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Social harms in borderised spaces: The case of Lampedusa.

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**Thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Edinburgh 2021**

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

FRANCESCA SOLIMAN

Edinburgh, 31 August 2021

Acknowledgments

During the long and winding journey that was the completion of this thesis I have indebted myself to a great many people, some of whom I wish to thank by name in this brief acknowledgment section.

First and foremost, this work would never have been attempted without the unwavering support and assistance of my supervisor Andy Aydın-Aitchison, who believed in the value of this project well before I was able to articulate it myself. Andy's impeccable guidance and his resolute faith in my potential prevented me from giving in to fear and self-doubt on too many occasions to recount. My sincerest gratitude for always being in my corner Andy, I hope to be like you when I grow up. My thanks also to Tobias Lock, who co-supervised the first half of my PhD, and to Leandro Mancano, who took over in the second half: both have endured with grace my legal illiteracy and love of sweeping statements.

My eternal gratitude goes to my PhD buddy, Estelle Clayton. We took the plunge all those years ago and embarked on our respective doctoral journeys, overburdened by youthful fear and self-doubt. As it turns out, we were 100% right to dread this. Nevertheless, through sheer spite we persist, and the end is in sight. Thank you for your enduring friendship and tireless support.

Lastly, I thank my partner Joanna, who tolerated the emotional rollercoaster that were the past five years with a mix of pride, resignation, and disgruntlement, and yet supported me emotionally, physically, and financially to the finish line. I am grateful to have had you by my side throughout this crazy ride and hope I can return all the favours now your own doctoral journey begins. Bring it on.

To Bob.

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Abstract

As migration control has risen to the top of the political agenda in the European Union, member states' border control practices have been attracting increasing criminological scrutiny, as shown by the growing field of crimmigration studies. Crimmigration challenges our traditional understanding of crime and punishment; however, while crime and migration control may be intertwined, they exemplify very diverse forms of state power. Criminology is thus not the most effective lens through which to understand border control practices and their social impact. In this thesis I advocate adopting a zemiological (i.e., social harm-based) approach, which pays due attention to the structural factors that generate border harms without being constricted by juridical or jurisdictional boundaries.

Critics have argued that zemiology stands on shaky ontological and epistemological grounds. In this thesis I address these objections by proposing a zemiological theory and methodology designed for the empirical study of border-related social harms, based on a critical realist view of society and Fraser's idea of social justice. I apply this framework empirically through an ethnographic study on the impact of borderisation on the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa, a key point of entry for irregular migrants crossing the southern external border of the European Union. After analysing the data collected through participant observations and unstructured interviews, I find that the borderisation of Lampedusa is socially harmful to its resident community and to the island's environment.

For instance, while the large number of law enforcement and military agents far exceeds the needs of the 6,000-strong community, authorities rarely intervene in local matters. The law is thus largely unenforced in Lampedusa, creating a permanent state of normalised illegality with increases insecurity for residents more at risk of victimisation, such as women. Insecurity is also increased by border authorities' failure to transfer migrants to the mainland in a timely manner. North African migrants are often held on the island for months at a time awaiting repatriation, creating unease and resentment in the local community. This manifests as open hostility towards North Africans, while sub-Saharan African migrants are universally considered in need of help and protection. This racialised hierarchy of victimhood may appear to overturn colourism by being more sympathetic to those with darker skins, but also exposes a persisting victim-saviour dynamic which reproduces colonial racial stratification, and rationalises the exclusionary logic of the border.

The island's economy and its environment are also intertwined with border control. The salience of migration news attracts tourists by keeping Lampedusa's name in the media,

although bad publicity can lead to the loss of a whole season's income. This is a constant source of economic anxiety for the community. Furthermore, the border is highly detrimental to Lampedusa's fishing industry, hindering operations in port and endangering fishers' lives at sea. Once seized by authorities, migrant boats are either left to sink out at sea, left to break in the harbour, or amassed in large dumps on the island. Each option is environmentally harmful, as pollutants leak into the sea and the soil. Periodically, environmental crisis triggers an emergency tendering process for the disposal of the boats, suspending for the sake of expediency the environmental protections normally required in public bidding. Lampedusa's perpetual state of crisis affects not only its economy, security, and environment, but also residents' wellbeing. Living in a borderised space has a profound psychological impact on the community, whose traumatic experiences are routinely appropriated by journalists, politicians, and researchers, with little consideration of the cumulative impact of secondary trauma. The thesis concludes by showing that the persistent state of crisis and the routinized border harms suffered by Lampedusa's residents ensure the community's acquiescence by silencing opposition to the border's presence. The thesis makes original contributions to theory, methodology, and research which are exceptional in both breadth and depth.

Lay summary

Migration control has become a hot political issue in Europe. While migration law and criminal law are normally distinct, there seems to be increasing overlap between the two, as European states develop different ways of dealing with migrants; this phenomenon is known as crimmigration and has been attracting much attention from criminologists. Crimmigration means that criminal justice measures may be used against migrants even when they have not committed a crime, and without giving them the same protections that people normally have when going through the criminal justice system (for example, the right to have a trial). Crimmigration is a very important issue in criminology, because it shows that the state can use its punitive power in different ways than the ones the discipline normally focuses on. At the same time, criminology's focus on crimmigration is not always useful, because it tends to exaggerate the similarities between crime control and migration control. For example, the state is free to determine its own criminal justice policy, but migration policy is influenced by many international political, economic, and social factors, and it can be very reductive to compare the two. This is particularly relevant if we try to understand the social impact of migration control measures, for two main reasons: one, looking at these measures through the lens of crime makes it more difficult to see the other ways in which states exercise their power, for example through social policy; two, it over-emphasises the power of the state to control migration, and makes it harder to look at its international dimensions.

In this thesis I adopt a different approach in order to overcome these limitations. Instead of criminology, I suggest the use of zemiology, which means the study of social harm. Zemiology does not focus solely on crime or on specific forms of state power, but instead considers a much wider range of social issues and their causes, allowing us to analyse the impact of migration control in much more detail. Any negative impact does not need to be intended to be included in the analysis, but may be considered a social harm as long as it could have been preventable. Zemiology is a relatively recent approach and not everybody agrees on how it should work, so in this thesis I develop a zemiological framework specifically designed to best understand border-related harms.

I apply this framework to the real-life case of the Italian island of Lampedusa, which is located at the southern border of the European Union. Migrants have crossed the Mediterranean Sea from the north coast of Africa to Lampedusa for decades, but the ways in which migration is managed and the border is enforced on the island have become stricter over the years, a phenomenon I call 'borderisation'. My research shows

that the borderisation of Lampedusa has caused social harm to the island's local community and environment.

For example, there are a very large number of law enforcement and military agents in Lampedusa; however, authorities focus on border duties and do not often intervene in local matters, which makes parts of the population feel abandoned and vulnerable to crime. This is made worse when migrants are kept on the island for months instead of being transferred to the mainland in a timely manner, which causes friction and increases social tensions for locals. The island's economy and its environment are also heavily affected by the border. Mediterranean migration is considered a newsworthy topic, so Lampedusa features often in the media; this fame brings tourists to the island, but bad publicity can quickly bring great economic losses, which is a constant source of anxiety for locals. Alternative sources of income such as fishing are made difficult by border authorities using up the space needed by fishing boats. Furthermore, many of the boats used by migrants to reach the island are often left to sink out at sea or in the harbour, and the wrecks are a danger to fishing boats and cause marine pollution. Migrant boats can also pollute the island, as they are sometimes amassed on land and left to decay for years at a time in large dumps. Finally, the border's presence has a heavy emotional toll on residents, who regularly witness traumatic events such as migrant shipwrecks. Such events also attract great numbers of journalists, politicians, researchers, and other commentators, whose intrusions make it harder for residents to process their grief on their own terms. I conclude by suggesting that the constant state of crisis and uncertainty brought by borderisation makes residents fearful to openly oppose the border's presence.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the early hours of 3 October 2013, an overcrowded fishing boat carrying over 500 people capsized just off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa. The boat had departed the coast of Libya carrying migrants originating mainly from sub-Saharan African countries; at least 360 of them died, and several more were declared missing. The scale of the disaster triggered an outpouring of public grief and declarations of solidarity, both nationally and internationally. The Italian Government immediately declared two days of national mourning and announced that victims would receive honorary Italian citizenship, though the latter pledge would remain unfulfilled (Aime and Ballerini, 2015). Meanwhile, survivors were charged with illegal immigration, a criminal offence under the Italian "Bossi-Fini" law (Law no. 189, 30 July 2002), and confined to Lampedusa's Identification and Expulsion Centre (RSI News, 2014). Khaled Bensalam, a Tunisian man identified by other survivors as the captain of the boat, was sentenced to 18 years in prison by Italian courts for culpable shipwreck and multiple counts of manslaughter, while Somali man Elmi Mouhamud Muhidin was sentenced to 30 years for human trafficking and sexual violence, having raped several migrant women on the long journey through the desert to Libya and then by sea to Europe. Lampedusa's city council brought a civil action during both men's criminal proceedings, declaring the island an injured party (Comune di Lampedusa e Linosa, 2014).

The events of the 3 October are a clear example of the challenges of untangling border-related harms from a criminological point of view. Criminal justice responses assigned culpability for the tragedy to various individuals based on their acts and omissions, but these legal responses were not in step with wider social reactions and public denunciations. Instead, most voices in the media, political, and academic discourse pointed to the responsibilities of EU member states and of the European Union as a whole, whose focus on securitising borders was considered to blame for the increasing death tolls of Mediterranean sea-crossings (Bergoglio, 2013; King and DeBono, 2013; Dines, Montagna and Ruggiero, 2014; Farkas and Guidelli, 2018). Similarly, when declaring the island's participation in criminal proceedings, the then mayor of Lampedusa denounced Italian and European institutions as equally responsible for the deaths, as *"through their current laws on asylum they prevent those who escape war, poverty, and persecution from doing so without risking their life¹"* (Comune di Lampedusa e Linosa, 2014). In addition to the intentional acts and omissions of individuals, commentators thus pointed the finger at wider structural and institutional responsibilities which

¹ Original text: "[...] una pesante responsabilità delle istituzioni, italiane ed europee, che con le leggi sull'asilo attualmente in vigore non consentono a chi scappa da guerra, miseria e persecuzioni di farlo senza mettere a rischio la propria vita."

remained beyond the remit of the courts, and were unaffected by trial outcomes. Indeed, the high lethality of Mediterranean migration routes has long been linked to institutional choices by the European Union and its member states, such as the implementation of increasingly restrictive migration policies or the refusal to support search and rescue operations (Amnesty International, 2014; Hartmann and Papanicolopulu, 2015; Crawley and Sigona, 2016; McMahon and Sigona, 2016; Cusumano, 2017a; Steinhilper and Gruijters, 2017). Border deaths in the Mediterranean are therefore the preventable consequence of a complex interplay of national, international, and supranational policies and practices (Cusumano, 2017b; United Nations, 2017; Okafor, 2019; Mann, 2021). Far from an exceptional event, the 3 October shipwreck must be situated in its wider context: according to data collected by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, over 17,000 people are known to have died while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea into Europe between 2014 and 2020 alone (UNHCR, 2021). Border zones such as Lampedusa have become the stage of repeated tragedies over the past few decades, raising questions over the nature and causes of the injuries suffered by these communities, their preventability, and their long-term consequences.

In this thesis I will make two key arguments. Firstly, I will establish the ways in which zemiology (that is, the study of social harm) is a more effective framework than criminology to study the social impact of border control policies and practices, and I will develop a specific zemiological theory and methodology for this purpose. Secondly, I will argue that the production and performance of the Euro-Mediterranean border is not designed to solely affect those who seek to cross it, but it has deep and wide-ranging consequences for border communities; taking Lampedusa as a case study, I will evidence how the border's presence on the island has caused insecurity, instability, and repeated trauma to the resident community, and damaged the island's natural environment. I will show why these outcomes must be conceptualised as social harms under the zemiological approach I propose in this thesis, furthering zemiology's development as a discipline and uncovering the mechanisms through which border policies perpetuate social injury and injustice in Lampedusa. In this introductory chapter I present the thesis' research problem, briefly contextualising it within existing scholarship; I then explain the thesis' aims and research questions and conclude with a summary of the research project's key findings and original contributions.

1.1 Research problem, aims, and questions

When considered from a criminological point of view, instances of irregular migration such as Mediterranean sea-crossings seemingly revolve around the conflict between a

sovereign state and the individuals who seek to gain unauthorised entry to its territory (Grewcock, 2003; Bosworth, 2008; Aas, 2011; Triandafyllidou and Maroukis, 2012; Nomikos, 2013). This conflict may lead to the criminalisation of offenses such as human trafficking or, in some jurisdictions, unauthorised entry, with individuals who move irregularly facing potential sanctions according to the state's legal system (Quassoli and Carbonaro, 2013; Mitsilegas, 2015). However, a crime-centric approach obscures the complex structural and historical factors that influence international migration, for instance the relationships between countries of origin and destination, the influence of supranational political entities such as the European Union, and the role of global inequalities and colonial legacies as drivers of displacement. A zemiological approach seems intrinsically better suited to overcome these limitations thanks to its specific focus on structures and its independence from state-defined categories (Muncie, 2000; Hillyard and Tombs, 2007). In *Beyond Criminology: Taking Harm Seriously*, the first book to explore the potential of social harm approaches, Webber (2004) untangles some of the complex historical and political factors that have long facilitated harmful migration policies in Western Europe, and the wilful choice by national and supranational institutions to tolerate the preventable deaths and suffering these cause. More recently, scholars such as Canning (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) have shown the value of employing a zemiological approach to uncover and examine border harms in different jurisdictions. Zemiology thus provides a more suitable framework to understand border control compared to criminological approaches.

However, critics such as Zedner (2011) have argued that zemiology lacks the coherent and consistent approach necessary to conceptualise and examine social harms; furthermore, Zedner adds, zemiology's disparaging view of the criminal justice system fails to consider criminal law's powerful role in defending individuals from abuses of state power (ibid.). Nevertheless, as Zedner concedes elsewhere, this objection is not always pertinent when it comes to migration control, as proven by the phenomenon of crimmigration (2013). By merging different aspects of criminal and migration law, crimmigration allows the state wider discretion in the use of coercive measures, thus reducing the individual's defences against abuses (Stumpf, 2006; Bosworth and Guild, 2008; Aas, 2014; Bowling and Westenra, 2015). Crimmigration undermines the checks and balances written within criminal law, and as such deserves increased scrutiny; however, a criminological approach to understanding crimmigration remains undesirable, as it risks normalising crime-centrism, ignoring the role of wider social policies in controlling non-citizens, and overestimating the state's power to decide migration policy (Bosworth, 2008; Velloso, 2013; Canning, 2018; Fabini, 2019). These limitations are particularly relevant when examining border control within a supranational political entity such as the European Union, whose border management is shaped by a complex web of

regional political and socio-economic interests, further mediated by national, regional, and international legislation (Green and Grewcock, 2002; Zapata-Barrero, 2009; Finotelli and Sciortino, 2013; Geddes and Taylor, 2013; Mitsilegas, 2015). In sum, border control represents a blind spot for criminology, which is intrinsically limited in its ability to understand and conceptualise the control of non-citizens. This blind spot, I suggest, is effectively a zemiology-shaped gap.

Still, Zedner's (2011) criticism of zemiology's lack of consistency cannot be ignored, as the discipline still lacks a consensus on how to define social harm, or on how to engage in zemiological research (Hillyard and Tombs, 2007; Copson, 2018; Raymen, 2019; Canning and Tombs, 2021). In fact, consensus is still lacking on whether zemiology is a discipline at all. At present, both criminology and zemiology seems to lack the necessary conceptual and methodological tools to make sense of the social impact of borders and border policies, particularly when it comes to the complex intersection of responsibilities at work at the edges of the European Union. In this thesis I have three overarching aims: first, to critically evaluate the available conceptual tools for the study of border-related harms; second, to propose a coherent theoretical and methodological framework for the study of border harms; and thirdly, to put this framework into practice by applying empirically to a case study, allowing theory and data analysis to inform one another. In order to achieve these aims I formulated the following questions to guide my research:

- 1) How do criminological and zemiological perspectives differ in how they approach migration control?
- 2) How well-equipped is the zemiological framework to describe and explain the social impact of borderisation?
- 3) What social harms, if any, have been caused by the borderisation of the island of Lampedusa to its resident community?

These questions are answered in different parts of the thesis. I tackle question one predominantly in Chapter 2, where I engage in a critique of the social construction of migration, and outline what I see as its uncritical problematisation within much criminological literature. I continue my comparison of criminological and zemiological approaches to migration control in Chapter 3, where I also partially answer question two by addressing what I see as the current limitations of zemiology, and I further explore them in Chapter 4 by answering two sub-questions: a) how should border-related harms be conceptualised?, and b) on which ontological and epistemological foundations is zemiological research to be based?. The answers I provide set the theoretical and methodological foundations necessary for me to address question three, which I answer in Chapters 5 to 11.

1.2 Research project and findings

In this thesis I make original theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions to the study of border harms. Firstly, I propose a zemiological framework based on a definition of social harm incorporating both Yar's (2012) idea of social harm as misrecognition and Fraser's (2000, 2005, 2006) conceptualisations of maldistribution and misrepresentation. By identifying social harm with social injustice, I theorise zemiology as an intrinsically transformative discipline, consistently striving towards an ideal state. Second, I argue that a critical realist view of reality must underpin zemiology's methodological foundations, embracing Archer's (1982, 1995) view of individuals and structures as co-generating over time, and establishing the paramountcy of examining events within their historical context. In line with the critical realist approach, I conclude that zemiological research is ill-suited to making universal causation claims, but instead can only infer causation mechanisms that are complex and context-specific. Lastly, these theoretical and methodological contributions are put into practice in the empirical part of the thesis, a case study of the island of Lampedusa. The purpose of this study was to establish the long-term social impact on Lampedusa's resident community of authorities' production and performance of the border on the island, a phenomenon I will call 'borderisation'. I conducted an ethnography of the island and carried out participant observations and qualitative interviews with residents, finding that borderisation has been socially harmful to Lampedusa's local community in several ways, which I have then categorised into five key types of social harm: security harms, racialised humanitarianism, economic harms, environmental harms, and cultural harms. I summarise each of these harms in the sub-sections below.²

1.2.1 Security harms

Security harms are discussed in Chapter 6, where I examine the Lampedusan community's complex relationship with law enforcement. Even though borderisation requires the presence of large numbers of law enforcement and military agents on the island, residents believe that state authorities have no interest in dealing with local concerns. Many residents consider Lampedusa a crime-free society where law enforcement is unnecessary, and welcome authorities' hands-off approach. However, others describe a "Faustian pact" where the state refrains from interfering with the community's affairs in return for tolerance of the border's presence. For these residents

² These paragraphs share material with a reflexive blog post I produced towards the end of the PhD process: Soliman, F. (2020). *Towards a Border Zemiology: Notes from the Field*. Border Criminologies Blog. Available at: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2021/02/towards-border> [accessed 26 August 2021]

Lampedusa is not crime-free at all, but a place where illegality is normalised. By not enforcing the law, authorities legitimise this permanent illegality, increasing insecurity for part of the population; this is particularly the case for women, who privately describe gender-based violence and sexual harassment as rife, but underacknowledged. Authorities' neglect thus exacerbates the community's existing security maldistributions and fails to protect those more vulnerable to victimisation.

1.2.2 Racialised victimhood and colonial legacies

The racialised nature of humanitarianism and hospitality on Lampedusa is discussed in Chapter 7, where I examine the relationship between sea-crossers and the resident community. Migrants arriving in Lampedusa are meant to be swiftly transferred to the mainland following identification in the island's Hotspot, but their stay often stretches into weeks or months. Given the poor conditions inside the Hotspot, migrants are unofficially allowed to exit through a hole in the fence and walk into town. Speaking to residents about their daily interactions with migrants, I found that the two groups largely have no contact. Still, most residents report some degree of hostility towards North African migrants, while sub-Saharan African migrants are considered in need of help and protection. This view is common among both supporters and opponents of migration, broadly reflecting a perception of North Africans as economic migrants and sub-Saharans as refugees. While this racialised hierarchy of victimhood appears to overturn colourism by being more sympathetic to those with darker skins, the victim-saviour dynamic still assigns them a subordinate position compared to residents. The paternalistic views of helpless and passive sub-Saharans expressed by residents seem a continuation of colonial racial stratification; support for refugees thus does not correspond to a lack of bias, nor does it challenge the racist foundations that underpin other residents' anti-migrant sentiments.

1.2.3 Economic harms

In Chapter 8 I discuss the economic and financial social harms linked to Lampedusa's international border. Borderisation has corresponded with a complete overhaul of the island's economy, which has switched from fishing to tourism. The tourism industry is intertwined with border control: while the salience of migration news keeps Lampedusa's name in the media, bad publicity can also lead to booking cancellations and the loss of a season's income. This is a constant source of anxiety for the local population, although a small minority can profit from times of crisis by providing accommodation to the influx of state agents. Still, the border unequivocally has a negative impact on Lampedusa's remaining fishing industry. Fishing boats struggle to find mooring space in the harbour, which has been taken over by law enforcement and military vessels, and is occupied by

confiscated migrant boats. When out at sea, trawlers can get damaged by the wrecks of abandoned migrant boats, ripping fishing nets and putting crews' lives at risk.

1.2.4 Environmental harms

In Chapter 9 I discuss the environmental harms caused by sunken migrant boats. A danger to trawlers, sunken wrecks are also hazardous to the environment, with pollutants such as oil and fuel seeping into the sea. Migrant boats that reach the island (whether independently or towed by rescuers) accumulate in the harbour and eventually break up, scattering debris in bad weather. Boats uplifted onto land are amassed in large 'boat cemeteries', where they leak pollutants into the soil. Periodically, the resulting environmental crisis triggers an emergency tendering process for the disposal of the boats, which paradoxically allows for the environmental protections normally required in public bidding to be suspended for the sake of expediency. The crisis-based circumventing of environmental regulations seems to also apply to military installations, such as radars, regardless of the possible risk to human and animal health.

1.2.5 Cultural harms

Lastly, in Chapter 10 I examine how Lampedusa's perpetual state of crisis affects not only its economy, security, and environment, but also residents' wellbeing and cultural safety, causing cultural harms to the community. The psychological impact of living in a borderised space is rarely acknowledged; still, residents told me stories of personal involvement in the aftermath of tragedies, such as contributing to rescue operations, witnessing the cries of survivors, hosting the families of victims. Countless coffins have been transported through the town over the years, rapidly filling up the local cemetery. These traumatic experiences are routinely appropriated and squeezed into self-serving narratives by journalists, politicians, and researchers, with little consideration of the cumulative impact of secondary trauma on residents. The world's gaze has become part of the borderisation process itself, as the border spectacle normalises the exclusionary violence of the border and the exploitation of Lampedusa's community.

The specific examples outlined above illustrate the key socially harmful outcomes that borderisation has had on Lampedusa. While in this brief summary they may appear to be distinct, they in fact share a common foundation in crisis, a consequence of the border's perpetual production of states of emergency. As I discuss in Chapter 11, this endless cycle of crisis acts as a silencer of dissent, ensuring local residents' acquiescence with the border, in spite of its harmful consequences. Borderisation thus exercises controls over both migrants and non-migrants, ensuring that border communities are subordinated to the power of institutional actors. In accordance with the theoretical and methodological framework I develop and adopt in this thesis, these findings are highly

contextual and thus cannot be generalised too widely; nevertheless, this research provides a novel framework with which to illuminate and explain border harms and their generative mechanisms, and uncovers issues that have so far been unexplored in existing literature, such as environmental border harms or the silently silencing nature of borderisation.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In the first half of the chapter, I briefly summarise how the phenomenon of migration has been studied and conceptualised in the field of criminology, and how criminology's dominance in migration research continues to normalise the framing of migration as a crime issue. I begin by analysing the complex and often contradictory ways in which migration is defined and quantified within academic research, policy-making, and political and media discourse. Such variety of definitions exposes the social, legal, and historical construction of the figure of the migrant, challenging the ostensive neutrality of the term. While critical approaches within criminology have sought to deconstruct the concept of crime and move beyond state-centred categorisations, criminological research has not dedicated similar efforts to deconstructing the phenomenon of migration; instead, the figure of the migrant is often presented as intrinsically distinct from the non-migrant, as evidenced in the considerable body of research dedicated to the search for a causal link between migration and crime. However, such uncritical problematisation of mobility is not universal. Scholars such as Melossi, for example, have recently pointed at migration as the key to critically examine wider processes of criminalisation and understand the social construction of crime (2015). Meanwhile, the study of crimmigration has widened our understanding of the intersection between crime control and migration control. These critical approaches notwithstanding, criminological approaches to the study of migration remain limited in their privileging of the state's penal power as their unit of analysis, obscuring the impact of non-criminal coercive or punitive measures and failing to account for the international and supranational dimensions of migration control. This is particularly the case in the European Union, where migration control and border enforcement practices are increasingly centralised and may transcend member states' interests. I draw on these limitations to suggest that a social harm framework should substitute a crime-centric approach to the study of migration and border control, allowing us to transcend the boundaries of the nation state.

In the second half of the chapter, I delve in more depth into how the European Union manages international migration, analysing how the Union's overarching aims drive policy and dictate individual states' migration control practice. In particular, I explain how the prioritisation of intra-EU mobility is linked to the securitisation of the bloc's external borders, which is in turn affected by international law mechanisms such as human rights and refugee protection instruments. Embracing an understanding of borders as social and political processes rather than geographical features, I show how the prioritisation of the prevention of irregular entry by the European Union has driven the increased borderisation of peripheral areas on its southern border. As I demonstrate

in the final part of this chapter, the process of borderisation at the Euro-Mediterranean border results in the assimilation of certain islands into the border enforcement machinery, turning them into sites of control and confinement. While the increasing role of islands in border control has received much attention in both migration and island studies, little attention has been given to understanding the social impact of borderisation on resident island communities. I conclude the chapter by introducing the island of Lampedusa, explaining the reasons behind my choice of it as an ideal example of a borderised space.

2.1 Migration and criminology: A brief overview

In this section I briefly summarise some of the key contributions by criminology to the field of migration studies. I begin by examining the difficulties of defining migration, and the different ways in which the figure of the migrant is conceptualised in research, policy-making, and public discourse. I explain how such definitions are never neutral, but rather embody historically and politically contingent points of view on the legitimacy of different kinds of mobility and constructions of belonging. The complexities of defining and quantifying migration are in many ways reminiscent of the complexities of defining and quantifying crime, a similarity that suggests that criminology may be naturally equipped with the conceptual tools necessary to engage critically with the topic. However, I argue that criminological research on migration has often fallen short of supporting this point; instead, it has historically focussed on proving an assumed relationships of causality between crime and migration, reifying both phenomena in the process, and framing migration as a crime issue. While scholars such as Melossi (2015) have adopted a more critical approach, using the example of migration to delve into processes of criminalisation, there has been no equivalent examination within criminology of processes of “migrantisation” and how they shape the problematisation of mobility. An important step in this direction has been taken in recent years by research on the phenomenon of crimmigration and the critical examination of states’ migration control practices. Notwithstanding the importance of this field of inquiry, it is limited in its analysis by its fundamentally crime-centric approach, which understates the prevalence and significance of coercive administrative measures in migration control. Furthermore, crimmigration tends to privilege domestic manifestations of state control, obscuring the importance of wider international and supranational dimensions. I conclude the section by arguing that these limitations can be overcome by adopting a social harm approach, suggesting that zemiology should replace criminology in the study of migration-related concerns.

2.1.1 Who is a migrant?

Despite its widespread use, the word migrant has no agreed definition in law, policy, or public discourse. The International Organisation for Migration, for instance, defines migrant as an umbrella term which includes anyone leaving their place of habitual residence, for whatever reason or length of time, and without necessarily crossing an international border (IOM, 2019). This loose categorisation inevitably includes many who are not commonly labelled as migrants, such as soldiers on deployment or students moving into a university campus. State legislation tends to be similarly broad; in UK law, for instance, there is no specific definition of who a migrant is, rather just a distinction between those who are subject to immigration control and those who are not³. This distinction excludes many categories who may still be labelled migrants in public discourse, such as settled EEA nationals or their non-EEA family members.

2.1.1.1 Quantifying the undefined

Attempts to pin down a 'common sense' definition of migrant by applying fixed parameters come with practical implications for policy and research. In their regular briefings for the University of Oxford's Migration Observatory, Anderson and Blinder find that migrants are defined and counted in different ways by various UK institutions, which undermines both the reliability and meaningfulness of available quantitative data on migration (2015, 2019). The reports identify three main criteria used to define migrants in UK datasets: country of birth, nationality, and intended length of stay in the country. At first glance these criteria may appear comprehensive, but while there certainly is some overlap, it must be noted that they are far from interchangeable (see Figure 1).

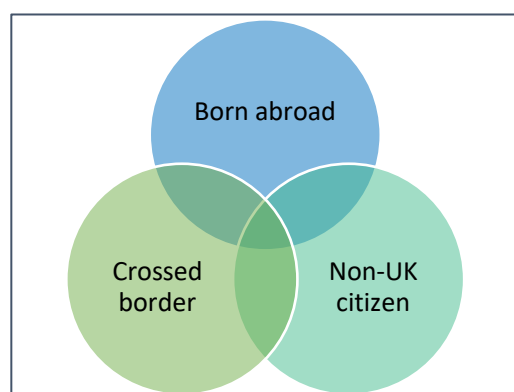


Figure 1 - Different ways of categorising migrants in statistical datasets

Defining migrants by country of birth, for instance, also includes British citizens who were born abroad. On the other hand, identifying migrants with those with foreign nationality is problematic because nationality is changeable, as citizenships can be acquired or lost. Furthermore, nationality and citizenship may be perceived as distinct; individuals born in Northern Ireland, for instance, have a right under the Belfast Agreement to identify as Irish, British, or

³ A 'person subject to immigration control' is defined in section 13(2) of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 as a person who requires leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom under the Immigration Act 1971.

both. Although the British government maintains that Northern Irish people automatically acquire British citizenship at birth, many identify solely as Irish and may only hold an Irish passport (Boyd, 2020). Rather than being proof of migration, identifying as non-British may be the expression of a cultural and national identity which may not reflect a person's formal legal status as understood under UK law. Equating foreignness with migration is thus based on the assumption that people are mobile and borders stationary, but as the case of Northern Ireland shows, the opposite can be true. Furthermore, shifting national boundaries can change how human mobility is classified at different points in time. Taking Baltic states as an example, Gorodzeisky and Leykin highlight how individuals who moved within the bloc's borders at the time of the USSR are today re-categorised as foreign-born international migrants in datasets used by the OECD, Eurostat, and the World Bank (2019). These categorisations, Gorodzeisky and Leykin argue, erase the political processes through which these international borders came into existence, and can be used to bolster exclusionary ethno-nationalist rhetoric. It is therefore unsurprising that counting migrants by country of birth or by citizenship can yield widely different results: according to a recent briefing paper prepared by the House of Commons Library, about 14% of UK residents were born abroad, while about 9% are foreign nationals (Sturge, 2020). It is important to note that even if these percentages were closer in size it would still not make the two definitions interchangeable: for example, people born in Northern Ireland are counted as British in UK government statistics regardless of their national identity; if those who identify solely as Irish nationals were counted as non-British, the proportion of foreign nationals would increase, but with no increased overlap with the proportion of residents born abroad.

Different limitations apply to the third criterion for defining migrants identified by Anderson and Blinder, which is based on the intended length of stay declared by travellers upon crossing the UK border. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) defines a long-term international migrant as someone intending to live in the UK for at least one year, based on their declarations in the International Passenger Survey (IPS). As Anderson and Blinder point out, however, intentions and reality often do not match, and individuals may leave much earlier or much later than declared. Furthermore, the IPS includes travellers of all nationalities, so UK citizens entering the UK to settle for at least a year also count as incoming migrants. Conversely, datasets used by the Home Office dispense with the one-year limit altogether, instead counting all entries as migrants regardless of the intended length of their stay. These widely differing ways of defining migrants, coupled with a lack of data on those departing the UK, make it unfeasible to accurately estimate the number of migrants present in the UK at any given time. A lack of transparency on these limitations can skew public debate and drive policy that is not based on fact. For instance, in 2017 the Office for Statistics Regulation released a report

declaring available data on student migration “potentially misleading for a topic of major public interest and policy sensitivity”, challenging the evidence base of the then UK Government’s upcoming reform of student visas (Office for Statistics Regulation, 2017, p. 17).

2.1.1.2 Migration without mobility

The complexities of quantifying migration are unsurprising, as a migrant status is a socio-historical construction rather than an objective quality of the person. It should also be noted that migration does not need to have an international dimension to be problematized and regulated by states; for example, several east Asian countries operate systems of household registration for the purpose of strictly regulating and securitising internal mobility, restricting access to public services and even affecting the recognition of citizenship (Chung, Draudt and Tian, 2020). Similarly, the rights and status of internal migrants in India are diminished compared to non-migrant citizens (Abbas, 2016). As Abbas notes, the estimated global number of internal migrants is over three times greater than the estimated number of international migrants, with many of these living in countries that implement forms of internal migration control. On a global scale, the IOM’s wide definition of migrants as including all degrees of mobility is thus the most comprehensive, even though perceptions change greatly at a local level.

It is also the case, however, that a migrant status may be passed down through the generations regardless of the actual national and cultural identity of the individual, and without movement. In the German Victimisation Survey, for example, respondents are counted as migrants whenever one of their parents was born abroad and moved to Germany after 1949 (Birkel *et al.*, 2019). The social stigma often attached to a migrant status can also be passed down to so-called second generation migrants, who may experience exclusion or discrimination when their belonging to the polity is contested (Kiliç and Menjívar, 2013). Furthermore, processes of racialisation can crystallise a migrant status for multiple generations in contradiction with legal and cultural identities (Silverstein, 2005; Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012). The othering of migrants’ descendants often reflects existing ethnic hierarchies dictating which communities are welcome and which role they are to occupy within society (Ford, 2011; Erel, Murji and Nahaboo, 2016). For instance, according to a study by Dustmann *et al.*, British-born children of ethnic minority migrants in the UK experience higher unemployment rates and receive lower wages than white British-born people, despite generally outperforming them in education (2011). It is therefore impossible to uncouple the understanding of migration from an understanding of processes of racialisation, and of how these interact with issues of gender, class, and citizenship (Mishra Tarc, 2013; Erel, Murji and Nahaboo, 2016; Ossipow, Counilh and Chimienti, 2019).

2.1.1.3 Migrants or refugees? Defining irregularity

A final consideration on defining migrants involves the question of refugees. The so-called European migration crisis in 2015, when the high number of people attempting to cross the southern Mediterranean border of the European Union gained global media and political attention, ignited a public debate over who should be defined as a migrant (Apostolova, 2015; Holmes and Castaneda, 2016). Fearing that the negative connotations attached to migration may undermine public support for refugees, organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) suggested that border-crossers in the Mediterranean be always called “migrants and refugees”, in order to recognise the two categories as fundamentally distinct (UNHCR, 2016). Others, such as news channel Al Jazeera, announced that they would only use the word refugee whenever reporting on the events unfolding in the Mediterranean, declaring the word migrant to be too disparaging (Malone, 2015). Unlike migrants, refugees are afforded specific rights under international legislation and cannot be returned to the country they have fled or be penalised for irregularly crossing a border. While legal provisions are clearly distinct, in practice the difference between refugees and migrants is not always clear cut. In a recent large-scale study, Crawley and Skleparis show how the distinction between forced and voluntary migration underpinning the labelling of refugees versus migrants fails to recognise the complex and ever-changing motivations that drive human mobility (2018). Rather than expressing objective qualities, they argue, the distinction between refugees and migrants attempts to erase nuanced and contingent human experiences, cramming them into fixed policy categories which were created for the convenience of state actors. Crawley and Skleparis support Apostolova’s position that the refugee-migrant dichotomy is a form of “categorical fetishism” rather than a defined conceptual boundary, and as such should not be uncritically perpetuated by migration scholars (Apostolova, 2015). Furthermore, Crawley and Skleparis and Apostolova suggest that singling out refugees as worthy of sympathy contributes to the vilification of other migrants and the legitimisation of harsher exclusionary practices. While history suggests that this distinction has often helped drive public support for refugees, it also shows that the resulting short term waves of public compassion usually fail to effect sustainable change, and thus bring limited long term benefit to either refugees or migrants (Long, 2013). The debates and historical context outlined above inform the decision to define Mediterranean sea-crossers as migrants rather than refugees in this thesis. While seemingly neutral, the use of the word migrant is imbued with political significance, and aligns with the critical approach advocated by Apostolova (2015) and Crawley and Skleparis (2018). In this work, I thus embrace what Carling (2015, 2016) defines as the inclusive approach to defining human mobility: by adopting an umbrella term I seek to reject projected

categories which imply hierarchies of worth, instead acknowledging each individual's circumstances and motivations as unique.

It is also important to note that regular and irregular mobility are not always easily distinguishable (Walsh, 2020). For instance, ever-changing migration regulations can become processes of illegalisation, so irregular migration should be seen as a legal, social, and political construction (Düvell, 2011). Furthermore, naturalised citizens or citizens with a migrant background can be unilaterally illegalised through processes such as citizenship deprivation (Tripkovic, 2021). On the other hand, mass regularisations and amnesties may be used in countries with large black labour markets to regularise the status of migrant workers, as in the case of Italy (Ambrosini, 2012; Kubal, 2013). Migrants' legal status is thus fluid and conditional, and the complexity of the systems regulating migration means that migrants' situations may often be far from clear-cut, giving rise to a persistent state of semi-legality (Kubal, 2013). In this thesis I focus on unauthorised migration in borderised spaces, where the legal status of migrants is similarly undefined, as irregular border crossings do not necessarily contravene migration restrictions. While I use the words irregular, unauthorised, or undocumented as synonyms to define this aspect of mobility, it must be noted that these terms are not interchangeable when describing migrants already in the state's territory; for instance, the case of the Windrush generation in the UK shows how migrants may be left undocumented by changing documentation requirements, without this automatically invalidating the regularity of their status (Wardle and Obermuller, 2019). The complexities of defining, understanding, and quantifying migration which I have summarised in this section must be kept in mind when considering criminology's conceptualisation of the migrant and the assumptions that have guided much scholarship on the relationship between migration and crime.

2.1.2 The crime and migration nexus

The social construction of migration is many ways reminiscent of the social construction of crime. According to Durkheim's "community of saints" metaphor (1938, p. 100), crime is an inevitable feature within a healthy society due to human propensity to draw boundaries between the behaviours which ought to be permitted and those which ought to be discouraged. While these boundaries fluctuate in accordance with changes in society's mores, those behaviours deemed so undesirable as to warrant the intervention of the state are regulated through legal rather than purely social definitions. Strictly speaking, an act may be defined as criminal when it contravenes a criminal law established by the authority recognised in the jurisdiction in which it has taken place. In practice, criminal law and public perceptions of what is criminal influence one another without necessarily overlapping, so there is rarely a perfect match between what may be

construed as criminal behaviour and what is legally defined as such. This recognition of the historically, socially, and politically contingent nature of crime has long underpinned critical and radical criminological scholarship, including among others the work of Becker (1963), Matza (1969), Hulsman (1986), and Michalowski (2016). As I argue in the previous section, the phenomenon of migration is similarly subject to ever-mutating and at times contradictory socio-legal definitions. Given this fundamental conceptual similarity with crime, it is unsurprising that migration has historically represented a key theme within criminology, as Melossi observes in the introduction to his book "Crime, Punishment and Migration" (2015); in fact, the existence of a migration-crime nexus has long been the object of criminological debate (Mears, 2001; Hagan, Levi and Dinovitzer, 2008; Trager and Kubrin, 2014). Criminological scholarship, however, usually refrains from deconstructing the concept of migration, instead focusing much attention on either proving or disproving a causal relationship with crime.

2.1.2.1 The search for causality

The endeavour is inevitably hindered by definitional and quantificational issues, with causal inferences often based on unrepresentative data or untestable assumptions. A good example of these issues is found in Newman et al.'s comparative study of foreign-born incarcerated individuals in Australia, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and USA (2002). Newman et al. quantify crime in each country by assuming a direct proportionality between prison population and crime rates, while quantifying migration by counting incarcerated individuals born abroad. Despite acknowledging the limited quality of their data, Newman et al. are less ready to acknowledge the limits in their methodology; for instance, they do not consider whether the number of incarcerated foreign-born individuals is proportionate to the number of foreign-born residents in the country, nor do they explain how the substantial differences in the imprisonment rates in the countries in their sample may impact their analysis. They also fail to address any of the points raised by Hagan and Palloni in their influential work on the incarceration of Hispanic immigrants in the USA (1999), where they highlight that no meaningful comparison between the numbers of incarcerated citizens and non-citizens can be made without adjusting for gender and age, given that young men tend to be overrepresented in migrant populations; in fact, Hagan and Palloni's analysis finds that the incarceration rates of Hispanic migrants do not reflect higher offending rates, but are instead inflated by immigration and criminal justice policies (Hagan and Palloni, 1999). Newman et al.'s analysis is by comparison quite rudimentary, simply adding a country's prison population to the number of its citizens who are incarcerated abroad to quantify the total criminality "produced" by a country, then using that figure to determine which countries export or import the most criminal migrants. Despite the unreliability of the data and the

questionable methodology, the authors generalise the study's findings in their concluding remarks by declaring that migrants bring diseases to their host countries and "criminality may spread in the same way" (Newman, Freilich and Howard, 2002, p. 162). The authors' inference that migration is inherently criminogenic is not accompanied by any aetiological explanation of crime, but the three possible interpretations offered by the authors are steeped in positivism, whether individual (i.e. foreign-born individuals are prone to criminal behaviour), sociological (i.e. social conditions in host countries cause migrants to offend), or a combination of the two (i.e. discriminatory policies cause foreign-born criminals to either be detected more easily or to increase their offending). These positivist assumptions posit a deterministic causal link between migration and crime which completely ignores the complexity and the social, historical, and legal contingency of both phenomena. Such problematic ontological and epistemological foundations, while particularly egregious in the study considered above, reflect common theoretical and methodological limitations in much criminological literature about migration (Mears, 2001). For example, in their brief review of literature on migration and crime, Belli et al. acknowledge that the studies they include rely on different definitions and measures which make comparisons difficult and results potentially contradictory, and yet ground their review on an unchallenged assumption that a relationship of cause and effect objectively links the two phenomena (2010). The presence of an initial assumption of causality is of course warranted in deductive research, but the authors stop short of challenging it in the face of unsupportive data, for instance when the correlation is shown to be too weak to be significant, or the direction of causation appears to be reversed (ibid.). The particular lack of methodological rigor in Newman et al. and Belli et al. may be imputable to researcher bias, but I suggest it is symptomatic of a more widespread ontological problem linked to an uncritical problematisation of migration by criminology.

2.1.2.2 The immigrant paradox and criminology's ideological struggle

It seems important at this point to clarify that research evidence overwhelmingly finds the causal relationship between migration and crime to be either insignificant or negative, meaning that migration is usually correlated with a decrease in crime (Lee and Martinez, 2009). The negative relationship between migration and crime has been shown to apply at individual (Mears, 2001), neighbourhood (Sampson, Morenoff and Raudenbush, 2005), and macro levels (Ousey and Kubrin, 2009), in different jurisdictions (Engbersen, Van der Leun and De Boom, 2007; Rumbaut and Ewing, 2007; Bell and Machin, 2011; Bianchi, Buonanno and Pinotti, 2012), and independently of legal status (Bersani et al., 2018). In a reflection about ongoing controversy over immigration in American discourse, Sampson describes being harshly criticised from both the right

and the left of the political spectrum for suggesting it is time the negative relationship between migration and crime be acknowledged and taken seriously (2008). This bipartisan criticism, Sampson posits, is due to migration contradicting long-held beliefs about the causes of crime. Referring to what he calls the 'Latino Paradox', Sampson argues that Hispanic Americans' low levels of violence and criminal offending challenge the usually accepted link between deprivation and crime, as Hispanic Americans generally experience high levels of socio-economic disadvantage (Sampson, Morenoff and Raudenbush, 2005). At the same time, evidence that foreign-born Hispanic migrants are less likely to offend compared to second or third-generation individuals also contradicts the protective role of social attachment expected by social control theories, such as Hirschi's social bond theory (1969); in addition, the protective power of increased incoming migration in urban settings further conflicts with ecological explanations of crime such as social disorganisation theory (Ferraro, 2016). Rather than an attempt to address an observable problem, the focus on a causal link between migration and crime may have been fed by the ideological struggle over the aetiology of crime and the predictive value of different criminological theories.

The apparent incongruity between theories of crime and the real-world impact of migration is consistent with what is more widely known within sociology as the immigrant paradox, summarised by Gottfredson and Hirschi as the "*disjunction between theoretical expectations about immigration and the facts*" (2020). Gottfredson and Hirschi take this disjunction as evidence that sociological theories of crime are fundamentally inadequate; instead, they suggest migrants' lower offending to be the result of a higher degree of self-control, thus supporting their self-control theory of crime (1990, 2020). Furthermore, Gottfredson and Hirschi add, employment and family ties act as protective factors against offending, so immigration policies privileging workers and family reunifications can decrease crime rates. Despite the claim of consistency with evidence, however, Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory remains limited by the fundamentally tautological argument first identified by Akers: if low self-control is defined and measured as the propensity to commit crime, as the theory suggests, then the two are equivalent and it is nonsensical to suggest a causal link between them (1991). As a result, the conclusion that migrants' lower offending rates evidence a higher degree of self-control is also a tautology, and it offers no support in proving the theory's validity; in fact, were migrants' offending rates higher than non-migrants', then the theory would simply posit that they have a lower degree of self-control. Aside from this logical fallacy, another fundamental limitation is identified in Miller and Burack's feminist critique (1993): in its search for neutrality and generalisability, the theory in fact homogenises its study population by ignoring the existence and impact of power structures, social relations, and ethnic, gender, and class differences. The same can be

said of Gottfredson and Hirschi's conceptualisation of migrants as having similar personality traits, motivations, and life circumstances, a categorisation which ignores not only the real-life complexity of migrants' lives, but also the socio-historical construction of the migrant label itself, and the myth that it describes a discrete category of people. In fact, the migrant paradox may itself be a product of this over-simplification. Feliciano and Lanuza, for instance, contest the usefulness of this concept in the field of education, where research consistently finds that children with a migrant background achieve far higher educational attainment than their peers (2017). Parental education and socio-economic background being predictors of educational attainment, migrants' children performance is counterintuitive given that they generally score lower in both factors than their peers; however, Feliciano and Lanuza note, research often focuses only on migrants' post-migration status, neglecting their pre-migration circumstances and the effect of migration itself. For instance, downward occupational mobility is a common consequence of migration, so migrants' present socio-economic status may be lower than it was in their home country. Furthermore, similar levels of educational attainment may have different value in different education systems, where opportunities for educational mobility vary. Once the pre-migration circumstances and relative status of migrants are considered, Feliciano and Lanuza argue, the educational outcomes of their children are revealed to be in line with expectations. The presence of a supposedly paradoxical link between crime and migration may thus be the result of similar oversimplification and flawed assumptions, exposing the dangers of testing criminological theory through complex social phenomena whose nature is neither understood nor explored in sufficient depth.

Moreover, research on crime and migration seemingly embraces two key assumptions: that a fundamental difference separates migrants and citizens, and that migration is defined and managed by the state. These assumptions have been decried as problematic by critical migration researchers such as Dahinden, who argues for the "demigrantisation" of research to eradicate what she sees as institutionalised deference to state-defined categories and priorities (2016). Dahinden's critique is reminiscent of those critical approaches calling for the "decriminalisation" of criminology, as Muncie (2000) defines them, by moving away from state-defined concept of crime; these include, for instance, Schwendinger and Schwendinger's suggestion that the concept of crime be substituted with human rights violations (1970), or Hulsman's reflections on the need to uncouple social justice from crime and to abolish criminal justice altogether (1986). However, these critical approaches have seldom been applied to the criminological study of migration. In fact, Melossi (2015) argues, the decline of critical criminology towards the end of the 20th century has coincided with the rise of a neo-liberal political climate in which states' decisions to centre the discourse on migration

around an agenda of security has gone largely unchallenged. Melossi attempts to address this gap by looking at migration as a tool to understand processes of criminalisation. In Melossi's words "*migration [...] is a very good example of a broader criminological truth*" (2015, p. x), that is that crime can only be understood by investigating the wider social and political processes linked to its characterisation as a permissible or impermissible act, and the ways in which offenders are identified, labelled, and punished. However, Melossi's critical look at processes of criminalisation does not extend to processes of 'migranticisation', to coin a term in keeping with Dahinden's argument. For instance, there is no in-depth exploration of who the migrant is or by whom they are defined, nor is the deceptive neutrality of the term challenged. This lack of exploration represents an epistemological blind spot for critical criminology, where the established hierarchy of credibility is challenged when it comes to deviance, but still uncritically accepted as natural when it comes to migration. Furthermore, the act of looking at migration through the lens of crime reinforces and normalises the presence of a link between the two; as Becker has warned, no unbiased position can be taken in sociological research, every standpoint being intrinsically value-laden (1967). The normalisation of migration as a criminological problem can have negative consequences for migrants, as noted by Engbersen et al., for example by indirectly reinforcing the idea of intrinsic deviance as linked to nationality or ethnicity, or by facilitating the targeting of vulnerable groups such as irregular migrants by the criminal justice system (2007). Criminological scholarship should thus be mindful of its contribution to the problematisation of migration. Nevertheless, just as critical criminological inquiry offers an insight into the harmful consequences of crime control (Lemert, 1972; Mathiesen, 1986), its gaze can be turned to understand the harms caused by the criminalisation of migration, the criminogenic effects of migration policy, and the over-representation of non-citizens in criminal justice systems (Engbersen, Van der Leun and De Boom, 2007; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 2020). An important contribution in this direction has been made by the growing scholarship on the topic of crimmigration.

2.1.2.3 Law and border: Hybrid governance and the crimmigrant other

Regardless of research evidence, the political discourse around migration in many Western countries remains centred around the theme of security, and the categorisation of migration as a threat to be controlled through state intervention is rarely challenged (Bosworth, 2008). The practice of framing migration through crime is described by Pratt and Valverde (2002, p. 135) as a case of "*hybrid governance*", where different social issues and public concerns are merged together to create a new tool of governance able to thwart opposition by decreasing public solidarity towards the newly constructed hybrid threat. Blurring the line between crime and migration has both political and policy

consequences; for example, anxieties over international terrorism have translated not only into increasingly tight entry requirements for the citizens of countries deemed at risk, but also to limited access to health, welfare, or social services for those already in the country's territory (Bosworth, 2008). Meanwhile, accusations of bogus asylum claims, of welfare fraud, and of having a higher propensity for offending behaviour have progressively eroded the status of refugees and asylum seekers from victims deserving of assistance to potential security threats, leading to a widening gap between their treatment by nation states and the protection granted to them by international law (Simon, 1998; Cohen, 2002; Pratt and Valverde, 2002; Zetter, 2007; De Genova, 2013a). Indeed, what Cohen called a "hostile new agenda" against migrants emerging throughout Europe in the 1990s prompted him to add refugees and asylum seekers to the list of the moral panics of the era in the introduction to the third edition of the book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Cohen, 2002, p. xix). The criminalisation of migration thus perpetuates a climate of suspicion around migrants, which in turn validates racist and nativist views seeking to legitimise the marginalisation of entire communities by giving a claim to objectivity to their labelling of the undeserving classes (Weber and Bowling, 2008; Sklansky, 2012; De Genova, 2013a; Longazel, 2013).

