Italy, the report states, constantly try to boycott the mechanism by not sending the fingerprint data to the European central unit or sending flawed or fake information. In this way, they boycott the Dublin II logic at its core: in fact, according to the Dublin II regulation, a person who wants to demand asylum needs to do that in the first European country he/she arrives in, and countries that are at the external borders of Europe, like Greece and Italy, are obviously more subject than others to the arrival of third-country nationals. Instead, in the case of people stored in Category 2 – illegal border crossing – the strategy of Southern Countries is more ambivalent: by reporting all illegal border crossings they can put pressure on the other member states, claiming the principle of “burden sharing”; but the number of annual illegal border crossings officially sent by Greece to Eurodac in 2011 corresponds to the average of the weekly illegal crossing at the Greek borders – 550 “successful transactions”<sup>135</sup> in the Eurodac database against 57,000 illegal crossing checked by Frontex at the Greek border. In this way, Greece and Italy can dodge standards and rules about deportations, instead signing bilateral agreements with Third Countries that include “exceptional” procedures<sup>136</sup>. In this sense the desirability of “Europe” and of a European government is constantly challenged by the move of the Southern European countries towards East-East or South-South agreements. However, the jam of Eurodac depends also on the technical failures and incompatibilities between

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<sup>135</sup> The Eurodac regulation uses this expression to indicate “a transaction which has been correctly processed by the Central Unit, without rejection due to a data validation issue, fingerprint errors or insufficient quality” (Eurodac, Annual Report, COM (2012) 533).

<sup>136</sup> Like for instance the bilateral agreement signed between Tunisia and Italy on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 or the one signed the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011, in which it is established that Italy deports 100 Tunisian citizens per day, five days a week.

different identification systems that make the “translation” of the national data into the standardized language of Eurodac database an arduous task<sup>137</sup>.

The other “log jam” that frequently happens in Eurodac is the “appearing” of a migrant’s digital trace in a country which does not correspond to the migrant’s first point of entry in Europe; and in this way the country in charge of deporting the unwanted migrant or of processing the demand of asylum is the country that first registered the migrant’s border crossing, namely the entry of the migrant in the European space. In fact, the European Annual Report on Eurodac labels these “mismatches” and delays on the part of some countries in sending the fingerprints to the European central unit as *wrong hits* and *missed hits*<sup>138</sup>. The delay results in part from technical failures and from the lack of interoperability between different national systems but it is also the visible outcome of the refusals by States to comply with the standards established by the European system of asylum. In this regard, a question intersecting the politics of number and the politics of discourses should be raised: indeed, the consideration that log jams very frequently occur and that some states delay in sending the fingerprints is largely recognized by the European institutions themselves [Samers, 2004]. Thus, how should we conceive a counter-mapping approach to that issue? If concerning other points it could mean to situate the analysis within the discrepancies between the discursive regime and the effectiveness of the functioning of power, in this case such a posture is not profitable for *taking backward* and *by surprise* [see chapter 1] the mechanisms of migration governmentality. Perhaps we could try rather to understand what those “failures”

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<sup>137</sup> The “failures” of Eurodac in receiving and processing data depend both on lack of compatibility between the national and the European system (discrepancy between digital and electronic systems, which involves a difficulty to translate the data from the national to the European database) and on the errors and hitches that take place at the borders, where police do not always take fingerprints accurately [Kuster, Tsianos and others, 2012].

<sup>138</sup> *Wrong hits*: when a third-country national lodges an asylum application in a Member State, whose authorities take his/her fingerprints. While those fingerprints are still waiting to be transmitted to the Central Unit, the same person could already present him/herself in another Member State and ask again for asylum. *Missed hits*: third-country national is apprehended in connection with an irregular border crossing and his/her fingerprints are taken by the authorities of the Member State he/she entered. While those fingerprints are still waiting to be transmitted to the Central Unit the same person could already present him/herself in another Member State (B) and lodge an asylum application

really stand for. The refusal of the European states<sup>139</sup> to send data not only concerning asylum seekers but also illegal border crossings could be seen as a generalized resistance to playing the game of a coordinated government of migration and standardized process of asylum envisaged by the EU.

Which subjects are inside or outside European databases is a question intersecting the temporality of the identification mechanisms on the one hand and the singular histories of migrations on the other. In fact, according to the Eurodac regulations, fingerprint data stored from migrants arrested whilst attempting to cross a European border illegally (Category 2) must be deleted after two years, so that their presence on the European soil vanishes [Kuster, Tsianos, 2013]<sup>140</sup>. At the same time, the data of those who have been returned back should not be stored at all in the system. In that case, deported migrants are not definitively “counted” and if they come back to Europe demanding asylum (category 1) or arrested during border crossing (category 2) they are categorized as “new entrances”. More broadly the “mapping” mechanism of the European systems of identification results in a scattered map localizing “illegal” presences at the borders (Category 2), irregular migrants living in Europe (Category 3) or demands of asylum (Category 1). However, a map formed by fixed “dots” – the punctual presence of migrants – which does not account for the peripatetic times and patterns of migrations focusing rather on the moment of the presence of the migrants on the European soil and the juridical-political position to assign to them. At the same time, it is not the actual bodily presence that is of interest to migration governance agencies: rather, what becomes relevant is the attestation of the passage/crossing or presence of that body at some points and in some specific place of the European space [Van der Ploeg, Sprenkels, 2011].

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<sup>139</sup> Thus, at a close glance it's quite noticeable that it is actually not only the Southern European countries that tend to bring down the number of the demands of asylum as well as of the illegal border crossing they send to the European central database unit.

<sup>140</sup> Talking about “digital deportability”, Kuster and Tsianos convincingly argue that “it is the result of the permeability of Europe's borders, making deportation at any given moment a constant threat within the slick space of the data flow. It is not the migrants themselves who circulate here, but rather the “embodied identity of migration,” as the sum of their data doubles” [Kuster, Tsianos, 2013, p.1]

**December 2011:** With the arrival of 53 000 Tunisian and “Libyan” migrants in Italy in 2011<sup>141</sup>, the number of fingerprints stored in Eurodac increased significantly, due to EU’s pressure of the on Italy to register all the migrants arriving on the island of Lampedusa. Nevertheless, the mismatch between the numbers of fingerprints sent to the Eurodac database by Italy and the “successful transactions” is about 2500 (53 000 fingerprints sent against 50 555 correctly processed by the Eurodac unity): 2500 fingerprints, that is 2500 people whose passage and presence in the European space was “lost” during the transmission from the national system to the European one. But besides all this, the total number of Tunisian and Libyan migrants' fingerprint data taken at the Italian borders appears to be mistaken if we shift the attention to the effective functioning of the “fingerprinting machine”. “Nobody took my fingerprints in Lampedusa” is the answer that many Tunisians who have now returned to Tunisia gave me, especially those who arrived in Lampedusa in the most “crowded” period – February, to end of March 2011– when the technical difficulty in identifying people went along with what I previously called a “tactic of discharge”: by letting some of the migrants go “undetected” on the Italian territory, Italy de facto made it possible to chase them away to France, where indeed the majority were headed.

As Dennis Broeders points out, referring to European identification systems, “exclusion could take two different contradictory forms: exclusion from registration and documentation and exclusion through documentation and registration” [Broeders, 2009, p.42]. The script of an overall control on people’s movements breaks up if we take a distance from the texts and the narrative of power, turning instead to what effectively happened in Lampedusa, since as Tunisian migrants attested, many of them were not fingerprinted at all. And the reasons for such a “failure” are in part technical – due to the huge number of migrants on the islands – and in part reflect resistance to complying with European norms. Something escapes and something is let escape. Reframing a little bit the abovementioned quote on the twofold mechanism of exclusion, it could be argued that both the monitoring systems (radar, satellites) and the techniques of identification work to produce “gaps of

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<sup>141</sup> Actually, in addition to the gap between the number of fingerprints sent to Eurodac by Italy (53 000) and the “successful transactions” (50 555) there is another one which upsets and complicates the “politics of numbers”: in fact, according to the most updated statistics of the Italian Home Office, the number of Tunisians and “Libyans” arriving in 2011 was 56 000.

visibility” and a “spectrum of (in)visibilization”. And this latter could take two different forms: visibilization through registration and invisibilization because of non-registration or non-monitoring of migrants’ passages/presences.

**July 2013:** A counter-mapping gaze on Eurodac has to bring attention to migrant struggles that oppose the circulation of their “data double”, as autonomous information “travelling” across Europe independently of the bodily presence of migrants. In fact, once that fingerprints are taken, these remain in Europe irrespective of the location of the person. And it is precisely through this disconnection that the “illegality” of the migrant apprehended is “carved out” in the European legal and political space. The ongoing struggle that Eritrean migrants are conducting in Lampedusa<sup>142</sup>, refusing to give their fingerprints to Italian authorities, crumbles the Eurodac logic and the Dublin II system at its core: during the demonstrations with the main slogan “no fingerprints by force”, they assert that, moving to Northern European countries as they want to do, their physical presence should not be disjoint from their digital data. In fact, according to Eurodac regulation, in the European database the person is registered –through fingerprints – on the basis of his/her first point of entry in the European space, irrespective of his/her present location. Migrants’ demand, “away from Lampedusa and from Italy without being fingerprinted”, oppose the dislocation and the disjunction of migration biometric profiles from their actual bodily presence; at the same time, it circumvents the function of the politics of protection as a technology for governing and allocating migration population in space, arguing that they want to choose in what Europe staying<sup>143</sup>.

