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**THINKING
OUTSIDE THE BORDER**

To the unknown migrant

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Introduction

In various forms and expressions, mobility is an inherent characteristic of human lives. However, as a pervasive and complex phenomenon, it can be challenging to understand its characteristics, motivations, social actors involved and implications. The various narratives around mobility disseminated in public discourse and the media make it difficult to approach this social fact as such, free from often erroneous and biased commentary and interpretation. Moreover, research studies, essential in understanding different aspects of the phenomenon and suggesting directions for political action, are not always accessible to the general public: their contents are concealed by complex discourses woven in precise technical terminology. The event organized at Isola - La Cantine Littéraire, from which this booklet takes its cue, was conceived based on these considerations, emphasizing the importance of direct experience and academic research in understanding migration.

With Anna, my colleague at the University of Neuchâtel, I have often reflected on the representation of the migrant associated too often with a negative narrative, taking on securitarian overtones and in which the idea of a crisis of migration predominates. Such discourses often do not draw on direct experiences, fundamental to understand the concrete aspects of the phenomenon and, perhaps, dispel some myths. Hence, we believe, there is a clear need to engage with people experiencing the migration issue on the front lines. As a result of these reflections, Anna contacted Simone Gavazzi, a former colleague at Maastricht University, so that he could share and tell us about his experience on board the Geo Barents - ship of Doctors without Borders.

This proposal was transformed into an event with the support of Guido Aloia, owner of Isola, a literary café in Paris where voices find space and socially relevant events materialize. In addition, we invited illustrator Arianna Sisani who with her ability and creativity translated the content of Simone's dialogue with Anna and the audience into beautiful drawings. The financial and organizational support of nccr on the move, a migration research institute based in Neuchâtel and where both me and Anna conduct research, was crucial to the success of this event. The event took place on November 26, 2023. Many people followed the event in person and online - through our social media platforms - and showed a genuine interest in the topic. Through their questions and curiosity, the audience contributed to a rich and spontaneous dialogue.

The primary objective of this initiative stemmed from our need to explain in clear and straightforward terms the crucial elements and steps that determine migration routes travelled in the central Mediterranean area. The booklet was created to document the discussion at the event, share its content with a broader audience, and initiate a knowledge transfer project. This project aims to provide clear and straightforward information concerning migration to a non-academic audience by sharing precise details about places, people, measures, facts, and terminologies associated with migration.

NGOs working on these peculiar borders and areas of the Mediterranean, search, rescue, and care for people abandoned at sea. Migrants and NGOs have been the subject of controversy, framed in different ways, narrated through words that come from distant realities and tend to circumscribe the narrative within the limits of crime and victimhood. Lastly, the booklet also sheds light on the tendency of the European Union and its member states located in the central Mediterranean to externalize their borders without taking into account the implications of these measures for the human rights of people on the move.

Overall, we consider this booklet the result of a collaborative effort. It incorporates the expertise of a researcher, the firsthand experiences shared by Simone, and the questions and reflections of the audience at the event organised

last november. The outcome is a comprehensive 'dictionary' that sheds light on different aspects of mobility and migration, the people involved, and in the specific case of the central Mediterranean region, by presenting more common and specific terms, measures, and people that we meet in this context.

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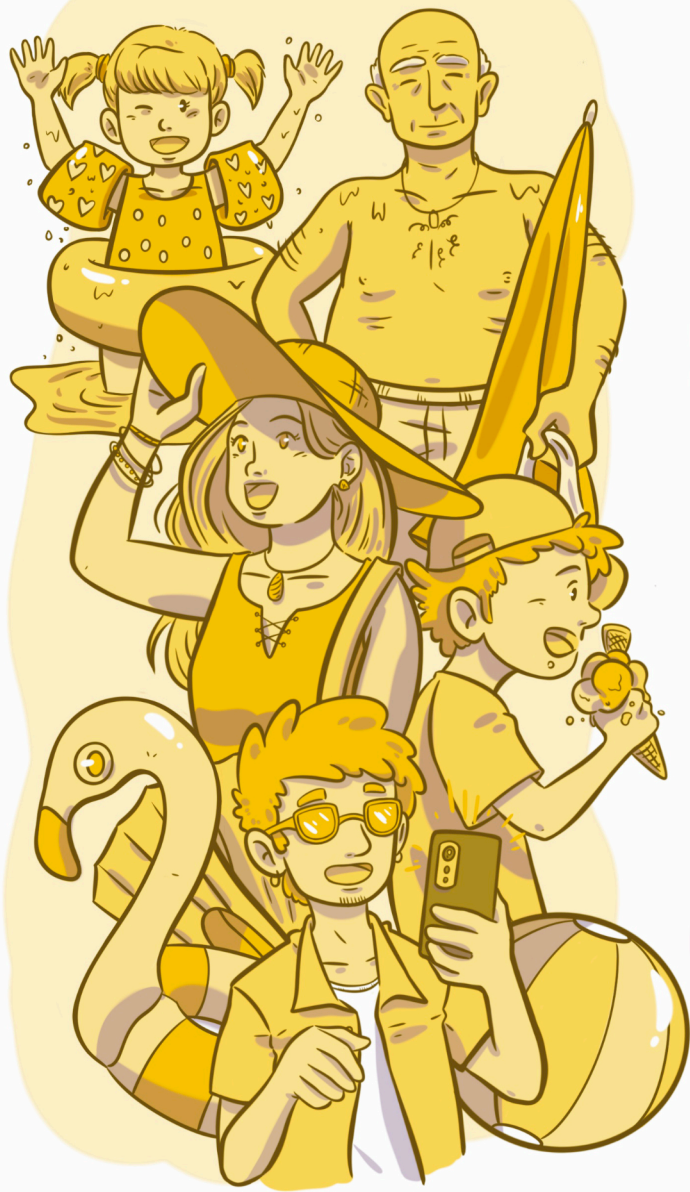