The progressive interlocking of migration management and crime control has given rise to a novel assemblage which challenges traditional criminological approaches and has the non-citizen as its focal point. Migration management disrupts our understanding of how criminal law and criminal justice processes operate and shines a light on the novel ways in which state power manifests itself in a globalised world (Aas, 2013; Bosworth, 2008). On a national level, this is most evidently exemplified by the rise of crimmigration, i.e., the pervasive blurring of boundaries between criminal law and migration law. Crimmigration creates a hybrid legal framework where administrative coercion, presented as necessary and justified to maintain security, can be adopted without requiring the individual safeguards normally built within criminal proceedings (Stumpf, 2006; Sklansky, 2012; Bosworth & Guild, 2008; Aas, 2011). Migration law affords state agents huge discretionary powers to apprehend, detain, and eventually expel any foreign citizen, even in absence of evidence of criminal behaviour or breach of migration rules, but based on loosely defined security concerns (Aas, 2014). Decisions can therefore be based on suspicion, profiling, and presumption of risk rather than a criminal standard of proof, turning migration control into a form of 'pre-crime' unit which aims to swiftly remove potential threats (Zedner, 2007; Bigo, 2007). In the resulting para-criminal justice system, Zedner argues, non-citizens suspected of criminal behaviour can be diverted from the criminal justice system towards alternative administrative routes where the safeguards associated with the criminal process no longer apply; furthermore, the framing of detention as a security measure rather than a

punishment removes the obligation from the state to ensure it is proportionate or to minimise harm to the person (Guild, 2007; Aas, 2014; Hansen, 2014). While the objective of the criminal justice system is, at least in part, to rehabilitate the offender with the aim of reinserting them into the community, the para-criminal justice system aims to exclude and remove the potential threat represented by the non-citizen. Fundamental principles underpinning criminal law, such as presumption of innocence and the right to trial, are thus reframed by crimmigration as being reserved to the citizens of the state, while non-citizens can be subjected to ad hoc legal processes which are more likely to result in less favourable outcomes (Guild, 2007; Stumpf, 2013; Zedner, 2013).

The phenomenon of crimmigration certainly deserves to attract scholarly scrutiny, and its conceptualisation enriches criminology's understanding of state control and penal power. However, it must also be noted that there are limitations to examining migration control through the lens of crime. As Canning observes, this approach limits our enquiry to those aspects of migration control which are linked to criminalisation, when in fact coercive migration control practices are largely administrative and often involve the punitive use of social rather than criminal sanctions (2018, 2020). Furthermore, when viewed through a crime lens, even critical approaches to understanding migration policy inevitably focus on its domestic dimensions and on the nation state as the unit of analysis; however, international migration by its nature transcends the boundaries of the nation state, not just because it is a complex historically and politically contingent phenomenon, but also because it is in part regulated by international and supranational laws. As I argue earlier in this chapter, a domestic focus also reifies the figure of the migrant by reducing them to their post-migration status as conceptualised by the state; despite critical tradition, criminological approaches continue to struggle to deconstruct migration. Abundant evidence thus supports Canning's suggestion that criminology is not best placed to study border-related phenomena, and that a social harm framework may be more appropriate. I take this point further in the next chapter, where I examine more in depth existing theoretical frameworks on border harms and propose a zemiological methodology for their study. I continue this review chapter by explaining why this is particularly apt in the case of the European Union, where international law and regional interests impact on how states manage international migration. In the following section I summarise how EU-level management of international migration impacts on member states and on the construction of the external borders, with particular attention to the southern EU border in the Mediterranean.

2.2 National, supranational, international: Migration management in the European Union

As Melossi notes, the European Union is a political entity acting separately from individual member states, but which must also be seen as distinct from the wider region commonly conceptualised as Europe (2015, p. 89). As I argue above, migration management is not just a concern of the nation state, but is influenced and informed by the political, economic, and historical relationships between different countries or regions. The European Union provides an additional level of influence and control to these relationships, as EU policies regulating international mobility shape how member states manage migrants, while the control of the EU's borders has become increasingly centralised. In this section of the chapter, I briefly summarise how international migration is managed in the European Union, and how this is impacted by the interaction between international protection obligations, regional legal instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights, EU-level constitutional and legal concerns, and individual member states' priorities. A key driver of EU-level mobility management policy has been the need to manage the tension between facilitating internal mobility and controlling incoming migration, which has translated into starkly different management practices at the internal and external borders of the Union; in fact, the securitisation of the external borders has become the most visible aspect of EU-level migration policy in recent years, particularly with regard to the enforcement of the southern border, where it has had a strong local impact on border communities. At the Mediterranean border, this impact has been particularly felt by border islands, and I here introduce the case of Lampedusa.

2.2.1 *International migration in the European Union*

The European Union is a political entity with defined borders, a system of government, a body of law, and a notion of shared citizenship and common identity. These characteristics obviously do not make the European Union a nation state, but it can be said to largely function as one in its approach to managing international migration. The movement of EU nationals or legally resident non-EU nationals among member states, for instance, is categorised as intra-EU mobility and regulated differently from incoming international migration. One of the four key freedoms at the heart of the European Union's single market (i.e., free movement of goods, services, capital, and labour), the right of workers and their family members to move among member states is in fact inscribed in the core functional treaties of European Union: the 1992 Treaty on European Union (TEU), also known as Maastricht Treaty, and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Currently regulated by the Citizens' Rights Directive

2004/38/EC⁴, the right to freedom of movement and residence among member states is further protected by article 45 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Kennedy, Boudalaoui-Buresi and Konle-Seidl, 2021). Intra-EU mobility is facilitated by the removal of internal border controls within the Schengen area, which corresponds with an increased emphasis on reinforcing the external borders of the European Union and strictly controlling the arrival of non-EU citizens (Heuer, 2007; Mitsilegas, 2009; Geddes and Taylor, 2013; Jubany, 2014). The removal of internal frontiers and the securitisation of external borders are two faces of the same coin; for instance, article 3.2 of TEU shows the close link between the assistance of intra-EU mobility and the restriction of non-EU immigration:

"The Union shall offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of persons is ensured in conjunction with appropriate measures with respect to external border controls, asylum, immigration and the prevention and combating of crime."

While member states remain individually responsible for the management of non-citizens on their territory and set their own policy on the admission of non-EU citizens, the control of the European Union's external borders is subjected to centralised oversight through the increasing involvement of EU-level agencies such as FRONTEX and the use of shared databases like the Schengen Information System (SIS), the European Border Surveillance system EUROSUR, or the asylum fingerprint database Eurodac. The securitisation of the European Union's external borders thus plays a constructive role, contributing to the creation of a shared European identity and the building of a political community, performing rituals of inclusion and exclusion that afford growing mobility to some individuals while restricting more severely the movement of others (Bigo, 2002; Green and Grewcock, 2002; van Houtum and Pijpers, 2007; Zapata-Barrero, 2009; Finotelli and Sciortino, 2013).

The increased involvement of EU-level actors in the enforcement of external borders has led to Europe being defined as a fortress, but this metaphor obscures the permeability of borders and their increasingly diffused, stratified, and deterritorialised nature (Rigo, 2005; Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010). As Mezzadra and Neilson argue, the border is a space of transition rather than a simple line of exclusion, and forms part of the broader mechanisms regulating the production of labour power (2013). The sifting role played by the EU's external borders is thus inextricably linked with the needs of its labour market and follows global asymmetric hierarchies of exclusion. Since the 1970s, changes in visa

⁴ The Citizens' Rights Directive includes all EU member states plus three of the four European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members: Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. In the case of Switzerland, freedom of movement is regulated by bilateral agreements.

policies throughout the world have afforded increasing mobility rights to citizens from Europe and the Americas, while the citizens of African countries overall face growing restrictions (Mau *et al.*, 2015). This mobility divide is mirrored by EU visa policies, where increasing openness towards movement from Eastern European countries has corresponded with more heavily restricted migration from Africa and poorer Asian countries (Bigo, 2002, 2007; van Houtum and Pijpers, 2007; Finotelli and Sciortino, 2013; Mau *et al.*, 2015). Approaches to fighting unauthorised migration into the EU appear to be similarly asymmetrical, with higher tolerance shown towards irregular movement that is considered short term or seen as consistent with the region's wider political or financial goals, and the prioritisation of the defence of the southern borders via increasingly harsh enforcement policies (Finotelli and Sciortino, 2013; Mau *et al.*, 2015). A fundamental part of the control of the external borders of the European Union is played by so-called deterrence policies, that is policies designed to prevent the entry of undesired non-EU migrants; these include, for instance, visa controls in the country of departure and the sanctioning of private carriers who transport undocumented passengers (Collinson, 1996; Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2014). In addition to hindering migrants from staying irregularly on the Union's territory, deterrence policies play a key role in preventing non-EU citizens who may seek asylum in the European Union from accessing its territory and triggering international refugee protection obligations (Hathaway and Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2015). National and EU-level migration policies and border control practices are thus fundamentally shaped by the international obligations I briefly summarise below.

2.2.1.1 The protection of refugees: global, regional, and EU-level legal frameworks

Individuals fleeing their country of residence to escape persecution or other serious harm have the internationally recognised right to request asylum in another country. The right to seek and to enjoy asylum was first inscribed in article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, although it was not explicitly included in either the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Refugees' right to protection was thus enshrined in international law by the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, initially designed to protect the rights of Europeans fleeing their home countries following the events of the Second World War and its immediate aftermath. The Convention was later amended by the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, which removed the geographical and temporal limitations given by the Convention and turned asylum into a universal right. The 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol remain to this day the key international legislation protecting the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. The Convention stipulates that

these rights are to be applied universally and without discrimination, and recognises that asylum seekers may be unable to follow regular migration routes when leaving their country of origin, thus making provisions for receiving countries to not penalise them for irregular entry. Importantly, the Convention does not give asylum seekers the right to enter another state, but rather affirms a fundamental right to non-refoulement, meaning that under no circumstances a refugee or asylum seeker can be forcibly removed to a state where their life or freedom may be threatened. Non-refoulement is further protected by other international law instruments, such as the prohibition of torture under article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which has been interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) as prohibiting the expulsion of non-citizens to countries where they may suffer ill-treatment (Lambert, 2005). The right to asylum is also incorporated into EU law by article 18 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which legally binds individual member states and EU institutions, and is enforced by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Unlike UN-level rights under the Refugee Convention, the protections provided by European international law and EU law are justiciable in European and state courts, providing increased access to remedy for refugees and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, research consistently shows that, despite these formal commitments to refugee protections, the European Union and its member states routinely circumvent international obligations through the use of deterrence policies or by restricting access to the asylum system by re-labelling potential claimants as economic migrants (Schuster, 2011; De Genova, 2013a; Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2014; Hathaway and Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2015). The refugee rights framework thus clearly shapes border practices, as states balance border control with the need to comply with international law. The same is true for asylum policy, which in the case of the European Union can transcend the interests of individual member states; in fact, the establishment of a common asylum system for the purpose of controlling the internal mobility of asylum seekers requires the detection and identification of all irregular arrivals at the external borders. Key to understanding the rationale behind the securitisation of the European Union's external borders is the Dublin Regulation.

2.2.1.2 The Dublin Regulation

Over the last two decades the European Union has worked towards the establishment of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) designed to harmonise asylum procedures in the European Union. One of the cornerstone legislative instruments of the CEAS is

Regulation No. 604/2013, also known as the Dublin Regulation⁵. The Dublin Regulation provides EU member states⁶ with a clear method to determine which state is responsible for the processing of asylum applications by third-country nationals; this is usually the country of first entry, as established by article 13:

"Where it is established [...] that an applicant has irregularly crossed the border into a Member State by land, sea or air having come from a third country, the Member State thus entered shall be responsible for examining the application for international protection."

In the years following the Schengen agreement, cases of asylum seekers lodging multiple applications in different member states or of being left 'in orbit' with no state taking responsibility to process their application raised concerns that asylum seekers' right to access asylum procedures were not being met (European Commission, 2015b). By assigning the responsibility to process asylum claims to a single state the Dublin Regulation aims to prevent the secondary movement of asylum applicants.

The Dublin Regulation is built on the assumption that all EU member states are safe countries where asylum seekers are met with similar conditions and processes (European Council On Refugees And Exiles, 2006; European Commission, 2015b). However, the Regulation leaves a wide margin of discretion to individual states on how to implement asylum policies, and the different standards laid out in the Regulation and in other EU instruments (e.g. the Family Reunification Directive or the Return Directive) can give rise to discrepancies in treatment and allow member states to adopt the lowest required standard (European Commission, 2015b). Member states may also have different policies towards citizens of different countries based on cultural, social, and historical reasons, leading to differences in the success rates of asylum claims; despite the apparent harmonisation of principles, national interests and preferences thus inevitably take precedence, and asylum claims are in fact processed differently by member states (Vanheule *et al.*, 2011).

In addition to the risk of inconsistent treatment, giving responsibility predominantly to the country of entry is an arbitrary criterion that keeps in no consideration asylum applicants' wishes. While the 1951 Convention protects the right to seek asylum in a safe state, it does not specifically provide a right to choose in which country to seek asylum

⁵ Regulation No. 604/2013 is also known as the Dublin III Regulation. Its predecessors are Regulation 343/2003 (also known as the Dublin II Regulation) and the 1990 Dublin Convention.

⁶ The Dublin Regulation applies to EU member states except Denmark, which has nonetheless agreed to apply its provisions. Additional countries applying Dublin provisions are non-EU EEA countries (Norway, Iceland, and Lichtenstein) and Switzerland.

(European Commission, 2015b). Nevertheless, asylum seekers may have preferences on which country they wish to settle in; while some exceptions exist for minors and family members (e.g. Articles 8-11), the Dublin Regulation represents an obstacle for applicants wishing to seek asylum in a different member state than the one they first entered (Brekke and Brochmann, 2015). The lack of choice given to applicants can decrease compliance with the asylum system and negatively affect border management, as it incentivises migrants to evade registration in the country of entry by either absconding or attempting to avoid fingerprinting. For example, despite decreasing from 35% in 2013 to 23% in 2014, multiple asylum applications have remained common after the implementation of the latest Dublin Regulation (European Commission, 2015b). Furthermore, so-called 'take back' or 'take charge' requests do not necessarily translate into a physical transfer of the applicant to a different member state; in 2014, for instance, only 8% of accepted requests concluded with an actual transfer (ibid.). The failure to conclude transfer procedures and to pass on legal responsibility among member states contributes to creating situations of irregularity for applicants. These add to the 42% of rejected asylum seekers who are not transferred and not returned to their country of origin and thus remain on the territory as irregular migrants. (European Commission, 2015b, 2016). Restrictions aimed at preventing secondary movement may thus incentivise applicants to actively pursue an irregular status, in turn bringing member states to adopt more coercive control measures such as forced fingerprinting and detention. Although the Dublin Regulation has been found to be legally compliant with fundamental rights as defined in the Charter, the European Union and other international organisations, as well as legal experts consulted by the European Commission, have indicated that the implementation of the Dublin Regulation has frequently led to interferences with fundamental rights and even rights violations in some member states (European Commission, 2015b, p. 16). Tension thus persists between the Regulation's stated purpose of protecting refugee rights, the priorities and interests of individual states, and the rights and autonomy of migrants.

2.2.1.3 Going south: The impact on border states

Although the European Refugee Fund allocates funds to member states based on the number of asylum seekers they receive, the reception and processing of asylum claimants is widely seen as a financial, administrative, and political burden by EU member states (Vanheule *et al.*, 2011; European Commission, 2015b). The Dublin Regulation is intended to assign responsibility for the processing of asylum applications, but it is not its purpose to ensure that this responsibility is shared among member states, or to ensure a fair distribution of duties. In practice, by mostly assigning the responsibility to process asylum claims to the country of first entry, the Regulation

inevitably puts increased pressure on border states (Marchetti, 2010). As a consequence, countries that become preferred points of entry due to their geographical location are disproportionately likely to receive applications and to have the legal duty to process them. At the same time, member states less likely to be the first country of entry are provided with a legal framework allowing them to send back to border states those applicants who enter their territory as a result of secondary movement. Moreover, the Dublin Regulation is not designed to deal with situations of mass influx, when the length of procedures can bring to the clogging of national processing system and outstrip a member state's internal capacity. Even when deadlines are respected, applicants routinely face lengthy waits before a claim is even examined (European Commission, 2015b). This brings both financial and social costs, as the longer the process, the longer asylum applicants are kept in a situation of precariousness and marginalisation. Humanitarian and discretionary clauses to deal with times of crises (e.g. those laid out in article 17) are not frequently used, as states are often reluctant to spontaneously take responsibility for claimants that the regulation assigns to other members (European Commission, 2015b). The lack of responsibility-sharing thus exacerbates rather than mitigate situations of crisis, to the detriment of those states who are appointed gatekeepers for the Union (Nomikos, 2013). This has been particularly burdensome for southern EU states; for example, in recent years the financial and political burden of receiving, identifying, and processing irregular sea-crossers has caused Italy to struggle with implementing Dublin Regulations, resulting in the state ignoring Dublin provisions altogether in times of crisis (European Commission, 2016; Trauner, 2016). Meanwhile, responsibility-sharing measures such as relocation or collective financial contributions to the reception systems of southern states have encountered resistance from other EU members (Vanheule *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, rather than a genuine attempt to overcome the limitations of the Dublin system, the relocation mechanism seems to have offered a temporary safety valve in times of increased migratory pressure, solidifying rather than challenging the status quo (Savino, 2015). Border states have at times resorted to extreme measures to attract attention to what they perceive as a failure of cooperation in managing irregular migration by other member states, as in the case of Italy's decision to deny entry into its ports to NGO boats carrying migrants rescued at sea; however, while these have elicited declarations of the need for increased intra-EU solidarity, they have fallen short of triggering any meaningful reform of the Dublin system (Cusumano and Gombeer, 2018). The need to maintain the functioning of the Dublin system continues to shape border practices at irregular points of entry in the southern borders, where EU agency Frontex is increasingly involved in ensuring member states comply with requirements such as the fingerprinting and identification of migrants (Aas and Gundhus, 2015). The emphasis on securitisation gives rise to tensions between

the needs of the single nation state and the overarching interests of the region and exposes the different political weight of EU member states, at the expense of international protection obligations for refugees and asylum seekers (Romano, 2017). The New Pact on Migration and Asylum, proposed by the European Commission in September 2020, seeks to overcome these conflicts through increased emphasis on solidarity and collaboration among member states (European Commission, 2020); however, critics have noted that the Pact further cements the role of external borders in the screening and processing of irregular migrants, potentially increasing rather than alleviating the burden on border states while simultaneously eroding human rights protections (e.g. Mouzourakis, 2021; Wessels, 2021).

2.2.2 Securitising Europe: irregular migration and the southern border

The aggressive securitisation of the EU's southern borders has put Mediterranean migration in the spotlight, despite sea-crossers being just a small fraction of irregular migrants reaching Europe each year (Finotelli & Sciortino, 2013). Nevertheless, securitisation has contributed to the border's increasing lethality, as sea-crossers who manage to depart the North-African shores face uncertain journeys made even more perilous by the European Union's reluctance to support search and rescue operations, something I examine in more detail in the next chapter (Fekete, 2003; Grant, 2011; Andersson, 2014a; Hammerstadt, 2014; Massey and Coluccello, 2015). The greater visibility afforded to the minority of irregular migrants who attempt the Mediterranean crossing favours the association of undesirable migrants with non-white countries, creating a distinction between EU and non-EU citizens that is increasingly racialised (Bigo, 2002; Finotelli and Sciortino, 2013; De Genova, 2018). Moreover, it perpetuates public discourses depicting the southern borders as the vulnerable underbelly of Europe, and of sea-crossers as an invasion in need of containment (Musrò and Parmiggiani, 2017).

At the southern border of the EU, geopolitical interests and supranational priorities converge on local realities. The construction of borders is the epitome of what Robertson calls glocalisation, that is the intertwining of the local and the global (1995). The concept of glocality is further developed by Bauman, who identifies it with large urban environments; global problems such as pollution, exploitation, or displacement, Bauman argues, become big cities' responsibility to solve when they manifest at a local level, inevitably shaping their policy and governance (1998, 2013). In this work, however, I wish to highlight the glocal nature of border control and of its impact on small border communities, particularly with regards to islands, which as I explain below have become key tools in the European Union's efforts to control unwanted migration in the Mediterranean (Mountz, 2010, 2011; Loyd and Mountz, 2014).

2.2.2.1 Europe's soft underbelly

The sustained influx of irregular sea-crossers into Italy begun in the early 1990s, when thousands of individuals fleeing post-communist Albania commandeered the ship *Vlora* to cross the Adriatic Sea and enter the port of Bari, in Italy's Apulia region. The arrival of the ship, shown in Figure 2 below, caught the country by surprise, and authorities' attempts to round up and swiftly deport all arrivals back to Albania ended in violence (Comberiati, 2013). Authorities' haphazard response, which included locking the Albanian migrants inside a disused stadium, famously prompted Italian philosopher's Giorgio Agamben's work on the conceptualisation of the camp, to which I briefly return in the next chapter (1995).



Figure 2 – Albanian sea-crossers disembarking the ship *Vlora* in Bari, Italy, on 8 August 1991⁷

In the 1990s longer irregular migration routes were also established into southern Italy, departing the eastern Mediterranean coast and the Middle East to cross the Ionian Sea; from the late 1990s to this day, sea migration into Italy has come to be increasingly dominated by journeys crossing the Strait of Sicily from the North African coast, mainly from Tunisia and Libya (Monzini, 2007). Despite the show of force highlighted above in the case of the *Vlora*, 1990s Italy was commonly depicted as historically tolerant of irregular migration, and holding a reputation as a desirable destination for irregular

⁷ Image by Luca Turi - <http://www.apuliafilmcommission.it/wp-content/uploads/La-nave-dolce.jpg>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=36002053>

migrants due to lax controls and a large informal labour market (Campani, 1993; Reyneri, 1998). Together with other Mediterranean countries such as Spain and Greece, Italy thus came to be labelled as the soft underbelly of the European Union, as the perceived power of migrant trafficking networks operating in the Mediterranean coupled with a negligent approach to migration control were widely considered a threat to the integrity of the Schengen area (Hollifield, 1994; Düvell, 2012). Both categorisations are at odds with empirical observations. Pastore et al., for instance, show that migrant smuggling in the Mediterranean is not the work of transnational criminal organisations, but of fragmented, localised, and loosely-organised networks (2006); indeed, Pastore et al.'s analysis is consistent with more recent understanding of worldwide smuggling and migration facilitation as being an improvised, community-based enterprise (Sanchez, 2017). Furthermore, the view of Italy as a country with weak migration policies is challenged by research by Finotelli and Sciortino, who argue that Italy quickly embraced the restrictive approach to migration which permeated Europe in the 1990s, developing migration control strategies based on the securitisation of borders, entry quotas, and exclusionary naturalisation policies (2009). Furthermore, Italian migration policy has long included strict measures such as the criminalisation of irregular migrants (di Martino et al., 2013), the framing of migration as a security issue (Callia et al., 2012), and the widespread use of detention (Campesi, 2014b). The success of these strategies, argue Finotelli and Sciortino, has however been undermined by the shifting needs of Italy's internal labour market, where the demand for irregular workers has been sustained by "*powerful demographic, economic and social forces*" (2009, p. 121). For example, factors such as the lengthening of life expectancy and the increase in women's employment rates drive the largely informal domestic labour market, in which migrant workers' condition of irregularity is perpetuated (Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa, 2006; Ambrosini, 2012).

The tension between Italian governments' stated aim to limit irregularity and the structural forces that feed internal demand for irregular labour is not merely a domestic issue. Before the Dublin Regulation, Italian authorities would routinely allow irregular migrants to travel to other countries, as Italy was often not their intended final destination (Leonard, 2010; Orsini, 2016). As showed in the previous sub-section, the European Union's need to supervise the correct implementation of the Dublin provisions thus placed a new emphasis on the enforcement of the block's external borders to ensure that all arrivals were detected and secondary movement could be prevented. Consequently, parts of Italy's national border saw a visible shift in the purpose of the border and the ways in which it was performed, a shift I refer to as borderisation.

2.2.2.2 *Borderising the Mediterranean Sea: the case of border islands*

The word borderisation has been used to describe the militarisation and physical enforcement by Russia of the conflict line between Georgia and South Ossetia, which turned an administrative boundary into an international border (Toal and Merabishvili, 2019). In the context of this study, however, the word does not imply a change in the legal or political status of the demarcated territories; instead, the concept of borderisation is a translation of the Italian word *frontierizzazione*, i.e. the making of a border, which has been extensively used by Cuttitta to describe the process of border production on the Italian island of Lampedusa, on which I say more in the next subsection (2012, 2014). According to Cuttitta, borderisation is not an accident of geography, but a deliberate act that is "*carried out through specific policies, practices and discourses*" (2014, p. 196). In the case of the European Union, the securitisation of the external frontiers has borderised southern states' existing national boundaries through the introduction of policies such as the Dublin Regulation, practices such as fingerprinting and ID recording, and a new discourse equating surveillance and control with humanitarianism (Campesi, 2014a; Franko, 2021). The increased focus on controlling irregular entry has also led to the borderisation of peripheral zones which were not previously sites of border enforcement, such as islands.

An example of the borderisation of islands along the southern border is the case of the Canary Islands, one of the outermost regions of the European Union. Situated in the Atlantic Ocean, just off the coast of Morocco, the islands were heavily securitised by EU agencies following an influx of sea-crossers from West Africa at the beginning of the 21st century (Godenau, 2012). The number of sea-crossers dropped considerably in subsequent years due to the increased efficiency of surveillance, the establishment of bilateral agreements with migrants' countries of origin, and the systematic prosecution of smugglers. The Canary Islands' attractiveness as a destination for irregular migration was clearly driven by political factors and institutional membership rather than geographical location; in fact, Godenau argues, sea borders are particularly arduous to cross irregularly compared to land borders, and the generally limited size of islands makes escaping detection particularly unlikely. The borderisation of the Canary Islands and their changing role within migration routes exemplifies Godenau's conceptualisation of the border as a socially constructed and politically managed institution, whose permeability is determined more by border practices rather than geography (2009, 2012). Cuttitta similarly conceptualises borderisation as reflecting a view of borders not as the natural edges of territories, but as phenomena that are specifically constructed and performed (2015); as best summarised in Simmel's much quoted words: "*the*

boundary is not a spatial fact with sociological consequences, but a sociological fact that forms itself spatially" (1997, p. 142).

While the borderisation of islands may be driven by political and social factors, it should also be noted that their geographical isolation facilitates their use by states as places of confinement (Godenau, 2012). As argued by Mountz, this has turned islands into key border enforcement tools for nation states, while their peripheral location has made them preferred sites for the production and normalisation of migration crises (2011; Loyd and Mountz, 2014). When turned into border zones, islands come to be seen as detached from the nation state's territory, becoming liminal spaces where state practice is obscured from public scrutiny and migrants' rights are not yet fully realised (Dines, Montagna and Ruggiero, 2014). Islands thus play an important role in migration studies, not just as the 'spatial laboratories' advocated by King (2009), but as sites where global geopolitical forces, regional interests, and national and supranational policies converge onto a single locality. Importantly, islands' geographic circumscription makes them ideal sites to examine the iatrogenic effects of migration control policies, particularly when it comes to the social impact of border enforcement on resident communities. This is not to say that islands are closed systems, or that they should be studied as such; in King's words, islands are "*critically placed nodes within much broader dynamics linking wider spatial realms and processes, potentially global in scale*" (2009, p. 77), and these global dynamics are particularly relevant in the case of borderised islands. Far from being a limitation, islands' limited size represents a key methodological advantage, offering the "*boundedness*" advocated by Candea (2007, p. 172).

While the political membership of the European Union's border islands largely drives incoming irregular sea migration, it must be noted that different islands experience borderisation differently. For example, irregular migrants landing on island states such as Malta or Cyprus will largely remain on their territory, in accordance with Dublin Regulations, while arrivals to Italian or Greek islands can expect to be transferred elsewhere on the mainland. Island states at the external border of the European Union thus contend with different demographic and social challenges than island territories that are controlled by larger member states (Baldacchino, 2009; Sojka, 2013). In this work I consider the specific case of Lampedusa, a small island on the southern border of the European Union which has experienced borderisation over the past few decades.

2.2.2.3 The case of Lampedusa

Lampedusa is a small island in the Strait of Sicily, with an area of 20km² and a population of approximately 6,000. Together with the island of Linosa (population 430) and the uninhabited islet of Lampione, Lampedusa forms a small archipelago known as

the Pelagie islands, which are part of the Italian Autonomous Region of Sicily. Marked by a red circle in Figure 3 below, Lampedusa lies approximately 205km south of the coast of Sicily, 164km east of Ras Kaboudja in Tunisia, 355km north of Tripoli in Libya, and 220km south-west of Marsaxlokk, Malta.



Figure 3 - Central Mediterranean map showing the locations of Lampedusa (red) and Pantelleria (yellow) - Google Maps

As the southernmost Italian territory, and the southernmost EU territory in the Strait of Sicily, the island of Lampedusa has in recent years become synonymous with the southern border of the European Union (Wright, 2014; Kushner, 2016; Orsini, 2016). The transformation of Lampedusa into a border zone followed the Schengen Agreement and the subsequent re-construction by the European Union of its external borders (Cuttitta, 2015); the effects of the resulting process of borderisation changed the face of the island and affected the life of its small community in such a way that, in Orsini's words, "*pre-border Lampedusa ceased to exist*" (2015, p. 522).

Nevertheless, as noted by Cuttitta, the degree of 'borderiness' of Lampedusa is not an accident of geography, but the result of political and social processes that have taken place at national and supranational level over the last few decades (2015). As can be seen in Figure 3 above, for instance, Lampedusa is not the closest EU territory to the North African coast; in fact, the slightly larger Italian island of Pantelleria, marked by a yellow circle in the map, lies just 75km east of Kelibia, Tunisia. Over the years, large numbers of irregular sea-crossers from North Africa have reached Pantelleria, or died

trying (La Repubblica, 2011; Ansa, 2020). In fact, Pantelleria was frequently mentioned alongside Lampedusa in scholarly literature as recipient of irregular migrants well into the 2000s, for instance by Monzini (2007), Simon (2006), and Pastore et al. (2006). However, Pantelleria has not experienced borderisation like Lampedusa. In fact, it can be argued that it is the presence of the border's logistical infrastructure on Lampedusa which reinforces its role as a border zone; with the exception of sporadic independent landings, sea-crossers are usually intercepted at sea and taken to land by state authorities, whose decision on where to transport migrants is inevitably dictated by the location of the required infrastructure. Lampedusa's role as the place best equipped to process irregular arrivals thus begun in the 1990s, when its migration reception centre first opened its doors (Cuttitta, 2015). The institutional presence of the border on Lampedusa also arguably drives its popularity as a destination for sea-crossers themselves; as Godenau suggests, *"Islands are only attractive as transit areas if transport to the continent is guaranteed and financed after interception"* (2012, p. 5), so the transport links established through the border infrastructure make act as a pull factor.

The symbolic role of Lampedusa as the gate to Fortress Europe has been widely explored in migration research literature (Coluccello and Massey, 2007; e.g. Friese, 2012; McMahon, 2012; Dines, Montagna and Ruggiero, 2014; Wright, 2014). In particular, Lampedusa's conceptualisation as a border zone mean it is usually examined from the perspective of those who pass through it, although ironically the voice of migrants themselves is seldom sought. Still, Lampedusa remains framed as principally a transit place; Rinelli, for example, defines Lampedusa as a liminal place, a place of passage he compares to uninhabited landscapes such as the desert or the sea (2015). The strong symbolic power of Lampedusa as a gate to elsewhere has led, confusingly, to the most disparate descriptions, such as a utopia (Wright, 2014), a dystopia (Giuliani, 2018), and even a heterotopia (Pugliese, 2009). As Godenau argues, bordering is an act of power exposing the asymmetric relationship between territories (2009). There is certainly much to be said about Lampedusa as not only the fault line between two continents, but also the manifestation of contemporary political powers and old colonial legacies (De Genova, 2018). An often-ignored dimension, however, is that of Lampedusa as a place where people live; little attention is given to the impact of living in a borderised space for residents, or to how the borderisation processes may affect the social and political reality of those who reside in peripheral zones. I address this gap in this thesis by using Lampedusa as a case study, a choice I explain in a bit more depth in Chapter 4, while in Chapter 5 I provide a brief historical, social, and political summary of life on Lampedusa, giving the reader the necessary context to interpret the findings.

2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have briefly summarised some of the key criminological contributions to the study of migration. I first explained the complexities of defining what migration is and who qualifies as a migrant, arguing that the historically and politically contingent nature of this phenomenon mean that definitions cannot be neutral. Despite the extensive application of criminological frameworks to the study of socio-legal constructs such as crime, I have demonstrated that criminology is ill-suited to the study of migration and border-related phenomena in general, due to its inevitably crime-centric focus and the subsequent privileging of a domestic lens. I have briefly argued that a zemiological framework is more adept at understanding and exploring the nuances of migration control and border-related harms; in the following chapter I further develop this theory through in depth analysis of EU-level migration control policies at the southern border.

Chapter 3: A theoretical framework for the study of border control⁸

State borders have radically transformed since the end of the last world war, and migration management appears to have increasingly merged with crime control (Aas, 2011). As I show in Chapter 2, the subsequent amalgamation of penal and administrative practices represents a new challenge for criminology, as emerging control assemblages redefine sovereign power (Bosworth, 2008). Crimmigration control practices such as migration detention have been conceptualised as spaces of exception to criminal law, where the state can exercise discretionary control with impunity and suspend the person's legal rights (Agamben, 2005). As argued in the previous chapter, this conceptualisation overemphasises the state's power to control and exclude non-citizens, while underestimating the role of supranational and transnational forces in determining migration policies. While crimmigration provides a valuable contribution to criminology's understanding of penal power and the purpose of criminal justice, its contribution to the study of migration is more limited. In examining migration control through a crime control lens, scholars risk squeezing global issues within the reductive frame of the nation state.

In Chapter 2 I briefly explore the limits of adopting a criminological framework to study migration management; in this chapter I examine this argument in depth, using the extra-jurisdictional migration control practices as an example. Over the last few years, EU migration policy has exploited jurisdictional limitations along the Mediterranean border to scale back search and rescue efforts in order to evade international law obligations, putting sea-crossers' lives at risk. I argue that criminology lacks the needed methodological tools to make sense of this kind of control policy, and I suggest a zemiological approach to make sense of migration control in a global world. In the final section of this chapter, I propose a coherent theoretical and methodological model upon which I build a zemiological framework for the understanding of migration and border control.

3.1 Border control and states of exception

During the last few decades the construction, function, and control of state borders have remarkably changed in the Western world (Rumford, 2006). Once a fixed geographical

⁸ The work in this chapter was published in 2019 by the journal *Theoretical Criminology* under the title "States of exception, human rights, and social harm: Towards a border zemiology". The article is available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1362480619890069>.

feature inextricably linked with the state's sovereignty and territorial integrity, borders are increasingly mobile and embedded through society, and their enforcement is entrusted to a complex network of cooperation among state and non-state actors (O'Dowd, 2002; Rumford, 2006). While progressively demilitarised, borders have become increasingly policed and managed through crime control (Bosworth and Guild, 2008; Campesi, 2015c). This in turn has fed a widening security discourse within which overlapping insecuritisations such as fear of crime, terrorism, and economic uncertainty have converged on the figure of the migrant (Bigo, 2000).

As I explore in the previous chapter, crimmigration creates a hybrid legal framework where administrative coercion, presented as necessary and justified to maintain security, can be adopted without requiring the individual safeguards normally built within criminal proceedings (Stumpf, 2006; Bosworth and Guild, 2008; Aas, 2011; Sklansky, 2012). Despite the higher likelihood of more restrictive outcomes, the crimmigration control system does not appear to be linked to penal populism or higher levels of punitiveness, but rather has established itself as a routinized form of governmentality now widespread throughout Europe (Aas, 2014). Thus, the securitisation of migration is not a simple show of force or legal authority by the state, rather a manifestation of the state's prerogative to make exceptions to the law; in this case, criminal law. By suspending the rights of part of the population, the state would thus exercise the concept of sovereignty theorised by philosopher Giorgio Agamben, who defines sovereign power as the ability to legally suspend the law by establishing when it should and should not be applied (Agamben, 1995, 2005). This prerogative to strip individuals of their political rights and reduce them to what Agamben calls 'bare life' would then manifest itself in migration detention centres, and in the high level of exclusionary discretion that characterises border control (Agamben, 1995; Salter, 2008).

3.1.1 The fiction of bare life

Bare life is best described by Hannah Arendt in her account of the statelessness of Jews persecuted in Europe before World War II, whose status put them outside of the recognition of the law. Exclusion from the law constituted such a comprehensive deprivation of rights to make criminalisation a more desirable option, as breaking the law would have brought the individual back within its remit and thus under its protection (Arendt, 1958). According to Agamben, the ability to reduce individuals to bare life is central to sovereign power, as it reinforces and normalises its prerogative to make exceptions to the rule of law (1995, 2005). Bare life should not be understood as the literal description of an animalistic natural state, but as a performance: it is the symbolic act of stripping the person of their political rights that reaffirms sovereignty, much like a successful degradation ceremony reaffirms a denouncer's embodiment of the

community's collective values (Garfinkel, 1956). Bare life is a fiction produced by the sovereign power itself, and it is functional to its governmentality.

The link between migrants and bare life is put forward by Agamben himself. In Agamben's view, the public spectacle performed by immigration detention centres represents the state's ultimate exercise in exclusionary supremacy, and is a clear manifestation of the state of exception (Agamben, 1995). However, detention centres are not sites of absolute state control. While immigration detention may be considered a legal anomaly (Campesi, 2014b), the idea that it represents a literal legal vacuum where detainees' political power is systematically annihilated has been refuted by empirical research. For example, Bosworth (2013) points out that UK detention centres are sites of exclusion and poor oversight, but they are also sites of resistance and solidarity. Similarly, in his ethnography of Italian detention centres, Campesi (2015a) finds that the effective state of anomie in which detainees are kept by authorities effectively decreases control and foments rioting and violent protest. This does not diminish the oppressive nature of detention centres, nor does it negate their inherently harmful nature (Canning, 2019). However, as the power relation established by detention carries the possibility of resistance, the state's attempt to exercise ultimate biopower over migrant bodies fails to strip them of their political significance, in turn undermining its own claim to supremacy over bare life (Foucault, 1961; Owens, 2010).

3.1.2 *Hybrid sovereignties*

Resistance is not the only issue undermining the definition of detention as a state of exception. Defining migration detention as an expression of unfettered sovereignty suggests that such measures fall fully within the remit of the state. However, contemporary migration control effectively relies on continuous negotiation and cooperation among different sovereignties. For instance, recent work by Fabini (2019) highlights the limited power of the Italian state to deport illegalised non-citizens. Regardless of domestic policy, the deportation of a non-citizen is ultimately contingent on their acceptance by their country of origin: the denial of this acceptance effectively makes the non-citizen "*undeportable*", in turn removing the rationale for detention. In addition, international legal principles such as non-refoulement formally restrict states' ability to banish non-citizens.

Migration policy in general is rarely the product of unilateral decisions by a sovereign state. In the European Union, for example, border control involves a "*pooling of sovereignty*", where migration management is cooperative and informed by regional as well as national interests (Andreas, 2003, p. 84). In practice, although individual member states are responsible for managing their own borders and set their own policy

with regards to controlling the movement of non-EU citizens, the presence of a common framework impacts on their operation and priorities. This is particularly the case when a member state's frontiers correspond with the EU's outer borders, as the securitisation of external frontiers is necessary to safeguard internal policies such as the freedom of movement of EU workers or the suspension of border control within the Schengen area (Mitsilegas, 2009). Furthermore, the existence of EU-level agencies such as FRONTEX and shared databases like Eurosur and Eurodac suggest an increasingly centralised role in controlling the movement of non-EU citizens, where the EU may act in a sovereign-like manner despite not being a state-like political entity (Campesi, 2015c). This interplay between national, international, and supranational actors performing migration control creates a hybrid form of sovereignty, which is simultaneously claimed, negotiated, and delegated by the nation state. In the case of contemporary Europe, it has become meaningless to view migration policy as an expression of supreme power by those who introduce and enact it, as wider structural forces are also inevitably at play. The application of Agamben's concept of states of exception to migration control thus seemingly overemphasizes the power of the state, undervalues migrants' agency, and overlooks the non-state forces that influence migration and its management.

3.1.3 Beyond crimmigration

Agamben's limited relevance to real-life migration control has not gone unexamined (Owens, 2010; Johansen, 2013). However, the criticism outlined above paves the way for further critique of the concept of crimmigration. For example, the idea that crimmigration represents an exceptional use of coercive state power coupled with diminished accountability suggests that the use of force is the prerogative of the criminal justice system. However, as Velloso (2013) points out, this view overlooks existing forms of administrative coercion, such as military law or mental health tribunals. Velloso takes this point further and argues that the concept of crimmigration is born out of criminologists' professional bias, what he calls 'criminocentric dogmatism': the tendency to view social phenomena within a crime framework, measuring different forms of social control against criminal law. This does not mean that crimmigration as a phenomenon does not exist. On the contrary, as Bosworth et al. argue, the state indubitably uses the criminal justice system as a way to regulate mobility, so crimmigration must become integral to our study of punishment (2018). However, if crimmigration widens our understanding of penalty and of the role of criminal justice, its contribution to our understanding of migration control is more limited. Velloso's criticism points to a fundamental drawback in the crimmigration discourse: the linking of crime control and migration management frames the latter as a domestic issue, understating its international and supranational dimensions and overstating state's power and state

sovereignty. Consequently, the lens of crimmigration obscures the global dimensions of migration control.

The limits of crimmigration are particularly evident when moving beyond the nation state as main unit of analysis. In the next section I present the EU's policy of non-assistance in the Mediterranean Sea as an example of extra-territorial migration control and examine the challenges it presents to criminological analysis. I argue that migrants' deaths at the EU's southern border are the result of hybrid sovereignties which may transcend individual states' powers, resulting in the deprivation of sea-crossers' rights under international law. As remarked by Aas (2011), Mediterranean sea-crossers represent the realisation of Agamben's bare life, suggesting that Agamben's conceptualisation remains relevant to contemporary migration control; however, the exclusionary power they embody is not born out of an individual state, signalling the need to move beyond sovereignty and reframe our analysis of migration control.

3.2 Extra-territorial states of exception

In this section I examine the EU's policy of non-assistance in the Mediterranean Sea, which I have chosen as an example of migration control measure which cannot be satisfactorily examined through a criminological point of view. The policy directly contributes to considerable loss of life in the Mediterranean, but jurisdictional issues and the hybrid sovereignties at play make it difficult to pinpoint legal responsibility. While the international law implications of the policy of non-assistance have been scrutinised, for instance by Mann (2018) and Okafor (2019), less attention has been given to how such a policy may shape criminologists' understanding of border control. I argue below that attempts to conceptualise lethal border control as a state crime fail to overcome the challenges already identified by legal scholars and demonstrate criminology's inability to provide an analysis of migration control that can move beyond state-defined categories. Consequently, a social harm framework can be advantageous in moving beyond these limitations, but only if it can shift the focus from the language of crime and build upon a new, distinct approach.

3.2.1 *Inaction and impunity at sea*

Just as the cat in Schrödinger's paradox is both dead and alive until an observer opens the box that contains it, the legal status of individuals on an irregular migratory journey is a superposition of possible outcomes, until one is crystallised by contact with a state's jurisdiction. Whilst *in itinere*, Mediterranean sea-crossers occupy a legal twilight zone, as their still undefined legal status means they are not entitled to the rights attached to citizenship or territory. For example, international protection obligations, which put a

duty on receiving states to process requests for asylum, are generally understood to be triggered once migrants reach the jurisdiction of a member state, whether by reaching its territory, boarding one of its ships, or being under the effective control of state agents (Hartmann and Papanicolopulu, 2015). Lack of jurisdiction equals a lack of protection, not only under humanitarian law, but under human rights law as well, as the absence of an accountable authority makes these rights effectively unenforceable (Mann, 2018).

This legal gap does not represent a literal suspension of the law, but rather exposes its jurisdictional limits. For instance, Article 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights puts on contracting parties the obligation to respect the rights of all those in their jurisdiction, but establishing jurisdiction at sea is not as straightforward as on land. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS) assigns zones of competence to coastal states with varying degrees of sovereign rights depending on distance from the coastline. Whereas territorial waters (up to 12 miles from coastline) are considered part of the nation's territory, in contiguous zones (12 to 24 miles) the state's jurisdiction is restricted to customs, taxation, pollution, and immigration, while in exclusive economic zones (up to 200 miles) it is limited to the seabed and its natural resources. As coastal states have the right to patrol their border within territorial and contiguous zones, a state's human rights obligations can stretch up to 24 miles from the coast (Galani, 2018). However, as established in *Hirsi Jamaa and Others v Italy*, extra-territorial jurisdiction applies when EU member state agents exercise control over individuals outside of the state's territory. During search and rescue (SAR) at sea, frequently the first contact between non-EU sea-crossers and their destination countries, EU rescuers are therefore subjected to ECHR obligations even in international waters. While these negative obligations put a duty on EU states not to breach human rights at sea, they do not constitute a positive obligation to proactively patrol international waters for SAR purposes. Paradoxically, rolling back SAR capacity does not breach sea-crossers' human rights, even if consequences are lethal.

In its damning investigative report 'Death by Rescue', the University of London's Forensic Oceanography department describes the EU's collective decision to prioritise deterrence and border protection over the prevention of sea-crossers' deaths as "*institutionalised neglect*", of which Operation Triton has been a glaring example (Heller and Pezzani, 2016). Following the drowning of over 300 sea-crossers off the coast of Lampedusa, in 2013 the Italian navy began a major SAR operation, *Mare Nostrum*, which rescued over 100,000 people along the Central Mediterranean route. Concerns by other EU member states that rescuing sea-crossers could constitute a pull factor and encourage other crossers meant that *Mare Nostrum* was ended after only a year, and

substituted with the much less ambitious operation *Triton*, headed by EU border control agency Frontex. Due to its limited remit, smaller budget, and focus on border control, *Triton* is estimated to have failed to prevent at least two major shipwrecks which would have fallen within the remit of *Mare Nostrum*, contributing to the preventable death of over 800 people. Despite the clearly foreseeable lethal outcome, the EU's failure to provide sufficient SAR capacity does not contravene any explicit legal obligation.

3.2.2 Ensuring extraterritoriality

In recent years NGOs have begun patrolling the Central Mediterranean Route in an effort to increase SAR capacity and fill the gap left by *Mare Nostrum*, particularly during the so-called Mediterranean migration crisis of 2015 (Cusumano, 2017a). The work of NGOs in the Mediterranean however has been met with hostility by EU border states such as Italy, which are frequently tasked with providing a safe port to rescued sea-crossers and process asylum claims under Dublin regulations. Restrictive bureaucracy, impounding of ships, and prosecutions for facilitating illegal immigration have constrained NGO operations, culminating in the refusal in the summer of 2018 to grant permission to enter Italian ports to NGO ships carrying rescued sea-crossers (Cusumano, 2017b; Fekete, Webber and Edmond-Pettitt, 2017; BBC News, 2018; Cuttitta, 2018). The obstruction of NGOs in the Mediterranean has corresponded with increased cooperation with third countries. Following the signing of a memorandum between the Italian government and Libya's interim government in 2017, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Rome has been increasingly delegating SAR responsibility in the Mediterranean to the Libyan Coast Guard (Governo Italiano, 2017b). This bi-lateral agreement is supported by the EU, whose own Operation Sophia changed its mandate to include the capacity building and training of Libya's Coast Guard and Navy to help prevent human smuggling and trafficking (Political and Security Committee, 2016).

The return of rescued sea-crossers to Libya by EU agents would breach the principle of non-refoulment, as widespread abuses against detainees mean that Libya cannot be considered a place of safety as defined by the International Maritime Organisation (2004; OHCHR, 2016; Amnesty International, 2017). The creation of a Libyan MRCC, supported by Italy and the EU, aims to facilitate the interception of sea-crossers by Libyan agents, before they reach EU member states' jurisdiction. However, NGOs have reported witnessing abusive and unsafe practice by Libyan agents during rescue operations, with sea-crossers being left to drown when refusing to board Libyan ships (Sea-Watch.org, 2017; The Guardian, 2018).

The EU's delegation of SAR duties to Libya is designed to absolve EU member states of their obligations under human rights and humanitarian law, prioritising border control at

all costs. In the absence of clear jurisdiction and accountability, international law is effectively unenforceable, stripping the individual of their human rights. This jurisdictional vacuum removes the power dialectic between state and individual, denying the latter any opportunity for resistance; within this gap in the law, sea-crossers' lives are lost with impunity.

3.2.3 Institutional negligence and prevention of harm

Restrictive EU migration policy and the deliberate roll back of SAR operations have increased the lethality of the EU's southern border and effectively weaponized the Mediterranean Sea in the war against migration (Amnesty International, 2014; Hartmann and Papanicolopulu, 2015; Steinhilper and Gruijters, 2017). The complex power dynamics operating at and beyond the border make it difficult to categorise these actions from a criminological point of view. Below I examine three different approaches in categorising states' attempts to prevent immigration, and their applicability to the policy of non-assistance.

3.2.3.1 State crime as violation of law

According to Green & Grewcock (2002), the persistent and systematic attempts by EU member states to evade international law guaranteeing human rights protection to migrants and refugees are an example of organised state crime. State crime, they argue, should be defined in terms of a violation of human rights rather than a breach of criminal law. However, such a framework remains difficult to apply to policies such as non-assistance, particularly when the role of EU-level decision-making is taken into account. While states' behaviour could be framed as contrary to fundamental human rights principles such as universalism, issues related to jurisdiction and interpretation make it unlikely that these violations can be construed as a literal breach of human rights law. The United Nations' Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions has categorised the failure to prevent foreseeable sea-crossers' deaths as a violation of the right to life, but their call for the International Criminal Court to include crimes against sea-crossers as atrocity crimes has remained unheeded (United Nations, 2017). This shows that such denunciations have limited weight. Aside from the complicated legal landscape in which sea-crossers' deaths occur, attempts to define non-assistance as an international crime rely on concepts such as intent and responsibility which would be difficult to establish in a court of law, making prosecution problematic. Furthermore, it could be argued that more immediate responsibility for the sea-crossers' loss of life may be found in the actions of smugglers and traffickers, so attempts to ascribe criminal responsibility for sea-crossers' deaths inevitably fall on individuals and divert attention from structural factors and the wider harms they cause.

3.2.3.2 *State crime as negligent harm*

A human rights-based definition of state crime does not need to rely on a legalistic approach, and a focus on harm rather than law would provide a more holistic framework, less hindered by jurisdictional limitations. Faust & Kauzlarich, for instance, propose that state crime should be defined as harm that is generated *"in violation of an explicit trust or duty between states, states and its citizens, or states and citizens of other jurisdictions"* (Faust and Kauzlarich, 2008, p. 86). The events in the Mediterranean suggest that EU states see no such explicit duty towards sea-crossers, so this definition of state harm is also ill-fitting to the policy of non-assistance.