#### *Deportations>Returns:*

**February 2012:** According to official Italian data, 3600 Tunisian migrants were deported in 2011 from Italy to Tunisia while almost 5000 were deported from France. 700 Tunisians in France came back through the so called “voluntary return

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<sup>142</sup><http://vimeo.com/70781121>;  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFu0h8CYfUM&list=UUDsP5wVi6kSQUs5Szv1Ckww&feature=share&desktop\\_uri=%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DJFu0h8CYfUM%26feature%3Dshare%26list%3DUUDsP5wVi6kSQUs5Szv1Ckww&nomobile=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFu0h8CYfUM&list=UUDsP5wVi6kSQUs5Szv1Ckww&feature=share&desktop_uri=%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DJFu0h8CYfUM%26feature%3Dshare%26list%3DUUDsP5wVi6kSQUs5Szv1Ckww&nomobile=1)

<sup>143</sup> Because they consider Italy a country which does not effectively grants full rights to refugees, and so they want to claim for asylum in other European countries.

programs” sponsored by Iom and Ofii (*Office Francais de l’Immigration et de l’Integration*), while only around 30 persons have effectively been involved with Iom in Italy. In 2011 Tunisians who returned from France through the Ofii program received 300 euros, but in 2012 and in 2013 the “wage for returning” decreased at 30 euros per person. It is harder to find the number of Tunisian migrants who returned by themselves, independently of any governmental program. In principle Tunisian consulates have these data – because most of the Tunisian migrants came without passports and so they need to demand a document to return – but they do not publish this information. Moreover, it is not even completely true that all Tunisians arrived without documents: although this is the case for the majority, some of them brought their passport with them, as Tunisian migrants living in Paris confirmed to me, and consequently their return wouldn’t be “checked” at all. According to Tunisians I met in Tunisia, many migrants who left in 2011 have now come back because of the economic crisis in Europe or due to the difficulties they came across in finding a place to live. A huge number, it can be supposed listening to some Tunisian voices, that neither the Tunisian government nor migration agencies “counted” the Tunisian migrants who came back, because they are outside both procedures of deportations and channels of “voluntary” returns. But meanwhile, this opacity of informal and ungoverned practices reveals the existence of infraliminar and concrete spaces of migrations that in part dodge and exceed the conditioned mobility figured out by governmental policies. Nevertheless, far from being out of any relation of power, these migrants constantly come to grips with finding leeway for moving and living; but sometimes enact discordant practices and strategies of movement which are not immediately graspable by programs like “migrations for the benefit of all”. For instance, at times they clustered as collectives to better find out strategies of existence and survival, or decided at what point to come back or go elsewhere, both trying to escape deportations and moving in a way that does not respond to criteria for “voluntary return”. Beyond this, we should consider the effects of the deportation regime [De Genova; Peutz, 2010] in the Countries of origin. What is noticeable is the tendency to study and to criticize politics of deportation locating mainly in the European or in the Western space, that is to say, challenging the deportation machine in destination countries, even though there is now a growing literature focusing on

deportees [Lecadet, 2013; Peutz, 2006, 2010; Majidi, Schuster, 2013]. Beyond bodily, psychological and economic consequences of deportation– families damaged by lack of income and migrants who experience the harsh treatment of police – “programs for the assisted return” promoted by Iom exclude all migrants who came back as deported, as I explained in the third chapter. In a way, deportation could be seen as a political technology to manage and re-distribute undesired moving people [Walters, 2002], and starting from that it should be investigated how it functions on the southern shore, that is, in those countries that experience the other side of the same mechanism. For instance, in Tunisia at a governmental level the theme of deportation is somehow eclipsed or neglected: no official discourse has emerged on migrants and their future time in Tunisia in the public debate, even though it is fairly easy to find returned migrants willing to talk about their deportation. Bilateral agreements with Italy and France concerning deportations are negotiated but then the phenomenon that is presented as something to be governed and fostered is the “voluntary return”, both at a discursive and a practical level, playing on and situating within economic projects for development that reinforce the migration-development nexus.

After migrants are deported to their Country of origin, we tend to lose their traces: an analytical scrutiny of governmental mechanisms at a distance necessarily entails a counter-map gesture, which looks at those technologies of government displacing the gaze on the other shore. How are the expulsions of Tunisian citizens seen in the Tunisian political debate? Are they presented as “clandestine” migrants, caught “red-handed”, or as Tunisian citizens subjected to European migration policies? The first aspect to be noticed is that a debate does not really exist in Tunisia, even after the fall of Ben Ali, concerning the Tunisians who were pushed back from European Countries. In other words, despite 5000 Tunisians being expelled from France and 3380 Tunisian citizens from Italy, neither an organized protest nor a political questioning of migration policies has occurred. And the official data of the number of Tunisians deported are taken by the Tunisian government from the European states. At the time that expulsions take place, sometimes– due to the huge number of people returned or because of the inhuman treatment suffered by the migrants – the public focus shifts, for a moment, onto that topic. However, the bilateral agreement

with Italy signed in April 2011 that stated that all Tunisians who arrived in Italy illegally would be deported directly, on the basis of a simplified procedure, was finally accepted without too many complaints, since the agreement also established the delivering of a temporary permit of six months for all the Tunisians arriving in Italy between January 2011 and the 5<sup>th</sup> of April.

But what are the consequences for Tunisian migrants deported to Tunisia? This is a question that can hardly be addressed, since the “traces” and the “traceability” of the Tunisian citizens expelled from Europe dissolves quite quickly, at least since after the fall of Ben Ali, because they have no longer been put in jail. However, unlike the sub-Saharan migrants whose journey usually lasts for years before they finally arrive in Europe, in the case of the Tunisians, especially those who left after the revolution, the practice of migration is an attempt that requires neither much time nor high economic costs – and that some have done many times, or have tried more than once before succeeding. In this sense, expulsion is seen as a kind of false step in the practice of *harraga*. If they are not pushed back just after being captured by the European authorities and instead are put into detention centers and then deported, the trace of their presence remains in the European space, both in the Eurodac system – for two years – and in the national databases, for a undetermined time span. Now, if we focus on the criticisms of humanitarian agencies and of critical migration scholarship about the politics of deportation, the main target seems to be the non-compliance of North African states with human rights protocols [Cassarino, 2010; Ceriani and others, 2009]: in this way, the political stakes are narrowed to the question of meeting humanitarian or democratic standards, while the mechanism of deportation is not really contested in itself. The problem is posited in terms of the inhuman treatment that migrants pushed back risk being subjected to in their country of origin or in the countries of transit, where most of them are deported: from such a perspective, North African states are under the demand to keep up with the international law on human rights, while European states are blamed for not considering how migrants are treated once they go back in their country of origin. Focusing on sea patrols in the Mediterranean, the infinite debate around the interpretation of Article 33 of the Geneva Convention on the *non-refoulement* [Allain, 2001, Fischer-Lescano, Lohr, Tohidipur, 2009; Lauterpacht, Bethlehem,

2001; Liguori, 2008; Mitsilegas, Ryan, 2010] in which Unhcr obviously plays a pivotal role, finally reinforces the partition between asylum seekers having a right to demand protection, and economic migrants. In fact, according to Unhcr, the *refoulement* of migrants at sea is illegal because among them there could be asylum seekers, since it implicates that no rejection at frontiers without access to fair and effective procedures for determining status and protection needs, and so states are obliged to screen intercepted migrants with a view to identifying persons in need of protection, assessing those needs and taking appropriate action [Unhcr, 2007, 2011]. Indeed, while giving prominence in the analysis to bilateral agreements (signed, for instance, between Libya and Italy<sup>144</sup>) allows us to discredit the Italian involvement with a dictatorship – at the time when Gheddafi was in power – and the technical support to the local authorities, even so the risk is to shift too much from the rationale of the mechanism itself to the “naughty” state partners chosen by some European countries [Cuttitta, 2008]. Thus, the floating notion of “safe country” becomes the tenet through which the politics of deportation is assessed in its legitimacy and “fairness”, since the deported migrant is considered not risking his/her life [Tondini, 2010].