Lampedusa

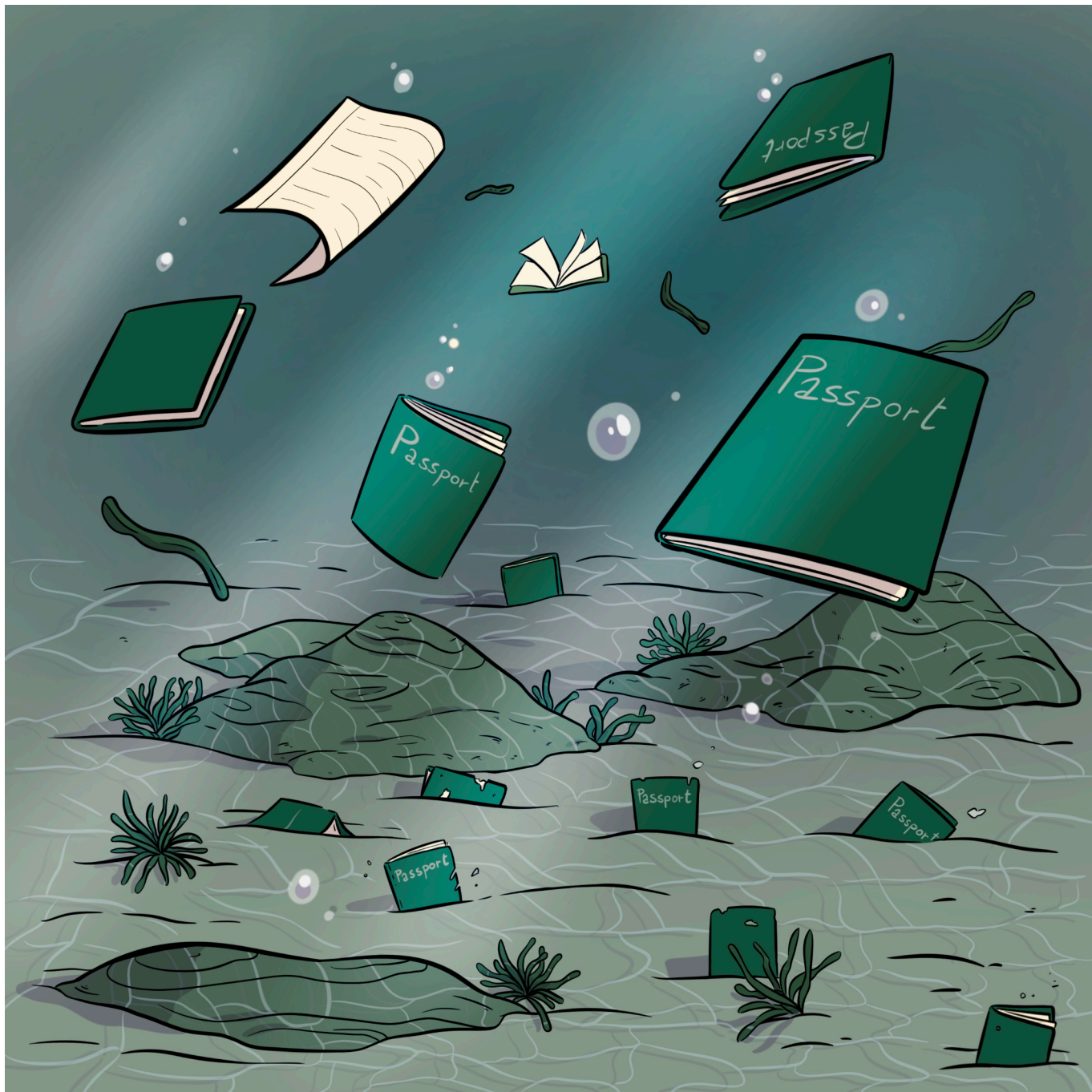
Lampedusa has been analysed and taken as a model of a “business of migration”. Migration flows governance in Lampedusa has created a business designed to manage flows, in that many people are engaged and working on the island due to the emergency situation: civil servants, police and aid workers, people present on the island are predominantly linked to the management of migration flows. This business has been developed and reinvigorated by the construction of Lampedusa as the EU border *par excellence* and the creation of the hotspot in 2015. Lampedusa's economy has flourished in the past decade and migration in Lampedusa has been at the centre of the island's infrastructure reshaping and improving. Tourism increased by 39% over the last ten years and is now the island's primary source of income (D'Ignoti, 2023). Lampedusa has one of the highest birth rates in Italy (AdminStat Italia, 2024), and is a highly paradoxical island: it thrives and grows thanks to tourism but is built in such a way that tourists and migrants never meet. In this sense, there are border processes taking place right at the border through infrastructure and policies that create a place where the tourist never meets the migrant. The Molo Favaro is the one port for incoming migrants, while tourists dock at the island's official port, Porto di Lampedusa. The hotspot is located in Contrada Imbriacola, far from Lampedusa's centre, separated by mountains. It is highly unlikely for tourists ever to notice or see the hotspot.

Furthermore, neither tourists nor the inhabitants of Lampedusa have much opportunity to meet migrants on the island as they generally do not stay on the island for long. Migrants are soon transferred to the nearest Italian island, to Porto Empedocle, in Sicily. Lampedusa can be described as an island of paradoxes because it has become wealthier, benefiting from mass tourism, even though it still lacks basic necessities: the lack of water on the island is of great concern to its inhabitants, for example. An island ready to welcome tourists, but where, at the same time, the Italian state constantly violates human rights, keeping, for example, four thousand migrants in a hotspot that can only accommodate four hundred.

But how do locals, the inhabitants of Lampedusa experience immigration? People who live in Lampedusa do not often see migration: counterintuitively, Lampedusa is one of the Italian towns with the fewest migrants. In the words of Simone Gavazzi, volunteer who has spent some time on board of Doctors Without Borders' boat Geobarents,: “Locals in Lampedusa are generally welcoming and kind. [...] Then there are people who are extremely racist, but it is usually the tourists, mostly coming from other parts of Italy. Locals, however, are not happy with current conditions, which are not only strictly linked to the migration phenomenon. Lack of drinking water is a common complaint, while fishermen, in particular, are concerned about the accumulation of shipwrecks on the island and, more specifically, in the area of the Molo. Of course, this concern is related to the immigration phenomenon, but it is more related to the how rather than to the essence of the phenomenon.”



Lampedusa, but more in general Sicily and the Italian South, *Meridione*, has a history of being denigrated by the rest of the peninsula due to the strong instilled *anti-meridionalismo*, an aversion and hatred towards the south of Italy and its population characterised by discourses that emphasised its inferiority to the population of the centre north for historical and cultural reasons, but also for its population stereotyped phenotypical. *Anti-meridionalismo* characterized the creation and development of the Italian state and contributed to the exploitation, isolation and mismanagement of the country's Southern regions (Cassano, 1996; Gramsci, 1948 - 1951). When we talk about and reflect on today's Lampedusa and its population, we need to take its history into consideration, even while witnessing Lampedusa's increasing popularity – for tourists – and visibility in national and international news and influential public figures' discourses. *Anti-meridionalismo* did not simply cease to exist, but it is today intertwined with xenophobic and anti-migration discourses: emblematic is a case reported by Italian media in September 2023, when a militant of the populist radical-right party Lega (Lega Nord), during a party rally in Pontida, called for Lampedusa "to be given to Africa" as a way to contrast the arrival of migrants to Italy (La Repubblica, 2023). The controversial statement steeped in a profound ignorance not only of the nature of migratory flows but also of global geography - in fact it refers to the African continent with its numerous and diversified countries as a single entity – repropose denigrating speeches – in some ways traumatic for many Southern Italians – against the South and in particular Lampedusa that, according to this militant, could simply, from one day to another, cease being part of the Italian state.



Mediterranean Sea, one of the worlds' most dangerous frontiers, and its Search and Rescue (SAR) zones

When one speaks of Lampedusa, one consequently refers to the central area of the Mediterranean Sea. Lampedusa is located in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, 145 km from the North African coast and more than 200 km from Sicily. The Mediterranean Sea, defined by some as one of the most dangerous migration and border routes in the world, has witnessed 25.000 deaths since 2014. In these waters, humanitarian non-governmental organisations operate to rescue boats in distress and save migrants at sea. There is a lot of confusion about how these NGOs operate: Simone explained that NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders operate in international waters, waters located beyond twenty-four nautical miles, the so-called SAR, Search and Rescue zones. SAR zones are areas where the state in question is obliged to rescue boats in distress. The concept of Search and Rescue zones was introduced with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) SAR convention of 1979, signed globally by 114 parties. The central Mediterranean has three SAR zones: the Italian, Libyan and Maltese ones. The Libyan SAR zone was established more recently by the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding between Libya and Italy; however, as Libya cannot be considered a Safe Third Country under international law¹, NGOs operating in the central Mediterranean refrain from calling the Libyan authorities. The sole actor in this area that persists in calling the Libyan authorities to report an emergency is the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex.

On the other hand, evidence has shown that Malta has been ignoring numerous distress alerts in its SAR area. In Simone's words, "We have examples from when I was two months on the Geobarents. It happened several times to call Malta, we also have a computer recording. In this recording you can see us call Malta to communicate that twelve boats in distress are in its SAR zone. Malta responds that they do not know anything about those boats and that they will not launch any operation. They urge to call Italy instead." Italy thus appears, at the moment, to be the sole actor capable of responding to international duties related

to its SAR zone. The practice around SAR zones in the central Mediterranean is an example of how, in international waters, jurisdictions and responsibilities are - sometimes deliberately - confused. The experiences of NGOs in these areas provide an essential account of how boundaries set in the Mediterranean Sea are less clear-cut than one might imagine and how, at the national, EU and international levels, not much has been done so far to reduce ambiguities or ensure actors' accountability.