However, the causal relationship between EU policy and irregular migration must be noted, as exercising control over legitimate migration routes necessarily shapes irregular ones (Green and Grewcock, 2002). In fact, the criminalisation of migration and the thriving business of people-smuggling have been considered evidence that the EU's attempts to control migration are inherently criminogenic (Amnesty International, 2014, 2017). Similarly, the Libyan Navy and Coast Guard, trained and financed by Italy and the EU, intercept sea-crossers at the behest of EU states, who thus enable any human rights abuses taking place during these activities. The increased involvement of third countries raises questions on the legitimacy of preventing individuals from leaving a state, or to detain them following unsuccessful attempts to migrate (Markard, 2016). EU states may not be held legally accountable for these potential violations, but it does not follow that their responsibility cannot be scrutinized.

3.2.3.3 *State crimes and state harms*

The secondary harms listed above may not fit into Faust & Kauzlarich's category of state crime, but border criminologists have explicitly sought to include them in their analysis of border violence. The most notable example is by Weber and Pickering, who argue that a framework examining the unintended structural harms caused by border control policies should supplement the state crime framework, providing a sociological basis able to overcome the legalistic limitations that frustrate efforts to define state crime (2011, pp. 200–202). While preventable border deaths may fit some state crime definitions, they add, the fuelling of people-smuggling is a collateral effect of migration policy; the two approaches however can overlap, for example when intentionally harsh measures lead to unforeseen levels or types of harm. This dual framework paves the way for a better understanding of systemic causes of harm in migration management, but it also reinforces an artificial dichotomy between state crimes and state harms. The value of this distinction is limited, as it varies according to different interpretations of state legitimacy and culpability, reproducing the intrinsic limitation of the state crime-oriented

framework. The labelling of an act or omission as a state crime thus brings little advantage to our understanding of border deaths, and ought to be abandoned entirely.

3.2.4 *From crime to harm*

Instead, I argue that moving beyond crime and focussing solely on social harm is best suited to critically evaluate contemporary migration control practice. By looking at the impact of how states and international organisations operate, regardless of whether their actions could be labelled as criminal or whether the harm caused is intentional, this approach provides an alternative viewpoint on migration control practices focusing primarily on preventability. For example, operation Mare Nostrum and NGO SAR missions have demonstrated that it is in EU member states' power to prevent a considerable number of deaths at sea, so by limiting SAR operations EU states consistently and knowingly fail to prevent serious harm.

A critical challenge in this harm-based approach is to develop a theoretical framework that can offer a meaningful analysis not just of deaths at sea, but also of other social harms related to border control, such as the detrimental impact of detention on individuals and communities, or the diversion of border communities' resources away from local objectives in favour of supranational political interests (Orsini, 2016). Zemiology offers an alternative lens able to zoom out from state-defined deviance and law-related concerns in favour of wider forms of harm and their structural causes (Webber, 2004). This approach is already being applied to the critical study of contemporary migration control practices, the most notable example being Victoria Canning's body of work on the harms of migration detention (2017, 2018, 2019). While convincingly advocating for the usefulness of a zemiological approach in the study of border control, in her work Canning refrains from suggesting what a zemiological methodology should look like, or upon which ontological and epistemological grounding it should be based. More recently, in their book *From Social Harm to Zemiology: A Critical Introduction*, Canning and Tombs (2021) have argued for the establishment of zemiology as a standalone discipline, proposing a provisional typology of social harm. However, as Canning and Tombs point out, there remains no agreement over how social harm ought to be defined and studied. In fact, even zemiology's relationship to criminology remains object of debate (Copson, 2018). The conceptual challenges provided by migration control represent an opportunity to develop a zemiological theory that is empirically useful, creating a constructive approach that goes beyond a simple critique of crime and crimmigration control.

3.3 A zemiology of the border

In this section I detail a possible framework upon which to build a coherent zemiology of the border, and the principles and vision of society which such a framework ought to embrace. This framework specifically aims to address the methodological limitations of criminological approaches in making sense of policies such as non-assistance. I begin by introducing Yar's (2012a) idea to base a definition of social harm on Honneth's theory of recognition (1995), exploring its limitations in supporting empirical enquiry, and arguing for the incorporation of a critical realist approach. I conclude by suggesting a move towards Nancy Fraser's (1998, 2000, 2005) feminist critique of recognition to achieve the transformative zemiology advocated by proponents of a social harm approach.

3.3.1 *Defining social harm*

To be empirically useful, the zemiological framework requires a working definition of social harm. Like crime, social harm may be described as a construct lacking an ontological reality, and there has been limited consensus so far on how it should be defined, or whether it should be defined at all. Hillyard and Tombs, for instance, suggest that social harms may be divided into four types: physical, financial, emotional, and cultural safety (2007); however, they also refrain from proposing any definitive categorisation, considering it necessary to embrace the inherent subjectivity of harm as an expression of the human experience. Pemberton, on the other hand, is more wary of accusation of moral relativism and argues in favour of a clear, needs-based operational definition of social harm (2007). However, an agreed definition remains elusive, something Raymen attributes to underlying societal problems linked to liberalism's excessive emphasis on individualism (2019). A loose understanding of social harm provides an attractive degree of flexibility when contrasted with the problematic power relations hiding within the more rigid definition of crime; however, it also risks promoting a view of zemiology as antithetical, rather than complementary, to criminology. Zemiology should be viewed not simply as a critique of criminology, but as a separate arrow in the theoretical quiver of the socio-legal scholar. As such, it needs solid ontological and epistemological grounding.

A compelling ontological basis is provided by Majid Yar, who bases his conceptualisation of social harm on Honneth's theory of recognition, which in turn borrows from Hegel's philosophy of right (Honneth, 1995; Majid Yar, 2012a). For Hegel the individual is not a monadic self-subsistent entity, but rather exists in a dependent form from others, and through others it can know itself and determine its own sense of worth. Self-realisation is therefore intersubjective, as our sense of selfhood depends on the recognition of others. Based on this concept, Honneth develops three levels of recognition at familial,

community, and state level. Interpersonal acts, structural impediments, and wider processes that deny the pre-conditions leading to individual self-realisation at any of these levels can be conceptualised as harms, as they deny a fundamental human need (see figure 1 below).

Love	Micro-level: family
	Emotional support: based on personal and unique characteristics
	Denial: Non-recognition of concrete, immediate needs by care-takers (e.g. abuse)
Esteem	Meso-level: civil society
	Social esteem: based on common characteristics tied to common culture or social identity (solidarity)
	Denial: Non-recognition of way of life based on cultural traits or identity (e.g. denigration or insult)
Rights	Macro-level: state
	Cognitive respect: based on intrinsic value of being human (human dignity)
	Denial: Non-recognition of human dignity and equality (e.g. exclusion)

Figure 4 – Honneth's (1995) three social modes of recognition

Recognition can thus give coherence to the concept of social harm, allowing for different harms to be united under a single overarching framework while at the same time remaining distinct. This provides micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis that make this framework particularly useful when analysing complex social phenomena such as migration. The death of sea-crossers can therefore be seen not only as the immediate consequence of the lack of rescue, but also of those conditions making sea-crossing the only route into Europe for migrants from many African and Asian countries. These conditions are not limited to state measures that deny equal rights to migrants (such as restrictive migration policies or non-assistance at sea) but are enabled by racial and financial concerns in receiving countries. These factors conspire to deny migrants' needs for safety, solidarity, protection from discrimination, and so on.

3.3.2 Beyond Honneth: addressing the agent-structure conflict

While Yar's recognition-based understanding of social harms is a useful starting point upon which to build a border zemiology, its reliance on Honneth's inter-subjective understanding of realisation raises further ontological and epistemological questions. The first issue relates to the nature of the self and the meaning of realisation. The idea that the individual knows and realises themselves only through interaction with others

suggests a vision of the self as socially constructed. On the other hand, the term recognition implies the acknowledgement of a pre-existing quality, something intrinsic to the person. Both concepts are problematic for recognition: if recognition brings personhood into existence, then misrecognition simply brings a different person into being, which makes the need for recognition meaningless; if recognition only uncovers what is already there, then it is its role in realising the person that becomes meaningless. Honneth does not provide a definitive solution to this conundrum (Laitinen, 2002; Markell, 2007).

This contradiction exemplifies the conflict between agency and structure. If we take the individual as our unit of analysis and discount the role of social structures, then we also discount the role of recognition in influencing the person. If, on the other hand, we consider social phenomena as main drivers of human behaviour, then we discount the significance of misrecognition and its presumed impact on the self. For zemiology to be empirically useful, it needs to engage with the agent-structure conflict and embrace a position on how to solve it. It seems clear that a recognition-based framework cannot rely on either an individualist or a collectivist approach to social reality; instead, the causal relationship between the individual and the social should be seen as bi-directional, where each can impact and, in some way, cause the other. Recognition only makes sense if such a co-creative process is present.

The nature of this process, however, needs further examination. It may seem reasonable to argue, for example, that agents and structures simultaneously create one another, in accordance with Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration (1984). After all, recognition is based on the presence of a dialectical interaction between the individual and the social, with the encounter seemingly affecting both parties concurrently. However, the inextricable interdependence of agency and structure presupposed by structuration hinders the development of a methodology to examine their causal power, as its effects cannot be isolated. Instead, I argue that a recognition-based understanding of social harm should embrace what Archer calls "*analytical dualism*", where agency and structure are ontologically distinct and co-create each other not simultaneously, but over time (Archer, 1995, p. 66). In Archer's view, existing social structures influence individual agency, which then goes on to causally impact future structures. This distinction is fundamental, and its effects are better understood when referring to the example of Mediterranean Sea-crossers.

3.3.3 *Analytical dualism*

Let us begin by considering the implications of basing recognition on structuration, that is the simultaneous co-generation of agent and structure. If an individual's realisation

depends upon others' recognition, then this presupposes an encounter with others, whether they are other individuals or social or legal structures. It follows that in absence of a dialectic interaction not only would recognition be impossible, but so would be misrecognition: social harm as denial of recognition can thus only happen if an encounter takes place. For example, as the withdrawal of SAR operations prevents contact between migrants and EU jurisdictions, then it could be argued that this negates the possibility of a dialectical encounter between the two, preventing both recognition and its refusal. This understanding of social harm would mirror the legal paradox identified earlier in this paper, justifying non-assistance as prevention of harm.

Taking an analytical dualism-informed view, however, I contend that the dialectical encounter has indeed taken place: previous search and rescue efforts by EU agents show that the right of migrants to be saved has already received recognition in the past, and this recognition has then been denied by subsequent policy reversals. However, the dialectic has already been established, regardless of whether physical encounters continue to take place. The present denial of recognition of sea-crossers' need for rescue means that deaths at sea are a social harm under this framework, even when extra-territoriality and lack of contact with EU agents cast doubt on whether they can be legally defined as human rights violations. Recognition and misrecognition are thus not just the product of momentary encounters, but of longer-term social processes. Archer's dualism also gives a basis for individuals' needs for recognition to change over time, in accordance with the cycle of social and political change; for example, in the face of increasing protections for cultural or social rights, individuals may come to expect progressively more comprehensive recognition of their needs under these rights and suffer social harm when this is denied. Individual examples of social harm, therefore, cannot be studied in isolation, but must be placed within their historical context. Embracing analytical dualism has wide-ranging methodological implications for the nature of zemiological enquiry, which I explore in the next chapter.

3.3.4 Activism versus transpraxis

Proponents of zemiology never envisioned it as an apolitical approach. In fact, it has been used to argue for wide-ranging social change (Pemberton, 2007) and to support direct activism (Canning, 2018). Indeed, zemiology builds upon a sizeable tradition of activist and revolutionary approaches first developed within critical and radical criminology (see e.g. Arrigo, 2016). A zemiological framework must, in some way, enable social change. In a recent contribution to zemiological theory, Copson (2016) argues that critical and radical approaches to crime and justice inevitably legitimise the systems they oppose, whereas zemiology can offer a truly alternative view of the social world. Part of Copson's argument is based on Henry & Milovanovic's constitutive

criminology (1991), which states that systemic structures or power relations are reproduced, rather than challenged, by critical opposition. This, Henry & Milovanovic argue, is because agents and structures co-create one another: individuals challenging the system end up reproducing it because their identity is being forged by it. As opposition praxis is unable to achieve systemic change, scholars should instead strive towards transpraxis, that is moving beyond the constraints of existing structures or relations. Transpraxis means to journey in uncharted territories, engaging in a "permanent revolution" (Arrigo and Bersot, 2016, p. 561). Zemiology, Copson argues, represents an opportunity for transpraxis because it transcends legal systems and the related ideology of crime (2016).

Henry & Milovanovic's constitutive criminology is founded on structuration, where agents and structures are inseparable, while the zemiological framework put forward in this paper relies on a dualist view. Nevertheless, both approaches have in common the understanding of agency and structure as causing each other, whether simultaneously or over time. It could be argued therefore that analytical dualism does not necessarily contradict Henry & Milovanovic's view of opposition as reproduction of existing discourse (1991). The question then is whether a recognition-based zemiological framework can be as transformative as Copson advocates. However, Arrigo & Bersot's understanding of transpraxis indicates that recognition, with its emphasis on negating or affirming categories and identities, fits squarely into praxis rather than transpraxis:

"it is not enough to return or to restore the subject's identity (or an excluded group's identity) to a state of political equilibrium (e.g., inclusion, enfranchisement) through reliance on categories of difference and their intersectional standpoints as derived from the praxis of resistance" (Arrigo and Bersot, 2016, p. 551)

Honneth's theory of recognition, it seems, can only take us so far in the quest for a transformative, permanently revolutionary zemiology. However, later critiques of Honneth's work have sought to move recognition away from identity and focussed on subverting accepted power structures. Incorporating these views is the final step towards building a comprehensive zemiological framework for the research of migration control.

3.3.5 Recognition, distribution, and representation

The role of public institutions in Honneth's society is to mediate universal recognition for all by all (Majid Yar, 2012a). However, as Nancy Fraser argues in her critique of Honneth's work, a push for recognition is meaningless without egalitarianism (2000). This means that recognition cannot be solely concerned with the individual's standing with regards to social or cultural norms, but can only truly be obtained by addressing the

structural obstacles that impede personal realisation. Understanding recognition as a simple reaffirmation of identity distracts from the structural causes of inequality, while at the same time shifting the burden onto the individual to meet their own need for self-realisation. Fraser states that emphasis on identity is problematic, as it lends itself to exclusionary rhetoric by sanctioning rather than challenging status subordination within society. Fraser's position is consistent with Arrigo & Bersot's (2016) critique of activist praxis, or indeed earlier work by Bourdieu, whose thought is also informed by structuration; for Bourdieu, addressing cultural bias without tackling structural inequality legitimises existing societal hierarchical divisions, reinforcing the status quo as an undisputed, natural order (1977). The state's role in mediating recognition thus cannot be simply to mitigate existing cultural and social harms, but also to address its own role in legitimising misrecognition, for example through legislation or policy which systematically undermine the status of certain individuals (Fraser, 2000). For Fraser, focusing on misrecognition ignores the other fundamental dimension of social injustice: "*distributive injustice*", or maldistribution (2000, p. 110). Misrecognition and maldistribution, while distinct, are closely linked: both need to be included in a vision of justice, as addressing one will not ameliorate the other. The definition of social harm must therefore include both dimensions.

Maldistribution is a central concept in migration studies. For example, the status subordination of migrants from poorer African and Asian countries in the EU is a visible manifestation of their economic subordination. The market forces that determine the value of labour power operate largely independently of cultural norms and are the true determinants of migration policy. The discrimination of migrants from poorer countries should thus be seen through a double lens: one is xenophobia, where prejudice denies recognition, and which may be fought for example through recourse to human rights law; the other is racism, a systemic mean of governance and control, which is based on denial of resources and must be fought through redistribution (Curcio, 2011). The inclusion of the dimension of maldistribution highlights the constitutive nature of opposition and paves the way towards true transpraxis. In addition, it highlights when measures to ameliorate one dimension of social harm may in turn exacerbate the other. For instance, extraordinary measures such as asylum, which grants status recognition to a limited number of worthy individuals, can act as an impediment to redistribution, as their foundation in exceptionality reinforces the legitimacy of harsh migration restrictions. If economic maldistribution lies at the foundation of border policy, it follows that the social harm caused by migration management can only be addressed by challenging the foundations of unequal hierarchies of mobility. Misrecognition and maldistribution then become two key dimensions of social harm, defining at once a coherent vision of social justice and of the duty of institutions. By relying on this

framework, a zemiological analysis can provide a coherent critique of institutional action or inaction that moves beyond legal obligations.

This independence is fundamental, especially when considering transnational phenomena such as migration. Going beyond the limits of state, law, and territory is necessary to understand migration, because its management by states is the result of processes that stray well beyond their borders, and which are influenced by regional politics, global economies, and so on (De Genova, 2013b). This brings me to the final hurdle that the zemiological framework must overcome, to avoid what Fraser calls misframing, that is "*when the state-territorial frame is imposed on transnational sources of injustice*" (2006, p. 48). Misframing, Fraser argues, is a meta-injustice, as it denies a voice to those who are not represented by the polity. When claims for recognition and redistribution are pressed for some individuals but not others, then a third form of injustice comes into view called misrepresentation (ibid.). A zemiological approach must thus include an understanding that, in a globalised world, the domestic cannot be isolated from the international. This is particularly important in a European context, where a supranational actor such as the EU, with its complex web of overlapping sovereignties and conflicts of interest, is involved in performing border control. However, it is equally relevant when looking at control from within the state's borders. For instance, migrant detention by EU member states cannot be viewed as a national issue, the way one would regard imprisonment, but as one manifestation of a wider process of exclusion. This does not mean that zemiology should ignore what Canning calls "*micro-level harms*" (2018). However, a transformative zemiology must look beyond providing a list of social harms caused by state practices, and seek out and challenge the wider processes that reinforce these practices and conspire to perpetuate global inequity.

3.4 Conclusion

The emergence of crimmigration has brought forward an energizing new era of criminological theorising, widening our understanding of criminal justice and non-criminal forms of coercive power. It remains important to note, however, that migration control strays well beyond crime control, transcending the state's authority and challenging common understandings of sovereign power. Researching domestic migration policies without keeping an eye on their transnational drivers only provides an incomplete insight into the social processes we seek to explain. In order to minimise this risk, it becomes necessary to un-merge migration from crime, moving from crimmigration towards a harm-based approach. The theoretical framework I have put forward in this chapter is an attempt to build a creative but coherent tool for the study of border-related harms which is able to reconcile the local with the global, keeping into account the continuous transformation of border performance, the hybrid nature of contemporary sovereignty,

and the constant tension between national goals and wider political and commercial interests. This framework is thus ideally suited to the study of processes of borderisation such as those I outlined in Chapter 2, and to conceptualise and explain their social consequences. In the following chapter I delve deeper into the theory's empirical applications by outlining the methodology and methods I adopted in this research, and why these were best suited to the study of the borderisation of Lampedusa.

Chapter 4: Methodology and methods

Having outlined the rationale behind this research and established its theoretical foundations in previous chapters, I now discuss how these impacted on my research strategy, choice of research methods, and ethical considerations. In the first half of this chapter, I delve in depth into the wider metatheory informing this study's ontological assumptions and epistemic claims, explaining the research paradigm and justifying my choice of methods. In the second half of the chapter, I describe how the planned research strategy was put into action during my fieldwork, examining how ethical and pragmatic considerations influenced not only the data collection process, but also the data analysis and my wider thinking on the research topic.

4.1 From theory to meta-theory: some philosophising on science

"If one has to philosophize, one has to philosophize; if one does not have to philosophize, one still has to philosophize (to say it and think it). One always has to philosophize" (Derrida, 1978, p. 191).

Like the Greek cited above by Derrida⁹, it is necessary for me to delve into the wider philosophical assumptions that underpin my research project in order to justify my research strategy. More specifically, I must explain what I believe the nature of social reality to be, to what extent it can be *known*, and what type of knowledge I have produced with this research. These considerations may seem abstract, but they lie at the very core of the research process, grounding my theoretical thinking deep within social reality, or at least within my understanding of it (Crotty, 1998). Without explaining the ontological assumptions and the subsequent epistemic claims that are held true in this project I cannot hope to successfully guide the reader through its aims, and through the nature and limitations of the claims I will make. I have delved in Chapter 3 into the implications of developing and adopting zemiological theory to study migration; however, while zemiology focuses on social structures and their impact on the individual, it does not in itself provide an in-depth insight into the nature of these structures, or their relationship with individual agency. For this purpose, in this chapter I discuss how I have grounded my zemiological theorising within a wider philosophy of science by adopting a critical realist (also known as social realist) approach. This is not to say that I believe my research proves the superiority of a critical realist philosophy, nor provide a comprehensive model to understand or predict social events. Rather, I am mindful of

⁹ In Derrida's essay, this quote is attributed to "a Greek", despite being commonly believed to be part of Aristotle's lost work *Protrepticus*. Derrida's choice of words acknowledges that the attribution is disputed (see Chroust, A. (1964), *Aristotle: Protrepticus. A Reconstruction*, Notre-Dame: University of Notre-Dame Press, pp. 48-9).

Fay's (1985) warning that metatheory is necessarily partial to ideological considerations, and limitations on what is known and knowable. I thus embrace Fay's suggestion to couple conviction in the soundness of my theorising with a willingness to accept I may conceivably be proven wrong, so "[a] *relative inconclusiveness is likely to be the order of the day*" (1985, p. 155). Nevertheless, philosophy of science plays a fundamental role in shaping the research process, which makes it necessary for me to detail it here (Gorski, 2013).

4.1.1 A brief introduction to critical realism

Critical realism is not to be understood as a theory of society, but rather as metatheory, a general umbrella of principles which have been embraced and adapted by different critical realist thinkers (Gorski, 2013; Rutzou, 2016). Its main proponent was British philosopher Ram Roy Bhaskar, who put forward his philosophy of science as a critique to both positivism and postmodern scepticism, creating what he first termed "*transcendental realism*" (Bhaskar, 2008a [1975]). In a nutshell, Bhaskar's critical realism maintains that, while experiments or observations may uncover individual causal mechanisms, they do not lead to the identification of universal laws. Instead, what we call natural laws are simply law-like regularities based on recurring instances of causality. Philosophy and science, Bhaskar holds, have for centuries fallen victims to an epistemic fallacy, that is to identify what *exists* with what is *known*; if only what is experienced can be known, as empiricism suggests, then it follows that what is not experienced does not exist. Instead, the world exists independently of our ability to experience it: a tree falling in a forest always makes a sound, regardless of the presence of ears able to capture the vibrations produced by the fall.

The empirical realm, that is what is experienced and observed, is only one of three ontologically distinct domains. Beyond the empirical lies the 'actual' domain, which is constituted by events that may not be observed, and whose causes are found in the 'real' domain, which includes underlying structures and generative mechanisms that exist regardless of whether they generate an event or not. The empirical is thus the result of exceptional events, not of deterministic rules, and what is manifest to us can only be a restricted view of the world. Observed law-like regularities, which may well show predictive power in the controlled environment of a laboratory, must not be mistaken for universal laws in the complex, open system which is the real world, where "[s]hifting constellations of causal mechanisms" are instead the norm (Steinmetz, 2004, p. 383). This does not mean that causation can never be inferred, rather that it must be understood as being complex, contingent, and conjunctural (Rutzou, 2018); unless qualified and situated within specific circumstances, causality becomes meaningless.

4.1.2 *Understanding social reality*

If universal laws cannot be observed in nature, this is even more so the case in the social world. Social reality is the open system *par excellence*, as structural forces interact and collide with individual agency to create a dynamic and complex system that cannot be reproduced under laboratory conditions (Gorski, 2013). A critical realist view of social reality is particularly pertinent to the construction of zemiological theory due to its attention to hidden structures and understanding of human agency. The nature of the relationship between individuals and society has long been a contested topic in social sciences, and criminology is no exception. Those embracing an individualist position, for example, will consider the individual as their main unit of analysis, and social structures as a dependant, subordinate element. Social phenomena such as crime may therefore be explained as primarily the result of human agency, as in the case of rational choice theory (Clarke, 1980, 1995), or psycho-social models of deviance (Bowlby, 1944; Bandura, 1978). On the other hand, a collectivist view of society subordinates the individual to the collective, and links human behaviours to societal causes. Emile Durkheim, for example, searched the cause of deviant behaviour within social processes (Durkheim, 1938 [1895]). It could be argued that attention to the social is also present in Bandura's or Bowlby's interest in the impact of socialisation on the individual; however, the fundamental difference is that for Durkheim social processes are not simply interactions between individuals, but they are ontologically distinct from individuals. To use a term that would be adopted by later sociologists, Durkheim's society is emergent: it is a thing in itself, and thus more than the sum of this constituting parts (Sawyer, 2002). Social phenomena are things, and for Durkheim this is a fact so self-evident that "*one does not need to philosophise about their nature*" (1938, p. 69 [1895]). On this, as I established earlier, I must disagree: a credible theoretical framework needs to make explicit its understanding of individuals and structures and how they relate to and influence each other, and, importantly, how they should be researched. Some more philosophising is therefore in order if I am to clarify why, in my view, zemiology ought to reject both individualist and collectivist approaches.

4.1.3 *Analytical dualism and morphogenetics*

Neither individualism nor collectivism provide a convincing account of social reality. The atomised view of society offered by individualism fails to account for the weight of historical or social context on individual agency, while collectivist approaches empty individuals of agency and responsibility, failing to explain how people within a social environment choose to behave differently. These objections suggest that the causal relationship between individuals and social structures is unlikely to be unidirectional; rather, both agency and structures must, to some extent, cause one another. This

position is at the core of Giddens' theory of structuration (1984), which holds that agency and structures are interdependent, simultaneously generating each other. However, structuration's dualism necessarily negates some of the properties of society's constituent parts; for example, if social structures only exist when individuals enact them, then they have no emergent properties, while at the same time individuals are denied any autonomous agency that is independent of the social. Furthermore, if agency and structures are inseparable, then it is impossible to untangle and analyse their respective causal power. While offering a more nuanced account of social reality, structuration neglects to offer a workable methodology able to analyse this reality. This limitation is elegantly overcome by critical realist thinker Archer, who holds that agency and structure are not inseparable, but ontologically distinct and irreducible to each other (1995). This approach, termed by Archer "*analytical dualism*" (1995, p. 66), finally reconciles emergent structures and autonomous individuals. Rather than simultaneously co-constituting each other, agents and structures impact each other over time: pre-existing social structures causally impact individual agency, and active agents influence the future make up of social structures. These temporal processes embody the cycle of social change, and are reminiscent of Marx & Engels's view of history and its relationship with individuals: "*circumstances make men just as men make circumstances*" ((1845) 1974, p. 59). The simple but fundamental analytical distinction between agents and structures provides a workable methodology able to explain societal changes based on what Archer calls "*the historicity of emergence*" (1995, p.66, emphasis in original). Bhaskar's complex, contingent, and conjunctural causation is thus given by Archer a new trait: it is morphogenetic, meaning it is continuously transformed by the historical dialectical relationship between agency and structures.

4.1.4 A critical realist zemiology

Critical realism grounds zemiological research within a coherent meta-theoretical basis, offering a clear ontology on which to base its epistemological claims. The agent-structure conflict lies at the core of social theory because, Archer writes, it is simply impossible to engage in sociological research without taking a position on how to resolve it (1995). The resolution proposed by critical realists provides not only a coherent view of the nature of society, but also a methodology to study causal mechanisms, albeit situated within certain conditions. Realist approaches have become increasingly popular within criminology in recent years. Roger Matthews, for example, suggests embracing critical realism to address what he identifies as theoretical and methodological inadequacies within both traditional and critical criminology (2014). Similarly, emerging ultra-realist approaches advocate for the recognition of deep social and structural causes of harm, although their critique of analytical dualism suggests a return to an individualist ontology

(Winlow and Hall, 2016). What makes critical realism particularly apt for a zemiological analysis, however, is the recognition of the causative power of absence. For Bhaskar, absence can be 'real', meaning it belongs to the realm of generative mechanisms that make certain events or outcomes more likely; taking this point further, he states that all harms may be conceptualised as absences, for example as the absence of an ideal state (Bhaskar, 2008b). These absences represent constraints to human realisation, and must in turn be 'absented' by being removed (Collier, 2005). This conceptualisation of absence supports the conceptualisation of social harm as lack of recognition or lack of distributive justice I discuss in the previous chapter. This has clear empirical implications. If this absence is a causative mechanism, research can only observe the event, that is the empirical manifestation: measuring symptoms to infer aetiology. In this case, the symptom being measured is social harm, and from it we can infer the real, underlying generative mechanisms. In line with the critical realist approach, the causation thus inferred will not be universal, but complex, contingent, conjunctural, and changing.

4.2 From theory to practice: research methods

4.2.1 *Retroductive research strategy*

The approach to social reality described above has directly impacted my choice of research strategy. The rejection of empiricism precludes the use of a solely inductive (i.e., data-driven) research strategy; induction presumes that universal laws can be inferred from observable empirical data, and thus falls foul of Bhaskar's epistemic fallacy. Similarly, a purely deductive strategy seeks to test a theory's predictive power by relying on empirical data, thus assuming that universal laws can be empirically proven and causal mechanisms can be experienced.

This project relies instead on a retroductive research strategy, a process which seeks to identify the necessary circumstances for a certain thing or phenomenon to exist via an interactive dialogue between theory and evidence (Ragin and Amoroso, 2011; Meyer and Lunnay, 2012). Like induction, the retroductive approach begins from the observation of a regularity, for example a specific social phenomenon, but instead of inferring a general law it seeks to explain the deeper, underlying mechanisms that produce this regularity within its specific context. Importantly, these causal mechanisms may not be observable, but can be known through their consequences. In this case, the social structures generating social harm can be known by analysing how social harm manifests itself. A retroductive approach thus infers a causality that is not universal, but complex, contingent, contextual, and changing.

4.2.2 Primary data: the case study approach

A retroductive research strategy permits an in-depth analysis of the circumstances that surround the observed phenomenon, making it particularly apt when seeking to produce context-specific knowledge. In this project I have achieved this through a case study approach. The case study is not to be understood as a data collection method, but rather as a way to define the social unit being analysed; as noted by Goode and Hatt, the case study is a way to view the social unit being studied as a whole, and to organise the data accordingly (1952, p. 331). Within the social sciences, the use of the case study has declined while quantitative analysis has become more popular, driven at least in part by technological advances widening the availability and sophistication of statistical models (Mitchell, 1983; Steinmetz, 2004; Matthews, 2017). Another reason is the supposedly low status occupied by the case study on the 'hierarchy' of research strategies (Yin, 1994). Indeed, case studies have often been viewed as 'less scientific' than other kinds of empirical inquiry due to the difficulty in generalising findings and extrapolating theory from a single case (Goode and Hatt, 1952; Flyvbjerg, 2006). For example, Gerring (2004) argues that, while case studies produce useful knowledge, this needs to be later generalised by using a larger sample, as case studies are "*a particular way of defining cases, not a way of analysing cases or a way of modelling causal relations*" (Gerring, 2004, p. 341). This view, however, presupposes the desirability of seeking to generalise causation in social inquiry, thus overestimating the predictive value of theory in explaining social phenomena (Yin, 1994; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Furthermore, it ignores how the rich, complex account of reality provided by case studies can be used effectively to test (Løkke and Dissing Sørensen, 2014), build (Steinmetz, 2004), or falsify theory (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Much of the criticism of case studies is a legacy of the influence of positivist approaches on the idea of scientificity within social inquiry. As I mention above, in adopting a critical realist approach I reject the idea that the scientific method can be applied to the social world, and maintain that empirical research does not equate empiricism. Rather, the validity of social inquiry relies on recognising the limits of what can be empirically observed and what can be inferred from it (Steinmetz, 2004). As Flyvbjerg (2006) argues, case studies' contribution to scientific knowledge is often underestimated due to a misguided bias towards generalisability to the detriment of in-depth, context-specific knowledge. This is based on the myth that social inquiry can produce universal, predictive theories. However, this does not mean that the findings of a case study cannot be generalised, or that causal mechanisms cannot be uncovered; rather, the generalisability of findings relies greatly on the strategic choice of the case, while the causal relations uncovered will be tied to their historical, real-life context. In this project

I do not seek to unveil deterministic causal mechanisms, but to understand and explore in-depth the impact of structures within a contemporary context, making the case study approach ideally suited for this type of inquiry.

4.2.3 Choosing the case study: the island of Lampedusa

The case study approach can involve multiple cases, either for comparative purposes or to extrapolate results to a wider sample. This project is a single case study focusing on a single social unit, the island of Lampedusa. Constraints on time and resources were of course a factor in this choice, as should be expected from a single researcher conducting research on a limited budget. For example, I briefly considered conducting a multiple case study including Lampedusa and a similar Greek island, comparing their analogous histories as long-term recipients of sea-crossers. The idea was quickly discarded, for several reasons. Resources were a primary consideration; not only would fieldwork be necessarily lengthened, but time and money would need to be invested in learning the Greek language to an acceptable standard. Furthermore, while my being Italian certainly facilitated my fieldwork in Lampedusa, allowing me to quickly gain an insight into the island's unique culture and dynamics, I would have had no such advantage in Greece. Had I carried out fieldwork in both locations, I am not convinced the two datasets would have been truly comparable, as I doubt fieldwork in Greece would have come even close to producing the rich and complex data I was able to collect in Lampedusa. In any event, time constraints were made even more limiting by unexpected delays in obtaining ethical approval, and by the fixed deadlines imposed by my funder on the application process to access funding for overseas fieldwork. These two factors alone would have made additional fieldwork effectively impossible. Practical considerations aside, I should highlight that this project was conceived from the very beginning as a single case study centring on Lampedusa, so the research strategy outlined here is not a scaled down version of an originally grander proposal. Rather, I considered widening the scope of my research as a response to a degree of scepticism I perceived in occasional remarks by other scholars asking me which other locations I would include in my research. These remarks were often prompted by the common belief that a comparative case study is necessarily more valid than a single case study, a myth I challenge in the previous section.

In fact, as Flyvbjerg (2006) notes, the validity of a case study relies on the rigorousness of the research process, while its generalisability depends on the strategic choice of the case. For example, if the aim of the research was to disprove a theory then one might choose what Flyvbjerg calls a critical case, which exemplifies the optimal circumstances to confirm the theory in question. If the theory can be disproven via the in-depth analysis of a critical case, then it follows that it is most likely untenable in other cases as

well. The purpose of my research is not to prove or disprove a specific theory, but rather to examine the manifestation of a social phenomenon (i.e., social harm) within a specific context (i.e., borderisation) and understand the hidden role of structures and mechanisms causing this context-specific harm. For this purpose I have chosen a paradigmatic case, that is a case that can act as an example of the characteristics of the wider social context to which it belongs (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Pavlich, 2010). The paradigmatic case is representative of the wider phenomena being studied, making it visible and knowable. Agamben (2002) describes the paradigmatic case as a contextual, historical singularity which analogically defines the whole of which it is a part. Within criminology, a well-known example of a paradigmatic case is Foucault's use of the panopticon as a symbol of disciplinary power in a surveillance society (1977). Generalising from the paradigmatic case does not mean to compare it to other cases, but to the wider class or phenomena it symbolises (Pavlich, 2010).

The island of Lampedusa is a paradigmatic case due to its role in performing EU border control in the face of irregular sea migration in the Mediterranean (Pugliese, 2009; Dines, Montagna and Ruggiero, 2014; Orsini, 2016). The closest EU territory to Libya, Lampedusa's strategic location as a longstanding primary point of entrance for irregular migrants has long made it the main destination on the central Mediterranean migration route, the most dangerous migration route in the world, receiving over 400,000 migrants from North Africa over the last 20 years (Bassi, 2018, p. 343). Thousands of migrants are known to have drowned en route to Lampedusa over the years, while the island's migrants' reception centre has seen several protests and riots by detained migrants (Friese, 2012). A wild, barren landscape with barely 6,000 residents, Lampedusa has played a central role in the politicisation of migration, first by Italy and then by the EU, and has been cyclically subjected to intense publicity and abject abandonment (Campesi, 2011, 2017). Lampedusa's role as long-time recipient of sea-crossers makes it an ideal study site, providing an insight into the long-term effects of routinised borderisation, moving away from the emphasis on crisis and exceptionality that has characterised the migration discourse since the so-called 2015 European migration crisis.

Over the last two decades, and the last few years in particular, Lampedusa has been the subject of much attention from scholars in Italy and beyond (e.g. Coluccello and Massey, 2007; Triandafyllidou, 2014; Terranova Cecchini, Toffle and Vitale, 2015; Triulzi, 2016). Growing up in Italy, I have witnessed how Lampedusa exemplifies the migration policy of the government of the day, periodically featuring in the news as a symbol of insecurity and fear of foreign invasion, of warm welcome to refugees, or as a model showcasing the latest redesign of the migrant reception, detention, or expulsion system. This partial familiarity with the reality of Lampedusa has been an advantage in conceiving this

project, but could also be conceived as an obstacle. In describing the case study approach, Goode & Hatt (1952) identify its greatest limitation in the researcher's overconfidence about finding the right answers within it. The weakness in a case study lies thus not in the object of the observation, but in the observer themselves, and their vulnerability to confirmation bias. I take Goode & Hatt's point and agree that careful reflexivity is necessary to minimise bias, but I would argue that this is true for any research strategy. If anything, singling out the case study underestimates the power of in-depth field research in forcefully challenging and reshaping the researcher's theories and beliefs (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The assumption that single case studies are necessarily biased towards validation is not supported by the actual experience of researchers, nor by the common tendency of case studies to favour falsification (Campbell, 1975). Finally, the case being analysed may be single, but this by no means makes it a homogenous unit. Lampedusa may be a self-contained social unit due to its geography, but it is also a microcosm, as complex as the wider social reality of which it is a part and that it simultaneously represents. Delving deeper within the case's reality means to surrender our subjectivity to its unfolding complexities, continuously revisiting previously held assumptions (Ragin, 1992).

4.3 The data collection process

Primary research in Lampedusa relied on an ethnographic strategy, employing two data collection methods: participant observations and face-to-face interviews. Fieldwork was carried out during the months of April and May 2018, which I spent living in Lampedusa. In my original research proposal, I had considered spending up to six months on Lampedusa, although pragmatic limitations linked to delays in accessing ethical approval and funding brought me to reduce this to an initial period of two months to be later followed by an optional further trip. However, the initial two-month trip turned out to be perfectly timed, and an additional trip was considered unnecessary. I detail below the rationale behind my choice of an ethnographic method, and how it was conducted.

4.3.1 *A critical realist ethnography*

Ethnographies feature prominently within the field of migration studies, at least in part due to the wealth of migration research produced over the years by anthropologists such as Andersson (2014a, 2014b, 2016) and De Genova (2002, 2013a). However, the ethnographic approach has also been adopted within criminology and socio-legal studies to explore in depth the working of migration reception centres (Campesi, 2015b), removal centres (Bosworth and Kellezi, 2017), and the asylum system (Canning, 2017). The popularity of ethnography is unsurprising; as Walters suggests, the study of migration governance should aspire at the very least to be informed by "*an ethnographic*

sensibility” to capture its complex nature, which is often characterised by expediency, ambivalence, and contradiction (2015, p. 5). Similarly, the lived experience of those affected by migration policy cannot be captured in a single snapshot, but requires extended observation for its hidden nuances to come to light.

According to sociologist Stacey, whose definition is so elegantly succinct that no paraphrase of mine could do it justice, ethnography is an “*intensive participant-observation study which yields a synthetic cultural account*” (1988, p. 22). Stacey’s description contains an implicit but crucial point: that observation is not in itself ethnographic unless it is accompanied by synthesis. Ethnography is to be understood not as a data collection method, but rather as a methodological approach, a way of making sense of the field and linking it to theory (Edwards, Mahoney and Vincent, 2014). The theoretical usefulness of the ethnographic method is not universally accepted.

Hammersley, for example, dismisses ethnographers’ claims to derive general theory from description as a fantasy, as no universal law can be extrapolated from the observation of a single social phenomenon (1990). This criticism is not unfounded, but it does not preclude ethnography from having explanatory value; while it may be inadequate to seek universal causation, ethnography remains suited to the research of complex, contingent, conjunctural, and changing causation. The ontological and epistemological assumptions on which this ethnography is grounded are based on a critical realist approach: through the observation of the empirically knowable phenomenon of social harm, I seek to infer the underlying structural mechanisms (or absence thereof) that may generate the phenomenon within this specific social and historical context. This also means that respondents’ experiences and perceptions are not examined in isolation, but connected to underlying structural factors, recognising individuals’ dual quality as both products and agents of social change.

In some ways, my approach to ethnography is aligned with the realist stance advocated by criminologist Matza, embracing a wider sociological view of individuals and their behaviour (1964, 1969). Critiquing the positivist approach of previous studies of delinquency, Matza argues for the inclusion of structural factors in explanations for human action, while at the same time recognising and respecting the role of individual agency and choice. However, Matza does not offer a clear resolution of the agent-structure conflict, opting instead for a ‘soft determinism’ compromise, where individuals’ volition is only partially constrained by personal circumstances (Haines, 1981). In Matza’s view, the essence of human nature is self-evident, and a naturalistic methodology best suited to its examination. For Matza, naturalism is a commitment “*to phenomena and their nature*” (1969, p. 3, emphasis in original); in the case of social research, individuals must be recognised as subjects rather than objects of study, and

researchers must empathise with their perception of reality. From a methodological point of view, this stance is problematic for two reasons: first, the unresolved agent-structure ontology makes it difficult to establish the nature and direction of causation¹⁰; second, naturalism calls on the researcher to be true to the phenomena under investigation, but this is an impossible endeavour. Every social phenomenon lends itself to multiple interpretations, and researchers cannot avoid value judgements, even when simply deciding what is relevant to the research and what can be ignored (Hammersley, 1990). The subjects of research may exist independently of the observer, but it does not follow that objective knowledge can be produced from their observation. In this ethnography, the realist approach is mediated by a critical stance, situating knowledge by engaging in an ongoing critique of my subjectivity and of my relationship with research participants (Soyini Madison, 2005). Borrowing once more Stacey's words, to engage in critical ethnography is to be "*excruciatingly self-conscious*" (1988, p. 25), and a relatively painless summary of my extensive agonising on issues of reflexivity and positionality is found below.

4.3.1.1 Reflexivity as method

As discussed above, this project's chosen methodology rejects positivist conceptions of how empirical research should be conducted. Positivist ideals privilege detachment from the object of study as the way to objectivity and generalisability, both priorities in positivist research. My epistemic stance instead privileges what Burawoy calls the reflexive approach, i.e. the engagement between researcher and subject (1998). This approach acknowledges that the researcher is part of the world they study, and that they are both an influence on and influenced by it. This is a feature of all participative research, but particularly important in immersive research methods such as ethnography. Neutral ethnographic observation is simply impossible, partly because of the theoretical 'baggage' that informs the ethnographer's view of the field, and partly due to the bidirectional dialogue between field and observer (Van Velsen, 1967; LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). Rather than seeing this interdependent relationship as an interference to be minimised, the reflexive researcher engages with it and incorporates it in their theorising (Burawoy, 1998; Evens, 2005).

Reflexivity is not simply a way of thinking about how research is done, but can be a methodological tool in itself. For instance, the reflexive approach put forward by Burawoy and, among others, Bourdieu (1992), is linked to their rejection of the ontological dualism between individual and society. Their view of society is based instead

¹⁰ For a more detailed critique of Matza's ontological assumptions see Beyleveld, D., & Wiles, P. (1975). Man and method in David Matza's "Becoming deviant." *British Journal of Criminology*, 15(2), 111–127.

on structuration, meaning that individuals and structures concurrently cause each other, as discussed earlier in this chapter. In the approach taken by this research, however, the two entities are ontologically distinct and impact each other over time. The impact that the researcher and the field have on each other can be unpacked and analysed in the same way. This may seem an unnecessary distinction, but it defines the researcher not only as another actor in the social world they seek to study, but also as part of its historical cycle of social change. This means that the impact of the researcher goes beyond their brief interaction with the researched. It does not mean that the researcher and the researched do not also concurrently impact one another: one clear example is the observer effect, also known as Hawthorne effect, which is the unavoidable influence of an observer's presence on the behaviour of research participants (Monahan and Fisher, 2010). However, a 'dualist' reflexivity takes into account how this effect can also build up over time, impacting future observer-observed relationships (Bagguley, 2003). In Lampedusa, which has been the subject of much media and research attention over the years, the behaviour of research participants was affected not just by my presence as current observer, but also by the cumulative effect of the interactions between past observers and the island's social reality. Reflexivity and awareness of my role as participant as well as observer were essential to my framing of academic research as yet another border-related phenomenon in Lampedusa, including my own presence on the island as object of the study.

4.3.1.2 Positionality

A way to reflexively situate knowledge is to examine the researcher's positionality, that is their position in relation to what is researched. By this I do not mean the presence of a personal rapport with research participants, although that is of course a fundamental facilitator of face-to-face research (Carley-Baxter, 2011). Rather, positionality refers to the power relations between the researcher and the researched, and their impact on knowledge production (Rose, 1997). These power relations are impacted by a complex interplay of social characterisations such as age, gender, ethnicity, class, and so on. Complexity is compounded not only by the different intersections between these characteristics, but also the fact that they are socially constructed; their meaning, and consequently their power, is thus co-constructed during the interaction between the researcher and researched within their shared social context (Rose, 1997).

For example, a researcher's university affiliation may put them in a position of power, perhaps by suggesting a privileged background compared to their respondents (Corlett and Mavin, 2018). However, higher education is much less expensive in Italy than the UK, so a university degree is not necessarily a reliable indicator of socio-economic status. Furthermore, low pay and chronic underfunding mean that an academic career is

not universally perceived as particularly desirable. These factors may have contributed to Lampedusa's residents being wholly indifferent to my education or employment status; on the other hand, my age and marital status were of great interest. I decided not to disclose my same-sex relationship, partly because of Lampedusa's deep social conservatism, but also a desire to maintain a veneer of distance between my private life and the field. This choice probably had profound repercussions on my research. For instance, some of my gatekeepers later revealed themselves to be extremely homophobic, begging the question of whether they would have chosen to help me had they known the truth. On the other hand, my status as an unmarried woman in her mid-thirties was also problematic; inquiries about boyfriends or husbands being an almost universal conversation-starter, my self-professed spinsterhood often made residents suspicious. Explaining this deviance required me to adjust my behaviour, for example by highlighting the immaturity commonly associated with being a student, to imply I may be too naïve or self-centred to find a husband; or by engaging in non-ladylike behaviours in the presence of men, such as wearing baggy clothes and eating noticeably large desserts, as a way to both infantilise myself and signal my non-availability. These strategies may seem curious, but while I was not aware of it at the time, they match closely those adopted by unmarried researcher Hamabata during his ethnography in Japan (1986). Though Hamabata is male, Japanese social mores are different from Italian ones, and the weight of obligation was much more explicit in his case, we found ourselves in similarly deviant positions in relation to our respective social contexts, and both responded by attempting to manipulate research participants' perception of us.

Still, the relational nature of positionality means that the researcher has limited control on how participants frame their presence within their social realm. While Hamabata and I approached the field as both insiders and outsiders thanks to our dual identity (third-generation Japanese-American in Hamabata's case, and first-generation British-Italian in mine), we were not equally successful in influencing how we would be seen by participants. For instance, Hamabata spoke English whenever faced with a social faux pas, using his outsider status at his advantage to be accepted as a knowledgeable guest rather than being rejected as an "*incomplete Japanese*" (1986, p. 356). In my case, however, my chosen identity as British-Italian was erased by Lampedusans, who ignored my life in the UK and dismissed my British citizenship. My Italian identity, in participants' eyes, superseded any additional allegiance. My occasional hesitation when speaking Italian, or indeed any other example of cultural confusion or ignorance, was instead blamed on my being from Northern Italy. Lampedusans' choice to re-label me as only a Northerner had implications of its own, due to the deeply entrenched North/South divide in the country. Wealthier and more industrialised, the North of Italy is also home to entrenched prejudice against Southern Italians. Try as I might, there was nothing I could

do to dissociate myself from these wider socio-political tensions; instead, I found myself carefully weighing my words to prevent my questions from being construed as a form of anti-South criticism. These challenges, which were linked to my specific status as outsider/insider, were largely unanticipated. Positionality thus goes beyond researchers acknowledging their own or their host culture's values, but also involves being able to critically examine their unfolding interactions (Shami, 1988). In my case, I was forced to question whether, as a Northern Italian, I might carry these biases. This is something I had not foreseen: since I perceive myself to be unbiased, I had assumed my stance to be neutral. As feminist and postcolonial approaches suggest, however, any pretence of neutrality in research must be challenged, as researchers inevitably draw from the values embraced not only by their culture, but also by the wider research community to which they belong (Hardy, Phillips and Clegg, 2001; Smith, 2012). In my case, I only fully realised the implications of this statement when already on the field, as I was faced with the unexpected perceptions of research participants. Positionality is thus to be understood not as a set of conditions, but as a process in constant flux.

Indeed, positionality also changes depending on individual research participants, causing the power relation to shift (Schoenberger, 1992). During face-to-face interviews, for example, it was sometimes obvious that I was the least powerful person in the room, while other times I felt that the opposite was true. The respondent's social standing seemed to be a deciding factor, but the channel through which I had approached them also seemed to matter. However, how these dynamics may affect the research outcome, or indeed how one would find this out, is not always clear (Rose, 1997). A respondent in a position of power may be more guarded in their answers, or perhaps feel less inclined to answer the researcher's questions at all. However, in my experience powerful respondents were more likely to engage with the topic and gave lengthier interviews, perhaps because they were more familiar with the process. I cannot state with certainty whether my gender or age played a part in ensuring their cooperation, nor can I determine how these factors may have impacted potential respondents' choice not to participate. However, I am confident that my continuous efforts to ensure reciprocity and equity with research participants have preserved the reliability of the collected data. Nevertheless, I agree once more with Stacey when she states that, regardless of the chosen methodology, the balance of power in ethnography inevitably privileges the researcher over the researched (1988). Turning life into data, Stacey argues, is fundamentally exploitative. In my case, I cannot deny that I personally benefited from researching phenomena that cause harm to Lampedusans. While I may have been temporarily subjected to the same circumstances while sharing my participants' social world, my ability to remove myself from it marked our relationship as inherently

unequal. I address the implications of this power imbalance more in depth at the end of the chapter.

4.3.2 Participant observations

During the time spent living in Lampedusa I interacted with a variety of residents, both permanent and temporary, from different social circles. The population of the island is relatively small, and its remoteness certainly facilitates a level of interconnectedness among residents: most have gone to the same school, prayed in the same church, or moored their boat in the same harbour. Nevertheless, the population is numerous enough for plenty of separate social groupings and identities to emerge, often congregating in different cafes, brought together by specific aims and interests. Some social circles may revolve around family ties, some around shared occupation, age group, politics, place of origin, and so on. These social dimensions overlap and intersect to form a variety of social identities, so despite its small size, the island is home to as complex a social world as would be found elsewhere. This is not to say that close proximity does not facilitate the permeability of the boundaries between social circles; after all, residents continually cross each other's path. Nevertheless, there is no daisy chain connecting all islanders together, and an outsider wishing to observe and participate in Lampedusa's life cannot rely on a single gatekeeper to access different social networks. It was essential for me to gain access to different groups with different experiences of borderisation, not only to gather more complete and reliable data, but also to minimise what Robben calls "*ethnographic seduction*" (1996), that is the more or less conscious manipulation by research participants aiming to steer the researcher towards their own partial position on the truth. Initial attempts to achieve the necessary variety in recruitment, however, were met with several difficulties.