In critical Migration Studies “deportation” refers mostly to the practices and politics of expulsions of migrants who have crossed the borders of a nation State, while the terms “interceptions” and “pushing back” are used for the *refoulements* of migrants at sea [Walters, 2002]. And notably, there are controversies around the term “deportation”, debating whether or not it could be applied to migrants pushed back in high sea, since they have not entered the territory of a nation state. For these reasons I talk about technologies of expulsion encompassing an array of ways, conditions and techniques through which migrants are chased away from the territory of a state or from the place where they are (as in the case of interceptions at sea). It is not properly an action of pushing them back, since for instance bilateral agreements that Italy signed with some North African countries like Tunisia and Egypt include a clause which requires those states to accept third-country nationals who transited

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<sup>144</sup> The bilateral agreement was signed in 2007 but then implemented in 2009. The 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009 Italy carried out the first interception operation. In total, in 2009 Italy intercepted and returned nine migrants’ boats coming from Libya and two from Algeria

there before arriving in Italy. In this sense, the formula “readmission agreements” encapsulates this ambiguity, positing expulsions as a return or as a measure adopted by the country of origin or by the country of transit. Despite the fact that the securitization of borders and the management of selected mobility are constantly mobilized in the dialogue between European and African countries, partnerships on mobility are usually enshrined into broader economic agreements on development *and* free exchange – as in the case of Morocco<sup>145</sup> – or development *and* transition to democracy – as in the case of revolutionized Tunisia. After all, in the face of the reticence of Maghreb Countries to sign “readmission agreements” of third-country nationals on their soil, the integration of mobility partnerships within the developmental agenda helps in shifting the focus from securitarian concerns to a global approach on human resources – as demanded by Morocco and Tunisia [Rodier, 2012].

According to a countermapping approach, we have ultimately to take stock of the prominence given to deportations and expulsions as mechanisms to look at for assessing the violence of border controls. In fact, when the number of deportations decreases it does not necessarily correspond to a softer regime of migration governance: for instance, in the two-year period 2006-2008, when Italy decreased considerably the number of deportations to Libya, in the meantime a series of measures were adopted for preventing and blocking migrants’ departures from Libya<sup>146</sup>. Nor should we link too quickly deportations and the politics of border spectacle: the first deportations to Libya were acted in the shadows, on the sly, only few videos made by activists bear witness to what happened on the island of Lampedusa. Thus, at that time deportations were functional to guarantee that no political or public debate would have arisen on migration: to keep the island “empty” instead of producing the spectacle of an invasion.

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<sup>145</sup> The last agreement between Morocco and the European Union was signed on the 7th June 2013, after many negotiations taking place in the month of March. The partnership on mobility is included in a broader project on free economic exchange, and it established that, for the first time, Morocco will accept the repatriations from Europe of third-country nationals on its territory.

<sup>146</sup> The first deportations from Italy to Libya were made in 2004 and in the period 2004-2006 more than 3500 have been deported. Instead, the first interception at sea took place in May 2009.

Europeanization of migration politics:

The overwhelming notion of “Europeanization” does not refer specifically to the domain of migration and it addresses rather a much broader spectrum of policies and processes of European integration aimed at building and institutionalizing shared common standards or practices [Delanty, Rumford, 2005; Featherstone, 2003; Radaelli, 2004]. However, issues of migration management are included in the European-ness “mindset package” that structures the rationale of a common political and economic Europe in-the-making: the creation of a common European asylum system and the implementation of a European border regime are two of the main goals constantly circulating in policy discourses and EU statements. The so called Europeanization approach posits and reiterates Europe as a normative frame and a political yardstick against which to assess the tenability of national and non-European policies. Moreover, Europe is assumed as a stable entity rescaling new political and economic architectures. The counter-mapping move that I suggest undertaking in order to destabilize the methodological and political Europeanism underpinning migration analysis [Garelli, Tazzioli, 2013] consists in a) highlighting the relationship between Neighbourhood policies and the Europeanization process and b) turning to the turbulence that migrations and the Arab uprisings triggered in the construction of a Europe-at-a-distance. In fact, as some scholars have noticed, “foreign policies and external relations have been neglected in the debate on Europeanization” [Jones, 2010], overlooking the politics of migration management and economic agreements that do not properly fall under the logics of European integration processes, but rather shape the image of a “scattered Europe”. Neighbourhood policies, Euro-Mediterranean partnerships and bilateral agreements form the spectrum of the “EU-at-a-distance” in the Maghreb region. B-ordering processes at a distance make it hard to locate Europe on the map: where Europe and European borders start cannot be gathered from geopolitical maps, and more than ever, especially at its southern borders, “Europe is not where it is supposed to be” [Walker, 2000]. In addition to that, I would suggest that it becomes just as difficult to understand what exactly “Europe-at-a-distance” is. In fact, it is widely recognized

that Neighbourhoods policies and bilateral agreements in the Mediterranean area do not aim at integrating the Maghreb countries in the European space and it is not even according to a logic of “outsourcing European borders” that these politics can be fully evaluated. For even if the externalization of the European frontiers and of the mechanisms of migration governance has been playing a central role since the early years of the last decade, more complex dynamics are today at stake, especially in the Mediterranean region: the promotion of “best practices” of government in the Maghreb area, Regional Protection Programs of asylum in third countries<sup>147</sup> and protocols on the technical assistance provided to North African states for improving frontier guards, shape a map which illustrates mechanisms for tracing the “borders of the others” as spaces of competence to take in charge. “Apprenticeships of democracy”, less for exporting the European democratic model than for making the southern Mediterranean area self-governing, in order not to burden European finances. And in the logic of Europeanization, borders refer less to lines of control than to spotted (border) zones of governmentality to promote asylum politics in critical regions, human rights standards, and reintegration programs for returned migrants.

**March 2013:** At this stage, I draw the attention to the effects of the “twofold Mediterranean spatial upheaval” – Arab uprisings and practices of migration – to see how they have partially troubled and resisted the logic of “Neighbourhood.” This could seem a paradoxical claim, since the aftermath of the Arab revolution is characterized by the mushrooming of Euro-Mediterranean partnerships, selected mobility programs and bilateral agreements. But what a counter-mapping gaze should try to do is precisely to scrutinize in-between the folds of official cartographies, shifting from the layer of institutional treaties and political discourses to unnoticed practices, struggles and impacts, that are already there, in the map-text, but that do not emerge on the surface. The first line of instability consists in the resistances of Morocco and Tunisia to signing Mobility Partnerships, and it is just around the “migratory clause” that bilateral agreements with the European Union on economic free exchange have reached deadlock. Morocco refuses to implement its “watchdog function” of the European borders, and in particular to accept

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<sup>147</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0388:FIN:EN:PDF>

readmissions of all irregular migrants arriving in Europe via Morocco. In Tunisia, the government is finally endorsing the logic of Europe as gatekeeper, with the argument that only a regulated emigration, channeled into a labor migration partnership, could be advantageous for the newly-born democratic Tunisia. But trade unions and Left movements strongly oppose the migration-development exchange with Europe<sup>148</sup>. Above all, in the wake of the many shipwrecks and migrants' "disappearances" at sea in 2011 and in 2012, the opposition to the visa system is widely percolating. Nevertheless, it cannot pass unnoticed that the only practice of struggle effectively in place which tries to dodge the mechanism of selective departure is the silent-invisible flight – that is, "clandestine emigration". In fact, one of the most troubling factors messing up the "more for more" approach promoted by the EU<sup>149</sup> is presented by the "disordered and silent mobility" enacted by Tunisian migrants. Some of those who migrated to Italy and France in 2011, once they returned to Tunisia, demanded the Iom reinstallation program benefit (from 700 to 3000 euros) and then left again to Europe with money. The last point of "friction" concerns the resistances of Tunisia against the pressure of the European Union to establish a politics of asylum and sign a Regional Protection Program: the dramatic situation of the rejected refugees in Choucha camp produced by Unhcr itself – asylum seekers which Unhcr has denied international protection – has been the occasion seized by the European Union to push the Tunisian government to adopt a politics of asylum. Both Unhcr and EU proposals need to be situated in a broader strategy that tries to delegate the "asylum burden" onto Third Countries and to discharge responsibility over the future of the refugees in Choucha.