¹ According to Art. 38 of Directive 2013/32/EU (Recast Asylum Procedures Directive), a safe third country is a country that treats a person seeking international protection in accordance with accepted international standards, in particular : (a) life and liberty are not threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; (b) there is no risk of serious harm as defined in Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive); (c) the principle of non-refoulement in accordance with the Geneva Refugee Convention and Protocol is respected; (d) the prohibition of removal, in violation of the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment as laid down in international law, is respected; and (e) the possibility exists to request refugee status and, if found to be a refugee, to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Refugee Convention and Protocol.



Malta and Libya

As we introduced, Malta and Libya are the two other state actors in the Central Mediterranean. We mentioned how the Libyan SAR zone was agreed upon since the 2017 Memorandum with Italy and how Frontex reaches out to the Libyan coastguard when detecting boats in distress in its SAR zone. Relations between the EU, its agencies, member states and Libya in the field of migration management have been severely criticised by international organisations. Amnesty International has called on the EU to refrain from developing flexible mechanisms of cooperation with Libya on illegal migration that do not include adequate legal guarantees nor parliamentary oversight. In the words of Matteo de Bellis, researcher on Migration and Asylum at Amnesty International, "EU leaders' cooperation with Libyan authorities is keeping desperate people trapped in unimaginable horrors in Libya. Over the past five years, Italy, Malta and the EU have helped capture tens of thousands of women, men and children at sea, many of whom ended up in horrific detention centres rife with torture, while countless others disappeared." (2022). The organisation notes that Libya's performance in relation to the treatment of refugees and migrants falls short of international standards. In addition to the fact that Libya is not a party to the Refugee Convention, there is no official recognition of the presence of refugees and asylum seekers in Libya, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, has no official status in the country; in the absence of a legal and operational framework, human rights and refugee protection concerns in Libya cannot be considered adequate. In this context, Amnesty International concludes that the expulsions of so-defined "irregular migrants" to Libya, repeatedly carried out by EU member states, particularly Italy and Malta, must be considered a matter of grave concern.

While it might appear so, it is important to underline that these concerns are not at all recent, as already on the 8th of June 2005, the European Parliament adopted a resolution urging "the Commission to ensure that persons in need of protection can have safe access to the Union and that their applications are

properly processed, and to ensure strict adherence to the rules of international human rights and refugee law and, in particular, the principle of non-refoulement," further reminding "the Commission of its duty to ensure respect for the right to asylum in the European Union, as the guardian of the Treaties, given that recent cases of collective expulsions from some Member States have cast a shadow over these countries' compliance with their obligations under EU law".

These concerns refer to the situation even before Libya could be considered a failed state, with the fall of Muammar Muhammad Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi in October 2011. In fact, with the beginning of the first Libyan Civil War in 2011, studies have started analysing Libya as a case of failed state due to an intensification of violence as a result of its institutions' inability to maintain governance, contain violence and the rise of armed groups (Poljarevic, 2016). In the wake of Gaddafi's fall, the ability to implement decisions on the ground remained in the hands of militias and armed groups. At the same time, we witnessed the paralysis of the country's political institutions. Analysts today argue it will be increasingly complex to pave the way to a restoration of peace and stability and that more recent developments rather threaten the absolute collapse of the state (Boserup & Martinez, 2018; UN Security Council, 2022).

While there is still a lack of willingness to recognise the EU's responsibility for crimes against humanity in Libya (Nielsen, 2023), evidence is increasingly emerging as in December 2023, Lighthouse Reports conducted an investigation that found EU authorities complicit in pullbacks carried out by Libyan militia (ECRE, 2023).

We turn now to Malta and its strategy of non-assistance in the central Mediterranean. Simone describes Malta as "smart" when commenting on its strategy of non-assistance. Why is Malta "smart", and what is its strategy? At the legal level, Malta is a signatory of the SAR Convention (1985) and the Hamburg Convention (1979), while it did not sign the 2004 amendments to the Hamburg Convention, which entered into force in 2006, that outline more precise rules on what states must do in the case of persons in



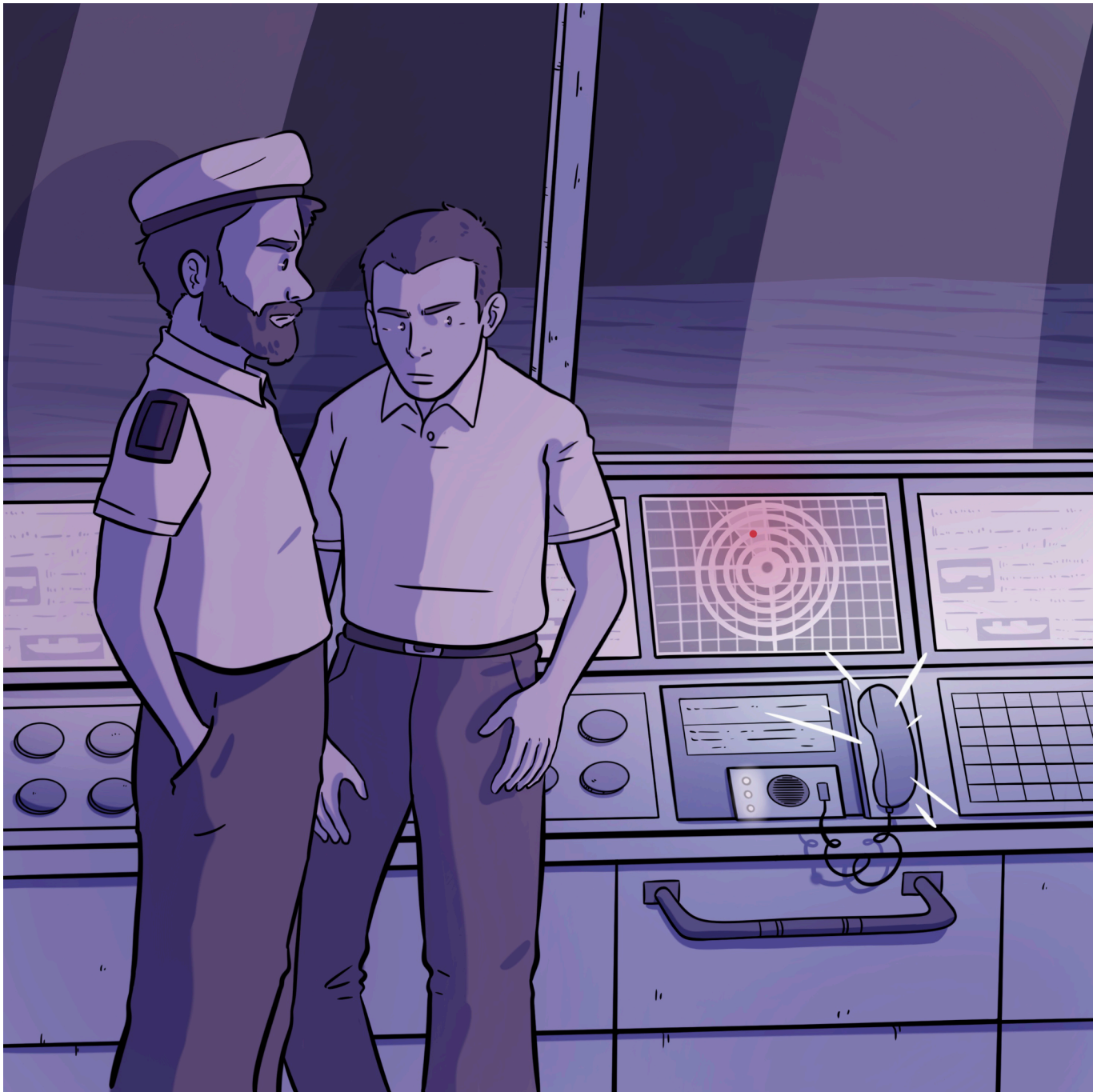
distress at sea². Nevertheless, Malta has been denounced by several organisations, amongst which Sea Watch, a German non-governmental organisation, for violating the obligations set by the SAR and Hamburg Conventions of which it is a signatory. More specifically, Sea Watch reports numerous cases of Malta systematically “disengaging from its rescue obligations in the Central Mediterranean, completely ignoring boats in distress, refusing to exchange or share any information with NGOs, instructing merchant vessels not to rescue the distressed” (Sea Watch, 2023).