4.3.2.1 Access and recruitment

Before leaving for Lampedusa I contacted a local association recommended by a fellow researcher, who had spent a month on the island the previous year. However, neither mine nor her inquiries were ever answered. Similarly, my attempts to contact two relatively well-known local residents were met with silence. It quickly became obvious that I had little chance of contacting potential gatekeepers from outside the island, although at the time I could not understand why. I now know that this was due to a combination of factors. Firstly, the sheer volume of researchers and journalists regularly making similar contact requests means that most are likely to be ignored; as a humble PhD student, I was unlikely to stand out, and nobody currently on the island could intercede for me. Another factor was the chosen medium of communication. Hospitality and helpfulness are highly valued in Lampedusan culture, resulting in strong social pressure to never decline a personal request for a favour. Although my communications

made no explicit request for assistance, residents knew from experience that one would be forthcoming, and by then it may feel too late to decline. The easiest way to escape this obligation was thus to not acknowledge my messages at all. Considering a courteous and unobtrusive email the best way to introduce myself to somebody I did not know, I only succeeded in making myself easier to ignore. As a result, I arrived on the island having made no successful contact with potential gatekeepers. My social interaction with Lampedusans was therefore limited during the first week of my stay, and my observations were largely non-participant and descriptive in nature (Liu and Maitlis, 2012). Over the coming weeks my participation steadily increased as I built a rapport with several residents, and I was invited to observe two public meetings of a local organisation, the *Forum Lampedusa Solidale*. My wider participation in Lampedusa's social life was often the result of the proactive recruitment strategies I discuss later in the chapter.

4.3.2.2 Research data

From the first day in Lampedusa I wrote detailed field notes documenting my observations, impressions, and reflections (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995). While I used a small notebook to jot down details such as names, contact details, or specific events, I usually typed my field notes every evening at home, as recommended by Burgess (1991). This gave me time to reflect on the significance and meaning of what I had observed during the day, and on why it had struck me as sufficiently "anthropologically strange" to be recorded (Hammersley, 1985, p. 152). My field notes are therefore not faithful narrations of events (or, as was often the case, of uneventfulness), but rather analytical summaries. As time progressed, notes became less descriptive, as I increasingly relied on photography and videorecording to document my visual impressions of Lampedusa. Carrying a camera with me every day enabled me to document extraordinary events, such as migrants' landings, but also the daily routine of the port, the airport, the city centre, and how these changed during my stay. In addition to field notes, I kept a regular field diary in the form of a blog, which is currently still live at <https://inlampedusa.wordpress.com/>. I updated the blog on average twice a week and shared new posts publicly via Twitter and Facebook. The blog's main purpose was to communicate my experience of Lampedusa in real time to friends, family, and colleagues, mostly as a way of reducing my sense of isolation and supporting my mental health while in the field. However, the blog also played an important role as part of the research process. Summarising my experiences for the imagination of outsiders with no direct experience of Lampedusa was a difficult endeavour, but this challenge represented an effective antidote to "going native", preventing me from immersing myself too deeply in the field and helping me maintain a critical eye

(LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p.47). Furthermore, the blog represented an ideal platform for me to share my practical difficulties with the research process, to conceptualise my fears and apprehensions, and to openly acknowledge the emotional burden of the field. As a reflexive account of my fieldwork experience, this field diary represents an integral part of my research data (Punch, 2012). Over the course of my stay, I documented my participant observations with over 13,000 words of field notes, 2,700 images and videos, and 18 blog posts.

4.3.3 Face to face interviews

Participant observations were an invaluable means of gathering detailed information on life on Lampedusa, on its social and political reality, and on the impact of migration-related processes on its population. This data collection method plays a fundamental role in situating the object of study (i.e., social harm) within its specific social and historical context. However, social harm is not conceptualised in this research as purely a social construct, but as an empirically knowable manifestation of underlying generative mechanisms. It is, in short, a thing in itself, which can be experienced and conceptualised differently by different people. To capture this personal dimension, I complemented observation data with face-to-face interviews. Aside from methodological considerations, private interviews have clear advantages over observations when it comes to investigating salient social issues, as they allows researchers to dig deeper beneath the dominant discourse (Kleinman, Stenross and McMahon, 1994). Migration is a polarising concept in contemporary Italy, and an overly simplified pro-against dichotomy is often favoured in public debate, which can result in individuals being wary of expressing a more nuanced point of view for fear of being mistaken for supporters of the wrong side of the argument. I found this division to be particularly marked in Lampedusa. Face-to-face interviews, however, allowed me to temporarily remove respondents from their social context; in turn, this allowed respondents to express their views in a more articulated way, free from fear of the community's judgement. Still, this was only possible when potential respondents trusted me to be a non-judgemental listener, which some people were at first not inclined to believe. Some residents particularly feared being labelled as racists, an apprehension I found in individuals on both sides of the debate and which had a noticeable impact on recruitment, as I discuss in the following subsections.

4.3.3.1 Sampling technique

After my initial failure to establish connections before arriving on the island, I decided to cast a wider net and rely on a mixture of face-to-face and virtual snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method which relies on referrals from individuals within existing groups or social networks to recruit new research participants

(Blaikie, 2009). Snowball sampling is used frequently in migration research, whether to recruit migrant (e.g. Rutherford, 2011; Brekke and Brochmann, 2015) or non-migrant participants (e.g. Antonopoulos and Winterdyk, 2006). Snowball sampling is an effective technique to recruit 'hard to reach' populations, so its popularity in migration studies is not surprising (Shaghaghi, Bhopal and Sheikh, 2011). A population may be categorised as hard to reach due to certain characteristics, such as social vulnerability or geographical isolation, which decrease its members' visibility and/or willingness to engage with researchers. As noted by Shaghaghi et al (2011), a population may also be termed hard to reach when their reluctance to engage is a consequence of being over-researched. This is the case of Lampedusa's residents, whose community has been the subject of intense research and media attention over the years. As I discuss below, residents' reluctance to take part in further research sometimes translated into outright hostility towards me; however, thanks to the intercession of local gatekeepers, I was able to reach the ear of potential respondents who would have declined a direct request to participate, including some who had ignored my previous contact requests.

4.3.3.2 Access and recruitment

As shown in Figure 5 below, my recruitment strategy included three engagement routes: face to face, email, and Facebook. Face to face requests for interviews were generally unsuccessful when not preceded by the intercession of a gatekeeper, regardless of the closeness of the rapport already existing between me and the potential respondent. The only exception was my second respondent, who became a gatekeeper themselves and facilitated access to two more respondents. The most successful source of potential interview respondents was, by far, Facebook. I posted an introduction to my research and an invitation to take part on two local Facebook groups, specifying that I was now living on the island and would be happy to meet for a chat. My posts elicited strong reactions in both groups. The immediate response was anger, with some residents accusing me of exploiting Lampedusa for my own benefit, such as achieving personal fame. Despite my attempts to clarify the wider aims of my research, some people took exception to its migration-related focus, voicing concerns that researchers' and journalists' obsession with migration detracts attention from the social and political problems faced daily by Lampedusans. The reference to a lack of positive impact and the characterisation of researchers as pursuing self-serving aims suggested widespread research fatigue (Clark, 2008). When other group members posted comments seemingly in my defence, it was to argue in favour of a pro-migrant position rather than to challenge the abuse that others had directed at me. The vitriol eventually convinced me to stop engaging, particularly after a sexually aggressive comment posted by an older man. While I encountered little public support on the page, I also received some private

messages offering assistance. In most cases, this initial show of helpfulness was not sustained; nevertheless, through these messages I was put in contact with my key gatekeeper, and directly recruited my first interview respondent.

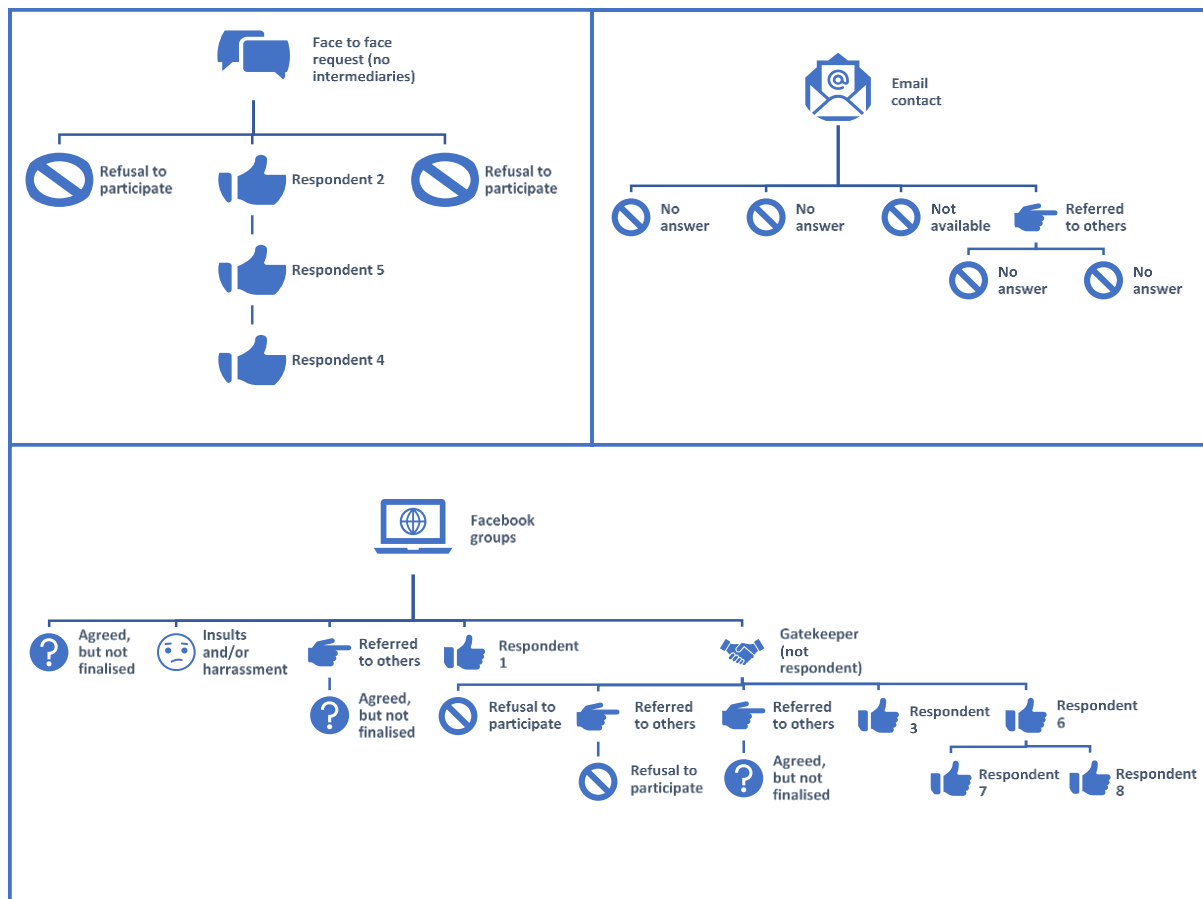


Figure 5 - Interview recruitment routes and their outcomes

The diversification of the recruitment strategy allowed me to reach respondents with whom I would otherwise not have been in contact. My first respondent, for instance, had never been interviewed before and had no social ties with any of the people I met during my stay; their self-professed motivation to agree to an interview was to show their disdain for the local people who had insulted me on Facebook, demonstrating their own superiority. A mixed approach to sampling thus proved advantageous in aiding recruitment among Lampedusa's fatigued population, leading to a total of eight completed interviews.

4.3.3.3 Sample size

The number of interview respondents was not determined a priori. As noted by Sim et al (2018), the appropriate sample size in a qualitative project is influenced by its methodology, which in turn is based on the study's ontological assumptions. A prior estimation of sample size may be justifiable when using a deductive research strategy, but not in inductive or retroductive research, where research themes are not known in

advance (ibid.). Instead, in this research I followed an adaptive sampling approach, where sample size was determined by saturation. As first conceptualised by Glaser and Strauss, saturation is achieved when "*no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category*" (1967, p. 61). In this study, I concluded that I had achieved saturation when I could uncover no new information to further develop different categories of migration-related social harm in Lampedusa. It should be noted that saturation was not determined by interview data alone, as the interviews were informed and guided by the continuous analysis of the themes emerging from participant observations. In fact, I used observations to target specific interview participants to increase the diversity of the data and to minimise repetition. I would argue therefore that saturation was an incremental process, which may make it problematic to pinpoint the precise moment in which it was achieved (Saunders *et al.*, 2018). Nevertheless, as my stay in Lampedusa was coming to an end, I was surprised to find that the island did not feel "*anthropologically strange*" anymore (Hammersley, 1985, p.152); in addition to the complex and rich data I had collected at that point, I considered this realisation as evidence of a sufficient degree of saturation.

4.3.3.4 *The interview process*

As mentioned above, the purpose of face-to-face interviews was to collect in-depth information on different categories of social harm in Lampedusa; interviewees were not story-tellers, but informants (Bertaux and Kohli, 1984). As the data collection process progressed, interviews became more targeted. For instance, interviews carried out at the beginning of fieldwork were wider in scope, exploring the respondent's perception of migration-related harms in Lampedusa and their everyday experiences of it. However, later interviews focused on gathering more detail on specific aspects of social harm, tailored to the respondent's personal expertise. This did not entail adopting a directive or obtrusive probing style during interviews, which would have introduced bias by leading the respondent towards specific answers (Brenner, 1985). All interviews remained unstructured, privileging minimal, unobtrusive probing. However, the focus of the interview was agreed in advance with the respondent. This approach allowed respondents to take control of what they wished to discuss, and mitigated the inherent imbalance of power between interviewer and interviewed (Hoffmann, 2007). This was especially important to minimise the negative effect of research fatigue, particularly for those respondents who had already given interviews in the past but felt that little attention had been paid to their concerns. Pre-interview conversations helped me create a rapport with the respondent, but also helped respondents prepare for the interview and reduce the risk of emotional distress, a key issue I discuss later in this chapter.

As a result, interviews were widely different in length and focus. The average interview length was 40 minutes, but individual interviews ranged from 17 minutes to one hour and 6 minutes, depending on the breadth of topic being tackled. All interviews were audio-recorded, and subsequently transcribed verbatim by me. Verbatim transcription made it easier to go through the data multiple times for the purpose of analysis, and to visualise and cross-reference emerging themes. However, interview transcripts could not faithfully report the meaning of respondents' words, partly because of the marked difference in vocabulary between written and spoken Italian, and partly due to the difficulty of transcribing non-verbal communication and contextual cues (Denham & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Giordano & Voghera, 2002). For this reason, interview recordings were used as reference during the data analysis to contextualise transcripts and ensure accuracy.

4.3.4 *Data analysis and synthesis*

Data analysis began concurrently with data collection through a process known as "*progressive focusing*", through which the research plan and research questions are gradually refined as new information continues to emerge (Stake, 2010, p. 129). This reflexive process allowed me to adapt my approach based on my developing understanding of the social and historical reality of Lampedusa, and the knowledge shared by my respondents and informants. Progressive focusing does not follow a linear, pre-determined strategy, but rather a multitude of ever-shifting winding paths, which has led to the approach being succinctly summarised as "*messy*" (Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012, p. 817). Unravelling the mess requires the researcher to prioritise the concepts and stories that are meaningful and abandon those that are found wanting, a subjective process which is heavily influenced by the researcher's understanding of the field; while this subjectivity may expose this approach to criticism, it nevertheless allows the researcher to "*gain in relevance and timeliness*", two essential factors in this research (Stake, 2010, p. 132).

Once the data collection was completed, all ethnographic fieldnotes and interview transcripts were analysed thematically with the help of qualitative data analysis software NVivo Pro (version 11). Coding was a slow and iterative process. At first, I identified emerging themes based on which topics or issues were most frequently mentioned by respondents. However, such an approach soon appeared inadequate, as it failed to account for the impact of research fatigue on respondents; for instance, it was clear that residents would often refrain from discussing potentially contentious issues during interviews, or refuse to engage formally with the research process, even when existing research data showed they had been vocal participants in the past. It thus became necessary to consider that the significance of each theme could not be ascertained solely

through what was openly disclosed by residents, but also by acknowledging what was withheld, and the historical and cultural reasons behind this concealment. This process of consistent re-analysis, which began during fieldwork, allowed me to develop a critical relationship with the data, and to contextualise the emerging causal links. In the later stages of the analysis, I categorised the findings under five key types of social harms: security harms, racialised humanitarianism, economic harms, environmental harms, and cultural harms.

4.3.5 Ethics

As must always be the case when human subjects are involved, fundamental ethical considerations lie at the heart of this research project. These have continuously informed not only the design stage of the research, but also its development, its execution, and the presentation of its findings. While complying with ethical procedures such as institutional ethical approval is a necessity, the responsibility of the researcher does not end there. In this section I discuss the formal and informal steps I have taken to conduct this project in accordance with the key principles for ethical research set out by the University of Edinburgh's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences College Research Ethics Framework (CAHSS Research Ethics Committee, 2017), and the Economic and Social Research Council's Framework for Research Ethics (ESRC, 2015b). These principles can be summarised as follows: beneficence and non-maleficence; dignity and respect; voluntary and informed consent; confidentiality and data protection; integrity and transparency; and responsibility and accountability. These six tenets are, in turn, an adaptation of the four guiding principles of bioethics (Beauchamp and Childress, 2013). As Israel and Hay note, holding social science research accountable to the same ethical standards as medical research is considered by some to be unnecessarily restrictive (2006). Nevertheless, I take the view that the inherent power imbalance between researcher and researched inevitably exposes the latter to the potential for exploitation and harm, regardless of the type of data being sought. Furthermore, pressure on academic researchers to meet the expectations set by their discipline — such as publishing, attracting research funding, or in this case, submitting a PhD thesis — can give rise to a conflict of interest when it comes to safeguarding researched people, meaning that an investigator's judgement cannot be assumed to be unbiased (Hardy, Phillips and Clegg, 2001; Hatton, 2018). For these reasons, I adopted in this project a deontological approach to ethics, meaning that adherence to ethical principles was prioritised whatever the consequences (Israel and Hay, 2006, p. 14). I discuss in the subsections below how I adhered to these principles and how they impacted my research, followed by a brief reflection on the ethical implications of emotional labour and trauma in the field.

4.3.5.1 *Beneficence and non-maleficance*

Ethical research should bring benefit and do no harm, not only to those directly involved, but also to other individuals and their communities. This principle imposes both a positive and a negative obligation on the researcher. The positive obligation to do good becomes particularly compelling when the researcher yields considerable power compared to the researched. Merrill Singer's longitudinal research on substance misuse, for example, greatly increased the provision of treatment and other health services to a vulnerable and marginalised community (1993). Researchers, Singer argues, must take an active role in addressing the social harms they encounter (2000). However, not all researchers have the power or resources to effect direct social change through their work. Furthermore, researchers run the risk of imposing their own values and perceptions of what is good for the community, potentially disregarding local sensibilities (Smith, 2012). Advocacy therefore can only fulfil the 'doing good' principle if it follows a consultation with the local community and clearly responds to their needs, which arguably puts this type of intervention outside the power of a single PhD researcher. I encountered several types of social harm in Lampedusa, most of which I was as powerless to address as the locals. However, the power of social science research often lies in its potential to inform wider change. While there is no simple solution to Lampedusa's complex social problems, this research sheds light on preventable border harms on the island and their generative mechanisms. Furthermore, by shining a light on the social impact of research fatigue on border communities, I am contributing to an emerging critical conversation on the role and responsibilities of migration researchers, providing further evidence for the need to safeguard vulnerable communities from academic exploitation (Hatton, 2018; Soliman, 2018).

While it can be challenging to demonstrate the benefits of ongoing social science research, showing adherence to the 'no harm' principle is more straightforward. Formal processes are in place in UK research institutions to prevent harmful research. In my case, this involved in the first instance applying for approval from a research ethics committee, as prescribed by the University of Edinburgh's School of Law Policy on Research Ethics (2015). Formal ethical processes are effectively risk assessments aiming to predict the "*ethical outcomes of research encounters*" (Thrift, 2003, p. 119). Their purpose is to minimise and manage the risk of harm to researchers and participants in the field, whether physical or psychological. In this case, for example, the Law School ethics committee rejected my initial application to interview irregular migrants in Lampedusa, due to their increased vulnerability and the potential distress which could be caused by recollecting traumatic experiences. However, the committee also feared that I would be exposed to greater risk of harm from migrant participants themselves, whose

dangerousness was assumed to be greater compared to the general population of Lampedusa. This assessment was based on the personal perceptions of ethics committee members and assumptions on the roles played by race and gender which disagreed with my own evaluation. This decision was symptomatic of a general weakness within formal approval processes: ethics committees must rely on their own judgement to assess the potential dangerousness of future field encounters, even when they have little knowledge of the field itself. In this case, the committee's limited expertise resulted in an overestimation of the risk of harm posed by migrants, and the simultaneous underestimation of the risk of harm posed by non-migrants. Ethics committees cannot be expected to accurately assess all risks a priori; rather, avoiding harm on the field requires the researcher to adapt, relying on their own "*situated judgements*" to manage circumstances as they arise (Darling, 2014, p. 211). While my fieldwork was limited to Lampedusa's non-migrant population, I maintained a high level of vigilance during my stay, as locals were subjected to a much lower degree of scrutiny by authorities compared to migrants. Furthermore, while the ethics committee had rightly assumed that migrants would have been exposed to high levels of trauma during their journeys, they had failed to appreciate the trauma experienced by locals over the years, many of whom had personally rescued migrants at sea, or provided a burial to those who arrived lifeless. While migrants receive some degree of basic support from charities or other institutions, Lampedusans endure a chronic lack of services and the near absence of mental health support, to the point that I was unable to provide respondents with a list of organisations who could realistically help ameliorate any distress caused by my research. This made it necessary for me to adopt extra measures to minimise the chance of distress, engaging in detailed conversations with potential respondents on what might be discussed during the interview and the possible effect it may have on them. In some cases, this meant that respondents chose not to participate, or to limit the topic of the interview to exclude specific events. Conversely, one respondent, who had experienced considerable distress during the shipwreck of 3 October 2013, insisted on being interviewed; they argued that being able to talk freely about their experience had a positive effect and helped them achieve a sense of closure. The actual vulnerability of respondents thus cannot be accurately estimated before they are encountered. Although formal processes play an important role in protecting researchers and participants from harm, it is crucial for the researcher to adapt to unexpected challenges presenting themselves in the field.

4.3.5.2 *Dignity and respect*

Researchers' duty to safeguard research participants extends beyond evaluating risks and benefits, and includes prioritising participants' wellbeing and autonomy over the

aims of the research. Participants must not to be viewed as subjects, but as bearers of rights, values, and culture, all of which must be respected in all circumstances. The researcher must be sensitive to these qualities not only during their 'intrusion' into the participants' social world, but also when analysing and disseminating findings. This is particularly relevant when the researcher travels to a different social or cultural context than their own. The risk, as Zedner points out, is to reduce oneself to a mere tourist, misrepresenting or oversimplifying the local reality (1995). My Italian background afforded me the linguistic and cultural fluency necessary to minimise this risk, and my extended stay gave me the opportunity to challenge not only my initial impressions, but also to critically assess and reconcile the contradictory truths I was presented as facts by participants. Buying into local myths, Zedner points out, produces bad research, but it is also a disservice to participants, as it skews our presentation of their social world. Respecting participants means also to respect the complexity of their social reality, and to represent it as faithfully as possible.

4.3.5.3 Voluntary and informed consent

Respecting the dignity of participants includes recognising their autonomy. While researchers have a duty to safeguard participants from harm, it does not follow that they have the authority to limit participants' freedom of choice. On the contrary, it is the researcher's role to enable participants to make informed decisions, communicating the predictable risks associated with the research. For instance, I mention in a previous section that a respondent insisted on being interviewed so they could share a traumatic experience. It was my duty as researcher to make sure they understood the risks associated with participation, the potential distress that it could cause them, and the limited avenues available on the island to ameliorate this distress; the participant however articulated their understanding of the risks, and their sincere belief that participation would be beneficial to them. To deny them this opportunity would have been a paternalistic decision impinging on, rather than recognising, their personal autonomy. A truly voluntary choice to participate thus requires both provision of information and freedom from external pressure.

Researchers must also be receptive to cultural factors which may limit respondents' autonomy. Before each interview with potential participants, I discussed in detail with them the purpose of the research, their right to decline or to withdraw at any point without penalty, and the ways in which they could do so after their participation. This information – including my contact details – was detailed in written consent forms, which

I planned to have participants sign before interviews (see Appendix 1¹¹). While favoured by research ethics committees, written consent forms have been criticised for being obtrusive and hindering anonymity (Israel and Hay, 2006). In my case, respondents found their formality at odds with the informal character of interpersonal relations on the island — an issue similar to that encountered by Huisman in her ethnography in the former Yugoslavia (2008). Consequently, respondents would ostentatiously waive consent forms or sign them without reading them, as a way of showing that they trusted my intentions. As in Huisman's case, this reticence was the result of the blurred boundary between the personal and the professional in the local culture, with respondents acting out of a desire to avoid causing personal offence. Instead of providing respondents with information, written consent forms were effectively hindering respondents' ability to make an informed choice. I decided therefore to discuss the content of the forms with respondents before interviews, but told them they could sign them afterwards, provided they were still happy for me to include their interview in my research. This simple adaptation allowed me to ensure respondents' participation was truly voluntary, and not dictated by obligation or a limited understanding of their rights. Furthermore, it provided respondents with a formal opportunity to review their consent after participation.

4.3.5.4 Confidentiality and data protection

Ethical research must safeguard respondent's right to privacy and comply with legal data protection requirements (CAHSS Research Ethics Committee, 2017). Individuals have the right to decide what personal information they wish to disclose and to whom, so maintaining the confidentiality of research data is an essential part of respecting respondents' autonomy (Beauchamp and Childress, 2013). In a small community such as Lampedusa, respecting this right requires extra care on the researcher's side. Anonymisation, for example, requires more than omitting respondents' full names, as they can still be identified through other characteristics. In one of Orsini's papers (2016), for example, most respondents are identified with their first name and occupation, which is more than enough for someone with knowledge of the community – including myself – to clearly recognise several of them. I can also easily identify many of the respondents in other sources, such as Italian anthropologist Marco Aime's ethnography of Lampedusa titled "*L'isola del non arrivo*" (2018). There is no set standard for anonymisation, and in community studies it is often accepted that individuals may remain recognisable to informed insiders (Crow and Wiles, 2008). However, the considerable research attention to which Lampedusa has been subjected means that the number of informed outsiders

¹¹ While the consent form in Appendix 1 is in English, the one I offered to respondents had been translated into Italian.

who can identify respondents is constantly growing. Furthermore, the fact that respondents' words can be collated and crosschecked from different research projects deprives respondents of their right to control what information they disclose, and to what audience. Finally, inadequate anonymisation can cause foreseeable harm to participants; serious acts of violence and intimidation were committed in the past against residents perceived to be 'pro-migrants', so researchers should think twice before tying respondents forever to their words in their research. In this thesis I allocate fictitious names to my interview respondents, randomly allocating the name of one of eight of the Mediterranean winds blowing on Lampedusa: Tramontane, Ostro, Sirocco, Ponente, Gregale, Levant, Libeccio, and Mistral. I deliberately do not mention their age, gender, occupation, or any other information I believe might identify them; other research participants are simply referred to as 'informants', once again omitting identifying information, although on some occasions I reveal their gender when necessary to contextualise their statements or actions. This approach was necessary to ensure a higher degree of anonymity to research participants and safeguard their right to privacy.

Confidentiality, however, was not absolute. Respondents were made aware, both orally and in writing, that confidentiality would be breached if they disclosed that they or others were in serious and imminent danger, and I would immediately relay this information to the authorities. Before fieldwork I agreed with my supervisors a serious harm protocol detailing the circumstances in which I would breach confidentiality, and which course of action I would take. The decision-making process is summarised below in Figure 6.

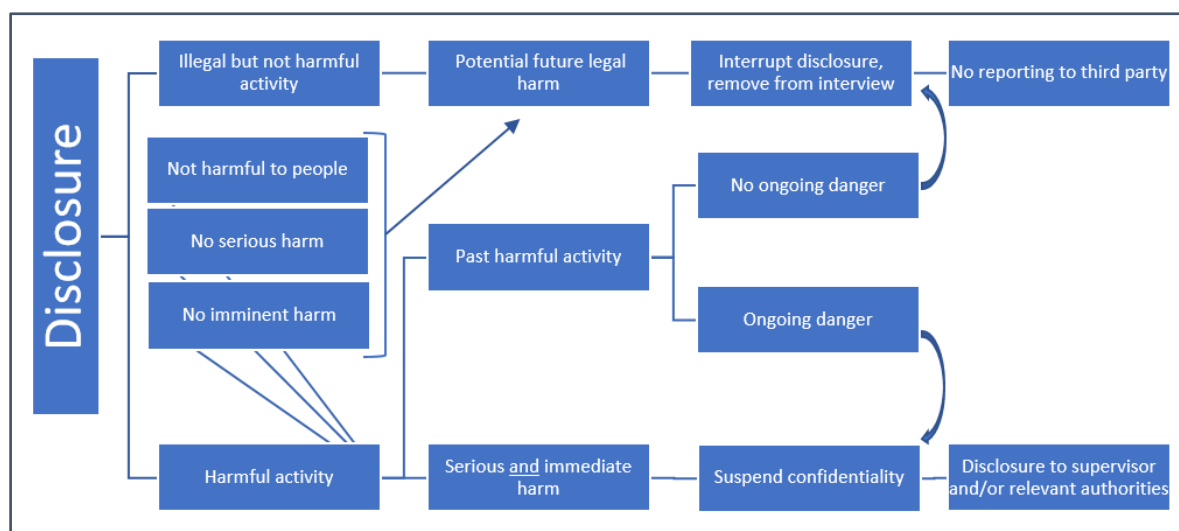


Figure 6 – The decision-making process following disclosure of harm

Once research data has been collected, researchers have a responsibility to ensure that personal information is not shared with unauthorised third parties. This includes drawing up a data management plan before the start of the research, outlining how and for how long the data will be stored or shared (Ekmekcioglu, no date). In accordance with my data management plan, I stored interview recordings and transcripts, photographs, fieldnotes, and participants' contact details on Tresorit, a password-protected end-to-end private encryption file storage service. Tresorit provides a zero-knowledge cloud service, meaning that the service provider can have no access to the data, which is accessible exclusively to the password-holder. Once back from fieldwork, I copied anonymised interview transcripts and fieldnotes to my private University of Edinburgh DataStore account, a secure file store for active research data. All interview data, field notes, and personal information will be securely deleted after the end of the PhD. Blog posts, however, are in the public domain and will not be deleted.

4.3.5.5 Integrity and transparency

Ethical researchers must "*promote high standards of research integrity*" (CAHSS REC, 2017, p. 2). In its most basic interpretation, this principle requires researchers not to lie to research participants, to be open about their research aims, and to acknowledge any conflict of interest, whether real or perceived. Independence is a fundamental quality in academic research, which must be "*free from personal, organisational and political bias, dishonesty, and considerations of gain*" (ESRC, 2015b). However, as I discuss earlier in the chapter, no researcher is completely devoid of bias; as Smith writes, our personal stance draws from our "*cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power*" (2012, p. 42). Similarly, researchers personally gain from conducting research, improving their standing in the research community and more easily attracting funding or employment opportunities. These factors do not necessarily preclude academic independence, but must be openly acknowledged and managed as part of the research process, as is the case in this thesis.

4.3.5.6 Responsibility and accountability

The responsibility to conduct ethical research does not lie solely with the researcher. While I was physically alone in the field, I was still subject to the oversight of my supervisors and personally accountable to them, to my school's research ethics committee, and to my funders. Formal lines of accountability need to be clear throughout the life of the project, so that concerns can be promptly raised and dealt with. Unfortunately, this is not always a straightforward process. For instance, when

applying for ethical approval before the start of fieldwork I encountered numerous difficulties in having my application reviewed in a timely and appropriate manner. My concerns were escalated by my supervisors, which brought to improvements in how the committee now deals with applications, how decisions are communicated to applicants, and clarification on the circumstances in which ongoing applications may be shared with third parties.

The negative impact that these protracted issues had on the progress of my PhD made me somewhat sympathetic to Hammersley's view that ethical processes are excessively constrictive and unnecessary in social research (2010). Nevertheless, I argue that while imperfect, formal ethics processes remain necessary. As Hammersley himself acknowledges elsewhere (1995, p. 112): *"research has material effects [...] People's lives may be affected by being researched, and by being in a context that is affected by research findings. And these effects may be for good or for ill, and can run through the whole gamut of more complex combinations and possibilities that lies between those two extremes"*. The potential for harm is undeniably a feature of social research. In places like Lampedusa, where the salience of migration-related issues guides funders' interest and increases research pressure on small communities, the cumulative impact of less-than-ethical research translates into serious, long term social harm, as I show in Chapter 10. Taking steps towards preventing this harm is the collective responsibility of the research community; continuously working to improve ethics processes and strengthen accountability can only be a step in the right direction.

4.3.5.7 Emotion, trauma, and identity: making ethical choices in the field

Despite the best efforts of formal ethics procedures, the collision between the researcher and fieldwork can have unforeseen outcomes. In my case, I found that research training had not prepared me for the intense emotional labour required to simply be in the field, and its role in what Guillemin and Gillam call *"ethics in practice"* (2004, p. 262). The formulaic nature of ethics procedures, they argue, is contrasted with everyday ethical decisions on the field, known as microethics. Fieldwork produces not only data, but also emotions, relationships, and sensibilities, which progressively alter the researcher's attitude towards microethics (Darling, 2014). The bridge linking procedural ethics and microethics, Guillemin and Gillam argue, is reflexivity, acknowledging the impact of emotions on fieldwork and on ethical decisions. Below I reflect on the role of emotion on three aspects of my fieldwork: experiencing trauma, relating with participants, and reconstructing a personal identity.

Migration-related research is often emotionally burdensome, as the researcher is likely to encounter stories of suffering (Bosworth and Kellezi, 2017). Although my research was

limited to non-migrant residents, I arrived in Lampedusa prepared to hear traumatic accounts of past and current tragedies. I was unprepared, however, to experience a very different type of traumatic event, which began when I found a tiny cat giving birth in my garden. She was not much older than six months and belonged to a small colony of semi-feral cats which were fed and cared for by a neighbour's son. I had noticed her pregnancy weeks earlier, upon my arrival on the island, and knew she had little chance of surviving the birth. When I found her, she had already birthed a dead kitten, and another was stuck halfway through her birth canal, hanging limply behind her. The numerous blood stains on the terrace suggested that it had been wedged there for quite some time, the mother being too small to push it out unassisted. As I informed the cat's carer of the situation, it became clear that they intended to let nature take its course, leaving the cat to die. This put me in an awkward ethical position. To me, letting the cat die in childbirth was an abdication of responsibility; as the pregnancy could have been prevented by spaying the cat, her current predicament was her carer's fault, not nature's. As the carer already interfered with nature by feeding the cats, further intervention was, in my eyes, perfectly justifiable. From the standpoint of ethical relativism, it would have been wrong to rely on my own values to judge choices made within a different culture (Israel and Hay, 2006). I normally have easy access to veterinary care, something that is not available in Lampedusa, so my decision-making process is informed by my personal circumstances. Rather than full-blown relativism, this could perhaps be considered an example of situational ethics (ibid): both I and the carer wished to act in the best interest of the cat, but came to different, equally valid conclusions on how to achieve it. As I mention at the beginning of this section on ethics, however, I adopt a deontological approach in this research, choosing to act in accordance with ethical principles regardless of circumstances or the nature of consequences. In this case, I decided that the preventability of the cat's death put a duty to intervene on whoever was able to do so, including myself. I donned a pair of kitchen gloves, extracted the dead kitten, and waited for more to come. A few hours later, a third kitten was finally being pushed out. I extracted it with difficulty from its mother, who was now strong enough to try to escape, and pulled it until the umbilical cord snapped. The third kitten's warm, lifeless body slumped in my hand. The mother had suffered considerable blood loss, but now stood a chance to survive. While I was deeply saddened by the sight of the three stillborn kittens, I knew they had been doomed all along, and took solace in knowing that my intervention was justified because it had saved a life. The feeling was short-lived. As I prepared to clean up, I thought I could detect an almost imperceptible movement in the third kitten's paw. I began to massage its belly and chest, keeping it upside down to free its airways from fluids. After a minute or so, it opened its mouth, and shortly afterwards begun to cry. I felt great

elation as I put it near its mother, followed by sheer horror as she rejected it. Too young to know what to do with it, she was unconcerned with its cries, and after cleaning the blood from her fur, she ran off. Even with the right equipment, I know it is very difficult to hand-raise a newborn kitten, but in Lampedusa the chance of success would have been even closer to zero. Blindsided by this turn of events, I asked my neighbour for assistance; defeated in my arguments for alternative solutions, I simply looked on as she put all three kittens in a rubbish bin, where the live one would simply die of hunger or cold. It was suddenly impossible for me to defend the ethical status of my intervention, as reviving the third kitten had caused him to die an even worse death.

The emotional distress caused by this event changed my attitude towards the field. While I could not blame others for my choice to act, I was angry at having been put in the position of having to choose in the first place. I also knew that I would have encountered little sympathy for my plight among local people, which soured my relationship with them: for a while afterwards I truly disliked being in Lampedusa. Feeling aversion towards the field is not unusual; after all, there is no obligation on researchers to like or identify with their participants (Kleinman and Copp, 1993). In the notorious private diaries he kept during his research in the Pacific islands, anthropologist Malinowski reports feelings isolated and appears to hate being among the people he studies (1967). Still anchored to his European world, Malinowski fits badly within the host culture, and openly acknowledges this friction. Ethnographic fieldwork can be taxing and thoroughly unenjoyable, but these moments represent an opportunity for reflection on ourselves and the assumptions we bring with us to the field (Kleinman and Copp, 1993). Rather than striving towards a pretence of emotional distance, the ethical researcher should instead examine their feelings, acknowledging their impact on the research. Reflecting on what had happened shifted not only my perception of Lampedusa, but also my understanding of the interplay between structure and agency. Allowing a newborn kitten to be thrown in the rubbish is an act I never thought I could knowingly commit; while the field had not impacted my agency, it had changed the realm of possibilities around me. As part of this new social world I had to surrender to its rules, or I could not hope to understand life on Lampedusa. My dislike for Lampedusans was later followed by humbleness, and a newfound respect for their ability to withstand adversity.

I find no consensus in the literature on whether researchers should be able to survive fieldwork unscathed. While Zedner argues that geographical distance aids intellectual separation, others suggest that we never fully leave the field, as it would require the researcher to separate from part of themselves (Zedner, 1995; Coffey, 1999). I find immersive fieldwork to be conducive to identity crisis. Following his fieldwork in Tokyo,

Hamabata writes about trying to eradicate the version of himself he constructed in the field; this alternative, 'more Japanese' alter ego continuously judges his present self and finds him wanting. Hamabata's discomfort is evident in the concluding words of his article: "*He haunts me still*" (1986, p. 368). Like Hamabata, I constructed a field version of myself. Unlike Hamabata, I do not find that the closeted spinster who lived on Lampedusa has reason to judge me; on the contrary, I am uncomfortable at the memory of her awkward, secretive nature, a one-dimensional caricature of my true self. Procedural ethics is more concerned with entering the field rather than leaving it, and fails to ask researchers to prepare for it, even though the way researchers disentangle themselves from the relationships established in the field can impact participants. If the researcher constructs a different version of themselves on the field, it becomes impossible to sustain honest relationships with participants after exit, which has implications for future research. The six principles of ethics provide important guidance for the planning of ethical research, but the ethical outcome of field encounters remains largely unpredictable.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have summarised the ontological and epistemological foundations on which I have grounded the zemiological theory I proposed in Chapter 3, providing a further original contribution to the development of zemiology. I have shown how the incorporation of a critical realist approach has shaped this research, informing my research strategy and choice of methods; furthermore, I have also shown that the methodology was in turn heavily influenced and shaped by my fieldwork. In particular, I have highlighted the importance of incorporating a high degree of reflexivity in zemiological research, and to reflect on the fundamental inadequacy of institutional ethics procedures in ensuring truly ethical research practices. The significance of these commitments will be evidenced further in Chapters 6 to 10, where I discuss my research findings, and on Chapter 11, where I discuss more in detail the specific challenges of research into border harms. Meanwhile, in line with the critical realist approach's emphasis on context-specific research, in the next chapter I give a very brief description of the island of Lampedusa and of the circumstances surrounding my fieldwork.

Chapter 5: Lampedusa: Some historical and social context

In chapter I briefly describe life on the island of Lampedusa. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the geographical, historical, and social background information necessary to contextualise the findings of this research, and to ground their analysis within their wider context. Some of the information presented here comes from existing literature, but a large part was learned during my fieldwork, so I consider it part of my findings rather than a literature review. In this chapter I summarise the history of Lampedusa's communities: residents, migrants, and institutional actors, explaining how the three groups came to share the island's territory. In the second part of the chapter, I focus on the specific timeframe of my fieldwork, contextualising it with the events that preceded it and followed it, and how they fit within the wider processes that continue to shape the borderisation of Lampedusa.

5.1 A very brief history of pre-migration Lampedusa

Archaeological and documentary evidence shows that human settlements have been present on Lampedusa since prehistorical times (Taranto, 2014). The island was an important port for Romans, who produced there a popular fish condiment called *garum*; in medieval times it was mostly occupied by Arabs, but it was considered a free port by both Arabs and Christians who could anchor and restock supplies even when otherwise engaged in hostilities. While Lampedusa's strategic position made it an important port for Mediterranean commerce, its vulnerability to pirating and the unproductivity of its land made it difficult for it to sustain human settlements, causing periodical depopulation. Attempts to repopulate the island were usually pushed by outside strategic interests rather than spontaneous enterprises. For instance, Lampedusa was briefly under British rule in the early 1800s to prevent it falling in Napoleon's hands and in the hope it could produce food to support Malta (Staines, 2008). British interest in Lampedusa soon declined, and troops and supplies were withdrawn. The short-lived British occupation suggests that the considerable investment of resources needed to occupy Lampedusa had proven to be more trouble than it was worth. Nevertheless, a further drive to colonise the island began in 1842, when it was seized by the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Sicilian farmers willing to settle in Lampedusa were promised fertile land and a steady income, a prospect which attracted about a hundred colonists. However, Lampedusa's unproductive soil made agriculture difficult, and the destitute population had to rely on fishing and sponge diving to survive. Twenty years later, when the island was annexed to the newly formed Kingdom of Italy following the Italian

Reunification, Lampedusa was bankrupt. Historically, Lampedusa's importance for its owners was tied to its strategic usefulness rather than the value of its resource or its residents; aside from a penal colony established towards the end of the 19th century, the island was largely forgotten until World War II, when it was heavily fortified by the Axis Powers. Lampedusa's wartime significance came at a heavy cost for the population and precipitated what would be known as its "*heroic surrender*" in 1943, when it was accidentally captured by a British pilot forced by technical difficulties to make an emergency landing while on his way to Malta. Shaken by the heavy Allied bombings part of Operation Corkscrew, the population spontaneously surrendered to the bewildered pilot, removing one of the last obstacles to the Allied invasion of Sicily (Scarpa, no date). After the war, Italian and American military bases were established on the island, which then became an important NATO listening spot. Defences were further enhanced after 1986, when two Libyan SCUD missiles, apparently destined for the American military base, narrowly missed the island and exploded in the sea (NY Times News Service, 1986). Following the attack Lampedusa featured heavily on national and international news for the first time, a newfound notoriety that was widely credited with ushering in the age of tourism (Taranto, 2014).

5.2 Life at the margin

Lampedusa's strategic position in the middle of Mediterranean commerce routes has made it a busy transit point throughout its history, although the paucity of natural resources on the island often meant it was unable to sustain long term human settlements. However, its crystal-clear sea has become the island's greatest resource for its current settled population, sustaining fishing and, in recent decades, a thriving tourism industry. An apt summary of Lampedusa's natural environment can be found in a brief newspaper article published in the US in 1986: "*barren and dusty island of sheer cliffs and waters so clear that the fish can stare up at the fisherman*" (NY Times News Service, 1986). Aside from the growing urbanisation to accommodate increased tourist interest, the island's landscape has changed little, and the description holds true today. While still poor of natural resources such as trees and drinkable water, Lampedusa's untamed appearance constitutes a major attraction for visitors.

Lampedusa's environmental credentials are further bolstered by being one of the last remaining nesting sites of the loggerhead sea turtle in Europe, and hosting a world-leading sea turtle rescue centre where fishers bring animals found injured by rubbish or fishing gear at sea. Lampedusa is also a site of importance for migratory birds, who stop there during their travels between Europe and Africa, and together with its sister island Linosa it is recognised as Special Protection Area ITA040013 under the European Union

Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. Furthermore, most of Lampedusa and the whole of Lampione are Sites of Community Importance as defined in the European Commission Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (SIC ITA040002), protecting their unique vegetation and insect populations. According to the latest Standard Data Form submitted to the European Environment Agency, Lampedusa remains a site of significant environmental importance despite having suffered "*significant anthropogenic degradation*"¹² in recent years.

Lampedusa's history as an intermittently populated and largely destitute farming colony remains in many ways visible today. The town, which surrounds the harbour in the southeast corner of the island, is where most of the population is concentrated; with the exception of a handful of 19th century palaces surrounding the main square, most of which are in a state of disrepair, Lampedusa was built with little regard for aesthetics. As shown in Figure 7 below, the town is ugly and rundown, and even academic visitors occasionally remark on the town's utter lack of charm (Tucci, 2018). Unlike elsewhere in Sicily, there are no ornate baroque buildings on Lampedusa, which was populated after the architectural style had already declined.



Figure 7 - A typical street in Lampedusa's town

¹² Original text: "pesante degrado di origine antropica". Natura 2000 STF can be found at <https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/Natura2000/SDF.aspx?site=ITA040002#7> [retrieved 29-10-2020]

The rest of the island, which residents call 'the countryside', is largely barren land littered with abandoned buildings, holiday homes, and square plots bordered by crumbling dry stone walls. While recent interest from tourists has brought unprecedented wealth, Lampedusa remains fully reliant on outside supplies to survive, and life can be difficult for residents. For instance, food, fuel, and other necessities are transported from Sicily via ferry, a connection which is often impeded by factors such as unfavourable weather conditions, mechanical failures, labour disputes, or simply lack of docking space in the harbour. Even a few days' delay can empty shops' shelves, causing the island to run out of fresh food or even water. Before the construction of the seawater desalination plant in 2015, Lampedusa relied almost entirely on freshwater carriers to transport water from the mainland (Agrigentonotizie, 2015). Desalinating seawater now provides the island with a sustainable source of water; however, the aging supply system still prevents tap water from being drinkable, so Lampedusa remains dependent on bottled water. The ferry affects not only the availability of basic necessities, but all aspects of life on the island, with much small talk centring on the likelihood of its arrival. The unreliability of sea transport and its effect on most goods' supply chain makes all kinds of maintenance more difficult and expensive, which goes some way in explaining the dilapidated look characterising most buildings, roads, and vehicles.

While the importance of the ferry cannot be overstated, it is not Lampedusa's only connection to the outside world. The island's small airport provides a passenger connection to the Sicilian cities of Palermo and Catania during winter, and a few additional Italian cities during the tourist season. While the sea route allows the movement of vehicles and supplies, air travel is essential to the provision of health services on the island; Lampedusa has no hospital, only a small clinic to which medical personnel fly daily from Sicily to provide routine visits and testing. Specialist visits or tests, however, require the patient to fly to Sicily themselves, the only exceptions being emergency cases and women in labour, who are transported by air ambulance. The small propeller planes serving Lampedusa's airport provide a more reliable form of transport than the ferry, but costs can be prohibitive despite the subsidised fares guaranteed to residents. The service to Sicily is put to tender every three years, with the winner gaining a monopoly on the route. The periodical change of provider causes great anxiety in the local population, partly due to inevitable variations in timetables and prices, and partly due to fears that this essential service will eventually be scaled down due to the route's limited profitability (Mediterraneo.it, 2018). Lampedusa's high dependency on the mainland and the uncertainty of its civilian transportation links mean that life on the island is lived in constant fear of sudden isolation due to the loss of connection. To make matters worse, these fears periodically come to fruition, sometimes in quite literal ways. Internet and phone connections, for instance, rely on an underwater

cable linked to Sicily, which is occasionally disturbed by bad weather or passing trawlers, cutting off communication on the island for months at a time (La Sicilia, 2019).

Lampedusa's vulnerability to isolation is to be expected given its location, although the presence of the border marks it apart from comparably remote communities. However unstable, its connections to the mainland are more developed than one would expect for such a small population, due to the added mobility needs of military forces, law enforcement agencies, humanitarian agents, migrants, politicians, migration researchers, and so on. As shown in the previous subsection, the stationing of national and international military forces on Lampedusa is linked to long-standing strategic interests largely unconnected to the control of irregular migration; however, the borderisation of the island has progressively increased the visible presence of law enforcement and other institutional agents.

5.3 Borderised Lampedusa: Reception and confinement

As Lampedusa lacks international transport links, international migration into the island entirely consists of unauthorised sea-crossing. The reception of irregular border crossers into Italy is divided in two categories: the so-called 'first reception', which is concentrated at irregular points of entry, and the 'second reception', which is diffused over the Italian territory. The purpose of the first reception is to provide first aid to irregular migrants, identify them, and divide them in two categories: economic migrants to be repatriated, or asylum seekers, whose protection claims will be processed through the second reception system (Masera and Savio, 2017). Lampedusa's role as a site for the first reception of migrants has long preceded the formalisation of reception practices. Until the mid-1990s, sea-crossers reaching Lampedusa's shores would be an unremarkable occurrence, largely ignored by media or law enforcement; migrants would be received and assisted by local residents, who would then help organise their further travel to mainland Italy (Orsini, 2015, 2016; Aime, 2018). Following the Schengen Agreement, however, first reception in Lampedusa began to be gradually formalised and institutionalised, a process which can be charted through the history of the island's migrant reception centre.

Italy's Law No. 40 of 6 March 1998, *Provisions Governing Immigration and Regulations Concerning the Status of Foreigners*, first established what would be known as Centri di Permanenza Temporanea or CPTs (i.e., Temporary Residence Centres), where irregular migrants would be hosted after their arrival, but also administratively detained while awaiting expulsion. A makeshift CPT was then established near Lampedusa's airport, although according to Cuttitta the long term detention of migrants on the island only became the norm after Law No. 189 of 30 July 2002, which criminalised irregular

migration, doubled the maximum permitted length of detention, and increased capacity for the interception of irregular migrants at sea (2015). The presence of the centre, Cuttitta notes, played a key role in determining where intercepted migrants would be transported by authorities, cementing Lampedusa's role as a site of first reception, and leading to the building of a new, larger reception centre in 2007 in a small valley in Contrada Imbriacola (see Figure 8 below).



Figure 8 - Lampedusa's reception centre in April 2018; fire damage is evident just right of centre on the façade of the left-hand and the front-right blocks.