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<sup>148</sup> <http://www.leconomistemaghrebin.com/2013/04/13/nous-refusons-que-la-tunisie-joue-le-role-du-garde-cotes-de-leurope/>

<sup>149</sup> The "more for more" approach can be considered one of the main pillars of the European Union's strategy and it basically consists in an "exchange" between economic funding-realization of democracy: in other words, third-countries are pressured to adopt the international standards on democratic reforms in exchange of financial support. And it is particularly claimed in the Neighborhood policies, especially in the programs started after the outbreak of the Arab Uprisings: "Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity" should react to the changing political landscape in the Southern region building on three elements: democratic transformation and institution-building, a stronger partnership with the people, and sustainable and inclusive growth and economic development. The EU offers "more for more" by linking democratic reforms and aid: More economic benefits & increased financial aid for more democratic reforms. The Partnership should be "an incentive-based approach based on more differentiation". [http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/docs/com2011\\_200\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/docs/com2011_200_en.pdf)

*The time of politics:*

Migration policies frame a complex spatiality of the Mediterranean, creating different channels of access to mobility – visa requirements, free movements, mobility partnership, and politics of quota– and consequently producing a forced clandestinity for those who remain out of the selected channels and want to migrate. But along with that spatial governmentality, the migratory regime also sets the “temporal pace” of migrations: on the one hand, fixing periods of time in which migrants could be legalized as migrants and then “translated” into statistics of future expected migrants' flows; and on the other hand imposing times of voids and suspension: when undocumented migrants live as invisible presences or when they wait for an indefinite time to get a permit to stay in a certain space. **April 2011:** Migrants' practices which took place just after the revolutionary uprisings in some way short-circuited, at least for some months, the temporal pace of the migration regime, arriving as non-calculated presences and proving to be in a hurry to move on, refusing to be entrapped in Lampedusa. However, this is only one side of the map, since it cannot be overlooked that in April the Italian government fixed a date-limit to give Tunisian migrants a temporary permit, and in May 2011 the European Union proposed a deep revision of the Schengen Treaty concerning the possibility for European Countries to reintroduce border controls. That said, it holds true that migrants have succeeded in temporarily disrupting the temporal map figured out by governmental politics, while this latter was forced to rearrange itself in the face of the spatial turmoil of migrants' practices. Another way to frame this topic consists in drawing the attention to the temporal narrative that underlies maps and discourses on democracy and migrations in revolutionized spaces. The discourse on the transition of revolutionized Tunisia to democracy and the rule of law is grounded in a temporal logic of “stages” as well as on the logic that democratic practices have to be gradually “learnt”. This logic, I contend, is replicated from a different angle through the stigmatization of “disordered” practices of mobility. The regulated pace of migration politics and the progressive democratic narrative have come along together in the context of the Arab Spring, stressing that the very welcome “Spring” should be able to translate disordered political turmoil into a “by degrees” and ordered learning of democracy. Within such a frame, “out of place” and unexpected

migrations are seen as infringing the “right” pace to get freedom and freedom of movement. Through their practices of movement and spatial insistence, Tunisian migrants misfired for some time both the mechanisms of the selective-and-selected mobility and the logic of a democracy that needed to be progressively learnt: “everything (and) now” was in the end their migration translated in words; everything (and) now because democracy is not a set of economic norms, juridical standards and political values to be apprehended but, instead, for those migrants it was at one with the revolutionary uprisings: in this sense, the shout “*dégage*” against Ben Ali was at the same time a disavowal of the legitimacy of any form of government over lives [Sossi, 2012].

### *Border controls:*

The European agency Frontex is commonly presented, both in critical analyses and in political campaigns, as an exceptional and “secret” agency playing very often at the limits of the European law itself. And the operative autonomy gained by Frontex in the last five years towards the European Union has raised objections from human rights associations and member states, warning the agency of its obligation to respect international and European norms. Nevertheless, it is important to notice is that Frontex was created as an operative unit for putting into place – albeit in a political climate of internal quarrels among member States – an integrated border management (IBM). Therefore, the image of Frontex as the official watchdog of the European Union needs to be complicated in order to not reduce Frontex’s activity to the securitarian bulwark of Europe. The rubric “border controls” does not entirely encapsulate the functions and the actions of Frontex, which has rather been working towards and through a logic of “border stretching”. Focusing on the Frontex Hermes operation<sup>150</sup> deployed between Tunisia and the island of Lampedusa in 2011, I investigate whether the paradigm of the border spectacle is apt for understanding the rationale and the functioning of Frontex. Following Foucault’s methodological suggestions of a “triple displacement” of the institutions [Foucault, 2009] I suggest shifting the attention from an ethnographic analysis of Frontex as an agency with its specific prerogatives to the broader integrated border regime, of which it is a

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<sup>150</sup> [http://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Attachments\\_News/119780.pdf](http://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Attachments_News/119780.pdf)

component part and that includes not only border patrols and the fight against illegal immigration but also the politics of asylum.

**May 2011:** The Hermes joint Frontex operation started on the 20th February 2011, as an immediate response to the sudden arrival on the Italian coasts of thousands of Tunisian migrants. The capacity to quickly set up a response was indeed tested by Frontex in 2007, with the start of Rabit, the Rapid Border Intervention Team deployed in the Aegean Sea to face the Greek “immigration crisis”. If Hermes, like all Frontex operations, was officially supported by many Member States –14 countries – from the interviews I conducted with the Italian military corps of *Guardia di Finanza* it is clear that apart from the two airplanes provided in rotation by the member countries involved in the operation, all the other means were given by Italy which definitively took over the management of the entire operation. In particular, *Guardia di Finanza* patrolled both the territorial waters close to Lampedusa; but the patrolling of *Guardia di Finanza* was conducted not only along the Italian coasts – the national waters going up to 24 miles from the coast – as envisaged by the international maritime law, but also operated in the high sea, reaching the limits of Tunisian territorial waters. According to the Italian authorities the encroachment in Tunisian waters was due to a clause included in the bilateral agreement signed on the 5th April 2011, in which the Tunisian government demanded the technical support of the Italian forces to block migrants leaving from the southern zones of Tunisia – mainly from the cities of Sfax and Zarzis, less monitored than the Northern coasts. Thus, more than a coordinated action resulting in a transnational network, the Hermes operation actually enforced and stretched the Italian spatial domain of competence. Nevertheless, at the same time, the location of Frontex patrols and airplanes, as well as the results of the interviews conducted by Frontex agents with migrants in Lampedusa remained almost secret to national authorities. The reference to this specific episode sheds light on the relative autonomy of Frontex towards the European Union and its member states on the one hand, and on the quarrels among member states, undermining the tenability of a European border regime.

**September 2012:** what it is important to stress, is that the border regime in question is characterized by the overlap of “humanitarian” borders, security borders and techniques of monitoring and control. In fact, the cooperation agreement recently signed by Frontex and Easo (the *European Asylum Support Office*) could be seen at the same time as a long term strategy through which the border regime is re-composed – with a combination of humanitarian and police functions – and a re-codification of that regime responding to “complex migration flows coming from North Africa” [Iom, 2012b]. The cooperation between the two European agencies has produced a substantial blurring of the competences between the two apparently conflicting domains, humanitarian government and border controls, signaling that the former is not the counterpoint or the counterpart of the border regime: rather, the latter continually traces and negotiates its frontiers: in the end, the exclusionary politics of asylum could exist precisely because a regime of illegal mobility (to govern) is posited as the horizon against which all forms of humanitarian protections are dispensed. As the two agencies explicitly argue, “it is essential that the activities of Frontex and EASO are coordinated when it comes to the reception of migrants at the EU’s external borders and to the identification of those in need of international protection” [Easo, Frontex, 2012]. Translated into a non-policy oriented language, what is at stake here is precisely the sorting between migrants to be governed through the politics of asylum and migrants to be governed through illegalization.

The other issue to raise about Frontex concerns what I called above the “stretching of the border”. By that expression I mean two operations that are related each other. Firstly, it consists in the displacement of the border from the geopolitical line, multiplying and disseminating it across different sites – “before” and “after” that line – and through an array of technologies – monitoring systems, pre-emptive identification mechanisms and biometric techniques. Secondly, along with this spatial displacement at stake there is also a temporal and conceptual stretching of the border that radically transforms the meaning and the function of the securitarian approach. Frontex is always presented as one of the main actors that fostered the securitization of migrations and asylum [Leonard, 2011; Neal, 2009] and as the European watchdog, with its team of border guards providing a quite emblematic image of that role. Nevertheless, I suggest that more attention should be paid to the

preemptive risk analysis that Frontex as a research unit produces : the annual risk analysis concerning the “migration threats” at the external borders of the European Union do not implicate that less importance is given to the security issue, rather this indicates its reformulation along different lines: the focus is not simply on operations at the borders and the capacity to respond directly to migrants’ crossing, but also on the production of a real time picture which takes snapshots of what happens at the borders, and simultaneously a map that anticipates future migration flows, providing a spectrum of full-visibility<sup>151</sup>. Therefore, the idea is to produce a real time map for realizing an anticipative risk-based picture of border crossing that, however, is aware of the impossibility of achieving an overall visibility on frontiers.

Ultimately, the statistics of illegal border crossing detected by Frontex reveal the peculiar way in which Frontex mixes up border controls and border crossing: indeed, every year the European agency stresses the annual progress in detecting illegal border crossing at the external frontiers of Europe, in order to emphasize the increased capacity in “capturing” the clandestine presences that enter the European space. But what gets lost in this politics of numbers is the non-necessary correspondence between the number of people who crossed the borders and those actually detected by monitoring systems. Secondly, it seems that what comes first is the ability to exercise an efficient monitor-and-capture activity at the borders against irregular migrants, more than succeeding in reducing the total number crossing; in fact, what remains implicit in the analysis is the non-coincidence between detections at the borders and the number crossing. It goes without saying that, in the end, such a discrepancy cannot be measured, since those migrants’ border crossings that are not detected are necessarily also invisible to any “count”.