Simone reports some details from his experience, “Malta would explain they heard about a distress case, but they did not have any updates. They justify themselves by explaining that, since they did not have any updates, they cannot launch a Search and Rescue Operation because they do not know where the boat is”. He continues “At the legal level, there are things that have been greatly overlooked, and Malta always manages in one way or another to protect itself. They mostly respond by saying that they were unaware of anything, while when there are NGO ships, Malta simply responds that they will not take them in. When the moment of urgency is passed, when migrants are safe [in Italian ports], at that point, you could blame Malta, but by then, the migrants are safe, and so there is little we can do. Only when they die can we raise our voice a little more, but Malta, in one way or another, always manages to protect itself.”

In 2020, Amnesty International published the report “Malta: Waves of Impunity”, aiming to describe the EU’s and Malta’s strategy of trapping people on the move in Libya. The document reports in-depth Malta’s violations through a. delays in attending to distress calls exposing people to the risk of drowning b. denials of disembarkation of people rescued at sea, and c. unlawful detention of the duration of weeks of the people rescued on board of private vessels meant for brief pleasure cruises. The report further reflects on Malta’s unlawful practices as the by-product of the European Union’s migration policies, prioritising reducing arrivals at all costs over protecting people on the move from violations and abuses. EU’s member states failure to agree on a system of shared responsibilities left border states, in the Central

Mediterranean in this case, to deal with arrivals themselves and, since states that accept the disembarkation of people on the move have the responsibility of meeting their first protection needs, addressing their status and of ensuring the access to rights within their jurisdiction, we see actors recurring to strategies to avoid responsibilities. Malta’s practices align with the EU’s migration management and its failed attempts to coordinate governance in the specific case of migration flows in the Mediterranean.

² The amendments include, according to the International Maritime Organisation: 1) the addition of a new paragraph in chapter 2 (Organization and co-ordination) relating to definition of persons in distress; 2) new paragraphs in chapter 3 (Co-operation between States) relating to assistance to the master in delivering persons rescued at sea to a place of safety; and 3) a new paragraph in chapter 4 (Operating procedures) relating to rescue co-ordination centres initiating the process of identifying the most appropriate places for disembarking persons found in distress at sea.



Distress

A boat must be in danger for NGOs to intervene and rescue the people on board. "Distress" is a term we encounter quite a lot when reading reports on boats rescued in the Mediterranean. But what does the term exactly entail? The Maritime SAR Convention defines the distress phase as "a situation wherein there is reasonable certainty that a person, a vessel or other craft is threatened by grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance" (International Marine Rescue Federation, 2018). You have to intervene not only if lives are at risk, but in any situation where a person is in distress at sea. As a result, assistance is needed not only where a passenger has gone overboard but also a. if a boat has difficulties or is unable to manoeuvre, b. if it is damaged or overloaded with too many passengers, c. lacks supplies in food, drinking water or necessary medication (Pro Asyl, 2015). Simone explains us that in all cases he experienced on board the boat was in distress as it was overcrowded and the engines had failed. In addition, Simone reflects on the fact that distress to him seemed always a bit abstract even through the definition. Distress to him now carries a specific feeling and smell: "It is the smell of petrol that lingers on you. Distress is the people you rescue drugged by the smell of petrol they have smelt on the journey. When I think of distress, I think of this" he narrates. The smell of petrol is a clear indicator of the disastrous condition of the boat (i.e., the failed engines) and the people in it, who have had to face a devastating journey with means that would never have been sufficient. The boats in distress are boats that would never have reached their intended destination, derelicts that present criteria for distress at their very departure.

Regarding the definition of distress and what it entails with respect to international obligations, the German non-governmental organization Pro Asyl published in April 2015 a guidance for skippers and crews in English, German, French and Spanish providing an overview of international law regulations and concrete instructions to give assistance in distress. In this guide, the authors underline that "the obligation to provide assistance in distress at sea is laid down in several international treaties on the law of the sea [...], treaties

have been implemented by the state parties, among them the European states. This means [contrary to what it is believed by some] that assistance in distress is more than charity. You are under a legal obligation to render assistance." (p. 4).



Migrants

Migrants are the subjects of the experiences narrated by Simone, they are the people on the move, the people rescued at sea. Although subjects of their journeys, they are often not represented except in numerical and collective terms. The way movement on EU borders is narrated by the mainstream media, i.e., established broadcasting or publishing outlets, highly contributes to a crisis narrative and the need for a militarised and securitised response to a potential threat. Studies have extensively investigated the presence of frames and categorisations of migrants in media finding categories which usually refer to migrants as either enemies, victims or heroes (Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud, 2020; Horsti, 2016; Mitić, 2018). In Western countries' media there seem to be a predominance of other two representation frames: one negative, alarmist one concerned with illegality, crime and the draining of power resources of the receiving country and one frame that depicts migrants as passive victims in need of protection (Gemi et al., 2013; Valente et al., 2021). Looking at European media, the most commonly identified frames are humanitarian and securitarian.

Media studies have found an increasing normalisation of anti-immigrant framing in newspapers, showing the predominant presence of the securitarian frame (Boswell et al., 2021; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; D'Amato & Lucarelli, 2019). We thus struggle to find stories of human beings on the move, each with their own fears, hopes, past lives and potential. Critical perspectives in migration studies have sparked a debate about the representation of migrants as human beings and individuals and the lack thereof in the media but also in research (Bleich, Bloemraad & Graauw, 2018; Chouliaraki, 2019; Dahinden, 2016). But how can migrants voice their experiences without endangering themselves and their right to privacy? Our reflection brought up a crucial missing point: more than giving migrants a voice, we need to prepare and educate host societies to listen to them and acknowledge them. Often there is the belief in members of the receiving societies that migrants - especially those who arrived in Lampedusa after being

rescued - should just be grateful to be alive and should not ask for much more. As Simone explains, it can be extremely complicated to challenge the mainstream image of the suffering, passive migrant, ready to be helped and quietly accepting whatever comes their way. Whenever an alternative narrative of a migrant is put forward - whether they are feeling joy, frustration or anger - this representation is met with a - at times aggressive - negative response by some in the receiving societies. Simone tells us about an instance when a migrant celebrating - dancing through a short video reported by a journalist of Reuters that was on the rescue boat and shown in a BBC article (BBC, 2023) - triggered a lot of negative comments. Simone mentions, "This is due to the belief that a migrant who has just escaped death - and perhaps war, exploitation and persecution - and has been lucky enough to be rescued should be quiet and desperate, in our collective imagination, and has no right to appear joyful or carefree".



We must therefore work hard to deconstruct the image of the migrant victim who passively accepts their fate as a person forced to face tragedy in order to live and survive. We must reflect on how a narrative that portrays the identity of the migrant as rigid and unvarying is ultimately extremely misleading, as human beings are intrinsically multifaced and should have the right to rediscover joy, despite the tragic nature of their past and present experiences.