In 2009 Lampedusa's CPT was temporarily rebranded as a CIE or Centro di Identificazione ed Espulsione (i.e., Identification and Expulsion Centre), in keeping with the shifting political discourse from the assistance to the detention and expulsion of migrants, who would be regularly warehoused on the island. In 2015 the centre was rebranded one last time, this time as the flagship of the European Commission's newly introduced Hotspot Approach. Aiming to strengthen the identification, registration, and fingerprinting of irregular migrants at points of entry, the Hotspot Approach increased the involvement of EU-level agencies such as Frontex in providing on-site support to national border enforcement authorities (European Commission, 2015a). Presented as an opportunity to improve solidarity and responsibility-sharing, the approach in fact increased the strain on national authorities, with the presence of EU agents being perceived as an attempt to ensure compliance with the bloc's supranational aims (Campesi, 2015c). Hotspots have also been found to erode migrants' rights by increasing recourse to coercive measures, bringing to flawed screening procedures and hurried expulsions (Amnesty International, 2016). The implementation of the Hotspot Approach has been poignantly described by D'Angelo as an illegality factory, firstly because it increases the use of coercive border control practices which are not supported by law,

and secondly because it illegalises large number of migrants who are never repatriated and live undocumented on the Italian territory (2019).

It must be noted however that breaches of migrants' human rights were commonly reported in Lampedusa well before the centre was renamed a Hotspot. An Italian Senate delegation, for instance, had found conditions in the centre to be unsanitary and overcrowded shortly before the new approach was implemented (Mouzourakis and Taylor, 2016). Over the years, a number of scandals regularly brought the centre's poor living conditions to the attention of the media and the public; in 2013, for instance, a Syrian resident secretly filmed migrants being directed by staff to strip naked and stand outdoors in the cold to be hosed down with disinfectant (Seminara, 2013). The shocking images caused consternation and drew comparisons in the media between the centre and concentration camps. Still, the centre's indecent conditions had been well documented back at the beginning of the 2000s, when Italian investigative journalist Fabrizio Gatti was detained in Lampedusa after posing as an Iraqi irregular migrant (Gatti, 2007). According to Masera, such systemic breaches of basic rights are a common feature of first reception, where migrants are at their most vulnerable due to the lack of legal protection (2014). In peripheral zones such as Lampedusa, Masera continues, these violations are further facilitated by being hidden from public view, suggesting they are woven into the system rather than aberrations resulting from poor practice (ibid.).

However, it would be myopic to ascribe the erosion of migrants' rights on Lampedusa solely to institutional agents' wilful acts. A key factor in the formalisation of migrant reception on the island was the large amount of public funding awarded to public, private, and third sector organisations bidding for border-related work, sustaining what Friese has called Lampedusa's growing migration industry (2012). These newly formed economic interests were not unproblematic; for instance, the reception centre's funding being linked to the number of migrants it houses, a structural incentive was created to delay transfers and stretch the de facto detention of migrants well beyond lawful limits (Cuttitta, 2015). Furthermore, the frequent use of emergency powers in the awarding of profitable border-related contracts bypassed usual anti-corruption procedural safeguards, facilitating the involvement of individuals and organisations known to be linked to organised crime (Orsini and Sergi, 2018). The borderisation of Lampedusa was thus not solely driven by legal or policy provisions or political processes, but by a multitude of actors operating according to different agendas. Quoting Cuttitta's words once more, borderisation is "*carried out through specific policies, practices and discourses*" (2014, p. 196). Borderisation on Lampedusa thus does not only consist in the physical infrastructure of the border or the institutionalisation of migrant reception,

but also its symbolic representations within political, media, and academic discourse as the interface between Africa and Europe. Practices such as confinement may seem targeted solely at migrants, but island residents' lives cannot be separated from the presence of the border and the cyclical emergencies created by its presence, as I show in the next part of this chapter.

5.4 Contextualising findings: A note on timing

The findings I present in the next five chapters are based on my fieldwork in the spring of 2018, providing a snapshot into the long-term processes of borderisation to which Lampedusa continues to be subjected. An important feature of borderisation, as I show in this thesis, is its cyclical nature, which is linked to the recurrence of crisis. To appreciate this cycle, and to locate my stay on the island within it, it is essential for me to provide some context on the events that immediately preceded and those that immediately followed my fieldwork. I write them here, as part of this brief chapter, because they provide useful background information to contextualise the findings I set out in the next chapters. However, depending on their own familiarity with Lampedusa, I am aware that the reader may find their descriptiveness tedious, in which case they may wish instead to come back to this section after having read the findings. Whichever way the reader chooses to go about reading this, I trust its relevance will appear clear.

5.4.1 *Lampedusa's winter of discontent*

In 2017, the Italian Government signed a bilateral agreement with the then Libyan Government of National Accord committing to providing financial and practical resources to prevent migrants from departing the Libyan coast (Governo Italiano, 2017b). Likely as a result of this agreement, over the second half of 2017 and the first half of 2018 the vast majority of migrants arriving in Lampedusa had departed the Tunisian coast, and were mostly of North African origins. Of these, about a hundred were de facto detained in Lampedusa for several months over winter, as authorities were slow in transferring them to the mainland. These delays were not unusual, despite the speedy processing times promised by the implementation of the Hotspot system. The migrants' presence caused tensions on the island between migrants, residents, and authorities. This culminated in the beginning of 2018 with migrants setting fire to the Hotspot, the damage to which can be seen in Figure 8 above. In March 2018, just a few weeks before my arrival, it was announced that Lampedusa's Hotspot would shut down indefinitely for repairs (Agrigentonotizie, 2018). As the next few chapters will show, residents frequently mentioned these events to me, offering their personal interpretation of the events, or drawing parallels between that past winter and other occasions in Lampedusa's history when migrants were confined on the island for extended periods of time.

Nevertheless, not all aspects of the past winter's events were seemingly to be discussed openly with outsiders such as myself. One evening, an UNHCR worker mentioned to me that they had been reading the blog I had been keeping during my fieldwork, and said I could know more about the past winter by reading the latest book by Italian anthropologist Marco Aime, who had spent most of the second half of 2017 living in Lampedusa (2018). Aime, the UNHCR worker told me, had been on Lampedusa "*when that boy died*". This was the only time somebody acknowledged in my presence the events of early January 2018, when the body of a 30-year-old Tunisian migrant had been discovered in the Lampedusan countryside. Arrived in Lampedusa on 30 October 2017, he was due to be transferred to Agrigento on 31 December, but the trip fell through at the last minute due to the ferry breaking down (La Repubblica, 2018). Over the previous months, Aime writes in his book, the Hotspot's psychologist had been trying to speed up the man's transfer due to mental ill-health. Fearful of being repatriated, he had refused to stay inside the Hotspot, instead sleeping in cars parked around the island, where some residents had witnessed his deteriorating conditions and tried to alert the authorities of his struggles to cope with the prolonged confinement on the island. Just a few days after the cancellation of the transfer, the man killed himself. While virtually nobody mentioned the man's suicide in my presence, it nevertheless was a big part of the local events that had preceded my arrival, and likely shook the small community. At the time of my visit, Lampedusa was just emerging from what had been a dark and challenging winter.

5.4.2 Future past: Lampedusa seen from afar

The spring of 2018 was an unusually quiet time in terms of migrant landings, and as the tourist season slowly kicked into gear, migration appeared to be quite inconsequential and remote from many residents' daily lives. It should be noted that this had happened before; in 2009, for example, another bilateral accord between Italy and Libya had drastically reduced arrivals and brought to the semi-closure of the reception centre (Sanfilippo & Scialoja, 2010). In the summer of 2018, shortly after my departure, the island entered a different phase. The March 2018 Italian general elections had resulted in a hung parliament, and after almost three months of uncertainty, a new Government was formed on 1 June by an alliance between two Eurosceptic parties: the populist Five Star Movement, and the right-wing League. The League's leader Matteo Salvini, famous for his harsh anti-immigrant rhetoric, took the roles of deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior (Cervi, Tejedor and Dornelles, 2020).

After a slow start, larger numbers of sea-crossers began to arrive in the summer. In June 2018 the ship *Aquarius*, which had been carrying out search and rescue operation off the coast of Libya for the NGO SOS Méditerranée, was denied by Salvini the right to

dock in an Italian port and disembark the 629 migrants it was carrying (Cusumano and Gombeer, 2018). This was only the latest move in a wider strategy of impeding search and rescue by NGOs which had begun well before Salvini's government (Cusumano, 2017b); nevertheless, the public backlash against Salvini and his well-known anti-immigrant views was notable, including in Lampedusa, which would have been the closest port of entry for the ship, had it been allowed to dock. The summer was punctuated with similar disputes; while the *Aquarius* became an international case and was eventually given permission to dock in Spain, in August the Italian Coast Guard patrol vessel *Diciotti* was also denied permission to disembark rescued migrants by the Italian Government, then engaged in political arm wrestling with Malta (Cusumano and Gombeer, 2018; Cervi, Tejedor and Dornelles, 2020). Meanwhile, protests and vigils were staged in Lampedusa by residents in support of the migrants and their rescuers, advertising Lampedusa as an 'open port' and a place of safety for migrants. Lampedusa was once more in the news in a humanitarian role, as a symbol of hospitality.

The newfound militant spirit of Lampedusa's activists was proof that the island had been in a state of apathy during my stay. My fieldwork had taken place during a lull in sea arrivals, which as the findings will show was a time of relative optimism for some, although others feared it may represent the calm before the storm. Storms indeed did come at the end of 2019, after a series of migrant shipwrecks just off the island's coast. In October 2019, one of my remaining contacts in Lampedusa posted on social media the photo of a pickup truck; it was carrying half a dozen coffins, which contained the bodies of some of the women and children who had drowned the night before. These historic occurrences and recurrences play a key row in the borderisation of Lampedusa, and its impact cannot be understood without contextualising single events within this relentless cycle.

5.5 Back to the past present

While this thesis' findings necessarily capture only a snapshot in the history of the island of Lampedusa, it is important for this snapshot to not be examined in a vacuum, but be considered part of a continuum. Linking back to the methodology I outline in the previous chapter, it forms part of the morphogenetic cycle (Archer, 1995). In this chapter I have provided some of the context necessary to situating the research within its wider social and historical circumstances. In the next five chapters I will detail how borderisation can be causally linked to social harm on Lampedusa, and the information in this brief chapter plays an essential role in supporting the counterfactual analysis which underpins this assumption of causation.

Chapter 6: Law and border: security and enforcement in Lampedusa

As I mention in the previous chapter, border enforcement is a particularly visible aspect of borderisation. This was especially true in Lampedusa, where law enforcement and military forces were stationed in considerable numbers, and marked vehicles and vessels regularly patrolled the island and its surrounding waters. This presence was often commented upon and problematised by residents, who would invariably accompany these comments by detailing their personal views on the nature and prevalence of criminal activity on the island. As noted by Andreas (2003), law enforcement agencies have increasingly been tasked with border control duties in recent decades; nevertheless, their role often remains linked to crime and its control in the eyes of the general public. In this chapter I examine the ways in which the visible presence of law enforcement impacted on crime control and feelings of security on Lampedusa. It should be noted that members of the community did not seem to agree on what behaviours constitute crime, seemingly basing their assessment on either criminal law, morals, customs, or some combination of the three. In this chapter I do not offer a definition of crime, but simply present residents' self-defined perceptions and their contradictory, multifaceted nature. Indeed, while most residents consistently described Lampedusa as safe and free of crime, criminal behaviour and illegality were in fact omnipresent, although largely normalised. Some members of the community, on the other hand, highlighted a culture of impunity on the island. Regardless of their views on crime prevalence, however, all residents with whom I interacted had a poor opinion of law enforcement. Those who considered the island to be inherently safe viewed law enforcement as a pointless nuisance, while those who condemned the culture of impunity considered authorities culpable in prioritising border-related priorities over local concerns. Interestingly, those who saw no need for crime control simultaneously advocated for the much harsher control of migrants, while those calling for increased enforcement in the community considered the role of police forces in border control to be more limited. I conclude this chapter by considering how border enforcement and the actions and inactions of state agents on Lampedusa can be construed as socially harmful under the zemiological framework I develop in this thesis.

6.1 The Good, the Bad, and the Other: enforcing the law in

Lampedusa

There are three main police forces in Italy: the *Polizia di Stato* (i.e. State Police), which falls under the authority of the Ministry of Interior; the *Arma dei Carabinieri* (i.e. gendarmerie or Military Police), under the authority of the Ministry of Defence; and the *Guardia di Finanza* (i.e. Finance Police), which is responsible for customs, tax, or other financial matters, and is under the authority of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (Barbagli and Sartori, 2004). These three forces have a variety of functions, from administrative (e.g. issuing licences or permits) to crime control, national security, emergency response, and in the case of the State Police, immigration control (Fabini, 2017). Members of all three forces are permanently stationed in Lampedusa. In addition, Lampedusa's port authority is controlled by the *Guardia Costiera* (i.e., Coast Guard), part of the Italian Navy and principally under the control of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, although it can carry out some law enforcement duties.

According to my observations, additional military agencies with a presence in Lampedusa included: the Italian Air Force, which operates the radars forming part of NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence System, and oversees the civil airport; the Italian Navy, which operates the island's lighthouses and whose ships I regularly spotted from the island; the 9° Nucleo Controllo e Ricerca (N.C.R.), part of the Italian military intelligence service; and the Carabinieri's specialised Unit for Forestry, Environmental and Agri-food Protection, which in 2016 replaced the Police's State Forestry Corps. Finally, although their presence was less visible due to the lack of marked vehicles or uniforms, members of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (also known as Frontex) were stationed on the island. Members of law enforcement and military forces were colloquially referred to as "*militari*" (i.e., soldiers), regardless of whether they belonged to a military or civil force.

While their duties were varied, the large presence of law enforcement on Lampedusa was mainly linked to the management and control of irregular migrants. In March 2018, shortly before my arrival in Lampedusa, newspapers reported that the Hotspot had been closed, and that all law enforcement agents would be relocated elsewhere, leaving behind only two squads (Agrigentonotizie, 2018). While I could not verify whether the number of law enforcement agents had indeed declined, none of my informants or respondents appeared to have noticed any change. Instead, a considerable presence of law enforcement and military agencies remained very visible. Each of the four main law enforcement agencies occupied a large building right in the centre of town or by the

port, making uniformed agents walking around town a common sight. Marked vehicles, such as the Police van patrolling the island or the numerous Coast Guard and Finance Police boats in port or off the coast, were a daily sight. It is not surprising, therefore, that several interviewees and informants remarked on their presence; however, none of them expressed feelings of security or reassurance associated with this presence, nor indeed any positive view at all.

Tramontane, for example, openly expressed scepticism on the value of this considerable deployment of law enforcement and military forces. Tramontane described their presence as "useless" and an example of "parasitism". Tramontane singled out for criticism the Police, whose marked van made them particularly visible around the island:

"Take for example the State Police, they go around with their nice armoured van, it's unclear where they need to go because you think, where the fuck are you going with this armoured van? It's the use of the armoured van, and the dicking around in the hotel, because they have no effective role here, [they go] from dicking around to the restaurant, from the restaurant to the hotel for a rest, then back to dicking around, back to the hotel, back to the restaurant."¹³ [Tramontane]

The description of the police van as 'armoured', it should be noted, only meant that the van was equipped with basic riot control features, such as a windscreen guard and reinforced side windows. As shown in Figure 9 below, the windscreen riot guard was usually not installed. These features, while considered excessive by Tramontane, seemed very modest compared to the armoured vehicles commonly seen in cities throughout Europe.



¹³ Original quote: "Prendi la Polizia di Stato, loro vanno in giro con il loro furgone bello blindato, non si sa bene dove debbano andare perché pensi, dove cazzo andate con questo furgone blindato; è l'uso del loro furgone blindato e dall'albergo a cazzeggio, perché non hanno un ruolo effettivo qua, dal cazzeggio al ristorante, dal ristorante all'albergo per riprendersi un attimo, torniamo al cazzeggio, torniamo all'albergo, torniamo al ristorante."

Figure 9 - The Police van in Lampedusa

Tramontane's negative opinion of the Police, it should be noted, was not uncommon. For example, members of law enforcement and military forces were housed in the island's hotels during their deployment, which contributed to the commonly repeated belief among residents that law enforcement agents and servicepeople in Lampedusa were on holiday at the state's expense. The sight of marked vehicles being used to go to the beach, something I had occasion to witness myself, probably reinforced this perception. However, Tramontane's remarks on the uselessness of police forces were not an attack on loafing officers trying to skive work, but rather expressed a widespread belief that there was no work to be done by law enforcement on Lampedusa. In short, police were not needed because there was no crime for them to control. In the following sections I critically explore this idea of Lampedusa as a crime-free society, which I found to be often contradicted by residents' own accounts. I then examine residents' separate attitudes towards law enforcement and its purpose when it came to controlling the actions of locals and of migrants, and the different ways in which these impacted on feelings of security.

6.1.1 Crime-free or free-for-all?

Lampedusa, I was repeatedly told throughout my stay, was a crime-free zone. This belief was often reflected in residents' behaviour. As I reached my accommodation the day of my arrival, I was told to open the gate to the property by poking my arm through the bars and turning the key, which was kept in the keyhole. When I asked how to lock my flat's door, I was met with puzzled looks and told I would have no need to do so. On my first strolls into town, I noticed that cars and bicycles were also left unlocked, and the mailman regularly left his moped unattended, engine running and mailbags wide open. This trusting attitude, I was told, had geographical roots: even if someone were to steal a vehicle, they could hardly take it far.

The ability to come and go without locking doors was described by an informant as a crucial feature of life in Lampedusa, a fundamental freedom. When I asked Tramontane to tell me their favourite thing about living in Lampedusa, they answered with the single word "security". However, when I asked them to elaborate on this, a contradiction emerged:

"That there is effectively no crime, except for some Lampedusans who will break into your house and empty it if you are away for over a month, but... And you can be sure

that they will, so a house like this one absolutely must have a guardian when we are away, otherwise they will even remove the hob. Yeah, it happened."¹⁴ [Tramontane]

Noticing my confused look, Tramontane offered more detail:

*"Hob, fridge, water pump. There is nothing they cannot steal. They cannot remove the marble countertops, but they take away all the furnishings."*¹⁵ [Tramontane]

Despite having been burglarised so meticulously in the past, Tramontane did not seem to consider the event to have been a proper crime, seeing no contradiction between such events and their assertions that crime did not exist on the island:

*"Speaking of the absence of crime, if not for some... at the end of the day this is petty theft, here nobody breaks into your house when you are at home."*¹⁶ [Tramontane]

Despite the undoubtedly significant financial damage suffered, Tramontane seemed to consider the burglary of an unoccupied home not to be a serious offence, rather just the work of opportunistic thieves. This also suggests that Tramontane perhaps conceptualised crime as something linked to violent victimisation; by targeting empty homes, perpetrators had removed the risk of confrontation and the potential for violence. Tramontane also gave no indication that the prevention or investigation of these events may have been part of the role of the Police or other law enforcement agents whose presence they had defined as "useless" just a few minutes earlier.

The mention of the burglary, and Tramontane's fatalistic attitude towards it, hinted at a more complicated picture of crime and security in Lampedusa than the one with which I was initially presented. This new picture was more consistent with my personal observations: scattered through my field notes were multiple references to vandalism, fly-tipping, traffic offences, health & safety violations, illegal buildings, corruption, threats, and other behaviours I found inconsistent with the idea of a crime-free society. Instead, the evidence suggested to me that Lampedusa existed in a condition of pervasive illegality. Regulation breaches and administrative penalties were often dealt with by asking for favourable treatment to public administration workers based on some sort of familial or other personal connection. As I prepared to board a flight at Lampedusa airport, I was once advised at the check-in desk that I was carrying an

¹⁴ Original quote: "Che non c'è praticamente criminalità, se non qualche lampedusano, che se vai via per più di un mese ti entra in casa e te la svuota, però... e sei sicuro che lo faccia, quindi una casa del genere deve avere sicuramente un guardiano quando vai via perché sennò ti staccano anche i fornelli. No, è successo."

¹⁵ Original quote: "Fornelli, frigorifero, pompe dell'acqua. Non c'è nulla che non possono portare via. I piani di marmo non li staccano, ma ti portano via tutti i suppellettili."

¹⁶ Original quote: "Il discorso di assenza del crimine se non per qualche... alla fine sono furtarelli, qua non ti entra in casa nessuno quando sei in casa."

illegal item in my hand luggage. According to the airport worker, I had two choices: if I had a friend working at the security gate I could just proceed and ask them to turn a blind eye; if, however, I lacked such a connection, then I should just put my bag in the hold. My decision to take the latter course of action was met with dismay by the local informant who was accompanying me and who struggled to understand why I would not at least try my luck first.

In their interview, Tramontane had implied that they considered the label of crime reserved for violent behaviour, but my observations suggested that violent crime was also present in Lampedusa, and very much in plain sight. The most obvious example was fire-setting. Shortly after my arrival, one of the island's few supermarkets caught fire overnight. Local news reported this as an accidental fire, caused by an old fridge struggling with the heat that built up whenever the shutters were closed. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, it was common on Lampedusa for things to exist in a persistent state of disrepair due to maintenance being hindered by the need to source parts from the mainland. To me, this made the official account perfectly plausible. Other residents, on the other hand, expressed certainty that it must have been arson, perpetrated by a rival supermarket for the purpose of hurting the competition. The readiness with which residents embraced this version of events, for which they offered no evidence other than motive, suggested that arson was not viewed as an exceptional, abnormal act, but was instead remarkably normalised. A quick search of local news showed that fires were indeed curiously common in Lampedusa. In the first nine months of 2016, for example, 21 cars were destroyed by fire, with the majority deemed to be malicious acts with the intention to intimidate (Comunicalo.It, 2019). Fire was used not only to damage property, but also endanger life. In 2004, a fire destroyed the home of a local activist and her partner, the relative of an Italian judge famously assassinated in Sicily by the mafia; ten years later, some locals threatened to set fire to the house once more (La Repubblica, 2014). Ostro, who was involved in support work with migrants, stated they and their colleagues had been victims of intimidation:

"They even threatened us more than once."¹⁷ [Ostro]

These threats, Ostro explained, were caused by some residents' dislike of migrants and of those who helped them, who were labelled *"friends of the Turks"*. The word Turks was used as a generic term for foreigners, a legacy from centuries-old conflicts with Arab countries all over the Mediterranean. Although I was told it was a common word in Lampedusan dialect, I only heard it used as a derogative term, suggesting that at least some of this violence was rooted in prejudice.

¹⁷ Original quote: "Ci hanno anche minacciato più di una volta."

Further evidence suggesting the mundanity, rather than absence, of violence can be found in the following words by Gregale:

*"Because over the years in Lampedusa we have seen all sorts of stuff, we have seen cars being set on fire, we have seen drug dealing, we have seen violence against children, nobody ever highlights violence against women on this island, instead these are not problems because the emergency is immigration."*¹⁸ [Gregale]

Gregale suggested that criminality and violence were common in Lampedusa, but they were not viewed as problems because all attention was diverted to the issue of migration. In particular, Gregale suggested that violence against women was widespread, but underrecognized. While gender or sexual violence was rarely discussed in my presence, it was apparent that residents considered it a common risk for which women should be prepared. Male acquaintances, for example, would always insist on walking me home, even when I was only a few metres away from my gate. This might simply have been the result of thoughtless chivalry on their part, rather than awareness of an actual risk; however, female residents' behaviour suggested consciousness of a concrete danger. One afternoon, as I shared with a female acquaintance my unease over having been followed by a strange man, she confided her habit of pretending to phone her husband whenever out walking on her own, declaring out loud that he was waiting for her nearby. Fearing that my status as outsider may make me more vulnerable, she recommended I too should mention her husband's name when in the company of other residents, so I might enjoy some protection from my association with a powerful local man. *"It's an island"*, she would repeatedly tell me, adding that as a woman I should always expect the gaze of the community upon me. While geography seemed to keep cars safe by giving perpetrators nowhere to drive them, it simultaneously made women less safe by giving them nowhere to hide from unwanted attention.

All these elements evidenced that Lampedusa was not a crime-free zone, and that despite their assertions to the contrary, residents were aware of it to some degree. Furthermore, criminal activity was not limited to petty theft or crimes of opportunity, as indicated by Tramontane. Still, although residents were conscious of the presence of violence, they also largely accepted it as normal; these behaviours were not always viewed as deviant within Lampedusa's community, and therefore often not constructed as criminal. In the next section I examine the ways in which this social construction of

¹⁸ Original quote: "Perché negli anni a Lampedusa abbiamo visto di tutto, abbiamo visto macchine incendiate, abbiamo visto spaccio di droga, abbiamo visto violenza sui minori, nessuno ha mai posto l'accento sulla violenza sulle donne su quest'isola, cioè questi non sono problemi perché l'emergenza è l'immigrazione."

deviance influenced the relationship between residents and authorities, shaping both residents' expectations and law enforcement practices.

6.1.2 Policing the resident community

In Tramontane's view of a crime-free Lampedusa, the only role available to the Police was to carry out traffic stops. Even traffic stops, however, were carried out sporadically, and with unclear purpose:

*"I mean, let's say I'm in the Police, ok? You send me to Lampedusa in May: yay, I'm going on holiday! I mean what am I going to do, traffic stops? Yes, from time to time, there is someone who does traffic stops. Who do they stop, Lampedusans? What are they going to do, get out and shoot you? And where are they going to run after that? So that's zero risk, they do some stops from time to time, but for them it's all a big party."*¹⁹ [Tramontane]

Tramontane believed the policing of Lampedusans to be pointless because they were unlikely to be dangerous, partly because they were unlikely to carry weapons, and partly because even if they did, they would have nowhere to run. However, Tramontane's account ignored, for example, the wide range of common traffic violations perpetrated daily by Lampedusans. Some of these were immediately visible, such as not wearing a helmet when riding a moped, or a seatbelt when driving a car. I witnessed countless examples and variations of these violations during my stay. Other violations, such as failing to carry out a regular MOT or to insure a vehicle, would have been difficult to uncover without checks from the authorities; still, an acquaintance once casually revealed to me they had been driving without insurance for ages, thinking nothing of the fact they had given me a lift just a few days earlier. These violations were so widespread that not only they represented the norm, but they also made compliance look deviant:

"[Informant] tells me that wearing a seatbelt in Lampedusa may make you look suspicious: a friend of [theirs] was stopped, and the police later confessed that they stopped her because she was wearing a seatbelt. It's a sign of having something to hide." [Field note]

The conversation summarised in this field note took place in the informant's car. Noticing that I was about to fasten my seatbelt, they told me not to do so because that

¹⁹ Original quote: "Cioè sono della Polizia di Stato, ok, mi mandi a Lampedusa a maggio: eh vado in ferie! Cioè cosa vado a fare, controlli? Sì, qualcuno ogni tanto, c'è qualche pattuglia che ferma a fare i controlli. A chi, ai lampedusani? Perché, scendono e ti sparano? E dove scappano poi? Quindi rischio zero, ogni tanto fanno dei controlli, ma per loro è una gran festa".

would have put us at risk of being stopped by authorities, something they were keen to avoid.

As the summer season approached, however, I was told that controls would intensify on account of the large influx of tourists arriving on the island. This suggests that the apparent state of perennial amnesty enjoyed by residents did not extend to outsiders, who were instead expected to follow the law. Occasionally, residents would get caught in the tightened net of controls; as I met an acquaintance for coffee, they told me with great indignation that they had been fined during a traffic stop for riding a moped without a helmet. Their outrage seemed very sincere, and they showed no sign of doubting that they were in the right. Instead, they vowed not to amend their behaviour, and to fight any further persecution by authorities.

While Lampedusans' traffic violations were routinely tolerated by authorities, there was evidence that perhaps more serious offences such as drug trafficking were being prioritised. The field note below reports what an informant claimed to have been told by a cousin who worked in law enforcement:

"[Informant] also tells me that the owner of the [name redacted] car rental company in Lampedusa rents out shitty cars without insurance, and the owner is also the biggest drug dealer on the island. [Informant] says law enforcement periodically bug bar tables or restrooms to catch drug dealers." [Field note].

I could not help being sceptical that large scale drug-dealing activities could be such an open secret in such a small community. On the other hand, drug dealing had also been mentioned by Gregale when listing the most pervasive yet ignored issues that plagued Lampedusa. Occasionally, gossipy residents would share with me the identity of individuals who were known to be particularly partial to cocaine. Substance misuse in general was considered a problem by the community members who attended the public forum meetings, as shown in the field note below:

"Alcohol and gambling become more problematic in winter, when there is no employment. Cocaine also an issue, drugs may travel by boat and plane, but probably also by fishing boat. Cigarettes are sold to underage people." [Notes from Forum meeting – 17 May 2018]

There appeared to be no doubt that, one way or another, drugs found their way into Lampedusa. When the collective discussion turned to the measures available to control this issue, however, the commitment of law enforcement agencies to fight small-scale drug dealing on the island was called into question. A community member then related an anecdote, detailing what had happened when a group of Lampedusan women had

asked the Police to curb the widespread consumption of marijuana amongst local teenagers:

"One attending person tells of an issue some mothers raised of young people smoking pot all over the island, so the police did an operation with sniffer dogs, sniffing customers in a pub. They found nothing, but one of them said that all customers had drugs in their pockets, so they doubt the sniffing ability of the dogs. Suspicion that such operations are done just for show" [notes from public forum meeting – 17 May 2018]

The suggestion that the Police had conducted a fake operation, perhaps by bringing into the pub dogs that were not actually trained for the purpose of finding drugs, exemplifies the relationship between Lampedusans and law enforcement. There was no way of verifying the truthfulness of this account of the incident, or that it had happened at all. Nevertheless, it was taken to be true by community members, who had no hesitation in believing that Police would go to such lengths to be seen to take action, while at the same time avoiding inconveniencing anyone. Law enforcement agencies, members suggested, would investigate international traffickers and other 'big fish', but would avoid interfering with islanders' lives.

Another anecdote by an informant seemed to support the view of a tacit non-intervention agreement between Lampedusans and law enforcement. Years ago, the informant told me, a new Marshal had arrived in Lampedusa to take charge of the local unit of Carabinieri. The Marshal was a keen enforcer of the law, which soon antagonised some locals. One day, my informant said, the Marshal approached Giacomino, an elderly man usually found selling homemade ricotta out of a wheelbarrow, asking to see his food licence. Giacomino had no licence or permit to show, which earned him a ban from selling any more of his ricotta. The persecution of Giacomino, my informant said, was a step too far for the already indignant population. That night, the Marshal's car caught fire. The Marshal heard the message loud and clear, transferred out of Lampedusa, and Giacomino's wheelbarrow went back to business.

The pervasive state of illegality I mentioned above co-existed with an equally widespread culture of impunity. Impunity was expected by Lampedusans, who did not recognise all law-breaking as deserving of punishment. This does not mean that no deeds were ever formally punished. Former mayor of Lampedusa Bernardino De Rubeis, for example, was incarcerated in 2018 following his conviction for corruption-related offences (Ziniti, 2018). When discussing the case with residents, I found more sympathy than condemnation. Nobody expressed any doubt that De Rubeis was guilty of the acts for which he had been tried. However, informants would tell me, he had only

done what everybody else had been doing. Indeed, the only reason he was caught was that he was not a bright man and simply made an ideal scapegoat. Sympathy also went to his elderly mother, who had to travel to Sicily to visit him. In my informants' opinion, the incarceration of De Rubeis achieved nothing in terms of fighting corruption, partly because the wider structures that favoured corruption remained intact, and partly because this conviction was an exceptional event. Despite the De Rubeis case, the usually ineffective action of law enforcement and their failure to uphold the law actively reinforced the general expectation of impunity:

*"And also, the people, the people, I mean, you cannot educate them without good examples and without culture, certainly not with the threat of a punishment that is never enforced, because they know that it is never enforced."*²⁰ [Gregale]

The lack of effective law enforcement in Lampedusa was so evident that it raised the question of why authorities should be so ready to tolerate and perpetuate the situation. Levant, a prominent figure in the island's political scene, thought that this was a conscious choice by the state, linked to Lampedusa's role as a border space:

*"There were years during which they left [migrants] here to protect the... The North-East [of Italy], with this came let's say the decline, the neglect, also due to some sort of Faustian pact, I mean we use the island because we need it for this and you, well if you don't pay taxes, if you build illegally, if you drive without helmet, without seatbelt, you see? A condition of pervasive illegality that may seem, may appear convenient, but in reality, was linked to the deprivation of rights."*²¹ [Levant]

According to Levant, Lampedusa had often been used as an open prison to warehouse migrants to serve the political needs of the government of the day. Over the years, the state's forces had descended ever more numerous over Lampedusa, and the tolerance of residents was bought with the tacit understanding that these forces would control the border and those who crossed it, but leave the resident population alone. Levant described this as a Faustian pact because the superficial benefits brought by maintaining impunity came at a cost. For example, Levant added, the population failed to appreciate that persistent corruption and illegality directed contributed to the chronic

²⁰ Original quote: "E anche le persone, le persone, insomma, non le educi se non con l'esempio e con la cultura, non certo con la minaccia di una sanzione che non arriva mai, perché loro sanno che non arriva mai".

²¹ Original quote: "Ci sono stati anni in cui li lasciavano qui per difendere il... Il nord-est, a questo si sposava diciamo il degrado, la dimenticanza, con anche una sorta di patto scellerato, cioè noi usiamo l'isola perché ci serve per questo e voi, vabbè se non pagate le tasse, se costruite abusivamente, se girate senza casco, senza cintura di sicurezza, capito? Una condizione di illegalità diffusa che può sembrare, apparire conveniente, in realtà a questi si legava la negazione dei diritti".

lack of services on the island and affected their rights negatively. While impunity was expected for residents, however, perceptions of deviance and criminality were often different when it came to the migrant population resident in the Hotspot, which was considered in need of strict control and containment. In the next section I examine the different expectations of residents on how migrants should be managed and policed during their stay in Lampedusa, and how these would be consistently disappointed by the routine management of the border, further increasing hostility towards law enforcement.

6.1.3 Policing the crimmigrant other

Several participants mentioned that episodes of criminal behaviour by migrants had allegedly taken place over the previous months. In some cases, this was presented as an inevitable consequence of Tunisian migrants being inherently delinquent, a perception I consider more in depth in the next chapter. Accounts of criminal behaviour by migrants were however highly contradictory. For instance, an informant told me that episodes of theft by Tunisians were frequent, two or three per day, and that there had been attempts to sexually assault local women. However, others claimed that these rumours were the result of exaggeration and political exploitation of local anxieties by the recently elected mayor, and that Lampedusa remained as safe as usual. It was impossible for me to establish the truthfulness of these accounts: while I met some individuals who reported hearing about frequent delinquent behaviour by Tunisians, I could find nobody who had actually witnessed such behaviour, or who had direct knowledge of someone who had been victimised. Nevertheless, the mere presence of these accounts was enough to convince some residents to alter their behaviour. For instance, an informant told me they had had to lock their doors and windows all winter, as there had been many burglaries on the island since the Tunisian migrants had arrived. However, they also said that these burglaries had caused little damage, and they had been committed by migrants who were tired of being kept in Lampedusa indefinitely. The burglars, I was told, would enter empty homes and turn on the lights, immediately raising suspicion and precipitating their own arrest. By committing a crime, they had forced authorities to transfer them more promptly to the mainland. The lack of intent to escape detection was taken as proof that the burglaries were committed to escape from the island, and not for personal gain. Despite this belief, the informant remained fearful of migrants. The locking of doors and windows had a strong symbolic power, as it represented a great impingement on the island's way of life. The same informant put it as follows:

"In Lampedusa we have nothing, but we have freedom. If you take that away, what do we have left?" [Field note]

However, their fear appeared to be linked more to media reports rather than real life interactions with migrants themselves. As I explain in Chapter 5, in March 2018 media reported that the Hotspot in Lampedusa would be closed, and all migrants transferred elsewhere. By the time of my arrival in early April it was becoming clear that this was not the case, although many residents still believed the island to be free of migrants. The informant I mention above had told me of their delight to be free to leave their door open again, and to let their grandchild walk the short distance between the house and the sea unaccompanied. The following day, as the presence of migrants on the island had become obvious to them, I noticed them locking their front door once more, loudly complaining about losing their liberty because of "*clandestini*", i.e., illegal immigrants. It appeared that the events of the past winter had negatively impacted their feeling of safety, and they now linked the presence of migrants with insecurity.

Interview respondents further evidenced the conflicting views of residents on the relationship between migrants and crime. Sirocco and Levant exemplified opposing viewpoints, each providing a different account of the situation on the island during the previous winter. According to Sirocco, the relatively small number of Tunisian migrants who had been kept on Lampedusa during the previous months had caused a large amount of disorder, with dozens of houses having been broken into. Levant, on the other hand, claimed that the events had been greatly exaggerated, and the only high-profile crime had been the theft of a watermelon from a market stall, promptly recovered by authorities. These petty thefts, Levant said, were the result of migrants looking for food due to the substandard diet provided within the Hotspot:

"If you were forced to eat rice with tuna every day, after two months, well, you could kill!"²² [Levant]

Both Sirocco and Levant directed me to attend the Police station to check local crime statistics. The data, Sirocco said, would prove that crime had spiked since the arrival of migrants, while according to Levant I would find evidence that no crimes committed by migrants had been reported. However, the true prevalence of migrants' offending was bound to remain unverified. Puzzled by my request, the Police informed me that no such data was available for me to consult, and to their knowledge, no such data was being collected at all.

Despite their disagreement on the volume and nature of crimes committed by migrants, Sirocco and Levant shared the view that any disorder would have been prevented if the migrants had been transferred to the mainland shortly after being fingerprinted and

²² Original quote: "Quando tu tutti i giorni sei costretto a mangiare riso col tonno, dopo due mesi, ma cioè uccideresti".

identified, in accordance with the intended purpose of the Hotspot. While Sirocco maintained that these Tunisian migrants were inherently delinquent and their prolonged presence was bound to cause disorders, Levant was more inclined to blame the poor conditions to which the migrants had been subjected in the Hotspot. Either way, the warehousing of migrants during the winter months had effectively turned the island into an open prison, negatively affecting the resident population's feeling of safety.

I could not help but wonder how a small number of migrants could cause such upheaval given the large presence of law enforcement on the island. It should be noted that law enforcement agents in Italy are routinely equipped with firearms and other weapons, while migrants on Lampedusa were not allowed any possessions. In many cases, migrants walked around the island wearing flip flops, as Hotspot authorities often did not provide them with shoes. Respondents' answers to my query were once more conflicting. Levant had denied that migrants had caused disorders, and explained the large presence of law enforcement as simply a matter of procedure:

"Then there are all the Police, Carabinieri, who are here to maintain public order for migrants, mainly... mainly you know what they are for, as escort when they transfer migrants, so they need many because... I think they have one officer for every three migrants, so with every group that is transferred there is a police unit escorting them, and then they come back and others take over, you see?"²³ [Levant]

The migrant transfers mentioned by Levant included taking migrants in or out of the Hotspot, for example to receive medical care, or to be repatriated. Migrants who were transferred to mainland Italy were usually taken via ferry to Porto Empedocle in Sicily, and then driven to their destination. The ferry crossing alone could take around ten hours, so agents accompanying migrants to Sicily would not return to Lampedusa for days, explaining the need for large numbers to ensure adequate cover at all times.

Sirocco, however, had a different answer. In their opinion, the purpose of Police and Carabinieri was to control migrants while on the island, but despite their equipment they were in fact powerless to do so:

"Because nobody can touch them. Maintaining public order is a problem. Because if they touch them and somebody sees that, and takes a photo, everyone is terrified at

²³ Original quote: "Poi c'è quella parte di polizia, carabinieri, che sono l'ordine pubblico per i migranti, e soprattutto... Soprattutto sai a che cosa servono, quando fanno i trasferimenti ad accompagnare, quindi ne servono tanti perché... Mi pare che facciano un militare ogni tre, quindi ogni gruppo che parte c'è un contingente di polizia che li accompagna, e poi ritornano e si danno il cambio, capito?"

the idea of having to touch a non-European or a migrant. They say so openly."²⁴
[Sirocco]

According to Sirocco, Police felt unable to use violence due to past scandals over the mistreatment of migrants in Lampedusa. Sirocco thus saw the large number of officers kept on the island as mostly performative:

*"[The large presence of law enforcement] is symbolic. First of all, [migrants] don't know the difference between Italian police and Tunisian police. A Tunisian police officer could kill you for doing the wrong thing. There is also more corruption, but that's a different... I'm telling you: people here are terrified at the idea of being tried in court for hitting [a migrant] in the head with a baton."*²⁵ [Sirocco]

In Sirocco's view, Italian authorities' reluctance to be seen using violence made it harder to police migrants, contributing to disorder. This, Sirocco claimed, was in contrast with the behaviour of Tunisian police, who they claimed could use lethal violence more openly. Sirocco appeared to admire the Tunisian police's perceived freedom to kill, bemoaning the Italian police's more cautious approach, which they viewed as an unwanted consequence of excessive media scrutiny. Sirocco therefore considered migrants to be under-policed in Italy compared to their country of origin. Interestingly, Sirocco also seemed to consider migrants as under-policed when compared to local Lampedusans:

*"Some guy would come and tell me: 'look, they are selling drugs. Excuse me, did you not search them? How come they have drugs on them?' And guess what, the Lampedusan drug dealer would come to me and tell me 'go and have a look, when I do the same thing I get arrested, how come they are allowed [to have drugs]'. They were probably hurting his business."*²⁶ [Sirocco]

The example of the local drug dealer was presented by Sirocco as evidence that migrants received favourable treatment from law enforcement compared to residents,

²⁴ Original quote: "Perché non li può toccare nessuno. Fare rispettare l'ordine pubblico, è un problema. Perché se li toccano e li vede qualcuno, gli fa una foto, ognuno è terrorizzato all'idea di dover toccare un extracomunitario o un migrante. Te lo dicono chiaramente."

²⁵ Original quote: "[La presenza delle forze dell'ordine] è simbolica. Intanto non lo sanno qual è la differenza tra i poliziotti italiani e i poliziotti tunisini. Se un poliziotto tunisino, se tu sbagli ti può anche ammazzare. Poi c'è più corruzione, questo è un altro... Te lo dico, qua invece la gente è terrorizzata all'idea di doversi fare il processo perché ha dato un colpo di manganello in testa [a un migrante]."

²⁶ Original quote: "[V]eniva quello e mi diceva 'guarda, stanno spacciando.' Ma scusa, ma non li avete perquisiti? Per quale motivi c'hanno la droga? E guarda caso veniva lo spacciatore Lampedusano che mi diceva 'vai a guardare, che a me m'arrestano e loro lo possono fare'. Possibilmente gli toglieva un po' di mercato."

but this was inconsistent with my observations on the chronic under-enforcement of the law outlined earlier in this chapter. In fact, it was also contradicted by Sirocco's final observation that the local drug dealer was probably worried about unfair competition, which suggests that they were normally able to operate their business with relative impunity after all.

For the large part, I noticed that the lives of residents and migrants seemed to run parallel to one another. One of the roles of law enforcement, it seemed, was at least in part to make sure that migrants interfered as little as possible with the island's life, although this was not always possible when migrants were kept on the island for long periods. Some residents took exception to the migrants' ability to walk freely around Lampedusa. Tramontane, for example, who admitted to never having interacted with migrants on the island in any way, nevertheless believed they needed to be confined:

*"So, the reception centre can hold up to 300 migrants, would you send 300 police officers to control 300 street protesters? Would you send 200 police officers to control 300 violent protesters? If you send 100 you've done enough. If the centre was, indeed, a reception centre, but it should be a detention centre. You have 300 people inside, but they can't come out, if they can't come out 50 officers are enough."*²⁷
[Tramontane]

In Tramontane's view, turning the Hotspot into a detention centre would have greatly reduced the need for law enforcement, reinforcing the view that their main role was to contain migrants.

Some residents, however, interacted with migrants by choice. Several local individuals and groups were involved in supporting migrants, whether through formal or informal channels. Their relationship with law enforcement was different from other residents'. Ostro, who was involved in support and advocacy work on behalf of migrants, mentioned law enforcement as the biggest obstacle they faced in their work:

"It's not my field, but I was here to help a bit the guys on the Iuventa, the German ship that they... I don't know, there were 50-60-70 police officers, 70 police officers in Lampedusa, it means they had come from outside, anyway we know they had arrived from outside the previous evening, and... There were 20-30 Police cars, the crew members were 18 people, young people. I mean, there is a will to repress those who

²⁷ Original quote: "Allora c'è un potenziale di 300 migranti nel centro accoglienza, in un corteo di 300 manifestanti mandi 300 forze dell'ordine? In un corteo di 300 manifestanti violenti mandi 200 forze dell'ordine? Ne mandi 100 e hai già fatto il tuo lavoro. Se un centro del genere fosse davvero un centro, sì, di prima accoglienza, ma deve essere un centro di detenzione. Ci sono dentro 300 persone, ma tanto non possono uscire, ne bastano 50 di persone perché non possono uscire."

show solidarity, those who organise solidarity initiatives, we have seen this at sea, in Lampedusa, in Briançon, and so on. So, it certainly isn't easy, because you know that the next victim could be you."²⁸ [Ostro]

The Iuventa (sometimes Juventa in Italian media reports) was a ship belonging to the German charity Jugend Rettet, which provided search and rescue (SAR) in the Mediterranean Sea between 2016 and 2017. In 2017 the Italian government asked all NGOs carrying out SAR activities in the Mediterranean to sign a code of conduct committing to closer cooperation with law enforcement and anti-smuggling efforts by state and EU agents (Governo Italiano, 2017a). Some of these commitments were seen as impinging on the NGOs' neutrality and making it deliberately too onerous for ships to carry out SAR closer to the Libyan coast (Cusumano, 2017b). Some NGOs refused to sign the code before the 31 July 2017 deadline, Jugend Rettet being one of them. On 2 August 2017 the Iuventa was seized by the Italian judiciary in the port of Lampedusa, and its crew were charged with aiding and abetting illegal immigration (Heller and Pezzani, 2017). Ostro described the seizure of the Iuventa as a deliberate and unnecessary show of force by the Italian state, given the disproportionate deployment of police officers and cars. This show of force, according to Ostro, was part of a wider campaign to oppress those providing organised support to migrants. As I mentioned earlier when discussing Lampedusans' perception of crime, Ostro had been threatened by residents more than once due to their work in support of migrants. However, rather than perceiving law enforcement agents as protectors against these threats, Ostro saw them as oppressors and feared being victimised by them. Their presence on Lampedusa not only failed to make Ostro and their collaborators feel safe, but was perceived as inherently intimidatory. Law enforcement were just another arm of the migration control machine and could become openly hostile depending on the political will of the day.

The extent of Ostro's suspicion towards law enforcement would become clearer shortly after our interview, when they received a call informing them that a boat full of Tunisian migrants was trying to evade the Coast Guard off the east coast of the island. Ostro invited me to accompany them as they went to observe the events, so I could take some photos. Once we arrived, we found that a few cars were already there, and

²⁸ Original quote: "Non è area mia, ma io sono stato qua un po' ad aiutare i ragazzi della Juventa, la nave che avevano... non so, c'erano 50-60-70 poliziotti, 70 poliziotti a Lampedusa vuol dire che sono arrivati da fuori, per altro lo sappiamo erano venuti da fuori la sera prima, e... C'erano 20-30 macchine della polizia, questi erano 18 membri dell'equipaggio, ragazzi. Cioè c'è una volontà di reprimere chi dimostra solidarietà, porta avanti iniziative di solidarietà, lo abbiamo visto in mare, a Lampedusa, a Briançon, e via dicendo. Quindi questo sicuramente non è semplice, perché sai che potresti essere tu la prossima vittima."

another arrived shortly after us. Ostro stated that the last car was carrying plain-clothes officers, as they could hear their radio as they passed us. Two men looking at the boat with binoculars were also suspected of being police officers, so we parked further away from everyone. As I took photos of the events, Ostro suggested I should not make my actions too obvious, lest we gave an excuse for the police to come and seize our equipment and phones. I was surprised by this precaution, but I did not question it. Shortly after, a man approached us and asked us in English what was going on. Ostro did not hide their suspicion and explained the events in as few words as possible. Once the man asked us who we were, Ostro declined to answer. Taken aback, the man explained he was a Bulgarian tourist backpacking around Europe, and he had come to Lampedusa after finding a bargain €20 flight from Venice; after a few minutes of small talk, he left. At that point Ostro stated their belief that the man was a Frontex spy. It was my turn to be taken aback, as I was not sure such a figure existed. However, Ostro pointed out that finding such a cheap flight to Lampedusa was the height of implausibility, even during low season, so the man's story did not stand up to scrutiny. When I asked why Frontex would need spies, Ostro's answer was evasive, and I realised that I might be putting myself at the centre of suspicion by asking too many questions. Sure enough, my moment came a few minutes later. As I remarked on the difficult attempts by the Coast Guard to disembark the migrants onto one of their cutters, I used two nautical terms: "*beccheggio*", i.e., pitching, which describes the oscillating movement of a ship caused by waves, and "*gomena*", i.e., hawser, a ship's mooring rope. Ostro turned to me with narrowed eyes and asked why I knew such specific words, and I realised I had no good explanation to offer, mumbled simply that I did not know. I could not tell whether Ostro was convinced by my explanation, but they did continue to assist me with my research, at least for another week or two. Later on, as we saw the self-professed Bulgarian tourist strip to his underwear and walk into the sea, Ostro declared that perhaps he was just a weirdo after all.

6.2 Insecurity and the purposes of law enforcement

Residents' different perceptions of crime's nature and prevalence on the island influenced their expectations on the role of law enforcement. Figure 10 below summarises the different perceptions I encountered on the prevalence of crime and the identity of its perpetrators, and how these linked to residents' understanding of the purpose of law enforcement on Lampedusa. These are based not only on formal interviews, but also on observations and conversations with informants.

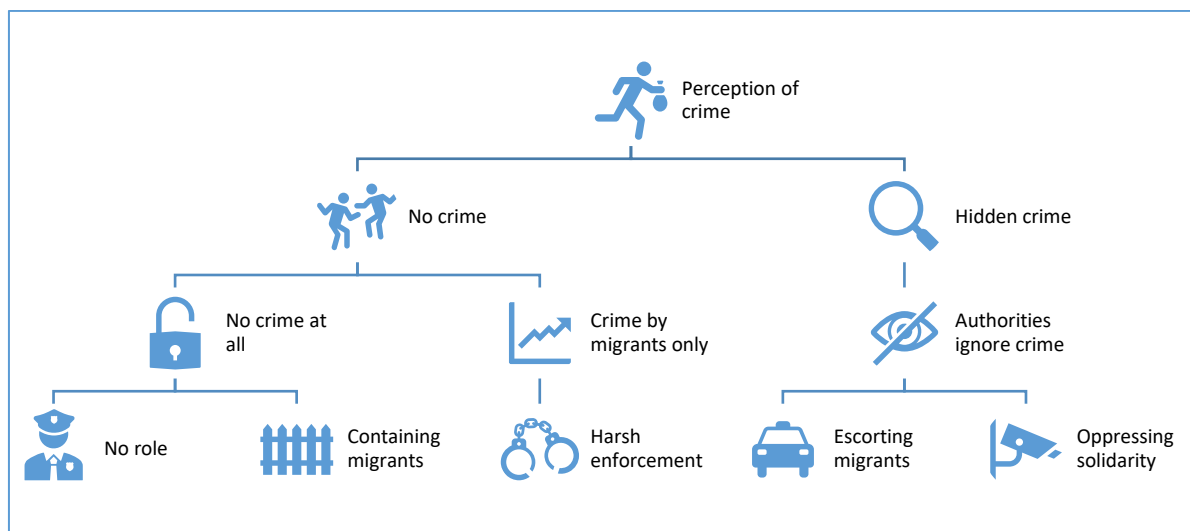


Figure 10 – How perceptions of crime prevalence and nature linked to understanding of police role

Those who maintained that Lampedusa was a crime-free society could be generally divided in two main groups: those who believed there was no crime at all (such as Tramontane), and those who believed that criminal incidents were perpetrated solely by migrants (e.g., Sirocco). The first of these groups could be further subdivided among those who saw no role whatsoever for law enforcement on Lampedusa, and those who believed its purpose was to segregate migrants from the rest of the population, be they residents or tourists. Those who thought migrants were committing crimes, however, considered it law enforcement's role to repress disorder by adopting a zero-tolerance approach towards the migrant community.