The new geographies that Tunisian migrants traced out in wandering across the European space are also part of the unspeakable maps that I tried to figure out. Maps of spaces not only crossed by the heterogeneous rationale of governments and political technologies, but also reshaped and unsettled by migrants’ spatial upheavals. These unspeakable maps definitively undo the idea of a coherent and

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<sup>151</sup> “the Frontex Situation Centre (FSC) was created. FSC has the task of providing a constantly updated picture, as near to real time as possible, of Europe’s external borders and migration situation” (see [http://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/General/Frontex\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/General/Frontex_Brochure.pdf) )

stable migration regime, since, as these counter-map gestures have shown, the existence of a political technology governing migrations is constantly undone by migrants' presence in space. Or better, migrants' practices do not play only as resistances against governmental mechanisms: rather, as their names indicate, mechanisms of capture and border controls try to discipline, filter and bridle practices of movement. In a nutshell, a counter-mapping approach on migration governmentality allows us to take on "resistances as a chemical catalyzer, enabling us to underline power relations" [Foucault, 1982]. To put it in cartographic terms, instead of taking for granted the codes and the epistemic frameworks through we usually look at movements and practices, the counter-mapping gesture consists in showing how migrations (sometimes) play as "discordant" practices of freedom in relation to the existing cartographic regimes of borders (political, social and geographic borders): in other words, they unsettle the tenability and the usefulness of such a map, forcing us to rewrite the coordinates of meanings. In fact, drawing on the distinction made in the fourth chapter between "mapping otherwise" and tracing "another map", it should be noticed that migrants' enacted countermaps do not (fully) situate on the same field of migration governmental maps, trying to subvert them or to shed light on the blind spots. Rather, they are struggles within that given "order of things" but, at the same time, struggles which undo the legitimacy and the existence of the borders of that regime of visibility. "Lived" maps which neither retrace nor recognize the existent cartographic blueprints. In other word, struggles for other maps, which bring into existence movements and practices that in governmental maps are not silenced or invisible but, more radically, are not expected to be there. In some way, through their uneven geographies, Tunisian migrants broke up the spread narrative on the Mediterranean as a space of free circulation –showing the deep asymmetry between the two shores -, and at the same time they enacted a not-calculated freedom, crippling for some moments the mechanisms of selected mobility. And it is just as "unspeakable", namely not easily translatable and hearable through the ordinary political and cartographic codes, that these counter-maps could put into place new geographies. "Unspeakable" as there is something which always resists being translated and mapped.

## CONCLUSIONS:

30<sup>th</sup> July 2013: this work was being written while the “twofold spatial upheaval”– migrations and the Arab Uprisings – was underway in the Mediterranean. The date of these conclusions also marks two years and half since the outbreak of the Tunisian revolution. Writing in the turmoil of these events imposes the limit of not being able to envisage the possible future developments of events underway, and of not being at sufficient distance to take stock of these spatial reshaping. Nevertheless, this work has tried to come to grips with the contingency of the present context and its changing conditions, resisting the temptation to judge on the failures or successes of those revolutionary movements. The choice to date the snapshots corresponds to relevant issues/transformations or to moments of rupture that took place at the times of the Tunisian twofold upheaval, both on the southern shore of the Mediterranean and on the northern shore as its “bank-effects” [chapter 2]. In a similar manner, dating the conclusions of this work on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2013, I do not intend to provide a general overview or retrospective gaze tracing the trajectory of the different events that I took into account in this work. Rather, I choose a moment to situate the gaze into the present, since the conclusion of this work does not correspond to the completion of that turmoil– and also because I refuse to embrace the discourse of a postrevolutionary stage [chapter 3], since the Tunisian uprisings neither started nor ended with the fall of Ben Ali. Instead, what can be noticed at this point is the considerable difficulty in finding the traces of those spatial upheavals two and a half years later. Most of the “Libyan”<sup>152</sup> and Tunisian migrants are scattered across the European territory or have come back, while in Tunisia the ongoing political instability has transformed the nature of the conflict into more diffused local fights that bring to the fore the deep distrust against any form of representative politics, as

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<sup>152</sup> I quote the term Libyan because actually migrants coming to Italy from Libya after the outbreak of the war were not Libyans but sub-saharan migrant workers. However, they were labelled as Libyans by Italian authorities as “non-Tunisians”: in fact, people coming from Libya followed a different institutional path, since all of them claimed asylum. Moreover, in the public debate the distinction between Tunisians and non-Tunisians also corresponded to a moral partition between “illegal” migrants and “vulnerable” subjects.

the general strikes and “exiles” confirm.<sup>153</sup> In the wake of this, rather than drawing general conclusions about these multiple and different spatial upheavals, I pinpoint some of the most relevant issues raised in the previous chapters that require being developed or that open the ground for further interrogations. What comes out is a texture, and not a narrative, that attempts to retrace and follow up the main stakes that those spatial upheavals generated, highlighted or exploded.

### **Politics of perceptibility:**

In this work I have mobilized a countermapping gaze on migration governmentality also as a non-cartographic practice, positing it as an analytical posture that unpacks and unsettles governmental mechanisms and the regime of truth of migration governance [chapter 5]. The shift to a non-cartographic gaze allows us to see the limits both of the politics of representation and of the “cartographic anxiety” that underlies the activity of mapping. Beyond this point, a salient issue coming out of this countermapping gaze [chapters 4 and 5] concerns the differences between a politics of visibility and a politics of perceptibility. In order to explain this point I start from the following consideration: all counter-mapping practices relate to a visual culture approach that hinges on the power of images in producing political spaces and boundaries, trying to strategically overturn the directions of power over knowledge and image production [Mirzoeff, 2011]. Many of these approaches explicitly draw on Jacques Rancière’s thesis on the disruption of the thresholds of visibility in order to make visible phenomena, practices and subjects that remain “out of the spotlight” and “off the map”. In this way, the primacy of the visible, and furthermore the struggle over (in)visibility, are posited as the main axes through which political subjectivities could be reconfigured [chapter 1]. In this regard, the question of how to disrupt thresholds of what is tolerated and what is visible remains narrowed to a politics of visibility: to put it differently, that visual gesture results in

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<sup>153</sup> For instance, in 2012 many general strikes took place in Tunisian towns. One of the most important was in the city of Siliana, the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2012, when the residents decided to start a strike to protest against the high percentage of unemployed and the unequal distribution of economic investment between the inner regions of Tunisia and the regions of the coast. The residents also left the city, as a kind of symbolic exodus, against the lack of attention and investment on the part of the government. Another significant protest happened in the village of El-Redeyef, in December 2012: also in that case the residents opted for a symbolic exodus toward Algeria against their exclusion from the governmental programs of employment. A similar movement took place in the city of Ghardimaou in January 2013.

the flattening of the politics of perceptibility within the frame of the visible. The problem that this move entails consists in taking for granted that the disruption of the codes and of thresholds of visibility would also engender a transformation of the thresholds of perceptibility at large, as well as a political transformation of the regime of truth. In fact, if it is indisputable that the growing production of images and mapping on migrations has brought to the surface new fields of visibility, at the same time the effects of making visible need to be deeply interrogated. In other words, what are the consequences and the outcomes of a struggle over visibility aimed at disturbing the thresholds of what is accepted and perceived? The regime of perceptibility encompasses all the ways through which “noisy” or silent practices –in our case, migrants’ movements and migrant struggles– become part of our political horizon, without necessarily being visible, that is appearing on the public scene. More than bringing out into the existing political space these noisy or silent movements, we should pay attention to the way in which they upset such a space. The second reason is that the battle over visibility and the production of new margins of visibility concerning migration has in part reiterated the posture of the spectator or of the claimant subject. Shedding light on the “silences” or on the “shadow zones” of the maps of power is politically oriented to activities of litigation against the violation of human rights and international law, thus defining in advance the borders and the terms of political action. In this way, the thresholds of acceptability of power are not really disturbed, since the stake becomes to provide a plan of visibility that accounts for practices and subjects *off the map* or to highlight elements and facts necessary to prove the violations of power [chapters 1 and 4]. The practice of “mapping otherwise” is neither a condition nor a guarantee for shaking the thresholds of what is acceptable or not; instead, a politics of perceptibility gestures towards a transformation in the practical and critical attitude in the face of power. Thirdly, this work has questioned the quite immediate nexus mobilized between politics of visibility and the vocabulary of political recognition: the appearance of uncounted subjects on the scene [Athanasau, Butler, 2013; Isin, 2002, 2006, 2012; Rancière, 2001, 2004a] is envisaged as a demand for recognition staged by claimant subjects - although it’s not seen in terms of integration but as an action that “stretches” and challenges the borders of the political space. Maybe a further

comparison should be made between two angles from which to look at the effects of power on subjectivities, or two forms of being affected by power: anesthetization and acceptability. Both these effects are critical objects of a politics which aims to disrupt the thresholds of perceptibility and that cannot be initiated by simply unfolding a plan of visibility about the functioning of power. Thus, migration is a strugglefield in which the issue of the regimes of visibility emerges in a prominent way, since undocumented migrants very often situate *off the map* –out of the borders of citizenship, out of the spotlight of civil society [chapter 1]. At the same time, as far as “unauthorized” migrations are concerned, the battle over visibility and perceptibility partially overlap: the disruption of the thresholds of acceptability of mechanisms of capture and detention tends to articulate with the task of “making visible” –making visible the violations of human rights, making visible migrants’ presence, making visible the arbitrariness of detention and migrants’ conditions etc. To put it bluntly, it is not a question of pushing for “imperceptible” struggles or visible claims [Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos, 2008]. What a counter-mapping gaze suggests is to complicate the issues around the regime of visibility, refusing to tackle it through a binary approach – visibility/invisibility or perceptibility/imperceptibility –instead investigating in detail, from time to time, the stakes over (in)visibility and mapping, the complex game between strategies of invisibility and visibility.