Simone continues after our initial reflection, "Migrants are often already criminals before they arrive and this is one of the big problems. I will never stop saying this: in Italy and Europe there is not a problem of migration, there is a problem of integration." The problem of integration appears more a problem of willingness to welcome people on the move. In fact, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, figures show how in 2015, the year of the so-defined migration crisis, one million people had reached Europe across the Mediterranean, mainly towards Italy and Greece, 3735 missing – believed to have drowned (Clayton & Holland, 2015). These figures have been dealt with as indicators of an emergency situation capable of putting the security of the continent at risk as European migration and it was argued that asylum policies were not ready and adequate. However, the same was not claimed in the course of the years 2022 and 2023, where a total of Ukrainian refugees four times higher than the numbers of 2015 were welcomed by EU member states without widely shared claims of a crisis of migration nor emergency. There appears thus to be for Europe "desirable" and "deserving" migrants as some migrants deserve to be welcomed while others do not. Studies have investigated this categorisation and shown how racism plays a central role in narratives of immigration referring to it as a crisis to overcome, a disruptive event to manage and the subjects of this event, the migrants, mainly as socially and culturally incompatible with the receiving systems in Europe, despite the increasing evidence of this portrayal's inaccuracy (Dines et al., 2018; Rosenberg, 2022; Teye, 2022). Rosenberg (2022) in his book "Undesirable Migrants: Why Racism Persists in International Migration" explains how the right to border control is a modern consequence of racism rather than an inherent feature of sovereign states showing how the right of border control is instrumentalised to respond to migration flows of people that are constructed as

undesirable in receiving societies. Notions of deservingness and non-deservingness are also employed in a migration "categorical fetishism" (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018, p. 48), namely the distinction between "deserving refugees" and "undeserving and/or deceptive economic immigrants", categorisation that, evidence shows, is increasingly used to define migrants travelling to Europe from the African continent (Paynter, 2022).



Volunteers

On the other hand, aid workers and volunteers are often consulted by the media and the public in search of an account of what is happening across migration routes, the conditions of migrants and the situation at the borders. Critical migration literature has pointed out that volunteers active on these border contexts might enhance further the global inequalities of mobility (Di Matteo, 2022; Wearing et al., 2017; Burrai & Hannam, 2017). Indeed, much of the migratory business we witness in Lampedusa, along with growing tourism, emphasise inequalities in mobility. Furthermore, narratives focused on the actions of aid workers and volunteers has been considered controversial, reinforcing an image of the European aid worker as a saviour and the migrant as merely a victim of events (Jefferess, 2022; Palladino & Wooley, 2018). The willingness to contribute to rescue and support desperate people might be generated from a need to feel useful and necessary in society, need in which a person's ego plays a central part. However, while volunteers and aid workers also receive a lot of negative comments, especially on social media, for who they work for and what they do on a daily basis, if their actions come from an egocentric need, the need to feel they have done something important, to feel better in the face of injustice and to be able to say they were among those who did the right thing while witnessing injustice, then we can argue that this is one of the best ways in which the ego can be utilised (Fontana, 2021). While it is true that humanitarian border workers, like all border migration management workers, reproduce mobility inequalities, the constructive part of this extremely relevant argument is not explicit. Some of the critical literature out there has attempted to offer strategies to work on this inequality reproduction. A common suggestion is, for example, focusing more on the migrant and their agency rather than on the European "saviour" on the border to avoid the exclusion of migrants: while the reason behind this suggestion might make sense theoretically, border experiences show us how difficult it can be to apply these broader theoretical suggestions to reality.



TG Lampedusa

Criminalisation of NGOs and its consequences

When reflecting on the representation of migrants we introduced the term “criminalisation” referring to processes of construction of the migrant, and especially the male migrant travelling to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea, as deceptive and up to no good (Paynter, 2022). A process of criminalisation in discourse and practice is also taking place in regards to the action of non-governmental organizations that rescue people on the move at sea. Studies have shown how there has been an inflated media coverage containing NGOs’ criminalisation discourses and especially in the case of Italy (Berti, 2020; Cusumano & Bell, 2021; Cusumano & Villa, 2021). These criminalising discourses accuse NGOs to collude with human smugglers and profit from irregular migration. Data show that, specifically looking at the central Mediterranean route, there is no relationship between the presence of NGOs at sea and the number of migrants leaving Libyan shores (Cusumano & Villa, 2019). Simone underlines that, from his experience at sea, migrants appear to leave if the sea is calm, if there are no high waves, if the waves are under a metre: identifying NGOs as pull-factors is simply incorrect. “NGOs are a scapegoat”, he adds, “it is very easy to blame them”. Although it has been reported how court investigations have up to now disproven a direct collusion between NGOs and human smugglers, this misconception of NGOs as pull factors for people to cross the Mediterranean has influenced policies and resulted in tangible consequences for NGOs. For example, laws such as the Italian Decree-Law 1/2023 of the 2nd January 2023 have made it increasingly difficult for NGOs to operate in a system that constantly criminalises and obstruct their action. The Italian decree limits the number of rescues NGOs can perform as it requires them to immediately travel to the Italian port assigned by authorities once one rescue procedure is started.

NGOs boats must travel to the port after only one rescue which puts them in the condition to contravene maritime law according to which they are obliged to assist people in distress (Frey, 2023). In addition, the ports assigned to them are increasingly far away from

their initial location and, as Simone describes, this can really undermine the rescue of lives at sea as NGOs’ boat are required to travel far and cannot operate before arrived with the rescued people to the assigned port. As one Ocean Viking crew member reports to InfoMigrants, “The practical impact (of the law) is that we stay fewer days in the zone of operation and so more people can die”. Luisa Albera, search and rescue coordinator for the NGO SOS Méditerranée, describes the scapegoating of NGOs, “This law is clearly made to discriminate against civilian vessels operating in the Central Mediterranean doing search and rescue. It is a campaign against the NGOs, basically.” As a result, NGOs are increasingly more careful and are not able to rescue as many people in distress at sea as they could. They do not change their way of operating at heart but they have been targeted and this has clear practical consequences. Simone explains that NGOs are also increasingly stressed and concerned about what they can and cannot do and often ask for the authorities’ confirmation, “[...] they just keep calling Italy, and saying: “Is it ok if I do this?”, because they are afraid of not being able to work and rescue people at sea.” “There are NGOs that refuse to do this” he adds, “but they are often seized and have to pay fines as a result”.



Externalisation of EU borders

Looking at the migration governance put in place in the last decade both at the national and supranational levels, with a focus on the European Union, there seems to be an intention in maintaining a situation of crisis and disruption on EU borders. More importantly, there is a clear aim – both at the national and EU level – to narrate, concentrate on, take action against the disruptions potentially created by the movement of people on the borders instead of reflecting on the history of the border context and its dysfunctions in the first place, which often have little to do with people's movement. We can see a clear aim to maintain the migration governance infrastructure that in last decades has particularly manifested through border externalisation. Research reports how externalised migration controls have played a crucial role in European mobility governance, and especially across the Central Mediterranean, through deals and agreements with third countries (Cusumano & Riddenvold, 2023; Muftuler-Bac, 2022; Oliveira Martins & Strange, 2019). On the other hand, studies also contest research focusing on externalisation of borders as a more recent governance strategy and call for a more critical approach that would give more importance to historical inquiry which would give insights into the evolution of border externalisation as more than just a recent response to unwanted migration (Cobarrubias et al., 2023; Calderón Vázquez et al., 2023). Peculiarity of today's externalisation of borders, however, is the way it became a key feature of the migration governance of the EU and its member states on the Mediterranean Sea and has seen a close, formal and institutionalised collaboration with third countries (Palm, 2020).