On the other hand, others believed crime to be widespread in Lampedusa, but hidden from view (e.g., Gregale). This was because authorities were choosing not to enforce the law against Lampedusan residents, allowing illegal behaviour to go unchallenged. Those who adopted this view agreed that the lack of enforcement was linked with the prioritisation of migration-related issues. They did not necessarily agree, however, on what the role of law enforcement was: while some considered it limited to the orderly management of migrant transfers, others feared it included the more sinister purpose of monitoring local organisations and activists, on whose activities always lingered the threat of repression. Curiously, whatever residents' position on the duties of law enforcement agents, their performance was consistently perceived to be inadequate, whether due to under-enforcing the law, over-enforcing it, or doing nothing at all.

The image presented above inevitably represents a simplification; however, this simplification is not simply the result of my squeezing nuanced positions within fixed categories for the purpose of data analysis. Rather, participants often offered remarkably clear-cut answers. It is not possible to say whether the views expressed by

participants were always a faithful reflection of their thoughts, or whether more nuanced positions were being simplified for my benefit. As I note on several occasions throughout my findings, Lampedusans were often cautious about expressing personal views for fear of being misconstrued and labelled as racist or anti-migrant. While this does not undermine the truthfulness of the findings presented above, it is nevertheless a reminder that ambivalent views may have been underrepresented. An example of such ambivalence is seen in the informant who so obviously resented having to lock their door because of the "*illegals*", but also went to great lengths to explain the reasons for their alleged law-breaking, to which they seemed genuinely sympathetic. Such nuanced positions were more evident in those who refused formal interviews, while interview respondents who had taken part in previous research were more cautious about expressing themselves. The reason behind this caution, and its implications for future research are discussed in much more depth in Chapter 10. When placing participants' words within the context of my own observations, it was clear to me that Lampedusa was not a crime-free society, and that authorities under-enforced the law. However, it cannot be established whether migrants had committed the crimes of which they had been accused over the past winter, as participants often lacked direct knowledge of these events. What they evidence instead is a chasm between residents and law enforcement, whose unclear purpose and allegiance challenged their legitimacy. While I did find that the presence of state agents contributed to feelings of insecurity, as argued by Orsini (2016), these feelings had more complex origins than those acknowledged in Orsini's work. For instance, for those who considered Lampedusa a crime-free idyll, insecurity was caused by the perceived under-policing of criminal migrants; those who saw Lampedusa as a place where crime was rife, on the other hand, considered authorities complicit in the populations' long-standing normalisation of deviance. Others, such as Ostro, considered law enforcement inherently oppressive, and their presence a threat to all those who supported or helped migrants. For all, law enforcement agents were not part of the local population, but outsiders whose presence was clearly tied to the border and was never intended to benefit the community.

6.3 Community of scoundrels? Isle be the judge.

At first sight, this chapter's findings present Lampedusa as a criminological curiosity. Residents' repeated assertions that Lampedusa lacked crime at first conjured in my mind a mirror image of Durkheim's "*society of saints*" (1938, p. 100), the imaginary society populated by virtuous individuals who come to see minor infractions as deviant and socially construct them as crimes. Lampedusa appeared to be the opposite, a 'society of scoundrels', where illegality was so pervasive and normalised that it had largely ceased to be deviant. However, given that some residents condemned this state of illegality, it

cannot be said it was universally perceived as legitimate; besides, other residents found illegality problematic when perpetrated by migrants. While generally normalised, illegality continued to be understood as deviant, but acceptable when perpetrated by locals. This appears consistent with research suggesting that close social ties in rural communities can foster criminal behaviour by undermining the othering of local offenders (Barclay, Donnermeyer and Jobes, 2004). Shared values, the authors argue, become shared techniques of neutralisation, allowing some criminal acts to be rationalised and justified by the community at large (Sykes and Matza, 1957).

However, while a remote community such as Lampedusa may have much in common with mainland rural areas, the significance of its 'islandness' cannot be ignored. As argued by Scott & Staines (2020), islands present specific characteristics requiring a distinct criminological approach to urban or rural settings. In fact, they argue, criminology *"is yet to examine islands as specific ecological settings, accounting for place (the social construction of crime in such settings) and space (the objective social and geographic conditions of islands and island life that have criminogenic impacts)"* (Scott and Staines, 2020, p. 2). Much of the idea of Lampedusa as a tranquil, crime-free society came from residents comparing it favourably with the chaotic mainland cities they frequently visited to access the health, education, or business services lacking from the island. To visiting islanders, locking a car door was a visible signifier of the city's intrinsic dangerousness when contrasted with Lampedusa's openness. The general lack of street crime, however, was not the result of protective social control features such as collective efficacy, but a simple consequence of the island's spatial features, which made it nonsensical for anyone to steal a vehicle or snatch a purse. At the same time, the closed island environment increased insecurity for female residents, something that was only acknowledged in my presence once I disclosed my own discomfort at being followed by strange men. As the findings have shown, the idea of a crime-free community was part of the island's identity, actively perpetuated by residents minimising and neutralising local deviance. While literature on island criminology is still scant, similarities can be spotted between Lampedusa and other island communities in terms of how they construct crime. In 2019, for instance, the outgoing elected constable made headlines by denouncing the small Channel Island of Sark as *"awash with criminals"*, with local police dealing with an ever-growing number of violent incidents often linked to excessive alcohol consumption (Morris, 2019). A local resident was quoted in the Guardian disagreeing with this account by responding that *"Sark is incredibly safe"*, providing as evidence the fact that *"[w]e don't lock our doors here; I don't even lock up my bicycle"*; while acknowledging occasional disorder, the resident added that this was surely not comparable to *"being in a city centre on a weekend"* (ibid.). Like on Lampedusa, security on the island was exemplified by the highly symbolic freedom to

leave doors and belongings unlocked, while examples of violent or disorderly conduct were minimised through the comparison with urban environments. Despite these similarities, Lampedusa's distinct characteristics as a borderised environment mean that the issues of security and policing on the island cannot be understood through a crime control lens alone. The considerable presence of law enforcement agents was visibly and knowingly linked to border-related duties such as the control and transport of migrants; while Fenwick notes that policing remote communities often requires the balancing of local concerns with national priorities (2015), on Lampedusa the balance was overwhelmingly skewed towards the latter. The resulting *laissez faire* approach of law enforcement towards local crime made their presence unjustified and even illegitimate in the eyes of locals, who viewed them at best as incompetent and at worst as aiders and abettors.

6.4 From crime to social harm

Consistently with Orsini's observations (2016), it could be argued that the large presence of law enforcement and military agents on Lampedusa was intrinsically criminogenic as it perpetuated a culture of impunity and illegality, where conformity to rules was perceived as deviant. Furthermore, as seen in the previous chapter, the routine mismanagement of the border often prolonged the presence of migrants, even by months, increasing the likelihood of discontent and disorders. It does not necessarily follow, however, that these criminogenic effects should automatically be construed as socially harmful to the community. For instance, Hillyard & Tombs critique criminal justice and law enforcement not only as ineffective, but as an inherently harmful tools to perpetuate unequal power structures (2007). From this point of view, the under-enforcement of law in Lampedusa may not have been in itself an example of social harm, especially considering the persistence of the widespread belief that crime was absent from the island anyway. In addition, a chasm between authorities and residents might have been unavoidable; as is common in island societies, Lampedusa's community had strong internal bonds and was hospitable towards short term visitors, but struggled to tolerate the prolonged presence of outsiders (Cave, Brown and Baldacchino, 2012). Law enforcement and military agents inevitably came from outside the community and had little chance to integrate into it, especially in such great numbers and fast turnover, further undermining their legitimacy in the eyes of residents (Adams, 2019). It could be argued, therefore, that if authorities had attempted to enforce the law more strictly they would have been met with strong resistance by the population, as suggested by the case of the Marshall who had sought to stop Giacomino from selling ricotta out of his wheelbarrow.

An important consideration, however, is that security on Lampedusa was not evenly distributed. As I noted earlier in the chapter, some residents remained vulnerable to less socially visible crimes such as domestic abuse or gender-based violence; in turn, the lack of enforcement perpetuated this imbalance by disproportionately affecting less powerful residents, for example when failing to limit minors' exposure to drugs, alcohol, or gambling. Insecurity in Lampedusa thus was not the result of a simple failure to enforce the law, but rather of a distributive injustice, which was in turn exacerbated by institutional actors. Indeed, the *laissez faire* approach adopted by authorities in Lampedusa prevented local social issues from being openly acknowledged and addressed, whether through criminal justice or social policy, while tolerance of corruption and tax evasion deprived the community of the resources needed to run local services, again disproportionately affecting more vulnerable residents. The large presence of state actors brought to Lampedusa by borderisation both legitimised and deepened this security maldistribution, depriving marginalised residents of the protection they could reasonably expect from authorities. At the same time, the high-profile arrests and prosecutions of NGO members who carried out search and rescue operations at sea had antagonised civil society actors in Lampedusa, making them fearful of state authorities and fostering a culture of paranoia and mistrust towards outsiders. Through both action and inaction, visible border enforcement thus caused preventable social harm to the resident population of Lampedusa.

Chapter 7: Hospitality, control, and racialised humanitarianism

As noted in the previous chapter, small island societies typically present weak levels of bridging social capital which can make it particularly difficult for non-natives to integrate within the community (Cave, Brown and Baldacchino, 2012). In Lampedusa, the division between outsiders and locals was not strictly based on residency or birth, as much of its population had been born elsewhere or had moved away to access education or employment. Instead, belonging was established according to familial ties; the frequently heard Sicilian expression: "*a cu apparteni?*", meaning "*to whom do you belong?*", was employed to discover to which family an individual was related, thus establishing their place within the community. This way of defining belonging allowed for the detection of outsiders while preserving the local ties of the island's more mobile community members. As Cave et al. put it: "*islanders may acknowledge the virtues of mobility as they apply to themselves, but disapprove once they are applied or extended to others*" (2012, p. 147).

Existing research on island communities finds that, while immigrants are generally unwelcome, tourists are commonly shown high levels of hospitality, suggesting different attitudes towards short term and long term visitors (McCall, 1996; Cave, Brown and Baldacchino, 2012). However, Lampedusa was a place of transit for migrants rather than settlement, so their presence tended to be short term; in fact, the length and nature of migrants' stay on the island was entirely determined by border processes, and their daily interaction with the community was usually minimal. In this chapter I analyse the Lampedusan community's relationship with the irregular sea-crossers who reached the island's shores, and its impact on the island's identity. Despite the very different political and ideological opinions expressed by those who were involved in supporting migrants and those who were opposed to their presence, residents shared similar views on which migrants deserved to be categorised as victims in need of hospitality. Both groups showed a racialised understanding of victimhood which in some ways mirrored the categories enforced by asylum policy, although this was heavily mediated by political processes and historical events. As a result, even ardent advocates of migrants' rights continued to perpetuate racialised hierarchies of need, reproducing those structural inequalities underpinning the border processes against which they often protested.

7.1 Overt hostility: against migrants

In this sub-section I examine the attitudes of those who, for various reasons, explicitly objected to the presence of migrants on Lampedusa. While united by this common belief,

their views were by no means homogenous, varying from total and complete opposition to migration of any kind, to a celebration of Lampedusa's tradition of hospitality. In most cases, a distinction was drawn between migrants who were more or less deserving of solidarity, something that I also found to be common among supporters of migrants, as I discuss later on. I show how this distinction was inevitably tied to the unique social and political history of migration on Lampedusa, something that was further confirmed by the lone dissenting voice of Tramontane.

7.1.1 *Uncompromising opposition*

While several Lampedusan residents explicitly expressed hostility towards migrants in my presence, very few acknowledged their attitude as hostile. Tramontane was by far the most open in this regard. When asked whether they had ever had any personal interaction with migrants on the island, Tramontane answered simply:

*"No, because I am very racist."*²⁹ [Tramontane]

When asked what they meant by that, Tramontane clarified their position as follows:

*"[Pauses] ... maybe racist is the wrong word. I would like everybody to follow the laws [...] on free movement. So, movement must be free only when you meet the legal requirements of the country you want to visit. If I want to go to Japan, I must have a passport. If I want to go to Italy from Algeria, I must have a passport, otherwise I stay at home. I don't give a fuck if you're unhappy at home. Is this racism? Maybe, but I don't give a toss. [laughs] honestly, I don't give a toss."*³⁰ [Tramontane]

Unsure of whether their opinion qualified as racist, Tramontane explained that they specifically disliked migrants who travelled irregularly. Throughout our interview, Tramontane appeared unaware of any factors that may prevent some individuals from migrating regularly. They also seemed to believe that regular migration only required the possession of a passport and seemed unaware of the restrictive impact of visa systems, or that entry requirements differed depending on factors such as the traveller's nationality. Tramontane's perception of migration law as equally and universally applied to all meant that they had no sense of their own privileged position as an EU passport-

²⁹ Original quote: "No, perché sono molto razzista".

³⁰ Original quote: "[pause] ... forse razzista è la parola sbagliata. Vorrei che tutti seguissero determinate leggi [...] sulla libera circolazione. Quindi la circolazione deve essere libera nel momento in cui tu sei a norma delle leggi del paese che vuoi visitare. Voglio andare in Giappone, devo avere il passaporto. Voglio andare in Italia dall'Algeria, devo avere un passaporto sennò me ne sto a casa mia, non me ne frega un cazzo se tu a casa tua non stai bene. Questo è razzismo? Può essere, non me ne frega niente. [laughs] sinceramente, non me ne frega niente."

holder. Tramontane's resentment of irregular migrants was thus compounded by the belief that they were circumventing the same laws which Tramontane felt obligated to respect.

Tramontane also did not believe in asylum, considering all irregular mobility unjustified and therefore illegal. In Tramontane's view, the issues affecting developing countries (which Tramontane viewed as the countries of origin of all irregular migrants) belonged to two categories: those caused by territory, and those caused by people. Issues caused by territory, such as famine, warranted intervention by Western powers in the form of aid or education programmes to reduce overpopulation. Issues caused by people, such as civil war or terrorism, were considered self-made problems which did not warrant external help. In Tramontane's view, irregular migration was unjustified in both cases. Tramontane considered victims of famine as blameless and therefore deserving of help; however, this help was to be provided in their country of origin. Those who migrated irregularly, on the other hand, could not belong to this category, since victims of famine would be unlikely to survive the long journey:

"When you think about a starving African... rickety... ok? Then a six-foot-tall beast arrives who weighs something like 14-17 stones, and you think, wait, ok, maybe he crossed the whole desert, and he still arrived here looking like that? What was he before then? Before he must have been a wrestler, because he was probably enormous, so he was not suffering any particular deficiencies if he made it here."³¹
[Tramontane]

Tramontane also mentioned seeing migrants holding expensive mobile phones, or withdrawing money from cash machines, and considered it evidence that Africans arriving to Italy were not in need of assistance. Tramontane's account seemed doubtful: while migrants arriving via boat to Lampedusa would sometimes have mobile phones, these were hardly the 700€ models Tramontane described. Possession of credit cards was also, according to my observations, unlikely. On the other hand, it should be noted that, given the ethnic homogeneity of Lampedusa, non-white individuals were generally assumed to be migrants, despite the regular presence of outsiders such as Frontex or UNHCR workers. For instance, several dozen actors were roaming the island in May 2018 during the filming of *Nour*, a film about the 3 October 2013 shipwreck. These actors were routinely mistaken by residents as migrants, something I discuss more in detail in

³¹ Original quote: "Quando pensi all'africano che sta morendo di fame... rachitico... ok? Quando ti arriva un bestione di un metro e ottanta che peserà qualcosa tipo 90-110 kg dici aspetta, ok magari avrà fatto tutta la traversata del deserto, ed è arrivato qui in quelle condizioni? E prima com'era? Prima era un lottatore di wrestling, perché probabilmente era gigantesco, quindi non godeva di particolari mancanze per arrivare qua."

Chapter 10. By their own admission, Tramontane had never interacted with migrants and even rarely interacted with other residents, so the potential mislabelling of a dark-skinned worker or tourist as a sea-crosser would have gone uncorrected. Regardless of their accuracy, these sightings only confirmed Tramontane's perception of migrants as not in genuine need of assistance. Tramontane's identification of Africans with hunger and famine was consistent with common stereotypes about the African continent, often perpetuated in the Western world by the fundraising efforts of international non-governmental organisations (Dolinar and Sitar, 2013; Beswick *et al.*, 2019). Tramontane only saw starving, "rickety" Africans as truly needy: unlike those who escaped war, they embodied the key requirements identified by Nils Christie (1986) in his conceptualisation of the ideal victim, i.e. weakness and blamelessness. The attempt to migrate, however, denied this victimhood in Tramontane's worldview. Since more fragile or ill individuals would usually be transferred immediately to Sicily for medical care upon their arrival on Lampedusa, the healthy-looking migrants Tramontane saw in the streets could never embody this idea of what true victims should look like.

It should be noted, however, that this perception of migrants appeared to have little to do with Tramontane's own lived experience on Lampedusa, but rather was the result of long-held personal beliefs. Tramontane was just as uncompromising in their dislike of Lampedusans as they were in their dislike of migrants. Tramontane regarded all Southern Italians as lazy and uncultured, and disapproved of Southerners moving to the north of the country, stating that people should stay and work in the area in which they are born. A fellow Northern Italian, Tramontane assumed I would share their views, which are indeed common in the north of Italy (Huysseune, 2008). The irony that neither of us lived in our area of origin did not seem to register. Instead, Tramontane's candidness was elicited by our shared background, and my neutral tone at first failed to dispel their assumption. Eventually noticing I was failing to explicitly agree, however, Tramontane became pensive, and followed me to my bicycle after our interview to ask whether what they had said was wrong. I could tell they were now doubting the appropriateness of their boastful claim of racism. I strove to remain non-judgmental, explaining how some may object to the factual accuracy underpinning some of the ideas Tramontane had expressed, and clarifying some key legal issues around forced migration and irregularity. We amicably said our goodbyes, and never talked again. Tramontane's experience appeared to be unique among those I collected: while they lived on Lampedusa, they were not part of the local community. In their hierarchical view of the world, they considered themselves intrinsically and inevitably superior to the people amongst whom they lived. Tramontane was effectively 'hunkering down', separating themselves not just from migrants, but from Lampedusans in general, with whom they felt no affinity or solidarity (Putnam, 2007). Their experience of Lampedusa was

therefore different from other residents', which at least in part helps to explain the uncompromising brazenness of their position. As I show below, Tramontane was the exception, not because of their dislike of migrants, but because this dislike was unaffected by the common experience of the history and politics of migration control on Lampedusa.

7.1.2 Qualified opposition: distinguishing victims and offenders

Unlike Tramontane, other residents who expressed hostility or opposition towards migrants' presence usually justified their view by making qualitative distinctions between different categories of migrants. These categories were usually defined according to the migrants' perceived provenance. For instance, Northern Africans were often presented as delinquent and untrustworthy, while Sub-Saharan and Syrians were deemed worthy of solidarity. This distinction, as I show later in this section, was widespread among not only those who opposed migrants, but also those who supported them. For residents who expressed hostility towards migrants, the distinction often seemed to be presented to pre-empt possible accusations of racism, whether towards themselves personally or towards Lampedusans as a community. An example of this can be seen in the field note below, which refers to a conversation I had with three residents:

"They seem to agree that the high number of Tunisians who arrived recently were not in genuine need of help, but rather describe them as 'jailbirds' who only come here to offend, as opposed to people from sub-Saharan Africa who are in genuine need of protection. There is emphasis on the empathy shown by Lampedusans. [Informer] tells me of local families looking up Syrian recipes online to feed Syrian families. There is a sense that Lampedusans have done a lot, but now their help is being abused. [Informer] talks of frequent thefts by Tunisians, 2 or 3 per day, and some attempted sexual violence." [Field note]

While stating their belief in the delinquency of Tunisians, the informant was keen to also underline that Lampedusans had always been very welcoming towards migrants, citing the example of locals googling recipes to prepare traditional meals for families from Syria. This was one of many examples of residents proudly referring to Lampedusa's history of solidarity; as I discuss in Chapter 8 and again in Chapter 10, the public reputation of Lampedusa as a community was very important to residents, and recent media discourse suggesting that the island was turning its back on migrants had not been well-received. Whether or not they supported the migrants' presence, residents wished to preserve Lampedusa's reputation as a welcoming and hospitable place. Expressions of hostility directed towards the current migrant residents were not seen as contradicting this reputation, because the migrants themselves were considered

undeserving of the locals' hospitality on account of their criminal behaviour, even though the actual presence or severity of such behaviour remained disputed, as I discussed in the previous chapter.

Sirocco, who viewed the current Tunisian migrants as delinquents and called for harsher law enforcement against them, also generally linked migrants' behaviour with their area of origin:

"It depends on which individuals land [from the boats], because there is a difference; many people are shocked when you mention differences among arrivals, there are people who are running away from wars and come in peace because they want to be helped, there are others who arrive... basically they are delinquents before they even get off the boat"³² [Sirocco]

In Sirocco's view, only those who escaped from war zones were 'good' migrants, like the Syrian families mentioned above by the informant. Sirocco believed that migrants who truly needed help would behave in an orderly manner:

"If instead those came, though we don't see them anymore, the various sub-Saharan who are running away from certain things that force them to run away, those would not cause public order issues."³³ [Sirocco]

In Sirocco's view, Tunisian migrants' lack of compliance was further evidence of their status as undeserving of solidarity. Like Tramontane, Sirocco viewed ideal victims as blameless and weak. Rather than obvious physical weakness, however, Sirocco seemed to privilege meekness and passivity, but also not asking for help, as shown in the quote below:

"When the Tunisians were here, there was a Syrian family who had landed with them, you should have seen them, you could tell they had nothing to do with them. They would see you and tell you: "but why..." I mean for example they would see the captain [and ask]: "but when can we leave? Where can we go? Why... but I have no place here..." They were embarrassed... and there wasn't any business like

³² Original quote: "Dipende che soggetti sbarcano, perché anche lì c'è una differenza; molti si scandalizzano quando uno parla della differenza di sbarchi, ci sono quelli che sono persone che scappano dalle guerre, e che arrivano in santa pace perché vogliono essere aiutati, ci sono quelli che sbarcano, praticamente sono delinquenti prima che sbarcano."

³³ Original quote: "Se invece vengono quelli, che ora non se ne vedono più, i vari Subsahariani che scappano da determinate cose che li costringono a scappare, man mano le azioni di ordine pubblico non li creano."

going to a bar and asking, "give me a whiskey", or give me... and yet, they landed from the same boat. But their behaviour was completely different."³⁴ [Sirocco]

The Syrian family's embarrassment at being on Lampedusa was taken as confirmation that they had been forced into their present situation by circumstances, but they were uncomfortable with finding themselves in need of help. Tunisians, on the other hand, settled in too comfortably in Lampedusa, according to Sirocco, suggesting that their aim was to exploit the reception system and with it the residents' hospitality. The distinction drawn by Sirocco and the other informant was not simply between ideal victims and imperfect ones, but a stark dichotomy between victims and offenders, suggesting an intrinsic criminal intent in those who migrated for reasons other than escaping war. In short, the act of migration was viewed as intrinsically deviant, unless it was the unavoidable result of exceptional circumstances. The association of migrants with criminal behaviour has long been prominent in Italian political discourse and even perpetuated by Italian academia, as pointed out by Dal Lago (2010). Lampedusans' criminalisation of migrants was thus not unusual, and any example of deviant behaviour would reinforce the labelling of the whole migrant community. Tunisians' delinquency thus put them outside the scope of the reception system, and outside the locals' offers of hospitality:

*"It's not all hospitality. Hospitality is something you give to those who land here and are truly in need."*³⁵ [Sirocco]

In some ways, this distinction between 'good' and 'bad' migrants appeared to mirror the commonly used categorisation of some migrants as refugees or asylum seekers, and others as economic migrants or illegal aliens. As seen in Chapter 2, this division is common in policy and media discourse throughout the western world; however, it is less readily accepted within migration studies, due to its uncritical embrace of state-defined legal categories and its over-simplification of the reasons behind migration, which are complex and ever-changing (Carling, 2016). Sirocco's emphasis on war and other "*certain things that force them to run away*" suggested that solidarity was due only to those who migrated reluctantly, forced by circumstances beyond their control. The well-known devastation caused by the war in Syria meant that Syrian migrants were

³⁴ Original quote: "Quando c'erano i tunisini c'era una famiglia siriana che era sbarcata con questi, che tu dovevi vedere, si capiva che non c'entravano niente con quelli. Ti vedevano e ti dicevano: ma come... Cioè vedevano per esempio il comandante: "ma noi quando ce ne possiamo andare? Dove possiamo andare? Per quale motivo... Ma io non c'entro niente qua..." L'imbarazzo... E non c'era come si dice il discorso che venivo al bar e ti dicevo "dammi un whisky" o dammi... Eppure, sono sbarcati con la stessa barca. Però il comportamento era completamente diverso."

³⁵ Original quote: "Non è tutta accoglienza. L'accoglienza si fa a coloro i quali sbarcano che veramente hanno bisogno."

immediately recognised as refugees by the population, a view commonly held also outside of Lampedusa (Szczepanik, 2016). Furthermore, residents often described Syrian migrants as "*families*", highlighting their vulnerability and simultaneously juxtaposing them with the young single men arriving from North Africa. However, Sirocco and other Lampedusans rarely used the words refugees or asylum seekers. I suggest that this was a reflection of the island's role within the border control apparatus, that is the reception of all migrants who arrived by sea, whose recognition as asylum seekers or illegalisation as undocumented aliens would usually happen later, far away on the mainland. While a first screening process did take place within Lampedusa's Hotspot, this process was carried out behind closed doors by Frontex agents, largely unbeknown to locals. Lampedusa's hospitality would thus theoretically extend to all who arrived by sea, regardless of how they would later be sorted by the asylum system. Those who opposed migrants' presence, but did not want to tarnish the island's hospitable reputation, instead relied on their own categorisation of who was worthy of being welcomed. While labels such as refugee or displaced person were not yet applied, Lampedusans also categorised migrants based on the perceived drivers behind their migration, using migrants' provenance as a proxy for understanding their status as either victims or deviants. In the following section I show how these categorisations, despite their reliance on racialised classifications, seemed to change over time, suggesting that wider social and political processes played an important role in determining how residents would label migrants.

7.1.3 The racialisation of solidarity

As shown by further examples in the sections below, Tunisians were frequently compared unfavourably to migrants from sub-Saharan countries. However, while respondents and informants often categorised migrants by nationality, the actual countries of origin would not necessarily be known by those who did not work closely with the migrants themselves. As I remarked earlier in this chapter, the word Tunisian was used to describe all migrants present on the island during my stay, even when these included Algerians and Moroccans. The term Tunisian was a proxy for North African, used in contraposition with the word sub-Saharan to categorise all individuals from the African continent. The distinction between these very broad categories was made on sight, with black individuals usually understood to be sub-Saharan, and olive-skinned ones as Tunisian. As a result, the darker the person's skin, the higher the recognition they would receive by locals, even those who did not generally support migration. It should be noted that this distinction seemed to be applied solely to arrivals from the African continent, so the exceptional influx of Syrians in the mid-2010s presumably represented a temporary exception to this rule.

Colourism, that is the hierarchical stratification of people of colour based on skin tone, usually links higher levels of discrimination to darker skin (Hunter, 2007). In Italy, for example, research by Degiuli (2011) on live-in domestic workers has found widespread discrimination towards African women due to their skin colour, with white-skinned Eastern European women being largely preferred. More specifically, Vianello (2014) found that migrant domestic workers received different pay and treatment depending on nationality and skin colour, with African women at the bottom of the hierarchy. In Lampedusa, however, this racial hierarchy appeared to be inverted, with darker skin being associated with more 'deserving' migrants. This mechanism seemed unaffected by the physical similarities between Lampedusans and North Africans. To my eyes, for example, their skin colour and features were indistinguishable, and I could not tell them apart based on sight alone:

"I do not know how he can tell [that they are Tunisians], as they do not look much different to anyone else to me." [Field note]

There was also evidence of strong cultural similarities. On one occasion, an informant told me how they felt out of place when going to Palermo, in Sicily, as they found the loud city confusing. They especially hated traffic lights, which were absent on Lampedusa. However, they told me of once going to Tunisia and finding it to be a larger version of Lampedusa, with the same sense of calm and freedom; they had felt more at home in Tunisia than in Sicily, despite proudly identifying as Sicilian. The general distrust of Tunisians thus existed in spite of this obvious affinity. I considered the possibility that residents' sympathy with sub-Saharan migrants may have been facilitated by shared historical heritage due to the Italian colonisation of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia in the early 20th century, or perhaps may have pointed to a preference for migrants of Christian Orthodox faith over followers of Islam. However, I found no evidence to support either of these ideas. While migrants originating from the horn of Africa historically constituted a significant proportion of arrivals from Libya, there was no suggestion by respondents or informants that these were viewed differently from citizens of other sub-Saharan countries, such as South Sudan or Nigeria. Furthermore, the religion of migrants was never mentioned by respondents or informants; in fact, all migrants' bodies resting in Lampedusa's cemetery had been given a catholic burial, regardless of their assumed faith, as shown in Figure 11 below. In the left-hand image, residents and unnamed migrant lie side by side, as signs on migrants' graves report when and where their body was found, and a brief description of their approximate age and origin. The right-hand image shows the inscription marking a mass grave of anonymous migrants in the same cemetery, all buried under Catholic crosses made of wood taken from the wrecks of migrants' boats. The inscription reads:

"Here lie Muslims and Catholics, the old and the young, blacks and whites, all migrants who died at sea searching for freedom. This monument is a symbol to the birth of hope despite the tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea, and the salvation that is delivered to all peoples."

Despite acknowledging the diverse religious belief of the individuals buried in this cemetery, the inscription evokes the Catholic precepts of universal salvation and hope in the face of suffering. The mention of Catholics rather than simply Christians is also interesting, as most Christian sub-Saharan migrants would likely be Orthodox or Coptic. Differences in faith were thus erased under a unifying, overriding Catholic message.



Figure 11 – Migrants' graves in Lampedusa's cemetery

I suggest that residents based their distinction between Tunisians and sub-Saharan migrants mostly on their perceived level of need for help, a perception which was affected by migrants' behaviour and demeanour. As the quote below shows, Lampedusans seemed aware that different attitudes existed elsewhere in Italy, including among the many Italian tourists visiting Lampedusa every summer:

*"If there are 50-100 people who don't create public order issues, then there's no problem. But when the sub-Saharan migrants were here, even 1,000 of them, they didn't cause any problem. They are only a problem for tourists, from a visual point of view."*³⁶ [Sirocco]

Sirocco's remark that tourists would have a problem with seeing sub-Saharan migrants appeared to be a reference to racist attitudes elsewhere in Italy. Reference to these

³⁶ Original quote: "Se ci sono 50-100 persone che non creano problemi di ordine pubblico, non ci sono problemi. Ma quando c'erano i subsahariani, anche 1.000 persone, non creano problemi. Creano sono problemi ai turisti dal punto di vista visivo."

attitudes was meant to support Lampedusa's anti-racist credentials; indeed, Sirocco compared Lampedusans' tolerance of the migrants' presence with the well-publicised episodes of intolerance of some cities in the north of the country, where communities had loudly protested against the arrival of asylum seekers (see for example La Repubblica, 2016):

*"But in Italian cities... Up north, whole communities rallied to prevent the arrival of 60 people, how would you judge a place that has 100 of them and yet nobody complains. It depends on what they do when they come. Or who are the people who come. If they are peaceful people, then why should it cause you problems."*³⁷
[Sirocco]

Sirocco's assertion that Lampedusans did not complain about the current migrants' presence was perhaps an overstatement, particularly in light of Sirocco's own comments about the need for harsher law enforcement (see Chapter 6). However, it is true that the town had not mobilised to refuse migrants in a way comparable to some other Italian cities. While migrants on Lampedusa were not housed long term in the same way as the asylum seekers who had encountered such hostility elsewhere in Italy, Lampedusa had housed hundreds of thousands of migrants through the years, sometimes for months on end. Once again, however, Sirocco pointed out that the locals' tolerance of migrants was conditional to the migrants' origin ("*who are the people who come*") and behaviour ("*It depends on what they do when they come*").

This racialised perception of migrants' behaviour needs to be explored more in depth. Sirocco's characterisation of Tunisians as inherently criminal, for example, was contradicted in their description of the events of 2011, when tens of thousands of North African migrants arrived on Lampedusa following the Arab spring. Due to authorities' failure to transfer arrivals to the mainland, migrants soon outnumbered locals; according to some accounts, over 10,000 Tunisians were kept on the island at one point, compared to fewer than 6,000 Lampedusans. Sirocco viewed those migrants more favourably than more recent arrivals:

"The same happened when they came to Lampedusa in 2011, [when] there was the Arab Spring and 30,000-40,000 Tunisians arrived, but nothing happened. Now, in the month of September 2017, 100 Tunisians landed and caused enough

³⁷ Original quote: "Ma nelle città italiane, con 60 persone al nord si sono mobilitate intere comunità per non farle arrivare, come lo giudichi tu un [posto] che ce ne sono 100 e nessuno dice niente. È in rapporto a quello che creano poi quando arrivano. O chi sono le persone che arrivano. Se sono persone pacifiche mi vuoi spiegare perché ti deve creare problemi."

problems for 1,000 people, 2,000 people, 3,000 people. Indeed, as it turns out they are the ones who eventually set fire to the reception centre."³⁸ [Sirocco]

Unlike the Tunisians who had been on the island over winter, the Tunisians who had come in 2011 had caused no public order issue, according to Sirocco. This distinction between the two 'waves' of Tunisians suggests that the locals' perception of migrants' behaviour was not always solely determined by the racialised criteria I mentioned above. This apparent contradiction can be explained in different ways. The first is that the Tunisian migrants who had arrived more recently had indeed engaged in more criminal behaviour than those who arrived in 2011, despite their number being considerably smaller. However, as showed in Chapter 6, the facts surrounded the purported criminal acts perpetrated by Tunisians over the past winter remained highly disputed. Furthermore, Sirocco's claim that Tunisians had caused no public order issue in 2011 were unpersuasive. News articles from the time reported widespread rioting: during one episode, a group of migrants had threatened to blow up a restaurant by exploding gas tanks stolen from the petrol station, while locals had responded with a number of serious assaults and, according to the press, 'lynching attempts' (Il Messaggero, 2011). The tension had culminated, at the end of the summer, with migrants setting fire to the Hotspot, then called Reception and Expulsion Centre, and destroying one of its wings (Il Post, 2011). In addition, as confirmed by other respondents, several houses were broken into, with these acts being widely attributed to migrants. Given that the disorders had involved the whole island, it was not possible for Sirocco to have been unaware of them. In fact, I later unearthed reports that Sirocco had been personally involved in some episodes of attempted aggression against migrants at that time. This curious case of historical revisionism suggested that residents' assessments of migrants' behaviour were not necessarily as objective as they were presented to be. Rather, recollection of certain events appeared to be adapted to fit specific narratives. As I suggest in the following section, these narratives sometimes transcended the political division between supporters and opponents of migration.

7.2 Explicit support: humanitarian aid, solidarity, and activism

In this section I examine the attitudes of respondents who identified themselves as supporters of Lampedusa's migrants and were involved in initiatives of solidarity, whether in a formal or informal capacity. Just like many of the residents who opposed

³⁸ Original quote: "Lo stesso fatto quando sono venuti a Lampedusa nel 2011 [quando] c'è stata la primavera araba e sono venuto 30.000-40.000 tunisini, non succedeva niente. Ora nel mese di settembre del 2017 sbarcano 100 tunisini e ti creano problemi per 1.000 persone, 2.000 persone, 3.000 persone. E difatti risulta che sono quelli che poi alla fine hanno dato fuoco al centro di accoglienza."

migrants' presence (with the notable exception of Tramontane), some supporters showed different attitudes towards Tunisians compared to sub-Saharan migrants. Once again, sub-Saharans were viewed as genuinely in need of help, and thus more deserving of residents' solidarity. Unlike opponents, however, supporters did not depict Tunisians as intrinsically criminal; still, great significance was attached to their demeanour and behaviour, which was compared unfavourably to that of migrants from sub-Saharan countries. The legitimacy of Tunisian migrants' claim to victimhood was questioned not through the lens of legality, but rather of morality, with their presence viewed by some as an obstacle to the realisation of humanitarian objectives.

7.2.1 *Devictimising arrivals from Tunisia*

Ostro, a member of a formal humanitarian organisation, made it clear to me that they shared the general population's frustration with the current presence of Tunisian migrants on the island. When asked about recent arrivals to Lampedusa, they answered wearily:

*"Only Tunisians, we are victims of this Tunisian invasion."*³⁹ [Ostro]

Ostro's use of the word *"invasion"* was reminiscent of the inflammatory and dehumanising language adopted by parts of the media to talk about irregular migration, something I found surprising given Ostro's humanitarian role (Esses, Medianu and Lawson, 2013). It soon became apparent, however, that Ostro's use of the word *"victims"* did not refer to Lampedusa's general population, but specifically to themselves and their collaborators, who felt redundant in the current situation:

*"If Lampedusa had a role within migrations [...] it was for emergency cases. And essentially the emergency cases are the sub-Saharans, not the Tunisians."*⁴⁰
[Ostro]

Lampedusa's geographical position, Ostro explained, made it an ideal port for disembarkation following rescue operations in the Strait of Sicily. Lampedusa was quicker to reach than Sicily, and individuals requiring further medical care could then be transferred to the mainland by helicopter. Ostro highlighted that the sea-crossing journey could be very different according to the country of departure. Depending on weather conditions, type of vessel, and migrants' navigation skills, the crossing from the coast of Tunisia could take as little as 24 hours. Sub-Saharan migrants, however, would normally depart from the coast of Libya, a much longer and far more perilous journey,

³⁹ Original quote: "Solo tunisini, siamo vittime di questa invasione dei tunisini."

⁴⁰ Original quote: "Lampedusa se aveva un senso all'interno delle migrazioni [...] era per i casi di emergenza. E i casi di emergenza essenzialmente sono subsahariani non tunisini."

and were more likely to need rescue at sea. Tunisians, on the other hand, could use much smaller vessels to reach Lampedusa or Sicily, and would on occasion land independently, so there would be no chance for humanitarian workers to meet them at the point of disembarkation. Even when brought to Lampedusa by authorities following a rescue at sea, Tunisian migrants often arrived in such small numbers that humanitarian workers could not reach the disembarkation area in time to welcome them before they were taken to the Hotspot. Consequently, Ostro and their colleagues found themselves with little to do, estimating that in the last year humanitarian activity at the Molo Favaloro had reduced to one percent of what it had been in the past.

Aside from numbers, however, for humanitarian workers such as Ostro there were visible differences between Tunisian and sub-Saharan migrants reaching Lampedusa by sea. In order to travel to Libya, sub-Saharan migrants first needed to cross the desert; those who survived the journey would then risk abduction, forced labour, and detention in Libyan camps, where torture and other human rights abuses were known to be rife (International Organisation for Migration, 2016; Amnesty International, 2017). Arrivals from Libya had dropped significantly in 2017 following a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding between the Italian government and Libya's interim rulers, later endorsed by the EU at that year's summit in Malta (Baldwin-Edwards, Blitz and Crawley, 2018; Baldwin-Edwards and Lutterbeck, 2019). The accord aimed to ensure Libya's cooperation in preventing irregular sea-crossers departing from its coasts, establishing detention camps on Libyan soil to facilitate the repatriation of migrants before they attempted to reach Europe (Governo Italiano, 2017b). Ostro was aware that this accord and further deals between Italy and Libya had substantially decreased sea-crossings departing from Libya. Nevertheless, Ostro also believed that smaller numbers of sub-Saharan migrants were still departing from Libya, but that these were not taken to Lampedusa following SAR operations because of the Tunisian presence:

"[Migrants] still depart from Libya, but they don't take them to Lampedusa, because Lampedusa has become a [holiday] resort for Tunisians."⁴¹ [Ostro]

According to Ostro, Lampedusa was an ideal place to 'store' irregular migrants who were due to be repatriated and would thus not move further in the asylum process, such as Tunisians. As there was no way of leaving the island undetected, migrants could be easily contained there for prolonged periods of time. The Tunisian presence, Ostro suggested, actively discouraged rescuers from bringing sub-Saharan migrants to Lampedusa:

⁴¹ Original quote: "Dalla Libia partono ma non li portano a Lampedusa, perché Lampedusa è diventata un resort per i tunisini."

*"Officially I couldn't even tell you, I mean if we were talking... but... sub-Saharan are never [brought] here, even if they are poorly, even if it's an emergency at sea, they don't take them here anymore because Tunisians and sub-Saharans... I mean Tunisians are very racist against sub-Saharans, so it isn't even advisable, let's say."*⁴² [Ostro]

While I had no way of verifying this information, during my stay I noticed that some sub-Saharan migrants were in fact present on the island. For example, a young man from South Sudan was pointed out to me by Tunisian migrants who had arrived on the same boat. The young man's kidneys were damaged and he was regularly receiving dialysis, one of the few medical treatments available on Lampedusa. However, he had travelled from the Tunisian coast, and he did not carry the visible signs of victimisation which had been increasingly common among migrants departing from Libya. For example, Lampedusa's doctor, Pietro Bartolo, had spoken publicly of the increasing frequency of torture injuries such as flaying, mutilation, or rape; these added to already common injuries suffered by migrants during the boat journey, such as chemical burns caused by fuel leakages (Galeotto, 2019). Tunisian migrants, on the other hand, arrived in relatively good condition and were less likely to need emergency medical aid. As I had the opportunity to observe, this contributed to some humanitarian workers being more dismissive of this group's potential needs, and less keen to provide the assistance they would normally offer to other migrants.

I witnessed an example of this attitude when a migrant boat from Tunisia arrived near Lampedusa on 11 May 2018. While I was in the company of a humanitarian worker, they received a call from a friend involved in solidarity work with the Forum Lampedusa Solidale (Lampedusa's Solidarity Forum), one of the organisations welcoming migrants at the pier after disembarkation (Caselli, 2019). The friend informed the worker that a boat full of Tunisians was desperately trying to evade the Coast Guard just off the coast of Cala Pisana, on the east coast of the island. The worker and their interlocutor were laughing at the migrants' doomed attempt to escape and appeared to show little concern for their fate. I heard them debate whether they would need to go and welcome these arrivals at the disembarkation pier, as they habitually did, joking that their usual supplies of drinks and snacks had probably long expired, as they had used them so infrequently during the past year. In the end, there was no landing for them to attend. The migrants were transferred at sea from the Coast Guard speedboats onto a British Border Agency ship, the HMC Protector, which took them directly to Pozzallo, in Sicily. As

⁴² Original quote: "Neanche te lo potrei dire ufficialmente, cioè se stessimo parlando... Però... Subsahariani qui mai, anche se stanno male, in emergenza, in mare, non li portano più perché per altro tunisini e subsahariani... Cioè i tunisini sono molto razzisti nei confronti dei subsahariani quindi neanche è consigliabile, diciamo."

Figure 12 below shows, the small boat was crammed, with passengers sitting all around the gunwales. The boat was obviously overcrowded, but I was still surprised to later find out that 108 people had disembarked from it, suggesting twice as many people were on board than I could spot from the coast (Mediterranean Hope, 2018).



Figure 12 - Rescue of Tunisian migrants off the coast of Cala Pisana, 11 May 2018

Explaining the reason for their apparent lack of concern for the state of the migrants on the boat, my companion stated that sea-crossers who arrived from Tunisia normally disembarked looking *"like they are ready to go to the disco"* [Field note]. When I asked them how people arriving from Libya looked after a crossing, the informant made a gesture which I took to mean *"too bad to mention"*. They then added that those who had spent time in detention camps looked even worse. It appeared that the choice not to devote too much attention to arrivals from Tunisia had been taken based on a presumed lesser vulnerability compared with arrivals from Libya. Still, the individuals on this cramped boat had spent at least 24 hours at sea, with no shelter from sun or rain, no privacy, and probably little food or water. Furthermore, close-up pictures I shot at the time showed there were several children on board, whose vulnerability to the harsh conditions of the journey may be assumed to have been greater. The pictures also showed the presence of several women, and some dark-skinned migrants who appeared to be of sub-Saharan origin. The relative indifference of humanitarian workers towards arrivals from Tunisia thus seemed to be linked not just to a perception of Tunisians as lacking a genuine need for help, as was the case for those who actively opposed their presence on the island, but rather be influenced by the sea-crossers' relatively good

conditions upon disembarkation. Arrivals from Tunisia were thus doubly denied victimhood status by humanitarian actors, well before they would be inevitably denied a legal claim to asylum by state officials.

7.2.2 *Blessed are the meek*

While humanitarian workers involved in the reception of migrants at disembarkation identified visible injuries as proof of victimhood, others put more emphasis on how migrants behaved once allowed to roam the island. Unlike opponents of migration, supporters generally did not describe Tunisians as inherently criminal, nor did they emphasise the purported unlawfulness of their behaviour. Nevertheless, several people seemed to ascribe great importance to the migrants' demeanour, which for some was further proof of a lack of need. This attitude was exemplified by the following quote by Libeccio, who had been informally involved in solidarity initiatives in affiliation with the local Catholic church:

*"Indeed, nobody can deny that these [migrants] come from war, from hunger, from many other problems that they have in those lands. Except that there are also issues like Tunisia, which for me is not a matter of integration, in fact I do not consider it the same as those faces I have met, as those people who really, despite being hungry, despite needing you, did not ask you [for anything]. Even though they really... you see, they were listless, and they did not come to Lampedusa to go somewhere and be cocky, right? Like these ones do... you notice, and we see what these, these, these Tunisian guys do who come to the island. They don't give a damn of what the problem really is, the problem of what happens at the centre of Africa. These guys come to do something else entirely. [In the centre of Africa] there really is suffering and the will to give a future to their children. Many times, it happened that they gave birth on the boats, they gave birth in Lampedusa, they gave birth even in Libya, many times the babies wouldn't even get here. But anyway, they wanted to give a future to their children."*⁴³ [Libeccio]

⁴³ Original quote: "Effettivamente nessuno può negare questi arrivano dalle guerre, dalla fame, da tanti altri problemi che hanno in quelle terre. Tranne che ci sono anche delle problematiche come nella Tunisia, che per me non è un fattore di integrazione quello, infatti non lo considero come quei volti che ho conosciuto, come quelle persone che veramente pur avendo fame, bisogno di te, non ti chiedevano. Per quanto erano veramente... Sai perché erano spenti e non era il motivo per loro arrivare a Lampedusa per andare in un territorio e per fare gli spavaldi, no? Come vengono questi... Si nota e vediamo che fanno questi, questi, questi ragazzi tunisini che arrivano sull'isola. Non gliene frega nulla di quello che è veramente il problema di quello che c'è in centro d'Africa. Questi vengono per fare tutt'altro. Là c'è proprio la sofferenza e la voglia di dare un futuro ai loro figli. Molte volte è successo che partorivano sulle barche, partorivano a Lampedusa, partorivano anche in Libia, molte volte i bambini non arrivavano neanche. Ma comunque che volevano dare un futuro ai loro figli."

Libeccio's speech seems quite tortuous when seen in writing, due to the hesitant way in which they expressed themselves in person. Libeccio's point, however, was straightforward, as they described the migrants from central Africa that they had met in the past and compared them favourably to the Tunisians currently on the island. Libeccio had no doubt that central African migrants were fleeing war and hunger, so they had been forced to move by unfavourable circumstances beyond their control. Furthermore, as they had wanted to give a future to their children, their intentions had been good, as they did not seek personal gratification. Crucially, once they had arrived on Lampedusa, they had behaved meekly and asked for nothing, despite their obvious state of need. Tunisia, on the other hand, had no serious issues that warranted escaping from it, according to Libeccio, so Tunisian migrants must have had other intentions. Instead of looking "*listless*", like the needy central Africans, Tunisians were being "*cocky*", openly asking things of the local population. Remarkably, Libeccio accused Tunisians of not caring about the problems of central Africa, perhaps suggesting that their arrival was somehow doing a disservice to truly needy migrants.

Just like Sirocco, however, Libeccio saw current Tunisian migrants differently from the thousands that had arrived in 2011, and minimised the disorders that had occurred at the time:

*"Many feared them, lots of people were scared, a friend of mine wanted to leave Lampedusa. An adult man, married, with kids, extremely frightened. I told him 'but you mustn't behave this way, they need us, they're not ransacking our homes, they are not even...' To think that 10,000 people only did some trivial things, you know what they did? They... Listen I don't want to overestimate this, they broke into 7-8 little flats out in the countryside, but they broke the doors because they needed to sleep, not because they did disgusting stuff, or broke the inside, you know... Besides, those were summer homes, those homes are almost empty. It's only because they needed to sleep. [...] It wasn't such a tragedy; 10,000 people should have... If they had wanted to, you know what they could have done to us? They could have trounced us."*⁴⁴ [Libeccio]

⁴⁴ Original quote: "Perché tanti ne avevano paura, tanta gente aveva paura, io ho un amico mio che voleva partire da Lampedusa. Persone grande, sposata con bambini, un panico allucinante. Dico "ma tu non devi fare così, quelli hanno bisogno di noi, non stanno saccheggiando le nostre case, neanche stanno"... Pensa che 10.000 persone hanno fatto delle stupidità, ma sai quali stupidità? Hanno... Guarda non voglio esagerare, hanno rotto 7-8 appartamentoi quelli più di campagna, ma hanno rotto le porte perché dovevano dormire, non perché hanno fatto le schifezze, o dentro hanno rotto, sai... Che erano poi quelle case estive, quelle case che dentro non c'è quasi nulla. Era solo perché dovevano dormire. [...] Non è successa poi quella tragedia, 10.000 persone dovevano... Se volevano a noi sai come ci facevano? A polpettine."

Libeccio highlighted several times that, given their great number, migrants in 2011 could have easily overpowered the local population, particularly as the residents felt they had been left defenceless by the authorities:

"At that time, the state was absent from Lampedusa"⁴⁵ [Libeccio]

Their presumed crimes, therefore, may have seemed small compared to what could have happened. Still, the disorders of which more recent Tunisian arrivals had been accused were very similar, and yet no justification was offered for them. It is noteworthy that, when speaking of migrants in 2011, Libeccio reported telling their reluctant friend *"they need us"*, while maintaining that current migrants from Tunisia did not need help. Libeccio implicitly acknowledged two key differences between the two groups. The first was that, while Tunisia was currently understood to be a safe country, the political situation in 2011 was much more volatile due to the Arab Spring uprisings throughout North Africa. The second was the circumstances of the migrants' stay on Lampedusa. In 2011, when the official reception system was overwhelmed by the high number of arrivals, hundreds (if not thousands) of migrants were left without food or shelter. The local population stepped in, just as it used to do before a formal migration reception system was established on Lampedusa. Residents such as Libeccio roamed the island to distribute donated food and clothes, and help migrants find somewhere to shower. The collapse of the official support system meant that migrants had been left without the means to fulfil their basic needs, leaving them dependent on Lampedusans' acts of charity. I suggest that this vulnerability reinstated their victimhood in the eyes of residents, leading them to minimise the scale of the disorders that followed their presence. Libeccio, who saw it their duty as a devout Catholic to help those in need, equated the Tunisians of 2011 to the 'needy' sub-Saharanans they had met in the past. The more recent Tunisian arrivals, however, were provided food, shelter, and clothing in the Hotspot. Their requests for more were thus viewed as going beyond basic needs and interpreted as signs of cockiness and arrogance.