### **Migrant geographies: vanishing maps?**

This work has taken into account different practices –cartographic practices, political campaigns, analytical postures – for tracing “another map” of the Mediterranean space as the result of the spatial upheavals produced by migrants and the Arab Uprisings. However, all these heterogeneous counter-mapping approaches correspond to strategic uses of the same knowledges and techniques at play in the governmental “mapping” on migrations. Recalling Foucault’s reflection on the insurrection of subjugated knowledges, it could be stated that all those counter-mapping practices consist of political or analytical devices internal to the same regime of visibility they try to challenge through counter-acts. Nevertheless, in order to really unsettle the internal coherence of the governmental regime of truth and to break the mainstream narrative on migrations, we should take the side of another kind of “subjugated

knowledges": "a series of knowledges that have been disqualified as non-conceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of scientificity" [Foucault, 2003, p.7]. This means shifting from the representative order of maps to migrants' enacted geographies, namely to the "invented geographies" that migrants perform, both as spatial imaginary and spatial practices [chapters 2 and 5]. Tunisian migrants have imagined and practiced their erratic and uneven mobility, displacing the spatial order of the Mediterranean and its implicit directionalities –the northern/southern shore "opposite relation", that sees migrants going northward and democracy exported southward. Moreover, through their practices of movement, they also envisaged the European space as if it were at hand, in contrast with the distance and the asymmetric mobility between the two shores of the Mediterranean that migration policies put into place: the fact of choosing where to go once they arrived in Europe, refusing to stay in Italy and showing a considerable ability to move around despite their unauthorised condition, is the most tangible mark of how they enacted a different map from the governmental cartographies. The imaginary of Europe that Tunisian migrants who left during the revolutionary uprisings traced out, is framed by "times of journeys" and strategies of migration.<sup>154</sup> Some of them were blocked in rail stations or moved by local trains, others squatted buildings and then were evicted; some Tunisians arrived in Belgium or in the Netherlands from Lampedusa and then were pushed back to Italy; sometimes they moved very quickly, while other times they were forced into indefinite rests; for those who had contacts in France, Paris was close, as was Sicily, while on the contrary the distance between Rome and Bologna could be significant for those who were arrested on the train. What comes out is a European geography reconfigured by the effective ways and possibilities of acting in space: migrants' erratic presence in the European space and the stories of the others who migrated before them, contribute to shape a fragmented "Europe in migration" whose borders and distances reflect the effective time of migrants' moving and staying [chapter 2]. The "democratic spatial orientation" of the Mediterranean has been definitively shaken by Tunisian migrants who arrived in Europe not to discover democracy but as the "sons of the Tunisian revolutions";

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moreover, they did not demand protection, but claimed the right to practice freedom of movement as an essential component of the same democracy they had won and that Europeans looked on as the “awakening” of the Arab world [chapter 3]. However, Mediterranean spatiality was further remapped by migrants in the wake of the European economic crisis, with many Tunisian citizens moving to the Gulf States or to Libya to find a job. “Europe is no longer a dreamland; you are getting poorer than us” is a common refrain that you can hear in Tunisia, two and a half years after the outbreak of the revolution. The erratic migrations of Tunisians enacted “other maps” of the European space, stretching distances and borders through their “pace” made of movements and rests. And the relevance of cities and places was redefined by their knowledge and imaginary of those spaces, as well as by the possibility to “make use” of them. In other words, European geographic landmarks were positioned by migrants according to the contact they had or the life projects they were able to realize there: Parc de la Villette in Paris as a place very well-known by Tunisians for ages, Norway as a country where to go unnoticed, Switzerland as a State to apply to for asylum, the occupations in Padua, Paris and Marseille as places to find shelter.

However, two and a half years after the starting of the “twofold spatial upheaval” [see Introduction] what needs to be questioned is the supposed vanishing character of migrants’ maps, which basically depends on the elusiveness and the “irregularity” of Tunisian migrants’ presence in the European space. In some way, the multiple cartographies of Europe performed by migrants resemble the elusive pace of migrants [chapter 2 and 5]: putting them into resonance with migration governmental maps, they show the hindrances and the impacts produced by borders on migrants’ movements. But at the same time, migration’s uneven maps emerge from the cunning strategies through which migrants dodge the “pace of mobility” set by migration policies. Migrants’ maps break up the consistency of Europe as a space with one single temporality of movements and one conception of space, cracking it as “an object constituted discursively” [Chakrabarty, 2000] and through cartographic imagination [Sakai, 1998]. Following this point, it could be argued that migrations bring out the fundamentally fragmented and composite dimension of Europe, in contrast with the supposed bounded and self-outstanding political community of the

nation [Anderson, 1990]<sup>155</sup>: in other words, the enacted uneven geographies of migrants in Europe show that the “imagined Europe” is a protean and many-sided cartography, formed of heterogeneous –and conflicting – narratives.

That said, let’s now go back to the vanishing character that I mentioned above: in fact, more than two years after Tunisian migrants’ spatial upheavals, we should investigate what “traces” still remain and how those maps inscribed some new languages of struggle that have not been (fully) recuperated by governmental cartographies. Recalling the question that I raised in the Introduction: beyond temporarily breaking some mechanisms of capture, did migrants’ enacted maps put into place “discordant” political practices that do not reproduce what is already there? This is a crucial question, since as far as migrants’ spatial upheavals are concerned, what seems to emerge two years after is precisely the difficulty of finding some “traces” of the collective struggles they organized and of the disorder they generated in the political geometries of the European space of free circulation. Related to this point, I would say that the importance to rethink the politics of (in)visibility [see chapters 4 and 5] that sustains migration governmentality, depends also on the elusiveness of migrants’ presence in space and on the “political scene” [see chapter 1]. Going to the most conflicting sites of the “Tunisian revolution in Europe” two and a half years later, what I realized is the “disappearing” of the most important political markers of their presence, such as political collectives<sup>156</sup> or occupations of buildings in European towns. In Paris, Milan, Rome, Brussels and Marseille, places where Tunisian migrants stayed for months, few traces remain of their spatial upheavals. In fact many have gone back to Tunisia, while those who remained on the northern shore are scattered all over the European space. However, the point here is not to romanticize the elusive and vanishing dimension of the

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<sup>155</sup> On this point, see ParthaChatterjee and his criticism of Benedict Anderson’s theory of nationalism as an imagined community: in fact, according to Chatterjee, if on the one hand Anderson “refuses to define a nation by a set of external and abstract criteria”, on the other he conceives of imagined communities in terms of “modular character” of culture [Chatterjee, 1986, pp. 19-22]. Also TalalAsad, in *Formations of the Secular*, questions Anderson’s idea of nation as “imagined community” that is grounded in homogeneous time [Asad, 2003, p.2].

<sup>156</sup> In this regard, a significant case is the *Collective of the Tunisian migrants from Lampedusa in Paris*, as they called themselves. In Paris two years later, it was not possible to find some of the people involved in the collective, since most of them came back to Tunisia, and others now live in the peripheral neighbourhood of Paris –many in squats in the area of Porte de la Chapelle– but they do not identify themselves anymore with that collective.

migrants' movements that I took into account in this work. Rather, this issue should be posed in a problematic way, at least from the standpoint of a militant research [see Introduction], which focuses on the interruptions of power mechanisms produced by migrants and on the possibility of envisaging “other maps” and alternative common vocabularies of struggles that do not ground on nation-based scripts. All these things considered, I suggest shifting the attention from the persistence in space of traces left by migrants' upheavals to the circulation of languages and practices across different spaces, and to what I call the deferred bounce-effects of struggles. Despite the short duration of many migrant struggles and the uneven strategies of (in)visibility they perform, if we turn to the resonances of those practices as deferred in space and in time, a quite different landscape emerges. This could be formulated in two questions: how did some claims and modalities of struggle circulate? And how did some languages disseminate in other sites? These interrogations would require further development of this research. However, just to make a concrete example of what I mean when speaking of the resonance of migrant struggles despite their local elusiveness, I mention the multiple sites of struggles of refugees in Paris and in Germany. Those refugees fled Libya in 2011 and all of them arrived in Italy where they were “managed” through the “North Africa Emergency” system [chapter 2]. In Italy, we actually find that two years later there is not an organized movement of “Libyan” refugees in Italy, and that most of them were scattered across Europe. Instead, focusing on Germany and France we realize that many decided to leave Italy despite the temporary permit they got, claiming the right to move freely across Europe. Moreover, some political episodes have been recalled to organize other struggles: the Collective “Lampedusa in Hamburg” formed by refugees coming from Libya, deliberately assumed that name recalling the experience of the “Collective of Tunisians from Lampedusa in Paris” that now does not exist anymore, pushing forward a common denominator (Lampedusa) that for both the collectives was a significant border-post of their journey. Or, as in the case of the rejected refugees in Choucha, their demand that “all of us fled from Libya, and so the international protection must be granted to every one of us”, in some way has posited, once and for all, the present untenability of the principles of the Geneva Convention, opening up at the same time new political claims.