The most recent discussed collaboration with a third state, linked to the narrated need to respond to the emergency in the Central Mediterranean and Lampedusa, is the one between Italy and Albania which created the controversial 2023 Italy-Albania Memorandum of Understanding on migration. But what does this agreement entail exactly? Signed on the 6th of November 2023, it aims to set two Italian reception centres in Albania to hold people rescued at

sea by Italian ships. In short, the Italian Coast Guard and the Finance Police, which are the two Italian state actors that carry out rescue operations in Italy, take care of transferring people rescued at sea to Albania, where they file an asylum request: if the asylum request is accepted, they return to Italy, while if the asylum request is rejected, they are repatriated. However, this is more easily said – or better written – than done as repatriation also follows specific regulation to be carried through and agreements with the countries migrants would need to be repatriated to. As repatriation can also be a long and contested process and it might exceed the time limit for migrants to stay in reception facilities, Italy commits through this deal to move migrants who have exceeded this time limit in the dedicated facilities in Albania back to Italy, given that the centres in Albanian territory would be under Italian jurisdiction and Italy would remain legally responsible for the migrants throughout the process (Emergency, 2023). The reception centres under Italian jurisdiction will be located near the port of Shengjin and would hold a maximum of 3000 people. The Italian and Albanian governments have estimated the cost of more than 650 million euros over five years, which is the term of the agreement up to now (RFI, 2024).

It is evident that the agreement poses additional useless and dangerous hurdles in governance of migration in the Mediterranean. In fact, Simone defines the agreement as “the most useless deal that could have ever been signed in migration governance” since “migrants will be transferred to Albania to eventually be transferred again to Italy – this if rules set by the agreement are respected”. Amnesty International also comments on the agreement feasibility in practice stating that “the agreement is highly unlikely to reach its stated aim in terms of migration management [but if so] its implementation would have a negative impact on a range of human rights, including the rights to life and physical integrity of people in distress at sea, and the rights to liberty, to asylum, and to adequate remedy, of people transferred to Albania” (Amnesty International, 2023). The aims of this fairly new



agreement set-up are efficiently outlined by a spokesperson of the Italian NGO Emergency "This is a way to prevent migrants from setting foot on Italian, and therefore EU, soil and requesting asylum as envisaged by both European and international law."

A peculiar aspect of this new agreement that is part of a migration governance focused on externalisation is that while agreements with third states generally give the responsibility and outsource this responsibility of the governance of migration to third states, we have here an example of externalisation in the territorial sense, while the jurisdiction and the responsibility remains with the Italian state, member state of the EU. But if EU law applies in reception centres in Albania, it is unclear how. Human Rights Watch reports that Italy states that Italian and EU law will apply, the centres being under Italy's jurisdiction, while the European Commission initially contested this statement, claiming that the agreement was outside EU law. The EU Commission clarified later its position declaring that the implementation of the agreement will be monitored in order to assess its compliance with EU law. Albania, however, does not seem to be on the same page: the Albanian Constitutional Court, in fact, declared Albanian law will also apply in the centres (Sunderland, 2024). This lack of legal certainty where actors' responsibility and accountability remain ambiguous will undermine safeguards of human rights and, quoting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, cause "great suffering and harm" as similar extraterritorial deals have done (Türk, 2024).

Meloni and the Italian government have constantly underlined the need of such agreement in place to reduce the incentives people have to migrate funding a whole approach to policy on a wrong – and proven wrong by several studies – assumption that people migrate solely because of incentives in the receiving countries/the potential territory of arrival. Not only, a spokesperson of Doctors Without Borders underlines how the agreement goes "one step beyond" previous agreements between EU countries and non-member states such as Turkey, Libya and Tunisia aimed, amongst others, at disincentivising departures. In fact, the Guardian reports, the aim appears to be "no longer to only discourage departures, but to actively prevent people from fleeing and those rescued at sea

from gaining safe and rapid access to European territory." (Tondo, 2024). Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights, has also underlined the dangerous present that this agreement sets, even in a context where externalisation of EU governance is already a trend, "The shifting of responsibility across borders by some states also incentivises others to do the same, which risks creating a domino effect that could undermine the European and global system of international protection." (Council of Europe, 2023)

Conclusions and Thanks

This booklet presented the context of migration governance in the Central Mediterranean Sea, drawing on international law and international and national governance in place while reflecting on experiences taking shape in the reality of these peculiar EU borders. It showed how borders are created in Lampedusa and the Central Mediterranean in different ways. At sea, we mostly witness an attempt to blur frontiers. We outline, in fact, how main actors' willing avoidance of responsibilities set by maritime laws and strategies of non-assistance result in tragedies. Meanwhile, on the island of Lampedusa, borders are more vivid and evident than ever: bordering processes occur physically – through specific geographical choices – and institutionally – through specific policy choices. In the case of Italy, new instances of externalisation of EU borders show how the human rights of people on the move continue to be highly disregarded in the name of crisis management. Bordering processes also occur in daily narratives around borders, migration and migrants. These narratives have been compelling in creating an image of how borders and migrants should look like. Getting more in contact with the border context, also thanks to humanitarian workers and volunteers' action and activism, can help take the first steps towards a reflection around these contexts and what they witness, what they are made of, and how they have been constructed through history. Through this booklet, we hope to reach a broader audience in the attempt to share knowledge on the current bordering processes and policy developments in managing movement in the Mediterranean by looking more specifically at the Central Mediterranean area.

This booklet was created taking inspiration from a rich and detailed discussion with Simone Gavazzi, a human rights activist and editor at Penshare, which took place during a knowledge transfer event I, Anna Marino, organised through the National Center of Competence in Research – The Migration-Mobility Nexus (nccr on the move) with the help of Alessandra Polidori, researcher at the Swiss Forum for Migration. I want to thank Simone for sharing his experience and allowing it to be part of the booklet and his dedication to this booklet's knowledge transfer aim; Alessandra Polidori for her precious collaboration in the knowledge transfer's event organisation and the writing of this booklet introduction which eloquently outlines the vision and mission of this creation; and Arianna Sisani whose collaboration allowed us to offer an innovative format complemented by a visual representation of what we reported both during the event and through this booklet.

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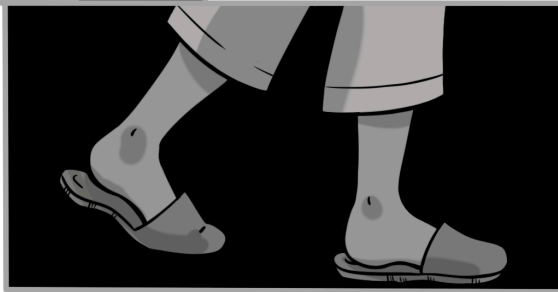
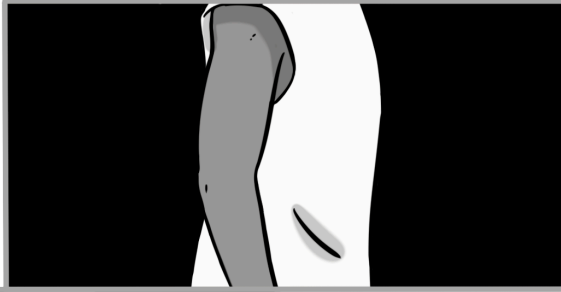
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Q&A

Q:

There has been a lot of discussion lately about the agreement between Italy and Albania on the externalisation of the reception of migrants, so I wanted to know your views on the impact it might have on human rights, the rights of migrants, and also on how this might change Lampedusa with respect to the business that you mentioned.

Simone:

I will play it safe: the agreement has yet to be signed, and it needs to be seen if it has legal force, especially if it is in accordance with European treaties. That said, it is the most useless treaty that could have been signed; why? Migrants can be rescued by nongovernmental organisations and the state - the Coast Guard and Finance Police that carry out the rescued at sea in Italy. According to the agreement, the migrants would be rescued and sent to Albania, where the asylum claim would be made. If the asylum claim is accepted, these migrants will return to Italy, while if the asylum claim is rejected, they will be repatriated. However, this could not be done since Italy has jurisdiction in these centres on Albanian territory and, therefore, Italy would have to make memoranda with third states for repatriations. If the memoranda were not accepted by third states, the migrants in question could not be returned and would still return to Italy. They would still always return to Italy: since the beginning of the year, out of 137,000 landings, there have been 54 repatriations.