As a temporary resident of Lampedusa, I too was often at the receiving ends of requests for a coffee or some spare change to buy cigarettes by Tunisian migrants, as shown in the field note below:

"A few Tunisians and some local women are sitting inside [the café], including the guy whom I met with [informant] and who had asked me if I have a boyfriend. He invites me to sit at his table, which I do. He asks me in broken English for money for cigarettes, something he reads out from a crumpled piece of paper. He also reads out 'I am attracted to you and I cannot live without you'. I have coffee and

⁴⁵ Original quote: "Lo stato in quel periodo era assente da Lampedusa."

leave but give him the change I have in my pocket to help him buy cigarettes."

[Field note]

Such poor effort at a romantic approach was less than flattering: since the two of us had never seen each other before, potential recipients of the boy's written ardour must have been quite interchangeable. Presumably, the boy's hope was to regularise his migration status via marriage as soon as possible, aware that he could be repatriated at any time. I found the exchange's patently transactional nature amusing, and rather unlike the common sexualised harassment of female field researchers described by Kloß (2017). While I found it easy to brush off awkward encounters such as this one, however, I could see how other residents may not find them similarly unthreatening, particularly considering rumours of sexual assaults and harassment. In general, it was clear that Tunisian migrants' attempts to obtain things other than basic necessities were not well received by residents. One notable exception was Levant, who told me that, while migrants did receive food and shelter in the Hotspot, provisions were of a very low standard, justifying migrants' requests for better treatment. Other residents, however, appeared to view Tunisians' requests as ungrateful and self-serving, frowning upon their apparent lack of shame. While it was linked to a perceived dichotomy between sub-Saharan and Tunisian migrants at that particular moment in time, it appears that the recognition of migrants' victimhood by residents may have been contextual, influenced not only by the political circumstances in the migrants' countries of origin, but also by how the border was being managed on Lampedusa.

7.2.3 Rights-based activism

While the categorisations described above appeared widespread, not all supporters of migrants embraced them, at least not explicitly. For example, local signatories of the Charter of Lampedusa had committed to support universal freedom of movement, removing distinctions between regular and irregular migrants (Carta di Lampedusa, 2014). The Charter also adopted a wide definition of forced migration, including climate change, but also socio-economic factors and other structural issues as potential push factors. Embracing this viewpoint, Levant recognised that different factors pushed migrants from Syria or from Africa to cross the Mediterranean, but without ascribing to them different degrees of legitimacy:

"The war in Syria will continue for who knows how many years, but maybe it will end one day; Syrians would never have run away if it hadn't been for the war. Africa is a different matter. In Africa they run away from war, but they also run away from structural reasons which come from very far and that will not be solved

today or in ten years, so forced migrations from Africa will continue over the years. It's something we will have to face."⁴⁶ [Levant]

The view that all migration from Africa was legitimate usually co-existed with a critical view of current migration control policy and of the asylum system, which restricted human beings' fundamental right to move. Except for Levant, however, I found the most committed supporters of this principle to be also the least vocal supporters of migrants. These included the members of the Collettivo Askavusa, a local anti-capitalist collective⁴⁷. Askavusa objected to the neoliberal market principles governing global migration policy, which they considered the direct cause of border deaths, and to the growing global business of migration management, which sustained military and humanitarian industries alike (Tucci, 2018). Members of the collective saw a direct link between migration control, imperialism, and the erosion of human rights (Collettivo Askavusa, 2018; Tucci, 2018). Askavusa also managed a small museum called Porto M, in which they had collected over many years the belongings left behind on migrants' boats (Mazzara, 2018). During my presence in 2018, however, I noticed a certain reluctance from members to discuss migration-related issues. At the time, as I discuss in Chapter 9, they had been trying to rally the local population against the building of a large military radar on the west coast of the island, while also cooperating with other local organisations to promote labour rights and create a workers' union. It was obvious that the collective, while still very active on local social issues, was at the time maintaining a low profile when it came to migrants. This, an informant who was part of the collective told me, had increased the wider community's approval of their activities. My informant maintained that this had not been a deliberate choice to fish for islanders' support, but acknowledged that there had been a positive change in their reputation now that they were not perceived solely as the "*friends of the Turks*". A similar shift in emphasis had been taken by Lampedusa's Solidarity Forum. As a founding member explained to me, the Forum advocated for the rights of citizens and migrants alike, seeking to promote the principles of equality and universalism. The choice to advocate jointly for the rights of both groups had been made deliberately to overcome potential hostility due to anti-migrant sentiment. When I attended its meetings during my stay, however, I found that the Forum was focussing almost exclusively on initiatives of

⁴⁶ Original quote: "La guerra in Siria chissà quanti anni continuerà, però forse un giorno finirà; i siriani non sarebbero mai scappati se non ci fosse stata la guerra. L'africa è un'altra storia. Dall'africa si scappa per le guerre, ma si scappa per ragioni strutturali che vengono da molto lontano e che non si risolvono né ora né fra dieci anni, quindi, le migrazioni forzate dell'africa aumenteranno nel corso degli anni. È un tema con cui si dovrà avere a che fare"

⁴⁷ For a summary of the collective's activities and publications see their website at <https://askavusa.wordpress.com/>

benefit to locals rather than migrants. Their only migration-related activity at the time seemed to be the reception of migrants at the point of disembarkation; however, as I discussed earlier on, this had become a rare event now that most migrants arrived from Tunisia. Although no members stated this explicitly, I could not help but conclude that both Askavusa and the Forum were refraining from advocating too loudly for migrants' rights at that point in time due to the unpopularity of Tunisian arrivals. Later that year, the then Minister of Interior Matteo Salvini would begin his year-long tug of war with NGOs carrying out search and rescue activities in the Mediterranean, denying their ships authorisation to disembark rescued migrants in Italian ports (Cusumano and Gombeer, 2018). The Forum would then make their opposition to this policy clear, organising increasingly well publicised protests and sit-ins asking for its reversal (see for example Ansa, 2019). Since the migrants rescued by NGO boats in the Straits of Sicily usually departed from Libya, it might be that organisations such as the Forum felt they could support them more openly, whether because they found their victimhood status more acceptable, or because it was more acceptable to the rest of the community.

7.3 Just deserts? Hierarchies of victimhood

Regardless of their political orientation or their general opinion on migration control, most of the residents I interviewed saw Tunisian migrants as less deserving of Lampedusans' solidarity than migrants arriving from sub-Saharan Africa or Syria. As I noted earlier in this section, this discrimination mirrored in some ways the dichotomy between refugee and migrant often found in political and media discourse. This dichotomy, Crawley & Skleparis argue, is a form of "*categorical fetishism*", accepting as real those categories which are constructed for the convenience of policy-making, but cannot accurately encompass lived experience (2018, p. 49). However, I argue that Lampedusans' discrimination of Tunisians is an example of a more fluid conceptualisation of victimhood than the one rigidly applied by policy-defined categories, as shown by the curiously positive recollections of the Tunisian migrations of 2011. Rather, Lampedusans' view of the ideal migrant largely mirrored Schwöbel-Patel's conceptualisation of the ideal victim in international law (2018). Schwöbel-Patel's definition includes some of the characteristics identified by Nils Christie's in his original theorisation of the ideal victim (1986), such as weakness and vulnerability, adding dependency, passivity, and grotesqueness. These characteristics can be found in the description of Syrian and sub-Saharan migrants made by respondents, although they were given different weight depending on respondents' relationship with migrants. Those who opposed migrants' presence generally emphasised weakness, vulnerability, and passivity; this is evidenced, for instance, in the description of Syrian migrants as families, or the highlighting of sub-Saharan migrants' compliance with authorities. Supporters of migrants, on the other hand,

emphasised dependency and grotesqueness, evidenced for instance in the passive acceptance of residents' acts of charity, or the visible torture injuries seen in sea-crossers who had departed from the Libyan coast. The different emphasis given to these characteristics also depended on residents' exposure to migrants, as for example visible injuries were more likely to be noticed by those involved in migrant reception.

Current Tunisian migrants, however, were overwhelmingly young and male, so were perceived as strong; they were not passive, but approached the local population; they did not rely on the charity of residents, instead protesting loudly against the way they were being treated by authorities. As such, they were far from the passive, voiceless, apolitical refugee archetype identified by Malkki (1996). Instead, by exercising their agency and engaging in protest they epitomised ungratefulness and deviancy in the eyes of the population (Schwöbel-Patel and Ozkaramanli, 2017). Recognition of victimhood did not rely solely on nationality or on the perceived legitimacy of the reasons behind migration, as required by legal definitions of asylum, but was influenced by the nature of the interaction between migrants and residents well after disembarkation. Victimhood was thus not modelled on a legal status, but on the construction of a "*moral identity*" based on a normative understanding of social conduct (Malkki, 1996, p. 380).

7.4 Dark bodies and white saviours

Tunisian migrants who failed to meet these expectations were not simply imperfect victims, but were instead attributed an antithetical role. For those who opposed migrants' presence, Tunisians were criminals who were victimising the local population. Supporters of migrants, on the other hand, saw Tunisians as an obstacle to humanitarianism whose presence victimised those who had legitimate claims for protection. Consistently with Ticktin's (2016) description of humanitarianism as founded on exceptionality and crisis, Tunisians' doubly deviant role served two purposes: highlighting the true victimhood of sub-Saharan and Syrians, and preserving the humanitarian identity of Lampedusans. As Mavelli argues (2017), humanitarianism goes hand in hand with exclusion, as the rejection of those deemed unworthy by host societies is necessary to legitimise the acceptance of those who are instead judged to be valuable. The act of accepting and caring for refugees, Mavelli continues, is designed primarily to maximise benefit to the host society.

However, the seemingly unconditional recognition given to the victimhood of sub-Saharan migrants by Lampedusans did not mean that their solidarity was based on a lack of racial prejudice. While occupying a privileged position compared to North Africans, sub-Saharan migrants remained subordinate to residents. As I argued earlier, the ideal humanitarian subject is characterised by passivity and dependence, on whom

humanitarian protection is bestowed as a gift rather than recognised as a right (Moulin, 2012). Lampedusans' hospitality was also a gift, and gratitude was expected in return (Friese, 2010). As Moulin points out, gift-giving has a role in constructing the identity not only of the recipient, but also of the donor, establishing their dominant position within the relationship. In the case of humanitarian gift-giving, the passive victimhood of the helped invites the care of the helper, but leaves no space for reciprocity or equality (Ticktin, 2016). Lampedusans' compassion for sub-Saharan migrants did not transcend this implicit hierarchy, with helpers always occupying a position of higher power. An instance of this unequal relationship was Lampedusa Solidarity Forum's custom of hugging all migrants as they disembarked at the pier, regardless of whether they wished to be hugged or not. Forum volunteers acknowledged that some migrants were reluctant to be touched by strangers, especially after a traumatic journey. Furthermore, migrants did not seem to report positive memories of that first encounter. Still, the symbolic value of the hug-giving was considered so important as to override migrants' potential objections. During my stay, migrants' voices seemed to be conspicuously absent in the Forum's and other organisations' work, and anecdotes of emotional reunions years after the first encounter usually focused on the expressions of thankfulness on the part of the migrant for the support received during their past stay on the island. It is undeniable that local organisations provided enormous support to migrants, sometimes aiding them for years on their journey through the asylum system and beyond, and yet migrants' voices remained absent even from the Charter of Lampedusa (Mazzara, 2016). Despite the strong political aims of volunteer organisations, migrants remained depoliticised and dehistoricised (Rajaram, 2002).

The passive status of migrants, while a result of the unequal balance of power intrinsic to humanitarianism, was perpetuated by underlying racist assumptions, as shown by the episode described in the following field note:

*"[Informant] tells the story of when she was in [a UK city] reading in a park early in the morning. A black man approached her, but after hearing she was from Sicily, he shouted 'mafia!' and left, seemingly frightened. She finds it funny, but also offensive that he was scared of her, and refers to him as 'negro di merda' [i.e. 'fucking n*gger']." [Field note]*

It is clear that the informant's indignation came not from the fact that the man had insulted her by being afraid of her due to her origin, but because in the natural order of things, the reverse should have happened: as a woman sitting alone, she felt she would have been entitled to be afraid of a black man. While this episode was recounted jokingly, the racist slur at the end seemed earnestly meant, and her outrage sincere. This informant was a keen activist and volunteer who had been involved for many years

in numerous initiatives of solidarity in support of migrants, sometimes establishing personal friendships with the people she had helped. Her actions suggested she was a principled and compassionate person, and yet the event suggested that she saw herself as entitled to a higher position within society than a black man. The racialisation of sub-Saharan migrants thus was probably instrumental to their passive subordination, further reinforcing the dominant status of those who sought to help them.

The event described above provided a very rare insight into Lampedusans' perception of race, an issue that was virtually never mentioned. However, Marco Aime's book contains an illuminating quote by Don Carmelo, the island's priest, which succinctly exemplified the relationship between race and compassion on the island. The quote refers to the death by suicide of a young Tunisian migrant at the end of 2017, which I mentioned in Chapter 5. Speaking of the lack of shows of solidarity from the population following the event, Don Carmelo stated the following:

*"The thing is that the death of a Tunisian doesn't even move people: he's not black enough, and he's not white enough either"*⁴⁸ (Aime, 2018, p. 143).

Don Carmelo's comment does not refer to literal skin colour but acknowledges instead a process of racialisation: while not being black enough is a clear reference to the solidarity reserved for sub-Saharans, not being white enough is a symbol of the perceived subordination of North Africans compared to Lampedusans, which is hardly based on actual differences in pigmentation. The recognition of victimhood granted to some individuals was thus rooted in the status subordination of others, meaning that the culture of hospitality relied on the perpetuation of structural inequalities.

Lampedusans' complex and at times contradictory attitudes towards migrants do not suggest that migrants' presence on the island was inherently socially harmful to the community. In fact, negative aspects such as disorder or social tension seemed counterbalanced by the positive image of Lampedusa as a beacon of hospitality and the financial benefits that followed favourable media coverage, as I show in the next chapter. However, the hospitality discourse appeared to hinder criticism of the border's presence, focusing attention instead on the perceived worthiness of migrants themselves, and perpetuating an evident distributive injustice between not only different migrants, but also between migrants and Lampedusans themselves. I discuss this maldistribution and its important implications for the study of border harms in Chapter 11.

⁴⁸ Original Italian text: "Il fatto è che la morte di un tunisino non commuove nemmeno: non è abbastanza nero e non è nemmeno abbastanza bianco"

Chapter 8: The economic impact of Lampedusa's borderisation

In this chapter I consider the impact of borderisation on the economy of the island of Lampedusa. As the evidence shows, borderisation not only coincided with a major shift in Lampedusa's economic system, but it played a huge part in both kickstarting and sustaining this new economic order. The continuing influence of the border has translated into greater wealth for the community, but also facilitated long term negative outcomes which I conceptualise as economic harms. Below I examine how borderisation has affected Lampedusa's tourism and fishing industries, its impact on socio-economic relations, and the mediating role of state institutions. Finally, I analyse how the example of Lampedusa can help illuminate our understanding of economic social harm in the context of migration control.

8.1 Borderisation and the age of tourism

As I explain in Chapter 5, the existence of the island of Lampedusa remained largely unknown to the Italian public until the late 1980s, when it was narrowly missed by two SCUD missiles launched by Libya's then ruler Muammar Gaddafi (NY Times News Service, 1986). The island's newfound notoriety was widely credited by residents with kickstarting the age of tourism in Lampedusa; according to Sanfilippo & Scialoja, around 30,000 people visited Lampedusa the summer that followed the failed missile strike (2010, p. 129). However, it would be the island's role within Mediterranean migration which would consistently keep Lampedusa's name in the media over the following decades, piquing the interest of Italian tourists; the age of tourism in Lampedusa thus went hand in hand with its borderisation. As noted by Orsini (2015), pre-tourism Lampedusa's economy relied entirely on the fishing and fish-canning industries, which employed the entire population. As tourists began to arrive, the majority of the island's inhabitants swapped their previous occupation for hospitality-related activities such as providing accommodation, guided boat tours, selling souvenirs, renting cars and mopeds, and so on. The shift towards hospitality also drove a massive increase in unauthorised development, as locals began to build summer homes and hotels in absence of any town development planning. As a result of this building spree, Lampedusa can now host an estimated 60-70,000 people, ten times the resident population of circa 6,000 (Sanfilippo and Scialoja, 2010). While some Lampedusans continued to work in the fishing industry, this took a secondary role in the island's economy once tourism became an established source of income.

Research has shown that tourism can have a strong economic, social, and environmental impact on islands, particularly small ones (McElroy, 2006). While it can bring considerable wealth, tourism also brings negative outcomes for small islands, such as pollution, unplanned urbanisation, seasonal overcrowding, the erasure of traditional customs and of islanders' identity, and so on (McElroy, 2003). Furthermore, higher individual income does not necessarily translate into higher financial resilience for island economies, which are particularly vulnerable to external shocks such as environmental disasters (Adrianto and Matsuda, 2002). This was also true on Lampedusa, where increased personal wealth did not correspond with a growth in collective resources. Lampedusa's new economic model thus brought novel challenges for the community, and few lasting benefits. In this section I examine the impact of the tourism industry on Lampedusans' social and mental wellbeing, and how the winter economy which relied on border-related sources of income benefited part of the population to the detriment of others. I explore how the perpetuation of inequality, a widespread black economy, and a growing reliance on state aid fundamentally undermined the sustainability of Lampedusa's economic model.

8.1.1 Seasonality, precarity, and economic anxiety

The shift to a tourism-based economy had lasting repercussions on the work patterns of Lampedusans. While the profitability of the fishing industry, being reliant on good weather and sea conditions, also dipped in winter, tourism was entirely limited to the summer months. This was unsurprising given that Lampedusa's tourism attractions were based on typical summer activities such as beachgoing and underwater diving. Furthermore, while flights from Sicily were guaranteed all year round, direct flights from elsewhere only took place in summer months. The tourist season, Tramontane told me, lasted from June to September, peaking during July and August; prior to the summer, Tramontane would spend two to four months refurbishing their property to prepare it for guests, but could carry out no work the rest of the year, as few supplies would reach the island during winter. Other residents working with tourism would follow a similar pattern, preparing their business in the spring and working non-stop through the summer. The rest of the year, however, most of the island's inhabitants would be inactive. This inactivity, according to some residents, was a source of hardship. Except for a handful of businesses, the island would effectively shut down in the winter months, making it more difficult for residents to keep themselves occupied. The island's winter apathy, an informant suggested, was linked to widespread mental ill-health:

"It is a very difficult place to live in, as there is nothing to do in winter and a lot of people suffer from depression. It is very hard to live here without an occupation."

[Field note]

Winter stagnation, the informant continued, was particularly difficult for young people, for whom Lampedusa offered little in terms of occupation or entertainment. Similar preoccupations were expressed at one of the meetings I attended with the Forum Lampedusa Solidale, where concerns were raised about the proliferation of gambling on the island. According to attendees, the town now had at least three betting shops, some near the school and the church, and scratch cards could easily be bought in bars. One of the attendees, who was involved in local social care work, suggested that winter stagnation was closely linked with addiction, which was rife on the island:

"Alcohol and gambling become more problematic in winter when there is no employment. Cocaine also an issue [...]." [Note from Forum meeting - 17 May 2018]

The hardship of winter, however, was not the only stressor linked to the seasonality of tourism. Forum meeting attendees, for example, noted that residents were perpetually anxious about the profitability of upcoming tourist seasons. Since residents would need to earn enough in the summer months to support themselves and their families the whole year, fear of a bad summer would cause severe mental anguish:

"Levels of anxiety among the population are high. The [attendee] says that most people under the age of 70 are on medication for it. Anxiety mainly linked to tourism levels and how successful the tourist season will be. Fear that if tourists don't come population will starve." [Note from Forum meeting - 17 May 2018]

While I do not know whether the above-mentioned attendee was privy to the medication records of Lampedusans, others agreed that residents under the age of 70 were much more likely to express anxiety over tourism levels compared to older relatives. This generational gap, they argued, was due to differences in upbringing. People over the age of 70 had grown up in poor, pre-tourism Lampedusa, and were less fearful of hardship. Younger people, on the other hand, were raised during the years of tourism growth, but lived in constant fear of losing their livelihood from one year to the next. While this classification may seem arbitrary, it is consistent with Orsini's suggestion that, following the arrival of the EU border, Lampedusa's changing economic model facilitated a sociocultural shift from solidarity to individualism in the community (2015). In the past, Orsini argued, residents would support one another outside of the fishing season, but the arrival of tourists had turned residents into neoliberal subjects, favouring private enterprise and competition. While Orsini's proposition aims to explain a shift in residents' attitudes towards migrants, I suggest it may be useful in understanding the different perspective of older Lampedusans on the island's resilience to financial hardship.

Residents' fears that the tourist season could collapse were not unfounded. The well-publicised disturbances of 2011, for example, had deterred many tourists from visiting Lampedusa, leading to the cancellation of an estimated 80% of bookings (Orsini, 2015). The potential loss of another tourist season was always at the forefront in Lampedusans' minds, according to Libeccio:

"Then other tragedies have happened in which Lampedusa didn't work for a year from the point of view of tourism, everybody has a business and the fear of that tragedy means, it meant losing the season. But losing a season for some can be a minor thing, for those let's say who own quite big facilities for the island... Let's say hotel facilities that host 40-50 guests, you have the hotel, you have staff, you have other things, if you don't work for a year you suffer tremendous losses, and this has happened. And there was that bogeyman, but we still have this today in Lampedusa, indeed during winter we are always talking about it. Sometimes I hear people say, even among friends, "what if something happens at the start of the summer", we always say that, right? Because the cancellations would arrive immediately. So, it's normal. Who would go on holiday where there are... many times they would give these fake news of corpses on the beaches of Lampedusa. It's true that many corpses have been found, but never on the beaches, you know. But all you need is news like this, it makes the whole season fail."⁴⁹ [Libeccio]

The visible presence of the border continued to influence tourism levels. On the one hand, Lampedusa's high profile as a place of solidarity and hospitality kept the attention of the Italian public, attracting tourists. On the other hand, negative news coverage could deter travellers, as in the example mentioned above by Libeccio. In Libeccio's view, fear of economic hardship caused some residents to express racist ideas towards migrants, although Libeccio did not think these externalisations reflected Lampedusans' true attitudes:

⁴⁹ Original quote: "Poi sono successe altre tragedie in cui Lampedusa un anno è stata ferma turisticamente, quindi ognuno ha le attività e quindi la paura di quella tragedia significa, significava perdere una stagione. Ma perdere una stagione per qualcuno può essere una cosa così, chi ha una struttura diciamo abbastanza grande per l'isola... Una struttura alberghiera che ospita per dire 40-50 ospiti, c'ha l'albergo, c'ha il personale, c'ha quello, in un anno che tu non lavori sono delle perdite allucinanti, ed è successo, questo. E c'era anche quello spauracchio, ma ancora oggi c'è questo a Lampedusa, infatti d'inverno se ne parla sempre, di questo. Alle volte io sento parlare, ma anche tra amici, "pensa se succede qualcosa all'inizio dell'estate" si dice sempre, no? Perché le disdette arrivano immediatamente. Così, è normale. Chi va in vacanza dove ci sono... Molte volte passavano queste notizie false dei cadaveri in giro nelle spiagge di Lampedusa. È veri che si sono trovati tanti cadaveri, ma mai nelle spiagge, per dire. Però basta una notizia di questa, ti fa fallire una stagione."

*"There are people who have this fear, which then turns into something darker, it looks like they all become a bit racist, saying "these people mustn't come, they have to kill them, they have to shoot them" with words, but then when I think of their actions I know better. As I said earlier, when [migrants] were in need, almost everybody helped, in the end."*⁵⁰ [Libeccio]

Ostro, who worked for an organisation providing support to migrants, also suggested that anxieties about the upcoming season might influence residents' attitudes towards migrants, due to fears that news coverage of their presence might deter tourism. However, Ostro seemed unsure of whether underlying racism may also play a role:

*"The people of Lampedusa after all are very used to the presence of migrants, they are also tolerant in their own way, there isn't underlying racism. Maybe there is, but, I mean... no, it's... the economic aspect is the most important."*⁵¹ [Ostro]

Residents' economic anxiety, in Ostro's view, affected not only migrants, but also their supporters:

*"Well we're the friends of the Turks, as Lampedusans would say, so while everything is fine we are tolerated, but if tensions were to rise, maybe at a time when tourists are here and everything, they won't think twice to..."*⁵² [Ostro]

Ostro's sentence ended with a meaningful look rather than words, a hint that Lampedusans might resort to violence once they ran out of tolerance. Ostro's statement suggested that residents might see migrants and their supporters as an intrinsic threat to tourism, but other respondents saw the relationship between migrants and economic anxiety as more complex. Levant, for instance, suggested that anxiety was a result of media outlets obsessively focusing on migration issues during the slow news season:

"When they don't have political events to report, or other matters, football, the wedding of the prince of England, there's the landing. And where's the landing? In Lampedusa. Ok? This is a stressful thing, because it actually creates a prejudice in those who do not know the island. People here notice because when phone

⁵⁰ Original quote: "Che c'è quella gente che ha questa paura che poi si trasforma in modo un po' pesante, sembra che poi diventano un po' razzisti, e dicono "questi non devono arrivare, li devono ammazzare, devono sparare, devono fare" sulla bocca, poi penso ai fatti non è così. Come dicevo prima, quando c'erano dei bisogni hanno partecipato quasi tutti, alla fine."

⁵¹ Original quote: "Le persone di Lampedusa tutto sommato sono molto abituate alla presenza dei migranti, sono anche tolleranti a modo loro, non c'è di fondo razzismo. Magari c'è, però, insomma... no, ma è... l'aspetto economico il più importante."

⁵² Original quote: "Beh noi siamo gli amici dei Turchi, per dirla in lampedusano, quindi finché va tutto bene siamo tollerati, se poi la tensione dovesse crescere magari in un momento in cui ci sono anche i turisti eccetera, non ci pensano due volte a..."

*bookings start coming, those who don't know the island ask "but is it true that there are... is it true that...". Because this creates fear in Lampedusans, fear of not being able to live off tourism in the future. So you feel that your survival is being threatened, and the anger here is not towards migrants, careful, but against the media."*⁵³ [Levant]

According to Levant, media reports exaggerated the impact of migrant landings on the island, deterring those who were not familiar with life on Lampedusa. As I examine more in depth in Chapter 10, there was indeed a noticeable disconnect between how migration-related news about Lampedusa were reported and the island's everyday reality. Residents worried about how the migrants' presence was perceived by those outside Lampedusa and how this may affect tourists' intention to travel, but expressed no concerns over how tourists may be affected once they arrived, as they expected the migrants' presence to go largely unnoticed. While Ostro's comments suggest that economic anxieties influenced residents' attitudes towards migrants, they also represent an oversimplification of the complicated relationship between migration and Lampedusa's economy. A possible causal link between economic insecurity and anti-migrant sentiment has long been the object of scholars' attention, even though empirical studies have shown that pre-existing racial prejudice plays a much stronger role (Burns and Gimpel, 2000). The idea that anti-migrant sentiment might be fuelled by competition for scarce resources also has little relevance for Lampedusa, where residents and migrants lived fully separate lives. Instead, residents' anxieties were not caused by migration itself, but by how it was represented to the outside world. In fact, negative coverage of issues other than migration was just as likely to increase economic anxiety in Lampedusans, as evidenced by the water treatment scandal in 2018.

At the end of April, prosecutors seized Lampedusa's water treatment plant and opened an investigation against several members of the current and past administrations. The treatment plant had failed to work as intended for years, and untreated sewage had been flowing into the sea, causing levels of faecal bacteria in the water to be 10,000 times greater than the legal limit⁵⁴. While 14 water treatment facilities had been seized

⁵³ Original quote: "Quando non hanno da raccontare le vicende politiche, o fatti di altra natura, u calcio, u matrimonio du principe d'Inghilterra, c'è u sbarco. E dov'è lo sbarco? A Lampedusa. Ok? Questa cosa è stressante, perché effettivamente determina un pregiudizio in chi non conosce l'isola. Le persone se ne accorgono perché quando arrivano le telefonate per le prenotazioni, chi non conosce l'isola chiede "ma è vero che ci sono... Ma è vero che...". Perché questo comporta una paura per i lampedusani, che è quella un domani di non potere più vivere di turismo. Quindi se tu ti senti minacciato la tua sopravvivenza, e la rabbia però non è verso i migranti, attenzione, ma è verso i media."

⁵⁴ My blog post summarising the events as they unfolded is available here: <https://inlampedusa.wordpress.com/2018/04/28/shit-happens/>

around Sicily as part of the same investigation, Lampedusa featured prominently in the headlines, probably due to the reputation of its crystal-clear sea. As phone calls from worried holidaymakers began to arrive, residents became furious with journalists for giving emphasis to the news, while some hypothesised a conspiracy from magistrates and law enforcement to ruin Lampedusa's tourist season. Media interest soon abated, but the emotional aftershock was felt for several weeks on the island, with its impact being noted during the following month's Forum meeting:

"Anxiety levels raised when news like the one about water treatment are made public right before the summer." [Note from Forum meeting - 17 May 2018]

The precarious state of Lampedusa's tourism-based economy made it particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in tourist numbers, which created a constant state of anxiety in residents; since most tourist-related businesses were either self-run or family-owned, even the loss of a handful of guests over the whole season could make a substantial difference to each business' yearly income. This anxiety in turn hindered protest or other initiatives aimed at addressing perceived problems in the management of the island. At the Forum meeting, for example, attendees discussed their difficulties in raising awareness about their work, due to some residents not wishing tourists to learn negative aspects of Lampedusa:

"The issue with publicising the forum's work is that there are internal divisions on the island so you may wish to say things differently. For example, people may not wish for tourists to find out about island's problems." [Note from Forum meeting - 17 May 2018]

The hostility described by Ostro therefore was not simply the result of anti-migrant sentiment, but of a more general resentment towards individuals or associations who rocked the boat by visibly challenging the status quo, meaning that these fears acted as an obstacle to protest or activism. The extreme seasonality of tourism on Lampedusa thus seemed to increase a sense of precarity and economic anxiety which in turn hampered local efforts to achieve social change.

The mere presence of these challenges does not evidence that seasonality was inherently harmful to Lampedusa. In fact, the idea that seasonality is a problem that needs ameliorating has been contested within tourism management studies, most notably by Butler (1998). In Butler's view, measures aiming to stimulate year-round tourism are often destined to fail; tourism-reliant economies should instead accept seasonality as a fact of life and embrace its advantages, such as allowing time for communities and the environment to rest and recover from tourism peaks (Butler, 1998). The potential advantages envisaged by Butler, however, were limited in the case

of Lampedusa by the presence of the border. As I mentioned above, the long off-peak season was a time of anguish and anxiety for many residents, feelings which were compounded by the inherent newsworthiness of migration-related events; meanwhile, the natural environment remained negatively impacted by borderisation all year-round, as I explain later in the next chapter. The detrimental effects of precarity and seasonality on Lampedusa were therefore not an inevitable consequence of having switched to a tourism-based economy but were mediated by the interaction between Lampedusa's existing social reality and the management of the border by state institutions. In the following sections I examine how the process of borderisation impeded economic resilience on Lampedusa by fostering inequality and illegality, which in turn hindered the search for more sustainable models of tourism development.

8.1.2 Profiting from the border: inequality and the role of the black economy

While the high salience of migration-related issues could increase anxieties over the profitability of the tourist season, the process of borderisation also helped provide some on the island with a steady income outside the summer months. The presence of the Hotspot, for example, had created a small number of jobs for local people. However, most of the workers came from outside, something that residents such as Sirocco considered a missed opportunity to increase employment on the island:

*"If I build a reception centre on Lampedusa, 90% of at least normal staff, those without special qualifications, should be hired locally. What happened is that there are more outsiders than Lampedusans working there. Besides, [Lampedusans] are the first to be fired, while the others keep working as normal."*⁵⁵ [Sirocco]

Sirocco's observation that Lampedusan workers would be the first to be fired first was consistent with the events I observed in April 2018, when the hotspot's capacity was reduced following arson damage. Local workers confirmed to me that they had been fired, while outsiders had either retained their original job or been reassigned elsewhere. The main source of migration-related revenue for Lampedusans thus came not from being employed directly into border-related occupations, but by providing services to workers deployed on the island. The large number of law enforcement agents, for example, were housed in the island's hotels and B&Bs, as noted by Tramontane:

"I would get rid of all the law enforcement agents that are on the island, although for hotel owners [...] it's big business. Because if there are 200 people between

⁵⁵ Original quote: "Se io costruisco un centro di accoglienza a Lampedusa, il 90% almeno le persone normali, quelle che non hanno grosse qualifiche, dovrebbero essere prese sul territorio. Si è venuto a creare che sono più quelle che vengono da fuori che vengono a lavorare che i Lampedusani che lavorano. Che poi sono i primi a essere licenziati mentre gli altri continuano a svolgere le attività che fanno abitualmente."

Carabinieri, police, Guardia di Finanza, for the hotels that's business that they would not have in winter."⁵⁶ [Tramontane]

On top of law enforcement agents, the island would host throughout the year large numbers of visitors connected to migration or migration control, including Frontex agents, humanitarian workers, politicians, journalists, and researchers, who in turn would also provide an income to the island's shops, bars, and restaurants. Institutional workers and visitors, however, were more likely to benefit some parts of the population rather than others. Accommodation, for instance, was more likely to be organised in larger hotels, principally for reasons of space. These hotels usually belonged to the more affluent and well-connected families on the island:

*"The wealthy here are those who own [hotel] facilities, and they have many."*⁵⁷ [Sirocco]

Inequality in Lampedusa was not immediately obvious to outsiders, as there were no luxury cars or other items upon which to rely as visible markers of wealth. However, members of the community were aware of other Lampedusans' properties and seemed able to estimate their income. Some resentment was evident towards wealthy hotel owners who profited from the presence of military and law enforcement agencies, although negative comments were often whispered or only hinted in my presence; I eventually realised I had come to be associated with one of these families, as I had been unwittingly residing in one of their homes, so residents were reluctant to criticise them openly in my presence.

Space, however, was not the only reason that larger hotels were chosen by public bodies to accommodate their staff. Another influential factor was likely a need for transparency, meaning that the accommodation arrangements would need to be above board. This was not the case for many tourism-related businesses on Lampedusa; in fact, the tourism industry fed the island's large black economy. As mentioned earlier, most homes had been built illegally over the past few decades, even within protected natural areas, while many residents did not pay taxes (Sanfilippo and Scialoja, 2010). I found abundant examples of under-the-counter economic activity being the norm. For instance, Ostro told me of an initiative by the Forum Lampedusa Solidale to cover the flight and accommodation expenses of those who needed to travel to Sicily for medical

⁵⁶ Original quote: "Toglierei anche tutte le forze dell'ordine che ci sono sull'isola, che però per quanto riguarda gli albergatori [...] è un grosso business. Perché se ci sono qua 200 persone tra Carabinieri Polizia Guardia di Finanza, per gli alberghi sono un lavoro di inverno che non avrebbero."

⁵⁷ Original quote: "Qua i benestanti sono quelli che possiedono le strutture, e ne hanno tante."

care, but who had limited funds to do so. However, the proposal had limited success because of difficulties in establishing who was truly in need of financial support:

"At first we thought of working, of doing this thing more formally, eventually we realised that, for example asking people for their ISEE, their tax return, you know? But many people here don't declare their income, so maybe you'll get someone telling you "I have nothing, help me" and then you'll hear "You should know that that guy actually has..." from somebody else."⁵⁸ [Ostro]

Another initiative to provide a community-funded scholarship for a disadvantaged Lampedusan student to attend university in Sicily similarly closed due to a lack of suitable candidates. According to Gregale, families who could consider sending their children to university already had the means to do so, despite pleading poverty with others. The black economy thus helped maintain pockets of individual wealth for business-owners which were hidden from the scrutiny of institutions, and on occasion of other Lampedusans. Those who worked for tourism-related businesses, on the other hand, were likely to be employed irregularly, and precarious and exploitative working conditions were the norm. This is evidenced in the note below, which reports a conversation with a local woman and an English friend about the upcoming summer season:

"[Informant] also fears she will be made to work alone in her place of work, while her employers always promise to hire somebody else to give her a hand. The English lady says she can leave the job if they do not keep their word, the local lady laughs and says she would be given no work at all, like last year." [Field note]

The vacation industry's illegal foundations not only exacerbated wealth inequalities, but also hindered attempts to establish more sustainable forms of tourism, as Levant explained:

"If you want to talk about tourism development, for example using European funding to establish dispersed hotels, to upgrade buildings, also to use sustainable energy, to decrease their impact and make them more suitable for island life, but also to add value to what we can offer to tourists. Obviously, you need to be in order, an illegal

⁵⁸ Original quote: "Inizialmente pensavamo di lavorare, fare questa cosa in maniera più formale, alla fine ci siamo resi conto che, tipo chiedere l'ISEE, il reddito, no? Però qua in tanti non dichiarano niente, quindi magari viene quello ti dice "io non c'ho niente, aiutami" e poi vieni a sapere da qualcuno "Guarda quello c'ha"..."

building cannot access European funds, so this situation causes a lack of opportunities.”⁵⁹ [Levant]

This widespread illegality, largely tolerated by law enforcers, sustained the short-term profitability of the tourism industry while simultaneously constraining its long-term development. In addition, it perpetuated to the chronic lack of resources of Lampedusa’s local administration, contributing to the fragility of its public services (Sanfilippo and Scialoja, 2010). Despite its economic growth through the last few decades, Lampedusa thus remained highly reliant on outside sources of funding, usually from the regional or national governments. Access to this funding, however, was typically contingent to crisis. In the next section I examine how this incentivised a cyclical state of emergency on Lampedusa, exploiting and exacerbating existing conflicts of interest within the community.

8.1.3 More problems, more money: the business of crisis

While the overall turnover was much smaller than in the summer, Lampedusa’s winter economy could bring a sizeable income for those in a position to attract business. As I established in the previous section, outside the holiday season the hospitality industry was largely dependent on the presence of state agents, such as military or law enforcement personnel:

“In winter, the hotels fill up with military [and law enforcement] agents. And the more agents, the more money.”⁶⁰ [Levant]

While negative coverage of migration issues deterred tourists, it could conversely trigger an increase in the number of state agents being sent to Lampedusa. As Levant articulated below, this raised the suspicion that well-connected residents who most profited from off-season visitors would have an incentive to loudly raise alarm levels in order to increase the presence of personnel on the island:

⁵⁹ Original quote: “Se vuoi fare ragionamenti di sviluppo turistico, per esempio utilizzare le misure europee, sull'albergo diffuso, su la riqualificazione anche energetica, ecosostenibile degli edifici per dare un'impronta coerente con l'insularità ma anche per valorizzare l'offerta turistica. È chiaro che devi essere in regola, una casa abusiva non può accedere ai finanziamenti europei, quindi questa condizione determina anche una mancanza di opportunità.”

⁶⁰ Original quote: “Gli alberghi d'inverno si riempiono di militari. E più ce ne sono più guadagnano.”

"So it's one of two things, if you cry 'emergency', the state's answer is to send more police and more military. So I'm inclined to wonder, are you doing it on purpose? Perhaps for somebody whose hotel is empty?"⁶¹ [Levant]

This led some to resent those profiting from the large presence of state agents, partly because the wealth created by their business was likely to concentrate in the hands of a few individuals, but also because of the inherent conflict of interest between the winter and summer economies. As outlined in the previous section, publicly raising alarm levels over migration issues would threaten the livelihood of those relying on summer tourism, further increasing economic anxiety:

"And the state's response, whenever they start shouting the way they did throughout the last summer, and also started doing now... What's their response? They send two or three vans, a few wagons, and then [people say] "ah there are too many soldiers, too many police". But they don't say how they make money from the military and the police who use the hotels and the restaurants, and the bars, and the clubs, and the fuel, I mean there is a whole economy tied to this. It's one of two things, some people prefer to make money by raising alarm levels, which in turn brings stress to the community, and then there are those like myself who think that we need to reduce alarm levels to a minimum, reduce the military presence, the police presence, etc. Because if you respect some rules, you don't... You can prevent problems in the first place."⁶² [Levant]

Levant was referring to the previous winter's instance of negative coverage of Lampedusa, when then mayor Salvatore Martello had denounced in the media the prolonged presence of Tunisian migrants and linked them to an increase in crime and public disorder, asking for the state's intervention to restore the peace. The population's reaction to the mayor's "shouting" was mixed. While most residents generally disapproved of negative media coverage of Lampedusa, few explicitly condemned the mayor's recent denunciations of public disorder and criminality by Tunisian migrants. In

⁶¹ Original quote: "Ma delle due l'una, se tu gridi all'emergenza, la risposta dello stato è più polizia e più militari. Quasi quasi mi viene da pensare, ma lo fai apposta? Per chi magari c'ha l'albergo vacante?"

⁶² Original quote: "E la risposta poi dello stato, quando loro si mettono a urlare, così come hanno fatto per altro tutta l'estate scorsa, pure ora han cominciato a fare... La risposta qual è? Ti arrivano due o tre pulmini, una poco di camionette, e poi "ah troppi militari, troppa polizia". E però non dicono che ci guadagnano coi militari e la polizia che vanno negli alberghi e nei ristoranti, e nei bar, e nei locali, e a benzina, cioè c'è un'economia legata a queste cose. Delle due poi l'una, c'è chi preferisce guadagnare alzando il livello di allarme, e quindi stressando la comunità, e invece chi come me ritiene che bisogna abbassare al minimo il livello di allarme, la presenza militare, la presenza di polizia, eccetera eccetera. Perché se rispetti alcune regole, non... I problemi li previeni del tutto"

fact, as shown in Chapter 6, many had accepted these reports as factual, despite a paucity of evidence, and seemed to support the mayor's public intervention. The apparent incongruity between this approval and the risk of negative repercussions on the tourist season suggested that part of the community may have seen other potential benefits in the mayor's actions. For those holding anti-migrant views, for instance, the wish to control non-residents may have taken precedence over commercial considerations. However, as Levant explained, other economic factors were at play. Aside from increasing law enforcement and military presence, raising media awareness of migration-related problems on Lampedusa could attract state support in the form of financial aid, for instance tax rebates and emergency grants:

*"If you have something to complain about, then you can ask for compensation. Something that has been used to purchase electoral support in these islands is moratoria on tax; since you suffered damages because we mistreated you, because we left the Tunisians in the middle of the street and you suffered a drop in tourism, then we won't make you pay taxes. There is a section of the community that thinks that this manner of doing things can bring benefits in the form of compensation."*⁶³
[Levant]

The safety net of state compensation may therefore have helped quell opposition towards the increased state presence on the island, even when this increase was detrimental to the tourism industry and decreased economic security for other residents. As Levant suggested, state compensation would be triggered when the damages suffered could be linked to an institutional failure to manage migration efficiently. For instance, the overcrowding of the island in 2011 was due to the government's failure to transfer the Tunisian migrants who were arriving in their thousands following the Arab Spring. In recognition of the harm caused to Lampedusa's tourism industry that year, the Italian government approved a moratorium on tax and mortgage payments for Lampedusans, and the allocation of funds to improve public infrastructure and tourism development (Manconi and Anastasia, 2012; Giuliani, 2018).

While triggered by exceptional events, these forms of state compensation aimed to make migration mismanagement more acceptable to residents, without challenging the presence of the border or any routinised harms caused by its usual functioning. In fact, I argue that they constituted an incentive to normalise the current economic model on

⁶³ Original quote: "Se tu hai da lamentarti puoi chiedere i risarcimenti. Ecco, un tema con cui qui si è diciamo contrabbandato il consenso elettorale in questi luoghi sono: le moratorie fiscali, siccome hai subito danni perché ti abbiamo trattato male, perché abbiamo lasciato i tunisini per strada e hai avuto un calo del turismo, non ti faccio pagare le tasse. Una parte di comunità che pensa che questo andazzo può comportare dei benefici in termini di risarcimento, c'è, esiste."

Lampedusa and discourage calls for change, something I examine more in depth later in this chapter. An example of an alternative model was the one suggested above by Levant, who supported a drastic reduction of the state's presence and a shift towards educational migration-related tourism in the winter, for example encouraging school trips. The idea was not without supporters. The Askavusa Collective, for instance, had long called for the demilitarisation of Lampedusa, which they considered an example of neo-colonialist occupation (Collettivo Askavusa, 2018). During my stay on Lampedusa I noticed how, despite its commitment and organisation, the Collective consistently failed to attract much visible support from the rest of the community. This was consistent with Tucci's research on activism in Lampedusa (2018), which found that the economic power of law enforcement and military forces was so strong it would frustrate any attempt at resistance. This power, according to Tucci, did not come only from bringing off-season income and tantalising offers of tax relief, but also from using coercion, as local business-owners who openly opposed the military presence on the island would attract extra scrutiny from the Finance police. Given the widespread state of irregularity on Lampedusa, any scrutiny could easily result in hefty fines. Lampedusa was thus effectively powerless to control the presence or activities of border agents; indeed, the local community had limited control over its own economic development, which was at all times subordinated to the interests of border control. As I show in the next section, this power imbalance also visibly affected the fishing industry.

8.2 The slow death of the fishing industry

As established earlier, the borderisation of Lampedusa corresponded with a major shift in the island's economy, progressively moving away from fishing to embrace the tourism industry (Orsini, 2015). The shrinking of the fishing industry brought a considerable drop in the number of professional fishers on the island; however, according to Ponente, the size of the fleet remained similar, consisting of around 250 trawlers at the time of my stay. This, Ponente told me, was thanks to technological advances which allowed for a much smaller crew to control each fishing vessel. Despite this, the role of fishing within the island's wider economy had been largely marginalised by tourism. In this section I specifically consider the ongoing impact of borderisation on Lampedusa's fishing industry. For many years, fishers had been the first to encounter migrant boats at sea:

*"When we didn't have Frontex and all this stuff, when the migrant boats would arrive at 10-20-30 miles [from the coast], we were the first to sight them, we were the sentinels."*⁶⁴ [Ponente]

However, as I consider below, while authorities' increased involvement in search and rescue operations reduced the burden on fishers to provide help to migrants at sea, their daily operations were affected in other ways by borderisation. The increasing space taken by law enforcement agencies in Lampedusa's port made it progressively more difficult for fishing boats to dock and unload their catch, which had a knock-on effect on other businesses near the port. Meanwhile, the growing number of abandoned migrant boats moored in Lampedusa's harbours pointed to a chronic failure by authorities to adequately dispose of them, periodically coming to a head when the half-sunken wrecks would cause damage to the docks and to other vessels during bad weather. Evidence suggests that rescuers might have on occasion scuttled migrant boats at sea rather than towing them to Lampedusa, which in turn would have helped reduce the number of wrecks in the port. However, sunken boats would then snag the fishing trawlers' nets causing not only financial damage to the fishing fleet, but also endangering the crews' lives. Mechanisms were in place to provide occasional compensation to Lampedusa's fishers for migration-related financial losses. However, these schemes, which were triggered by crisis, highlighted a lack of strategy or forward planning in dealing with the financial effects of irregular migration on the fishing industry. Instead, they relied on the cyclical declaration of states of emergency and a subsequent recourse to emergency measures which addressed some consequences of the crisis, without impact on its causes. These mechanisms not only denied any accountability from state authorities when it came to damages linked to the migration control apparatus, but they perpetuated the marginalisation of Lampedusa's fishing industry, leaving it financially dependent on these sporadic forms of state aid.

8.2.1 The port of Lampedusa

The establishment of the formal border control system had brought tangible difficulties to the remaining fishers on the island, negatively affecting their daily operations. One of the most visible issues was the decreasing availability of mooring space in Lampedusa's crowded port. As shown by the nautical chart in Figure 13 below, Lampedusa's port consisted of three coves: Cala Guitgia to the left, Cala Salina in the centre, and Cala Palma to the right.

⁶⁴ Original quote: "Poi quando non c'era Frontex, tutta sta roba qua, che arrivavano i barconi che arrivavano a 10-20-30 miglia, i primi avvistatori eravamo noi, le sentinelle eravamo noi."

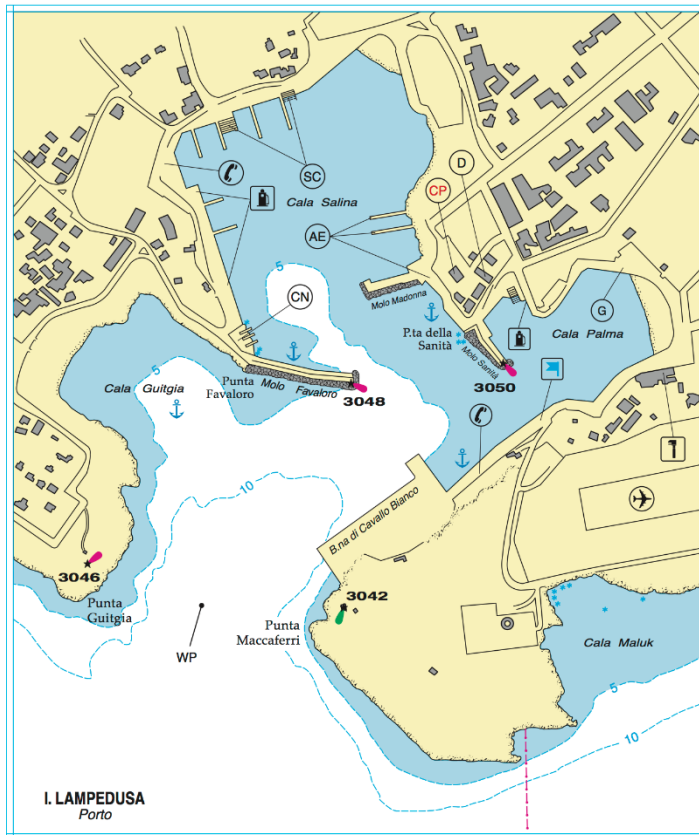


Figure 13 - Nautical chart of the port of Lampedusa.
Image courtesy of Pagine Azzurre⁶⁵

The coves were separated by three large piers, all of which were reserved to military and law enforcement agencies. The largest was Molo Favaloro, which lay between Cala Guitgia and Cala Salina; migrants would be disembarked on this pier following rescue operations at sea, and it was predominantly used by the Coast Guard and the Finance Police. At the time of my visit, large parts of the pier were often left empty, while others were occupied by the wrecks of migrant boats recovered after rescue operations or independent landings. Opposite Molo Favaloro, on the other

side of Cala Salina, lied Molo Madonna, which was permanently occupied by Coast Guard and Carabinieri speedboats, while neighbouring Molo Sanità was used by the Police. The space reserved to law enforcement and military agencies had increased over the years, Ponente told me, and access to these areas remained restricted even when no other vessels were using them. This had considerably limited the docking space available to fishing boats:

*"Yes, now it's a restricted area, but it used to be the docking place for fishing boats. You would dock 30-40 fishing boats in there, and if the weather was bad like today, 30-40 fishing boats could go in, the large ones. It would give shelter to 300-400 people. During winter, for a cafe that would mean selling 300-400 more coffees, and that's just the coffees. But not now, now it's all restricted area and fishing boats stay outside [of the port] waiting for the wind to change."*⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Pagine Azzurre is a specialist publication providing portolans and other navigation information in Italy. Available at <https://www.pagineazzurre.com/porti-della-sicilia/i-lampedusa-porto/> [accessed 4 February 2020]

⁶⁶ Original quote: "Sì, ora è zona militare, una volta era zona pescatori. Si ormeggiavano lì 30-40 pescherecci e in caso di cattivo tempo come oggi entravano lì dentro 30-40 pescherecci di quelli grossi. Si mettevano al riparo 300-400 persone. Nel periodo

Fishing boats' inability to enter the port, Ponente pointed out, had a knock-on effect on the local economy, as the local bars and cafes were deprived of business which would come in handy in the dead of winter. Instead, fishing boats were effectively being squeezed out of the port, and while they could request permission to anchor away from the piers or docks, options were limited due to the need to leave space for larger vessels. For example, dock Cavallo Bianco, on the south entrance to the port, was used by large commercial ships such as the ferry that brought supplies to the island. Consequently, boats berthing in the opposite Cala Guitgia had to keep at least 50 metres to the left of the imaginary line linking Punta Guitgia and Punta Favaloro to allow commercial ships using the dock Cavallo Bianco sufficient space for manoeuvre. Further restrictions operated during the summer season, when boats had to keep at least 100 metres away from the beach, but without getting in the way of tanker ships carrying oil or drinking water to the island. While finding anchoring space was a common problem for all boats, fishing boats were particularly affected by lack of docking space, as they needed to be able to unload their catch and either distribute it to local dealers or load it to the ferry ship headed for the mainland. The perishable nature of their goods made this a time-sensitive operation, and delays in finding a space to dock could mean wasting the whole cargo.