### **Political subjectivities:**

A gaze on migrations that does not flatten “noisy practices” and “discordant practices of freedom” [chapters 2 and 4] into pre-existing political categories or radical democracy’s framework could see the exclusionary gesture of tracing the boundaries of the “political”: the partition between political and non-political languages results in a huge array of practices remaining unheard under the thresholds of perceptibility. Paying attention to the “noise” of migrant struggles, and to the ways in which they played as a troubling factor for “ordered mobility”, it becomes possible to see how “discordant” practices of freedom crack the representative dimension of the political. To put it differently, (some) migrant struggles, such as those that I have described [chapters 3 and 4] destabilize the neutralizing signifier of “political subjectivity”, forcing it to account for practices that cannot be “accommodated” into the tempo and the exclusionary boundaries of what is established as “political”. However, this does not mean to oppose a “politics of translation” of heterogeneous movements and struggles for crafting a shared language. Rather, the point is to resist that the codes and the coordinates of translation are fixed in advance, and that they belong to the normative script of “citizenship-and-representation” which “makes the law” to discordant practices of freedom.

From this standpoint, as Papadopoulos and Tsianos nicely capture, “one cannot build liberal democracies with migration [...] It’s impossible to adapt migration to our own political target be it right, left, liberal or radical left” [Papadopoulos, Tsianos, 2013, p. 187]. Therefore, disengaging from a governmental point of view on migrations [chapter 1] involves, first if all, to resist attributing in advance goals and meaning to the struggles: assuming migration as a vantage point means not taking for granted the political space of address in which migrant struggles are situated. But the above considerations also lead to challenging an abstract model of political subjectivity that one could postulate as a yardstick of (migration) practices: drawing on Foucault, we should not take any given subject as a starting point of the analysis, and should investigate rather its transformations and how it comes out of conflicting strugglefields of governmentality. Indeed, one of the recurring themes of

this work is that a critical gaze on the government of migration should challenge the supposed solidity of the migration regime, analysing its instabilities and transformations, and at the same time questioning the forms of subjectivity shaped and captured by that regime. Recalling the quote above, it could be argued that it is not from the standpoint of liberal democracies or from a space of citizenship already-there that one could grasp the stakes of migrants' practices and their opening of new political possibilities. Therefore, following this argument, migrants cannot be framed as the new figures of citizenship in crisis, the subjects "at the borders" who can reinvigorate the democratic pact [chapters 1 and 3]. Instead of asking what subject-position migrants fit into, by reversing the angle we could explore which subjectivities are shaped and produced by certain political technologies, and how in turn they muddle, upset and crack its functioning.

Focusing on migrations to see how governmentality and sovereignty work and combine makes it possible to see that it is not in the terms of binary relations that the strugglefield of powers/resistances can be framed: the considerations on the uneven regime of (in)visibility [chapters 4 and 5] and on the multiplication of migration profiles [chapters 1 and 3] reveal that the stake is not to endorse one of the two poles of the battle – visibility vs. invisibility and imperceptible movements, identity established by power vs. autonomous subjectivity. Rather, the issue is to play within and along the subtle ambivalences of processes of subjectivation through which practices of mobility are translated into migrations. The ambivalent ways in which migrants grapple with mobility profiles and identities, show that a critical analysis should retrace the emergence of a certain political and conceptual field of government, and how local tactical elements are situated in broader strategies. A concrete example comes from the multiplication of "mobility profiles" through which migration governance partitions migrants, hampering in this way any possible unity of struggle. The importance of pluralizing the catchword of migration [chapter 1] is not in itself a political defeat to the migration regime; instead, it depends on the very logic upon which migration governmentality is predicated, since the "migration crisis" has triggered a multiplication of migration profiles. At the same time, migrants and asylum seekers who got muddled in the mechanism of partitioning [chapter 3] shed light on the inadequacy of migration categories in encompassing all

forms of mobility, in response to which migration policies invented the blurred label of “mixed migration”. However, in relation to this point, it is important to recognize that the different “migrant conditions” do not actually resolve into the juridical status and the mobility profiles through which migrants are fixed to an identity. In fact, juridical categories, even though characterized by a multiplicity of status, are ultimately grounded on binary divisions (for instance, between asylum seekers and migrants) which are the condition for all the others. Instead, the juridical and epistemic regime of categorization needs to be confronted and articulated within the regime of labour. What emerges is firstly a more complex picture, in which the supposed binary distinctions and well defined subjectivities are superseded by a more blurred cleavage of inclusion through exploitation of (some) migrants in the labour economy. Secondly, there is a discrepancy between migrants’ identities shaped by juridical categories and migrants grappling with power relations in the domain of labour. Therefore, an exclusive focus on the epistemic and juridical proliferation of migration profiles does not make it clear how mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion—and most of all, of “exclusion through inclusion” [De Genova, 2013a]—which are at stake beyond the smooth space of subject-positions depicted by governmental agencies and juridical knowledge work. Talking about “migration strugglefield” for designating the complex articulation between different layers and mechanisms of power-resistance [see chapter 1], could be seen as a reformulation of Marx’s notion of capital as a social relation: the migrant condition is always “slippery”, since it is involved in a field of changing relations of power.

### **The refusal to stay in one’s own place: migrants’ upheavals in postcolonial spaces**

Resistances played by refugees and their strategic “good stories” [chapter 1]; Tunisian migrants who refused to play along with the stages of the democratic transition and with the pace of migration policies and enacted their freedom of movement, pushing on the northern shore of the Mediterranean the impact of the Arab Uprisings [chapter 2]; rejected refugees at Choucha camp that undermined the principles of the politics of asylum, demanding protection as all having escaped from Libya and from a war started by Western countries [chapter 3]. These three episodes

confront us with migrants' refusal to stay in their expected place, namely the place established by the articulation of migration policies and economic factors. However, "place" does not stand here simply for being "fixed in space": rather, it indicates the times and the conditions at which migrants are supposed to move and stay. In particular, in the case of the Tunisian migrants, such a refusal was actualized through their unexpected presence on the European soil, troubling the narrative of freedom and democracy conquered through progressive steps. As Fanon remarked, the refusal to stay in one's own place, conceived both in a spatial and in a social sense, is one of the main forms of resistance through which the colonized unsettled the colonial order [Fanon, 2007]. And this issue is a recurring motif in Fanon's work, through which is possible to read his analyses into a postcolonial context of transnational mobility, and multiplication of borders [see chapter 1]. In a nutshell, it provides us with a lens to grasp the "intractability" of the migrant struggles that I examined in this work if confronted with the codes of representation and citizenship. In fact, what characterizes these movements is, I suggest, the way in which they interrupted or misfired for some time the pace of the politics of mobility; not so much by making claims but enacting practices of freedom that exceeded the "tractability" and governability of their conducts by migration policies.

### **Multiple modernities and the history of the present:**

The "travelled" and uneven maps of Europe enacted by Tunisian migrants, and the political uprisings on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, unsettled the "methodological Europeanism" which underpins both Migration Studies and the analyses of the Arab Spring [see Introduction]. In fact, Migration Studies tend to posit Europe as the master signifier and the spatial referent of migrations, postulating a strong desirability of that space from the migrants' standpoint. Similarly, political analyses on the Arab revolutions read those events in the light of the Western "road to democracy", that is to say by iterating the script of secularization and democratization in the Arab countries according to the logic of the "not yet", overlooking the *différend* of political practices taking place on the southern shore. By "methodological Europeanism" I mean the assumption of Europe as a politically stable counterfoil through which to read both the direction of migrations and political claims [see Introduction]. From this perspective, the growing centrality

gained in the political debate by the “Euro-Mediterranean” signifier – as a space of free exchange and free mobility – contributed to “tame” those upheavals, encoding them into a *Euro*-led narrative: indeed, through the cultural and geographical medium of the Mediterranean, the spatial upheavals and the “disorders” triggered by migrants’ movements and political uprisings, were rebalanced into that supposed shared space with a prevalent European matrix, as the designation of “Euro-Mediterranean” suggests. In this way the “silent referent” of Europe, or better of “methodological Europeanism” is surreptitiously reintroduced through the Euro-Mediterranean frame.