To answer the second part of your question, these centres will not impact Lampedusa since we are talking about 140,000 landings this year (2023) in Italy, while only 3,000 people can be transferred to Albania. Hence, these are meagre numbers, and it will be a cost: migrants will get to Italy, they will only get to Italy later. Also, if we reflect on the consequences of this agreement and the stress people experience on the move, it's just obscene. There are so many people who say, "At least this agreement will make people not be enticed to leave." Migrants have always travelled complex routes; they will continue to do so; we see it now in Calais as well.

Consider this: Italy is merely a transit point for migrants heading to Calais, Dunkirk, and other destinations. So, this agreement seems to be creating more stress without any logical nor political sense. Paradoxically, the agreement between Rwanda and the United Kingdom, despite its violation of international law, seems more practical. In that case, if the migrants' asylum claims are not accepted, they stay in Rwanda. It's still a disturbing situation on a human level, but it seems to make more sense in terms of practicality.

Anna:

This agreement, a protocol, to be precise, of which we do not yet have the text -- which is why we do not know what will be written in it -- is particular in its externalisation. When we talk about externalisation, even in the literature, we mean giving responsibility to a third state to manage migration flows. In this case, the responsibility is still with a European Union member state. I am very curious to see how this will develop. It could create more chaos, and it starts from an incorrect idea, which several studies have already refuted, that if potential migrants have incentives or see the place they want to migrate to as a place of possibility, they will migrate; otherwise, if they see how difficult it is to migrate, to undertake the journey, then they will remain sedentary. This misinformation and these false beliefs reveal how little attention is paid to the different reasons why a person wants or can move. The reasons are not always just because there is heaven, a better certain future waiting on the other side.

Q:

I want to address two questions to Simone. The first one is about the processing time for asylum applications. I was wondering how long the average processing time for an asylum application is. The second one is about the procedure for establishing the state of distress; if I understand correctly, pregnant women, children, for example, are imperative and cumulative criteria, but does that mean that before you send a rescue boat, you make sure that there is a pregnant woman on board and if that is not the case you send the ship back? How does that work in practice exactly?



Simone:

I start with the second question, which is more straightforward. No, the assessments are carried through by those who see the boat in distress, very often then the Italian or Maltese authorities. If there are 70 people, you already know that we are in a distress situation. We always find one of those 10 factors; all it takes is a pregnant woman, and there's always a pregnant woman on the boat. The migrants themselves, before they leave, know what it means to be in a distress situation at sea. So, very often, they know the boat is going to be in distress. We have to be honest. Overcrowding is the first factor, and that is always there.

Now, let's address the first question, the asylum claim. It's important to note that the asylum claim is not initiated in Lampedusa. Lampedusa is only a hotspot; from Lampedusa the migrants are sent to the first reception centres where they apply for asylum and are fingerprinted. There are European bureaucratic procedures, and Italy gives asylum to certain people for which there are specific parameters: family members (so if you have other family members in Italy), if you are an unaccompanied minor, if you are a pregnant woman, or you come from a war-torn country. When asking for asylum, you are detained in the centres for two years, and then the application is very

often denied, but you cannot be returned. So you are on the loose. These people whose asylum claim is rejected and who cannot be repatriated then try to go to other places, such as Ventimiglia, and then arrive in France, for example, because they cannot work in Italy.

So very often, France says to the migrant, "But according to the Dublin Treaty, you have to apply in Italy." Italy responds, "You did; it was rejected." So France continues, "Why do I have to take you in? You are as irregular in Italy as you are irregular here." So, what happens now? Since 2018, the number of migrants crossing the English Channel has increased exponentially because before, they could not apply for asylum in the U.K. as the European Union. Now they can. So the number of people trying to cross the Channel has increased. That's also why Prime Minister Sunak in the U.K. and Boris Johnson said, "Let's send them to Rwanda or to an island in the middle of the sea to make this asylum claim because migrants by boat have increased fivefold from before Brexit to now."

Q:

My question refers to your reflection on the integration rather than migration "crisis" - I think we can all agree here. For example, tensions between an assimilationist and universalist approach structure the debate about integration in France. I was wondering how this debate developed in Italy. How does one become Italian without being a soccer player?

Simone:

Irregular immigration in Italy is a big business because it also brings jobs. Irregular migrants pick fruits, vegetables, and tomatoes at low prices, so it is much more profitable to have irregular immigration than regular immigration. It is a political issue: no more money and resources have been invested in the integration project. In the past, free Italian courses were offered, and it was much easier to create activities for migrants. Then, since the radical right has been in government, these activities have been eliminated because they are expensive, although, in the long run, it is much more expensive to have irregular migrants

than to have regular migrants who bring to the country's economy. How does one become Italian? In Italy, there is *ius sanguinis*; however, after ten years, you can apply to become Italian if you are a legal migrant and have lived in Italy for more than ten years. Otherwise, you can marry an Italian person. Still, you have to prove that you have lived with this person for two years, so after two years of marriage, you can become an Italian citizen. Otherwise, you will get picked up by some soccer team, as you said.



Q:

The data on the numbers of migrants arriving in Italy are always tricky to read; however, from what you read in the most popular newspapers, the percentage of migrants coming through Lampedusa is very small, or at least less significant, than those arriving through other channels in Italy. Yet, it is the most mediatised one; we always talk about crisis, but we never speak about crisis from other channels. I have the impression that there is an intention to preserve a crisis in Lampedusa and to instrumentalise it to no one knows what end. There is often talk about the idea of using it and mediatising it and then using it in the European Union for the negotiation of the Dublin Regulation now that it is underway. Still, it is a problem that needs to be solved because governments on the right and left seem to intend to maintain a problem for no one knows what end because, precisely for now, we have not seen any change in the Dublin Regulation.

Anna:

First of all, it is indeed a very small percentage of irregular migration to Lampedusa also because in irregular migration, the largest percentage is people who have already arrived in the country and remain after some time without permission. So, this reflection of yours about it being convenient to use Lampedusa as a critical place is absolutely relevant; I also notice this as a researcher investigating other European borders. For example, now I am looking at the context of Ceuta and Melilla in the Morocco-Spain border, where we find the migration business mentioned. So many state officials are working in these areas. When we talk about migration and the migration crises in these contexts, the same volunteers but also people who work with NGOs tell me, "I am here, and I work for this, and many officials who are here from Spain are happy to be here because by the way they are paid more and for the work they do, due to the emergency, they get paid more." I am referring to a different context to help you understand that this is something we find as a trend in Europe, and it would be interesting to see it on other borders in the world. Still, as far as the European Union is concerned, this is what we see in several of its border contexts.



Simone:

And the number is indeed smaller, but it's the one that makes the most noise because of the colour of the skin; very often, we have to be honest, Italy has to hope, at the level of numbers, that the Dublin Treaty is not changed because as it's in revision now, it's paradoxically worse for Italy. Right now, in Italy, out of 150,000 people a year coming through the voluntary system, very few are applying for asylum; in fact, they go a lot to Germany and France. So, if it were changed, it would not be good for Italy; it would only be good as a *façade*, and this leads us to the third point: why? Because you always have to have a crisis, this is part of so many political theories. Having a crisis is always useful: it is always a weapon that you can play at the European level, even national, not only European level.

Q:

I need clarification in relation to your introduction; I was curious about the way you associated the demographics and wealth of Lampedusa. Lampedusa, therefore, has a higher birth rate than the rest of Italy, but whose children are these children? Are they from the ecosystem that has been created around the migration issue, the volunteers, the police or, as I assume, are they the migrants' children? I also wonder if *ius soli* has a role in integrating these migrants.