In this regard, the Foucaultian perspective of a history of “our” present comes to be strongly complicated in the face of “twofold spatial upheaval” [chapter 1]. In fact, addressing both migrants’ practices and the political turmoil that burst on the southern shore, it becomes necessary to pluralize the present in question, paying attention to the different ways of practicing the space and the asymmetries (of subject positions and mobility conditions ) that carve out the space of free circulation. Migrants’ geographies, by tracing “another map” of Europe, bring out the encrusting of multiple tempos within the same space; or better, they unsettle the very idea of a unique space in which people move or stay in different ways. Therefore, a history of the present requires at the same time a pluralisation of its terms – “histories” and “present(s)” – and in turn, such a gesture cracks the consistency of a given homogeneous space to investigate. The second displacement concerns the spatial coordinates we take for granted: the pronoun “our” presupposed in many analyses that interrogate the bank-effects of the Arab revolutions (what impact did they produce on “our space”?) comes to be deeply questioned [chapter 1 and 3]. Does it refer to a contemporaneity that encompasses many spaces but keeps alive the blueprint of European political modernity? Or rather does it result from the “complication” of such a spatial/temporal baseline – through the resonance of multiple events? I suggest that it concerns the refusal to immediately operate the translation of political practices and subjects’ claims into the blurred counterfoil of Europe, that is to say the categories of “political modernity”. A countermapping gaze on the “Tunisian upheaval in Europe” [see chapter 2], unsettles the possibility of writing a history of the present without rethinking the terms and the coordinates

through which the spaces of the present are investigated. This doesn't mean only changing our own location – moving from one shore to the other –but “complicating the grid” and getting rid of the baseline of political modernity for assessing the impacts of spatial and political turbulences.

**Migration crisis, crisis as bordering:**

The conquest of democracy in the Arab countries is the main motif of the narrative through which the Arab Uprisings were narrated from the northern shore of the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, the paradigm of the road to democracy has been quickly reversed into the framework of the “crisis” [chapter 3]. In particular, migrations worked as a kind of magic tenet through which democracy was soon translated into political instability across the Mediterranean: migration threatening the order and the temporality of the politics of mobility, migration disturbing the progressive building of democracy, migration as an economic burden for Europe. Migration as a “troubling factor” was associated with the overwhelming catchword of the “crisis” that the Libyan conflict generated, spreading far beyond Libyan borders and designating multiple sites of “crises”: the humanitarian crisis of refugees who fled Libya, the crisis of migration governmentality in partitioning migrants, the crisis of democracy... What I would like to add to this picture, is the functioning of “crisis” –conceived both as a discourse and as set of governmental strategies – as a re-bordering technology, that is as a political technology retracing the lines and the functions of borders. The production of new spatial economies and economic spaces in revolutionized Tunisia, but also on the northern shore of the Mediterranean (see for instance the spatial and economic transformations produced by the North Africa Emergency Program in Italy) is intertwined with the management of “multiple-crises”. It is not simply that in the name of the crisis the security-humanitarian assemblage is reworked and fostered; rather, the question is how the government of migrations and the script of the crisis are imbricated and the government of the multiple-crisis works as a re-bordering mechanism. Conceiving the crisis as a bordering technique refers to a twofold meaning. On the one hand, the politics of “migration (in) crisis” mobilized in the aftermath of the Libyan conflict has in part retraced the borders and the terms of migration governmentality, and especially of the politics of asylum. On the other hand, the governmentality of “migration (in)

crisis” is characterized by the persistence of the horizon of the crisis: the issue does not seem to be how to step out of the crisis, but rather how to revise the politics of mobility, taking the crisis as its baseline. Therefore, the “crisis” could be seen as one of the main linchpins through which governmental strategies are reassembled and reframed. “Migration crisis” appears as a longstanding and complex phenomenon to govern that, unlike the logic of emergency, does not centre primarily on exceptional measures but tends to accelerate processes of power’s reconfiguration already underway [chapters 1 and 3]: Regional Protection Programs, the implementation of digital techniques of identification, the security-humanitarian nexus, the politics of rescue at sea...

However, if one stops here the analysis it could appear a sort of circular dynamic between power-resistances at play, according to which migration policies reassess their strategies in the light of political transformations and migration turbulence. Instead, it is precisely that supposed circular mechanism that, as I tried to show in this work, needs to be challenged, highlighting the disconnections and the breaking points that migration produces inside. In this regard, in the third chapter I analysed how practices of migration do not only resist the script of the crisis but also produce it, making governmental partitioning spin freely and forcing power to rearrange its strategy as a strategy of crisis.

### **Reoriented migrations:**

This final focus more points to further developments of this analysis of the “twofold spatial upheaval”, undertaking a counter-mapping move. It grounds on the critique of the “methodological Europeanism” that characterizes both Migration Studies and our political imaginary. The other source of this focus draws from “crisis as a rebordering mechanism” from the idea that in order to grasp the political effects of the heterogeneous spatial upheavals, it is necessary to intersect the impact of the economic crisis with revolutionary uprisings. Migrations are situated within this framework in a two related ways. Their reorientation in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings and due to the economic backlash is a useful lens to scrutinize the ways in which revolutionary uprisings and the crisis combine. And, simultaneously, such a reorientation is a visible marker of the effects of that articulation and it shows us the

increasing provincialization of Europe as a space of immigration and as the “sovereign subject of all histories” [Chakrabarty, 2000; see also Chen, 2010]. In this regard, I bring the attention to the Tunisian revolutionized space conceived here as a “migration cluster” [see Chapter 3]: far from being exclusively a country of emigration towards Europe, migration patterns that increased after the outbreak of the revolution tell us another story. Firstly, Tunisia is historically a crossroads of different forms of migrations - migrant workers, asylum seekers and transit migration- coming from other Maghreb Countries, from Libya or from the sub-Saharan region. Secondly, Tunisians themselves historically migrated to France (the big waves started in the Sixties) to Italy, but also to Libya (especially during the Seventies at the time of the oil economic crisis) and to the Gulf States. With the outbreak of the revolution and with the growing economic crisis that is affecting Europe, this scenario of multi-directional migration has gained more consistency: the Libyan war caused the arrival of hundreds of thousands of third-country nationals like never before and the temporary return of many Tunisians working in Libya. But the end of the conflict and the intensification of the rate of unemployment in Tunisia and in Europe made more than 40% of the Tunisian workers coming back to Libya unemployed, while 70% of the active Tunisian population is ready to leave to Libya to find a job. In the meantime, the choice of the Tunisian government to turn to a closer economic and political cooperation with the Gulf States, and especially with Qatar, favoured the signing of bilateral agreements for official quotas of Tunisian labour migrations. Indeed, in the interviews I conducted in summer 2012 in the cities of Sfax, Gabes and Tunis with unskilled Tunisian workers, what clearly emerged is the double salary that Tunisians are expected to get in Libya or in Qatar in comparison to the Tunisian average. This doesn’t mean that the “desirability” of the European space is over: Tunisian citizens and migrants working in Libya are still arriving on the Italian coasts, despite the critical economic situation; and Europe has multiplied in number the programs of selected mobility, promoting in particular student mobility, although the negotiations with Tunisia encountered many resistances on the Tunisian part. The reorientation of migrations does not concern only Tunisians or people from other African countries. In fact, the divide between the northern and the southern shore of the Mediterranean has been downsized due to

Tunisian migrants who “burned every kind of cultural, spatial and political distance between the two continents” [Sossi, 2013c]; but also for the escalation of the economic crisis that cracked the European space between the southern countries of Europe and the others. This is not to say that Tunisia has become a prosperous economy: on the contrary, the economic backlash is at once one of the primary reasons for the outbreak of the revolution and one of the main problems that Tunisia is facing today, as is proven by the ongoing social unrest which has been triggered by the huge disparity in wealth between the inner zones and the regions on the coast. However, the liberalization of the market and cheap labour costs are pushing many European industries to externalise their production. The result of that is a new orientation of migrations that would seem quite unexpected to the eyes of European readers: young unemployed Italians, some of them also with a university degree, have chosen to migrate to Tunis to work in call-centres or as technicians for 600 or 800 dinars per month, that is 400 euros, but while profiting from the low cost of life in Tunisia.

The articulation between the economic crisis and the “twofold spatial upheaval” forces us to reiterate the question - raised in the first chapter - “who is a migrant, here and now?”, and to critically interrogate how some practices of mobility are seen as practices of freedom and others “translated” as “migration”. The imbrication and the interferences between migrants’ upheavals and the Arab Uprisings suggest that for undoing the “discipline effect” on migrations – namely, the becoming discipline of migration as object of governmental knowledge – a militant research should take on migration as a strugglefield. This means to challenge, rework and unravel the boundaries of migration as a self-standing field of research. In fact, on the one hand migrant struggles are enmeshed and articulated with other sites of conflict which “exceed” the migrant’s condition and identity; and on the other hand it should be investigated how they open up new claims, and languages that could be appropriated and played into broader political practices which are not exclusively of “migrants”.

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