Simone:

You have to imagine that the more people work in Lampedusa, the more houses are rented, so there are so many houses for rent, and the prices are very high. The fishermen make money because they keep selling to people who go to work, the restaurants work so much, and there are so many of them. We saw the pictures of Ursula von der Leyen going with Giorgia Meloni to Lampedusa, which was very clean that day. So, it includes houses, catering, fishing, and tourism. Tourism has increased by leaps and bounds, so it's just an economic issue, and it's been seen that when the economy does well in certain places, the population increases. No, it's not an issue that the migrants themselves have children; they see Lampedusa for one

or two days, then they leave; it's purely an economic issue of who lives in Lampedusa and Linosa, which is the next to Lampedusa.



Q:

Are policymakers already forecasting anything for climate change and issues related to people on the move?

Anna:

It's a good question, one that people ask a lot. For now, there is no climate migration crisis in the central Mediterranean; no migrants are coming to Europe for the time being from climate crises. Many people in these contexts move within the same or neighbouring states. It is difficult at the moment to report about experiences of people who are migrating to Europe because of the climate crisis : they don't have the means; at the end of the day, people who are coming or trying to come to Europe have the financial means to do so, but many people cannot do so and especially people who are in contexts where the climate crisis

causes severe conditions. These people are the poorest and are the ones getting poorer and poorer. But just because you don't have now the data of people who are fleeing climate crises to Europe, that doesn't mean that they are not migrating; they are migrating to the African continent or other contexts or other continents because they are not coming to Europe and it is probably not even their destination. So, if we only look at the analysis of the Central Mediterranean or European context, I don't see that for now, but these people are still migrating.



Q:

Earlier, you were talking about the criminalisation of migrants, which also made me think about the criminalisation of NGOs that help migrants. This was seen a lot in Hungary, where I believe there are laws against NGOs that offer services to migrants, but it was also seen in Italy with Matteo Salvini and the clash between him and Carola Rakete. I wondered how this trend in Europe affects rescues and SARs and how NGOs are changing their operations.

Simone:

Data and several studies unequivocally attest that

NGOs are not pull factors. Migrants leave if the sea is calm, there are no high waves, and the waves are under a meter. NGOs are a scapegoat: it's very easy to blame them, we can blame them, but it was seen again this year that NGOs recovered only 6 per cent of the migrants at sea, 6 to 8 per cent of the migrants at sea, to be precise. Everyone else came on their own. So you blame them simply because you have to blame somebody. After all, you have to find a scapegoat, but NGOs are not a pull factor, which is a proven fact.



Regarding the second question, yes, the situation is changing. The assigned ports are further away, so sometimes authorities assign ports in Northern Italy to waste time; to get to Genoa, for example, it takes four days to sail, and four days to return, so there are changes. Also, because of the issue of strong criminalisation, NGOs are much more careful; they only do one rescue at a time, and that's also why they rescue fewer migrants

However, they don't change their function of saving lives; they don't change how they operate, only they continue to call Italy and ask, "Is it okay if I do this?" because they fear they can't work anymore. Some NGOs refuse to do this but are often seized and have to pay fines, such as Mediterranea Mediterranea's Mar

Ionio. Aurora, from Sea-Watch, had been seized, as well as Geo Barents, for 20 days—also Humanity, and so on.

Q:

So, Malta does not respond legislatively. I mean, is it right not to respond? Can it not respond? Is there legal action at some point? Can there be legal actions towards Malta because there is still lack of assistance?



Simone:

I have so many videos of us calling Malta. At the legislative level, Malta has signed the SAR Convention and the Hamburg Convention but has not ratified the protocols. At the legal level, it has protections because it has not signed the 2004 additional protocols, which

have more precise rules on what states have to do. Beyond that, by international maritime law, Malta still has to take action beyond the SAR conventions. Malta, however, says, "We have heard about this case, but we have not had any updates. So since we haven't had any updates, we cannot launch a Search and Rescue Operation because we don't know where the boat is." When there was the last migrant tragedy a few months ago, there was an exchange between Malta saying, "But I didn't know where the boat was." So even at the legal level, there is a huge gap, and Malta always manages in one way or another to protect itself by saying it didn't know anything, and when there are NGO ships, Malta simply says, "We don't take them in." At that point, you could blame Malta; however, by then, the migrants are safe, so there is little you can do. Only when people die then can you make a bit of a fuss, but Malta, one way or another, always manages to protect itself, saying, "You were still in the Libyan SAR zone; why didn't you go there?" Or, "You are an NGO related to which country/reporting which flag?" They always manage to defend themselves in one way or another by looking for flaws in the system.

Q:

I very much support the idea that violence comes from our system. So how can we get politics to change its view? Because, after all, that is what runs our lives and society. For example, looking at the Riace model, why can't we integrate it into the visions of politicians and ordinary people? I know it isn't easy, but I always try to think about how it can be done.

Anna:

It's the million-dollar question. However, as we have already explained, there is also an intention to maintain a migration crisis. Sadly, the status quo is beneficial to some. But let's not forget, politicians indeed have the power, but in reality, we, the citizens, vote for them and bring them to this power, at least in democracies. This realisation should empower us, as we hold the key to change. I see a lot of misinformation on these issues, and, as we have already repeated, there is an interest on the part of some national, local, and international

actors to maintain these great polarisations and these conflicts.

In general, what I also see is a great distance with respect to these issues, generated also by the way these issues are told. So, the media has a huge role and responsibility in this. It is interesting and instrumental to look at borders and frontiers in the words of those that live them. I also see these types of events as a way to spread what is because, unfortunately, in what we see in the media, we often don't realise what the reality is. We have the right and the duty as citizens to vote in a democracy, which, to me, also means being able to change. So I don't think it's all in the hands of politicians, and if it is, it's because we give politicians this power, taking them where they are.



As a final reflection, not enough attention has been given to the role of the media and, how certain border situations are told and taught, how we tell what happened in specific situations. If we also look at the context of Ceuta and Melilla on the Spain-Morocco border, there is so much that Europe is not telling, there is so much that is not being taught with respect to these border contexts that can be seen as being in crisis, but not so much because of the movement of people, but because they are contexts where there has been history, changes and what has happened in the course of their development. Their history is critical and

dysfunctional, so it is not something that has appeared now.

Q:

Does the presence of a Lampedusan as a member of the European Parliament, Pietro Bartolo, determine the development of the cause a little bit further? How is this development seen in Lampedusa?

Simone:

I want to say something positive and negative: the negative is that, unfortunately, we only give light to the issue when there are deaths. Unfortunately, only when there are deaths do we look at the number of polls, and the number of people who are in favour of immigration grows.

Regarding the presence of so many politicians to tell the truth at the Italian and European levels, they can bring forward a cause; it certainly does well to talk about it differently, so from the moment that we start talking about it, over time, not only among politicians but also in schools I think it is definitely a good sign. When I talk about education, I mean not so much the subjects taught but also knowing that different does not have to mean scary; that's what education is. This is the positive thought with which I want to conclude.

Anna:

I don't know how this presence can be perceived from the island's point of view. Of course, it's a message, but let's see in the sense that even in the past, there have been these grand gestures, and as Simone says now, we realise it is a little too late. It is disturbing that we start to think more about how unfair this system is only when people die; however, at least there are still people who are shocked hearing about the deaths, in the sense that I would not like to get to a point where, even when hearing about deaths, we carry on in our indifference.

So, it is disturbing on the one hand, but on the other hand, it makes me think that at least we are asking questions about the injustices we see happening. And again, yes, it could be good, but we have to see how it

will go on because so many times, these gestures, these people, are still put in a broad context of European parliament and politics, where you still have to negotiate, compromise.



nccr on the move