Law enforcement and military vessels were not the only reason space for fishing boats had decreased. Scattered around different areas of the port were a large number of migrant boats which had been recovered and seized by authorities following rescue operations or independent landings. Figure 14 below shows two such boats, easily recognisable due to their state of disrepair and the presence of faded Arabic writing on the hull.



Figure 14 - Migrant boats moored near Cavallo Bianco (left) and Molo Favaloro (right)

invernale per un bar quelli erano 300-400 caffè in più, solo di caffè. Invece no, ora è tutta zona militare e i pescatori rimangono fuori ad aspettare che cambi il vento.”

The size and material of the boats suggest that they were at least several years old, as more recent arrivals overwhelmingly used smaller, wooden vessels. It seemed evident that they had spent this time moored on the same spot and had been left to rust. Boats left in sea water for prolonged periods of time were destined to sink, and Ponente recalled seeing many of these boats sink while moored in port over the years. This exacerbated the space problem:

"The port is small, we already can't fit our fishing boats, imagine if 20-30 of these [migrant] boats arrive, if you don't lift them [out of the water] quickly they'll sink and you won't even know where they are."⁶⁷ [Ponente]

As I show more in detail in the next section, dozens more migrant vessels occupied dock space in the port, but the large boats in Figure 14 evidenced that this was a long-term problem, which persisted well after my departure. The boat pictured on the left, for instance, was among several to be eventually removed in late 2019 after partially sinking or causing damage to the port during bad weather (Agrigentonotizie, 2019b). This was not an isolated incident, but something that had been happening periodically over the last few decades. Indeed, transcripts from Italy's Chamber of Deputies describe these very same circumstances occurring back in 2004 (Camera dei Deputati, 2004). At the time, the crisis was solved by granting emergency powers to the Protezione Civile, Italy's civil protection department, a national body coordinating emergency responses to exceptional events such as natural calamities or other disasters. As I show in Chapter 9, the periodical recourse to emergency powers perpetuated these crises rather than preventing it. By the end of 2019, according to media reports, only 100 metres of docking space remained available to fishing boats, enough to accommodate just one-tenth of the fishing fleet (Puato, 2019). The visible marginalisation of fishing vessels in Lampedusa's port exemplified their declining role in the island's economy.

8.2.2 *Danger on the high seas*

While the overcrowding of Lampedusa's port obstructed fishing boats when returning to land, fishers faced graver dangers while out at sea. The waters around Lampedusa, Sirocco told me, were littered with the wrecks of sunken migrant boats:

"Because when you see a [law enforcement] speedboat carrying migrants you need to wonder where their boat is. Or their rubber dinghy. If the boat of those who are carried on the speedboat does not come to Lampedusa, it means that they either

⁶⁷ Original quote: "Certo il porto è piccolo, già con i nostri pescherecci non ce la facciamo, figuriamoci se arrivano 20-30 barconi di questi, se non fai presto a sollevarli vanno a finire a fondo e non sai neanche dove sono."

gave it back to the migrants so they can do another load, or they sank it. Who will know where it was sunk, nobody knows."⁶⁸ [Sirocco]

Sirocco seemed to suggest that, following rescue operations at sea, the Coast Guard or other SAR providers such as Frontex or NGOs would sometimes either return boats to smugglers, or scuttle these boats so they would sink at sea. Both were serious accusations; as I explain in the next chapter, procedure dictated that migrant boats should be seized as evidence of immigration offences by the authorities, who would tow them to port. While I found no evidence to support the idea that rescuers would return boats to migrant smugglers, Ponente confirmed to me that migrant boats were being sunk into the open sea. Ponente at first denied that authorities ever scuttled boats, only to quickly concede that this was indeed happening. While Ponente had seen boats being sunk, they had not taken any photos or videos, so they were reluctant to present their experience as fact without offering corroborating evidence:

*"No no no no, they are left adrift, not scuttled. Actually, I also saw scuttling, I saw them, but I do not have evidence so it's pointless for me to tell you about it, but I did see them. I saw them set fire [to the boats]."*⁶⁹ [Ponente]

Ponente maintained that fishers would often encounter empty migrant boats left adrift at sea, often partially scuttled. The fact that the boats were empty suggested that a rescue operation had taken place. The failure to tow some of the migrant boats back to land, according to Ponente, was a deliberate choice by authorities due to the bureaucracy and expense of disposing of boats in accordance with the law:

*"It's easier to sink them in the open sea. Also, because there are so many of them, if you took them here, you'd end up with thousands of boats. How would you dispose of them? How much would it cost? Just let the sea dispose of them."*⁷⁰ [Ponente]

Allowing boats to sink was not only a cheaper alternative, but it was also easy to conceal, as the sinking could be framed as the inevitable result of pre-existing leaks which made it impossible for authorities to tow the boats back to land. This would undoubtedly have been true in some cases, as migrants' vessels were often barely

⁶⁸ Original quote: "Perché quando tu vedevi arrivare una vedetta piena di migranti ti dovevi porre il problema di dov'è la barca. O il gommone. Se non arriva a Lampedusa la barca di chi arriva con la vedetta, significa che 'sta barca o gliel'hanno data ai migranti per andare a fare un altro carico o l'hanno messa a fondo. I punti dove è stata messa a fondo chi lo sa, nessuno."

⁶⁹ Original quote: "No no no no, vengono abbandonati, non affondati. Anzi, ho visto anche affondamenti, ho visto, ma non sono documentati quindi è inutile che te lo sto qui a dire, però li ho visti. Li ho visti dare fuoco."

⁷⁰ Original quote: "Conviene affondarli fuori. Anche perché sono in tanti, se tu li porti qua sono migliaia di barche. Come li smaltisci? Quanto costa? Falli smaltire al mare."

seaworthy, and shipwrecks were common (International Organisation for Migration, 2016). As Collyer points out, border control agents and sea-crossing migrants sometimes give conflicting accounts of incidents at sea, each accusing the other of scuttling the migrants' boat (2010). Past evidence suggested that migrants might damage their own vessel when meeting authorities at sea to force a rescue and prevent being towed away from the state's territory (Sciortino, 1999). On the other hand, Heller & Pezzani documented how migrant boats are also accidentally sunk by larger commercial vessels, when these find themselves forced to attempt rescue operations for which they lack the appropriate equipment (2016). Elsewhere in the world, the scuttling at sea of migrant boats by authorities has been well documented, for example the sinking by United States agents of boats used by Cuban and Haitian sea-crossers (Pugh, 2004). Regardless of the causes behind their sinking, the wrecks of migrant boats hindered commercial fishing around Lampedusa. It was frequent, for example, for parts of the wrecks to get caught in the nets, as shown in Figure 15 below. This photo was given to me by Ponente, who had taken it just a few days earlier about 35 miles south-east of Lampedusa, and it shows the propeller and part of the hull of a sunken migrant boat snagging the nets of Ponente's trawler.



Figure 15 –A boat wreck's propeller caught in a fishing net⁷¹.

Ponente explained that trawlers would usually lower their nets for three hours at a time during their fishing trips. However, if part of a wreckage got caught in the net, the net

⁷¹ This picture was provided by Ponente and is reproduced here with their permission.

would get torn and provide fish with an escape route. When fishers would raise the nets to find a wreck caught into them, as is the case in the photo above, they would lose their catch from the three-hour-long fishing session. On top of the loss of earnings, they would need to spend time and money repairing their fishing equipment. The cumulative financial loss to Lampedusa's fishing economy was considerable, as Ponente estimated that someone in the fleet would have their trawls torn by wrecks in this manner at least four or five times every night. Economic damages, however, were not the only consideration. Wrecks that had been sitting at the bottom of the sea for a long time would fragment easily, breaking into smaller pieces on impact with the trawls. Boats that had sunk more recently, however, would be much larger and could prove too heavy for the fishing boats to move, potentially causing them to capsize if caught in the nets. Half-sunken wrecks were also hazardous, hiding beneath the surface of the sea, all but invisible in the night. Ponente told me they had encountered them often and had always managed to avoid them, but others had not been so fortunate:

*"What happened is that it was a very close shave. He hit the wreck and seriously damaged his boat, he was taking on water, but he was close to the harbour, so he made it; he survived."*⁷² [Ponente].

Migrant boats had been accumulating for over 30 years, since sea-crossers had first started to venture from North Africa in the 1990s. The sea around Lampedusa, Ponente said, was now a minefield for fishing boats:

*"There was a time when they were scuttling... not scuttling, I should say leave to sink, they left boats to sink 80-90 miles away from here; we don't reach that far, we only fish up to 40 miles away, so for a time we were... but the damage has been done, all around the island. By around the island I mean between 0 and 40 miles [from the coast]."*⁷³ [Ponente]

Given the long-term nature of the problem, the recent decrease in the arrival of migrants provided no respite. Instead, the situation kept getting worse:

"[The obstacles] keep increasing. The first time we get stranded on them we signal their position with the GPS; we share the coordinates among ourselves and try to

⁷² Original quote: "È andata che si è salvato per miracolo. È andato a sbattere e si è rovinato tutta la barca, imbarcava acqua però era vicino al porto diciamo ce l'ha fatta, si è salvato."

⁷³ Original quote: "C'è stato un periodo che i barconi li affondavano, no affondavano, li abbandonavano meglio dire, li abbandonavano a 80-90 miglia da qui, noi non ci arriviamo, noi al massimo peschiamo a 40 miglia perciò per un periodo siamo stati... Però già il danno è bello è fatto attorno all'isola. Attorno all'isola parlo da 0 a 40 miglia."

avoid them. You avoid going here, you avoid going there, in the end you can't go anywhere anymore."⁷⁴ [Ponente]

Although Lampedusa's fishers shared the GPS position of the wrecks they encountered, accidents continued to happen. This, Ponente told me, was because the wrecks kept moving. Lampedusans were not the only ones to fish in these waters; Tunisian fishing boats, for example, were much larger and more powerful than the local ones and could drag a large wreck around the seafloor with their nets. Meanwhile, floating wreckages or debris would keep wandering below the waves, escaping detection until hit. Both Sirocco and Ponente appeared to believe the problem of wreckages at sea to be beyond resolution, although both refrained from explicitly assigning blame to migrants or their rescuers.

Ponente, for example, had been reluctant to talk about this issue at all, for fear of appearing to be unsympathetic to migrants, or to give ammunition to those who opposed their presence. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ponente did not wish to make general statements on migration, although I knew them to have been involved in solidarity initiatives in support of migrants. Ponente was adamant that the rescue of lives at sea was an inalienable duty; on the other hand, they despaired about the predicament facing Lampedusa's fishers:

*"The priority is to save people, nobody doubts that. But if we save them and then die ourselves, that doesn't seem fair to me."*⁷⁵ [Ponente]

Ponente's statement seemed to indirectly allude to the state's responsibility for the danger posed by wrecks to fishers' lives and livelihoods. In the next section I explore issues of accountability more in detail, examining how authorities had been dealing with the difficulties caused by wrecks to the fishing industry.

8.2.3 Compensation and accountability

There appeared to be no policy by the Coast Guard, Frontex, or other bodies conducting rescue operation at sea to routinely scuttle migrant boats, or to abandon them to eventually sink in open seas. As I discuss more in depth in a later section, such a policy would likely have gone against existing regulations on the disposal of vessels at sea. It is also unlikely that Ponente had been referring to NGOs, as their SAR operations typically took place further away in the Strait of Sicily, while the fishing fleet kept within

⁷⁴ Original quote: "Continuano ad aumentare. Quelle che abbiamo preso già la prima volta che rimaniamo incagliati, le segnaliamo col GPS, divulghiamo le coordinate tra di noi e tu cerchi di evitarle. Evita di qua, evita di là finisce che non puoi passare più da nessuna parte"

⁷⁵ Original quote: "La priorità è salvare le persone, nessuno lo mette in dubbio. Però se salviamo loro e moriamo noi non mi pare neanche giusto."

40 miles of the Lampedusan coast (Cuttitta, 2017). Among the Lampedusan population I encountered a certain degree of secrecy around the topic of sunken boats, as shown by Ponente's reluctance to discuss it without being able to show me hard evidence. Attempts to gather information from the local Coast Guard were futile, as they declared themselves unauthorised to discuss any issue related to migration. Other local informants, meanwhile, would conspiratorially hint at the issue, telling me to "ask them what they do with the boats", but never specifying who "they" were supposed to be. On the other hand, I found Ponente's claim to have personally witnessed the intentional sinking of migrant boats by rescuers to be compelling. Ponente suggested that these acts were being carried out, if not directly by state authorities, by agents acting with the state's approval:

*"They make me mad, because we suggested it 20 years ago to the Ministry, this idea of sinking the boats. We would strip the paint, we would clean them, and we would create a barrier outside the port for two-three miles to make sure the trawls don't get snagged, and we would create a reserve. They called us idiots, lunatics. We were lunatics, but now they are doing it. When they do it, then it's all good. Without stripping the paint, without cleaning them. They leave them, abandon them. I don't want to say they scuttle them, but they abandon them."*⁷⁶ [Ponente]

Ponente's frustration with the seemingly indiscriminate sinking of wrecks was exacerbated by Italian authorities' previous rejection of the fishing community's offer to dispose of boats in a controlled manner. While stating that they could not offer a solution to the issue of wrecks, Ponente suggested that the current response was inadequate:

*"But it's a problem, it's not easily solved. Because you cannot stop them [from arriving]. The boats, moving them onto land is a serious problem. It's expensive. It's expensive, you need to lift them, you can't leave them here, you need to take them to the mainland to be disposed of, to an authorised dump... is this situation normal? Is it normal?"*⁷⁷ [Ponente]

⁷⁶ Original quote: "Mi fanno innervosire perché noi, sta cosa di affondare le barche lo abbiamo detto noi 20 anni fa al Ministero. Le sverniamo, le puliamo e facciamo una barriera davanti al porto 2-3 miglia per fare in modo che lo strascico non entri e lavoriamo fuori, e fare una riserva. Ci hanno dato degli idioti, dei pazzi. Eravamo pazzi, ora lo fanno loro. Lo fanno loro, tutto tranquillo. Senza sverniciare, senza ripulire. Si lasciano, si abbandonano. Non voglio dire che li affondano, li abbandonano."

⁷⁷ Original quote: "Però è un problema, non è di facile soluzione. Perché fermarli non si fermano. I barconi, portarli a terra è un problema serio. Costano. Costano, devi tirarli su, non li puoi lasciare qua, devi portarli fuori in terraferma a smaltirli, in una discarica autorizzata... è normale sta cosa? è normale?"

While the arrival of boats was considered inevitable, the damage caused by wrecks was not. As Ponente highlighted, the choices made by authorities in how to dispose of migrant boats were at least partly responsible for the current situation. However, respondents were weary of explicitly assigning blame onto authorities. The harm caused to fishers was incontrovertible, but accountability was unclear:

"[...] because if you are trawling in these waters and here's a sunken boat, there's another one, if I am trawling it will snag my nets, and who's left with the damage? Whose [fault] is it, the fisher's, the migrants', or the Coast Guard's?"⁷⁸ [Sirocco]

Fishers took every possible measure to avoid hitting wrecks at sea, so could hardly be held responsible for these incidents. The arrival of boats was inextricably linked to the arrival of migrants; however, it seems reasonable to presume that migrants intended to safely reach the coast, so the sinking of boats was not an intended consequence. While Sirocco and Ponente suggested that state authorities would have had the power to prevent these incidents by disposing of boats in a different manner, authorities' response seemed to suggest that they acknowledged no such responsibility. Instead, the damage caused by wrecks to fishing boats was considered an exceptional calamity, to be cyclically addressed through emergency compensation administered by devolved regional authorities in Sicily.

Given the importance of the fishing sector for the Sicilian economy, and its vulnerability to unpredictable circumstances such as extreme weather or natural disasters, regional law makes provision for emergency compensation to be provided to fishers affected by calamities beyond their control (Regione Sicilia, 1998). Over the years, this law had been the foundation of multiple regional decrees unlocking compensation for Lampedusa's fishers, sometimes in open recognition of the effect that migration had on their business. In 2014, for example, compensation was awarded to the crews of several Lampedusa's fishing boats to offset the loss of earning suffered when encountering migrants at sea (Regione Sicilia, 2014). The loss of earning, Ponente had explained, was due to having to alert and wait for authorities:

"You would waste a couple of hours, you'd call the Coast Guard, meanwhile you'd lift your trawls, and see whether [the migrants] needed anything, needed water; we would never let them board our ship because you know, with the laws we have..."

⁷⁸ Original quote: "[...] perché se tu hai la rete a strascico e vai a strascicare su questo pezzo di mare e lì c'è una barca che c'è il motore, qui ce n'è un'altra, quando io passo con le reti spacco le reti, e il danno a chi resta? Il danno di chi è, del pescatore, del migrante, o della capitaneria?"

Anyway, you'd waste a couple of hours. Now you lose your trawls, back then you'd lose time."⁷⁹ [Ponente]

Waiting for authorities meant having to lift the trawls from the water and pause fishing. Fishers' reluctance to take migrants on board was due to fears of being prosecuted for facilitating irregular migration, a fate encountered by the crew of two Tunisian fishing boats who had rescued 44 migrants at sea in 2007 and brought them to Lampedusa (*Bayoudh più sei*, Tribunale di Agrigento, Proc. Pen. N. 875/07 R.G. TRIB. N. 3294/07 R.G.N.R.). The two captains Abdelkarim Bayoudh and Abdelbasset Zenzri were sentenced to imprisonment after a lengthy trial but were eventually cleared of all charges on appeal (Corte di Appello del Tribunale di Palermo, sentenza N. 2932/2011 Sett.). Despite the acquittal, the fishermen lost their livelihood. Their fishing boats had been seized and left to rot for years on Lampedusa's soil, while the crew's fishing licences could not be reissued following seizure by Italian authorities (Jacquemet, 2020). Lampedusa's fishers thus knew that being of the wrong side of Italian migration law would cost them considerably more than the loss of earning caused by waiting for rescue boats to arrive. During his own research in Lampedusa, Orsini even reports several fishers admitting to changing course when sighting migrant boats at sea, to avoid legal and bureaucratic complications (2015). The current legal framework thus encouraged fishers to stay out of authorities' way by not engaging in any way with migrants at sea. In return for their compliance, the fishing fleet would receive emergency compensation for losses incurred from suspending fishing activity to alert authorities of the presence of migrant boats.

The use of the 'calamity' law as basis for compensation put migration on a par with exceptional events such as accidents or natural disasters. The process may be seen as an example of what Pugh calls "*the natural disaster metaphor*", where migrants are described using terms such as flood or tide (2004, p. 54). Likening migrants to a force of nature not only depersonalises them as individuals, but also absolves receiving communities of responsibility: agency belongs to the migrant masses who decide to take the journey, while on the other end are passive receivers who respond to a crisis as best they can. Indeed, the Sicilian region's response to migration-related harms to the fishing industry put the emphasis on emergency while removing wider context or accountability by other parties. For instance, in 2016 a regional decree once more awarded compensation to Lampedusa's fishers to reimburse damage or loss of earning caused by activities tied to migration (Regione Sicilia, 2016). For the first time, the

⁷⁹ Original quote: "Perdevi quel paio d'ore, chiamavi la Guardia Costiera, intanto che arrivava dovevi tirare su le reti e vedere se avevano bisogno di qualcosa, di acqua, mai fatti salire a bordo perché sai con le leggi che ci stanno... Insomma, però quel paio d'ore le perdevi. Ora perdi le reti, prima perdevi tempo."

decree explicitly listed the damage caused by sunken migrant boats as a possible cause for compensation:

*"Identification of individuals who suffered damage to fishing vessels and equipment caused by wreckages (boats, engines, etc.) sunken during emergency rescue operations in the waters off the island of Lampedusa and off Sicily."*⁸⁰ (Regione Sicilia, 2016)

While providing a rare acknowledgment of the issue of sunken boats, the decree's use of passive language refrained from implying any responsibility for the sinking of boats. Instead, the focus on "*emergency rescue operations*" suggested that the sinking of boats, whether intentional or accidental, was an unavoidable corollary of sea rescue. Compensation schemes for fishers were thus based on exceptionality, with no indication of possible accountability. Since crisis was the *condicio sine qua non* of these compensation schemes, compensation itself further perpetuated crisis. Consequently, there was no acknowledgment that any of this damage might be preventable, or that steps might be taken to limit its future impact. There was also no mention of responsibility by the migration control apparatus, for example the difficulties caused by the increasing presence of border control agents in the port. Instead, compensation further perpetuated the status quo, cementing the idea it was an inevitable consequence of migrants' actions, while fishers' increasing dependence on reimbursement discouraged demands for systemic change. Furthermore, the uncertain success of compensation applications increased the community's gratitude towards those able to help. According to several of my informants, this gratitude had recently translated into electoral success for the current mayor Totò Martello, the president of the fishers' union:

"Fishermen got compensation from region just once, 3 years ago, for 'calamità naturali' [i.e., natural disasters]. Martello helped with this, which is why he won the election, as the fishermen were grateful. Another time a boat full of migrants hit his boat while it was docked in port and caused over €2,000 in damages, he wrote to authorities but they said they were very sorry but they had no funds for things like this." [Field note]

During my stay, however, I noticed that authorities had begun to visibly keep track of migrant boats. Figure 16 below shows some migrant vessels recovered following rescue operations in May 2018. Spray-painted on the vessels' cabins are the date in which the

⁸⁰ Original text: "Individuazione dei soggetti che hanno subito danni alle imbarcazioni e alle attrezzature da pesca causate dai relitti (barche, motori, etc.) affondati durante le operazioni emergenziali di soccorso nelle acque antistanti l'Isola di Lampedusa e la Sicilia."

rescue took place, and the code identifying the law enforcement vessel that carried out the rescue; in this case, Carabinieri's patrol vessel number 808 on the left, and the Coast Guard's SAR vessel number 312 on the right.

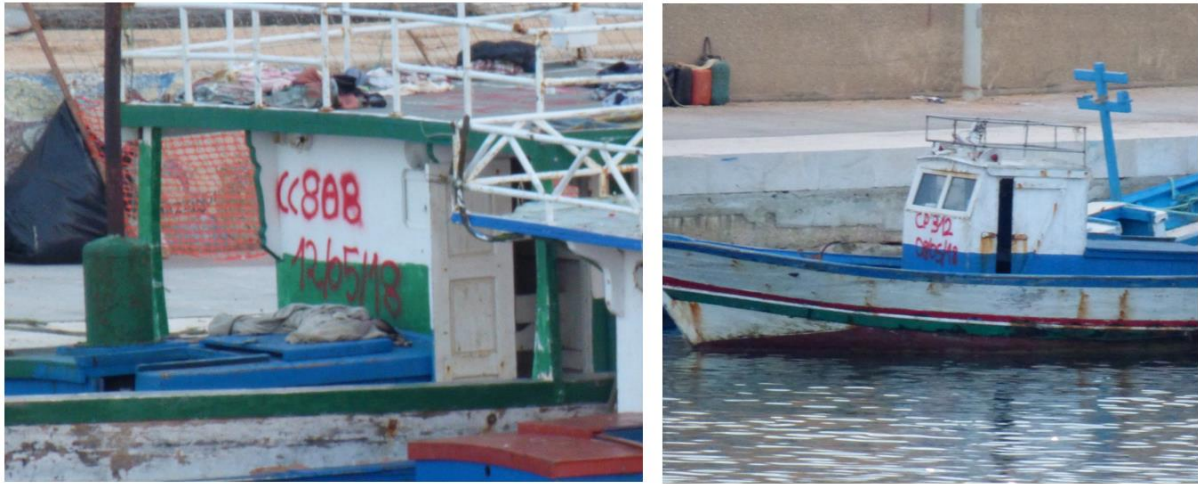


Figure 16 - Migrant boats marked with details of the rescue events

The codes usually identified law enforcement vessels normally stationed in Lampedusa, so it is unclear whether rescues carried out by navy or other forces were similarly documented. However, the marks were absent from older vessels, suggesting the existence of a record now linking rescue events with specific migrant boats. While it cannot be established with certainty that this was the policy's intent, it seems reasonable to assume that this procedure might have encouraged the recovery of wrecks following SAR operations. This idea found further support when a Tunisian migrant showed me the boat on which they had travelled just a few days earlier, which had now completely sunk, still moored to Molo Favalaro. The boat had broken down before the rescue operation, so the Coast Guard had towed it back to Lampedusa when already unseaworthy, instead of letting it sink at sea. While it is possible that a change of practice now always required rescuers to tow back migrant boats, it should be remembered that such a conclusion is only a conjecture. What remained certain, however, was the ongoing negative impact on local business; as boats accumulated in port, fishers continued to contend with overcrowding and lack of docking space. Furthermore, issues related to the environmental risks posed by migrant wrecks remained unchanged as their disposal chain remained similarly tied to a cycle of crisis and emergency responses.

8.3 From rags to riches: no harm done?

The shift towards a tourism-based economy brought considerable wealth to Lampedusa, although since this wealth was largely kept off the books it is impossible to quantify. Tourism gave many residents a chance to lift themselves out of poverty, and to create

new opportunities for their families. These benefits notwithstanding, the tourism industry was also linked to negative social outcomes, which were exacerbated by the presence of the border. Here I examine how these negative outcomes can be conceptualised as a form of economic harm under a zemiological framework.

While refraining from providing too prescriptive a definition of economic harm, Hillyard and Tombs describe it as incorporating "*both poverty and various forms of property and cash loss*" (2007, p. 17). Since Lampedusa's overall wealth had increased, it cannot be argued that the community generally suffered a financial loss from the arrival of tourism. Economic social harm, however, cannot be simply quantified in terms of financial losses or gains; instead, under the zemiological framework adopted in this work, it must be understood as a maldistribution of economic power. The focus is thus on the specific nature of Lampedusa's new economic system and its social consequences. In *Beyond Criminology: Taking Harms Seriously*, Tombs and Hillyard suggest that neo-liberal economies are intrinsically socially harmful because they concentrate economic power in the hands of few private individuals to the detriment of public interest (2004). This view is shared by Pemberton, who states that this form of capitalism inevitably produces severe social harms such as exploitation, alienation, commodification, and the erosion of social cohesion (2016). As seen earlier on in this chapter, Lampedusa's tourism-based economy's reliance on private enterprise and competition represented a departure from the cooperation and social solidarity which had previously characterised the island's fishing community. In turn, the adoption of a neo-liberal model had fostered precarity and exacerbated inequality, creating a perpetual state of economic anxiety among the population.

On the other hand, if these outcomes are intrinsic to the neo-liberal model, as suggested by Pemberton, Tombs and Hillyard, then it could be argued that their presence was an inevitable consequence of Lampedusa's embracing of tourism, and not a preventable social harm for which state institutions could be held responsible. Besides, the shift did not seem to be the result of a deliberate political choice pushed from above, but of the entrepreneurship of individual residents seizing new opportunities, going against Pemberton's understanding of economic harm as a denial of autonomy (2016). These outcomes thus cannot be labelled as economic social harms without being contextualised further. If the economic inequality fostered by the tourism industry, for instance, is understood to be inherently harmful, it does not follow that the widespread destitution which preceded it was a more desirable state, particularly given the Lampedusan community's autonomous choice to embrace a different economic order. Instead, the focus of this analysis is on the impact of acts and omissions of state

institutions on the socio-economic order of Lampedusa. Quoting once more Pemberton's words:

"Nation states are often complicit in capitalist harms through the role they play in the maintenance and reproduction of inequitable social orders." (2016, p. 42).

Within Lampedusa's specific social and political context, state institutions affected the island's economic development in two ways: by virtue of their presence as part of the borderisation process, and by virtue of their absence through the chronic lack of law enforcement and regulation. In the case of tourism, the visible presence of the state was a cause of substantial economic anxiety for some, while simultaneously an opportunity for profit for others. This conflict of interest not only fomented social tension and increased mental ill-health among residents, but also highlighted the particularly precarious position of those working within the vast illegal economy which sustained summer tourism. In their reluctance to regularise or at least regulate tourism activity on Lampedusa, state institutions continuously perpetuated a position of vulnerability and permanent precarity for residents. This prevented the community from taking control of their economic development, for instance making them unable to further access public funds to help create more sustainable forms of income. At the same time, the widespread illegality made virtually every citizen potentially impeachable, which in turn increased law enforcement's coercive power over the population. While the initial arrival of tourism had provided Lampedusans with an opportunity for economic growth, the actions and omissions of state actors now constricted this growth and prevented Lampedusans from taking control of their island's future. Lampedusa's economic wellbeing thus remained subordinated to the priorities of state institutions, whose presence was tied to the needs of the border and its management. The economic subordination of Lampedusans, coupled with the structural constraints that its economic organisation put on residents' autonomy, constituted economic harm, perpetuating what Nancy Fraser calls a *"distributive injustice"* (1998, p. 7). As I show in the following section, the fundamental role of state acts and omissions in controlling Lampedusa's economic outcomes is thrown into sharp relief by the case of Lampedusa's struggling fishing industry.

8.4 Beggars or choosers: compensation as social harm

Already marginalised by the arrival of tourism, Lampedusa's fishing industry was actively stifled by borderisation. The permanent occupation of large parts of Lampedusa's harbour by military and law enforcement agents made it difficult for fishers to access the port's facilities and sell their product. Meanwhile, the wrecks of migrant boats left to sink out at sea and inside the port actively endangered fishing

vessels and their crews. Workers within the fishing industry continued to suffer obvious economic losses due to borderisation, which would fit the idea of economic harm put forward by Hillyard and Tombs' (2007). On the other hand, as I argued previously, loss alone should not be considered a type of social harm without being situated within its wider context. For instance, the impoverishment of the fishing industry coincided with the disappearance of a traditional way of life for Lampedusa, and it negatively affected related industries such as fish-canning. On the other hand, it could also be argued that fishing was a more dangerous and labour-intensive occupation than working in the tourism industry, so disincentivising this activity might have benefitted the community. Furthermore, it cannot be known whether fishing would have remained a sustainable industry for Lampedusa in the long term, given increasing stock depletion in the Mediterranean Sea due to chronic overfishing (FAO, 2020). The financial losses suffered by the fishing industry were surely damaging for the individuals involved, but they do not necessarily translate into economic social harm when viewed in isolation; rather, they must be examined in conjunction with the state's response and management of them.

As stated earlier, the financial losses suffered by fishers due to the borderisation of Lampedusa were occasionally compensated through the release of emergency public funds. While these forms of state compensation represented a redistributive attempt to remedy financial loss, they did nothing to address the underlying causes of this loss, and thus failed to successfully tackle the original distributive injustice (Fraser, 1998). The use of a compensation mechanisms designed to deal with emergencies removed accountability from the state to ensure that border-related activities did not cause harm to the local community. Drawing instead a parallel between migration and natural calamities, emergency compensation framed Lampedusans as victims of the irregular migration phenomenon, and the state as their saviour. Mirroring the situation of migrants being bestowed the gift of hospitality, as discussed in Chapter 7, suffering Lampedusans received instead the gift of financial relief. For both groups, the gift was a symbol of their subordinate position, as assistance was granted as an exceptional grace rather than as a right (Moulin, 2012). The endless cycle of damage and compensation was thus designed to perpetuate the economic and political powerlessness of Lampedusa, allowing the smothering of the fishing industry by borderisation to continue undisturbed. While this perpetual, self-fulfilling distributive injustice is an example of economic social harm, the same generative mechanisms also caused harm to the island's natural environment, as I explain in the following chapter.

Chapter 9: Natural frontiers: the bordered environment

In this chapter I consider the effects of borderisation on the natural environment of Lampedusa. While I examine the environmental impact of borderisation separately from its economic impact, the two are in fact closely related, as both tourism and fishing capitalised on Lampedusa's natural resources. Nevertheless, as White points out, environmental harm must not necessarily be considered subordinated to human interests, but may be seen as intrinsically detrimental and, as such, worthy of critical attention (2013, p. 35). I do not consider here how environmental issues affected tourism or fishing on Lampedusa, nor do I examine the impact that these industries had on the environment. Instead, I detail the effects of borderisation and its related activities on Lampedusa's marine, air, and land environment, including its human population. In the following sub-sections I thus consider once more the issue of sunken migrant boats, although this time not from the point of view of the financial and physical risk they represented for fishing vessels, but of the environmental impact that wrecks had both in the high seas and closer to Lampedusa's coasts. Wrecks that were taken onto dry land, however, also presented an environmental hazard; this was exacerbated by the bureaucratic processes regulating boats' disposal, which relied heavily on emergency responses triggered by crisis. I conclude this section by considering the proliferation of military radars and their feared impact on natural environment and public health, and their role in the Askavusa Collective's symbolic struggle to empower Lampedusa.

9.1 The environmental impact of migrant boats

In a previous section, I quote Ponente's bitter remark that authorities had been abandoning migrant boats to sink at sea without first cleaning them or stripping their paint. The decision to deliberately sink a boat normally involves a number of environmental considerations because, as detailed by Devault et al. (2017), sea vessels contain polluting substances which can contaminate the sea floor and cause long term damage to surrounding flora and fauna. The deliberate sinking of a boat should thus ideally be preceded by attempts to clean it from any potentially toxic chemical it contains (Cooke and Hoyt, 1970). Migrant boats sunk during sea-crossings, however, were likely to still have fuel in their tanks, and to carry other potentially polluting substances, as Ponente pointed out:

"Fuel, oil, engine oil, paint, the sea swallows all sorts of stuff."⁸¹ [Ponente]

In addition, they would likely contain some belongings left behind by migrant passengers, which might include other polluting substances such as plastics (SkyTG24, 2011). Many of these pollutants might not be immediately released into the sea, but leak out over time as a result of corrosion (Michel *et al.*, 2005). For the wrecks surrounding Lampedusa, this process was likely accelerated by being repeatedly dragged and broken up by fishing vessels' trawls. In many cases, the sinking of a migrant boat was likely not the result of an intentional act, but rather of a breakdown or accident, so little action could be taken to remove pollutants. However, if some boats were being scuttled or abandoned by rescuers, as Ponente and others maintained, then the potential harmful effects of these wrecks on the marine environment would arguably have been preventable. Even if the scuttling of migrant boats at high sea could not be conclusively demonstrated, environmental negligence was evident in the handling of migrant boats left to sink inside the port of Lampedusa. This can be seen in Figure 17 below, which shows migrant boats piling up near Molo Favalaro, partially sunken and in a state of abandonment. These boats had either reached the coast independently, or had been towed following a rescue operation, and had been left at the mercy of the elements:

"At the Molo Favalaro they just leave them there, then coastal storms break them up, even when they are moored."⁸² [Libeccio]



Figure 17 - Migrant boats amassed at the Molo Favalaro.

⁸¹ Original quote: "Carburante, olio, olio motore, le vernici, il mare inghiotte di tutto."

⁸² Original quote: "Al Molo Favalaro li lasciano lì, poi con le mareggiate anche legate si rompono."

The breaking up of small wooden boats such as those in Figure 17 would have likely taken no more than a few months. The main reason would have been lack of maintenance, as wooden boats needed to be treated regularly to remain waterproof:

*"Wooden boats, whether you like it or not, if there is water it will eventually leak. A litre today, a litre tomorrow, it will sink."*⁸³ [Ponente]

Another major factor, however, would have been adverse meteorological conditions, as winter storms regularly damaged the boats moored in the harbour (Agrigentonotizie, 2019b). However, Lampedusa's port was also vulnerable to a particular phenomenon locally known as 'marrobbio', a form of meteotsunami common in the Strait of Sicily (Candela *et al.*, 1999). Marrobbio could raise sea level by up to 150cm, suddenly and without warning, thus causing moored boats to capsize and sink (Libera Espressione, 2017). The eventual breaking and sinking of migrant boats moored in port was therefore both inevitable and entirely foreseeable. However, no measures appeared to ever be taken to minimise consequent marine pollution. When asked whether fuel and oil had been removed from the boats in the port, Ponente stated:

*"If there are any twenty, thirty litre barrels, you make them disappear. What is in the boat's tank, that will all come to the surface. Now one 100-horsepower engine has at least fifteen litres of oil inside, you don't take that out, it stays inside, then the engine breaks and it all goes into the sea. And the battery will go into the sea."*⁸⁴ [Ponente]

The expression "make them disappear" was a euphemism for theft, as opportunistic port users would take advantage of unattended barrels. However, no attempt was made by authorities to clean the boats, so their remaining contents eventually leaked into the otherwise crystal-clear seawater. This was a regular occurrence, although larger events occasionally made the news; for instance, the capsizing of a large boat moored at Molo Favalaro in November 2019, which spilled a considerable amount of fuel into the sea (Agrigentonotizie, 2019a). The boat's tank had never been emptied, despite having been moored in the port for five years.

The environmental harm caused by sunken migrant boats is difficult to quantify. Available literature on the environmental risks of ship scuttling mostly focuses on military vessels (Rogowska and Namieśnik, 2013; Devault, Beilvert and Winterton,

⁸³ Original quote: "La barca in legno finalmente vuoi o non vuoi dove c'è l'acqua entra. Un litro oggi, un litro domani, va a fondo."

⁸⁴ Original quote: "Se c'è qualche bidone di venti-trenta litri si fa in modo che sparisce. Quello che sta nei serbatoi della barca quello viene tutto a galla. Già un motore di 100 cavalli ha almeno quindici litri d'olio dentro il motore, quello non lo vai a togliere quello rimane lì, poi il motore si rompe e se ne va a mare. La batteria, e se ne va."

2017); however, these raise specific concerns related to hazardous materials such as ammunition or other explosives, which are not relevant to migrant boats. Oil and fuel spills, on the other hand, are known to be dangerous to the ecosystem, although literature on oil spills focuses mostly on industrial accidents or other major polluting events (Stephenson, 1993; Michel *et al.*, 2005). This makes it difficult to estimate the impact of the small boats used by sea-crossers. In this case, the environment was likely affected not so much by the scale of the individual incidents, but by their cumulative effect, given that thousands of boats had travelled to Lampedusa over the years. Another consideration was the vulnerability of Lampedusa's marine environment. For instance, a large nature reserve on the south coast of the island protected one of the last known nesting sites of the loggerhead sea turtle in Europe (Prazzi *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, the waters surrounding Lampedusa and its sister islands Linosa and Lampione were part of a large marine protected area, where all sea-related activities were strictly regulated in order to safeguard the fragile marine ecosystem (A.M.P. Isole Pelagie, 2018). Most of the island of Lampedusa (with the exception of the town area) is a Site of Community Importance (SCI) as defined in European Commission Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds; both designations form part of the EU-wide Natura 2000 network of protected areas (European Environment Agency, 2019). In addition to the issue of pollutants on migrant boats, the frequent incidents of trawls being snagged by wrecks also constituted a possible hazard when broken fishing gear became loose in the sea. This type of debris, known as ghost nets, can be lethal to marine wildlife, including sea turtles (Sheavly and Register, 2007; Blasi, Roscioni and Mattei, 2016).

The environmental damage caused by the poor management of migrant boats was not limited to the marine environment. Although less frequently over the last few years, the boats would sometimes be lifted out of the water and stored on dry land, creating dumps known as boat cemeteries. Depicted in Figure 18 below are the two cemeteries still present on the island at the time of my stay: one was at the edge of the town, between the port and the football field (left); the other by the former LORAN military base (right), on the opposite side of the island, away from residential areas. An additional past dumping ground for migrant boats had been in the area known as Taccio Vecchio, in the centre of Lampedusa, which had since become the island's waste management facility. The boats depicted in Figure 18 had been in Lampedusa for many years, as evidenced not only by their state of disrepair, but also by their large size, which suggested they had made the crossing from further afield than Tunisia.



Figure 18 - Migrant boats dumped near the football field (left) and the former LORAN base (right)

The island's boat cemeteries had much reduced in size by the time of my visit, but had collectively housed large numbers of boats over the years, as noted by Levant:

"Because they piled them up, hundreds and hundreds of them, [...] and they caused seepage into the soil, etc., they would end up being set on fire, they would end up in such a state..."⁸⁵ [Levant]

Levant here mentioned the fires that had periodically hit the boat cemeteries in the past, for example the one in Taccio Vecchio in 2010 (Giornale di Sicilia, 2010), or by the port in 2014⁸⁶ (Fulloni, 2014). Residents seemed to have little doubt that these fires had been started by those tasked with the boats' removal, perhaps to make more space or to cut down on costs. However, given the high incidence of fire-setting episodes on Lampedusa, I was inclined to take this version of events with more than a pinch of salt. The mishandling of potentially polluting substances, on the other hand, was undeniable. The seepage mentioned by Levant referred to the liquids inside the boats, such as fuel or engine oil, which had not been removed from the boats. Soil pollution by oil-based substances is a well-documented hazard, and so are the harmful effects of their fumes on humans (Rauckyte, Hargreaves and Pawlak, 2006; Wang *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the toxic smoke produced by oil-based substances when burnt would further exacerbate air pollution during fires. Still, migrant boats were simply lifted out of the water and dumped on land without being emptied of any waste products:

"Besides, they just dumped them with bulldozers, so they broke down, they fell apart, with all the waste still inside. They would not remove waste, organic waste, clothes, you have no idea of what's left on a migrant boat after disembarkation. And

⁸⁵ Original quote: "Perché loro li accumulavano, a centinaia e centinaia, [...] e quindi provocando infiltrazioni nel sottosuolo, etc., finivano incendiate, finivano in un modo..."

⁸⁶ A deliberate fire would hit the boat cemetery by the port again in 2020 (Scifo, 2020)

they became a haven for mice, and maybe some wily guy would go and dump their own waste there too, right? Because when you create a dump...⁸⁷ [Levant]

While so far unquantified and perhaps unquantifiable, the environmental harm linked to migrant boats on Lampedusa and at sea cannot be ignored. Some of this harm might have been inevitable, as in the case of accidents at sea, but in other cases, it was evident that damage was knowingly being allowed to occur. This harm was undoubtedly preventable. Lampedusans' proposal to clean up and then sink migrant boats in a controlled manner, for instance, would have reduced both the economic and the ecologic damage caused by wrecks in Lampedusa's waters. The reasons behind authorities' disregard for such a solution seem obscure, but become clearer in the following analysis of the processes that regulated the disposal of migrant boats.

9.2 A riddle wrapped in bureaucracy: the disposal of migrant boats

When authorities encountered a boat carrying irregular migrants, whether following interception at sea, search and rescue, or an independent landing, they would seize the vessel under article 12 of the 'Testo Unico sull'Immigrazione' (TUI), the consolidated legislative decree regulating non-EU immigration in Italy (Legislative Decree number 286 dated 25 July 1998). Article 12 criminalises a range of activities aimed at facilitating the irregular entry of non-EU nationals into the country and establishes that the means used to transport people irregularly must always be seized by law enforcement. This seizure is usually eventually followed by confiscation, after which the state may sell the vessels, entrust them to state bodies such as police or coast guard, or destroy them. However, legislation introduced in 2002 modified article 12 of the TUI to allow for seized migrant boats to be destroyed even without a final confiscation order (L.D. number 51 dated 4 April 2002; Law number 106 dated 7 June 2002). These provisions also gave the customs agency the power to commission specific firms to manage the urgent disposal of boats, even if this meant circumventing normal procedures regulating public procurement (Progetto Lampedusa, 2014b). The owners of seized vessels could still reclaim them if they had not committed the offence, although this was a rare occurrence; since sea-crossing was usually a one way journey, the boats were often either custom-built or already approaching the end of their life (Carling,

⁸⁷ Original quote: "Tra l'altro venivano scaricati così con le ruspe, così si degradavano, si sfasciavano, con tutti i rifiuti dentro. Non venivano eliminati i rifiuti, rifiuti organici, vestiti, non hai idea di quello che rimane su un barcone dopo lo sbarco. E diventavano ricettacolo di topi, e magari qualche furbetto andava lì a scaricare anche i suoi rifiuti, no? Perché quando nasce la discarica..."

2007). Furthermore, as shown by the case of Tunisian fishermen Bayoudh and Zenzri I mentioned in the previous chapter, even when boat owners were able to reclaim seized vessels, these were unlikely to have survived the lengthy legal process, as seized migrant boats were treated as waste destined for destruction. In the case of Lampedusa, they would be crushed, loaded on cargo ships, and taken to landfill sites on the mainland.

Despite these seemingly straightforward provisions, in practice the treatment and disposal of migrant boats on the island was a fraught process. There seemed to be no system in place to deal with the boats in a methodical manner. Instead, wrecks would periodically accumulate in port and on land until a crisis point was reached, making emergency measures necessary:

"They piled them up, [...] and then they would put the disposal [of boats] out to tender, using the excuse of emergency to do it illegally"⁸⁸ [Levant]

Levant's comment about illegality refers to the ability of public bodies to circumvent the normal restrictions regulating competitive tenders for reasons of urgency. For instance, the disposal in 2019 of the fishing boat 'Maka', shown in the previous chapter in Figure 14 (right), required an emergency procedure triggered by the boat's partial sinking following bad weather. According to the customs agency, the boat had been recovered in 2015 and kept in Lampedusa's port ever since (Agenzia Dogane Monopoli, 2019). The agency declared that, should the boat sink completely, the release of the boat's fuel and oil into the water would cause "very serious" environmental harms, affecting the economy of the port and endangering the security of other vessels (ibid.). For these reasons, usual tender procedures had to be bypassed:

"When, for reasons of extreme urgency which are caused by events unforeseeable to the awarding administration, the terms for open proceedings or for restricted proceedings or for competitive proceedings with negotiation cannot be respected, the administrations can award public contracts through a negotiated procedure without the previous publication of a call for tenders"⁸⁹ (Agenzia Dogane Monopoli, 2019)

The bypassing of tender procedures allowed the awarding authority to approach specific companies directly to ask for quotes, and to waive the checks usually needed to ensure

⁸⁸ Original text: "Li accumulavano, [...] e poi facevano mega appalti per smaltirli, in maniera illegale con la scusa dell'emergenza"

⁸⁹ Original text: "Quando per ragioni di estrema urgenza derivanti da eventi imprevedibili dall'amministrazione aggiudicatrice, i termini per le procedure aperte o per le procedure ristrette o per le procedure competitive con negoziazione, non possano essere rispettati, le medesime amministrazioni possono aggiudicare appalti pubblici mediante una procedura negoziata senza previa pubblicazione di un bando di gara"

the quotes were realistic. The case of the boat Maka was emblematic of the management of migrant boats. While the conditions of the wreck posed an undeniable danger to the port's environment and safety, these conditions had been created by the management of the boat itself, such as the failure to empty its tank. While bad weather had precipitated the state of emergency, it remains debatable whether this truly had been *"caused by events unforeseeable to the awarding administration"*. Nevertheless, emergency processes dominated all stages of the disposal of migrant boats. According to Italian journalists Sanfilippo & Scialoja (2010), for example, the former boat cemetery at Taccio Vecchio had been created in 2006 by the Protezione Civile through the use of emergency powers. These powers had been used to circumvent environmental restrictions on the use of Taccio Vecchio, which was located within both the Site of Community Importance and the Special Protection Area. The move was challenged by Legambiente, a national environmentalist organisation, which obtained the seizure of the site pending further investigations. After two years of legal wrangling, the matter was settled by arson, as the boats went up in smoke on Boxing Day 2008. The company commissioned with destroying the boats, however, remained entitled to their fee, which mayor De Rubeis made conditional to the payment of a large bribe, one of several offences for which he was later imprisoned (Ziniti, 2018). According to Sanfilippo & Scialoja (2010), the company had been awarded every emergency contract for the destruction of migrant boats since the year 2000, with the company owner's close friendship with a powerful Sicilian politician raising questions over the transparency of the emergency procurement process. After each contract would end, disposal would stop, and boats would keep accumulating until the next emergency. The repeated recourse to emergency powers to trigger the disposal of migrant boats not only hindered transparency in the administration of public funds, potentially fostering mismanagement and illegal activity, but consistently restored the state of crisis it was meant to resolve.

The status quo also prevented the implementation of alternative solutions. Libeccio, for example, told me of several attempts made by Lampedusans to reuse some of the migrant boats; in one case, Libeccio and others had wanted to turn a boat which had arrived in perfect conditions into a floating classroom on which to teach schoolchildren about migration:

"Some boats arrive new, but really new, both the wood and the engine, beautiful boats, large, they would have been perfect for our aims. However, Italian bureaucracy, we always end up saying the same things, and then all these boats,

*they lifted them, put them on dry land, they ended up like this, and then they crushed everything.*⁹⁰ [Libeccio]

In this case, the request to utilize a boat for cultural purposes would have required an exceptional dispensation, as the TUI made no provisions for the state to entrust seized boats to private citizens or associations (Progetto Lampedusa, 2014a). However, requests to consider alternative ways to destroy the boats also met difficulties. Unlike quick emergency demolitions, such proposals would need to include very detailed environmental, safety, and financial assessments to be even considered for formal approval. Instances of local proposals included an offer by the administration of Lampedusa to take charge of the removal from the port of the two boats depicted in Figure 14, including the fishing boat Maka, while a private company had offered to dispose of abandoned boats for free in return for the scrap metal (Puato, 2019). Neither of these proposals were considered, and emergency demolitions remained the norm. This was a source of consternation for Levant, who had hoped that the raw materials from the boats could become a resource for the community:

*"I thought that a cooperative made up of young people could have done all sorts of things with that wood: from street furniture, to benches, to objects, even gadgets to sell to tourists [...]."*⁹¹ [Levant]

The management of migrant boats thus remained completely outside the control of the local population, who had to live with the long-term impact of their presence on the island. Even if the bureaucracy had allowed it, however, locals had limited resources to take any initiatives independently. Discussing the issue of migrant boats slowly sinking inside the port, Ponente explained that the community was completely dependent on external intervention to remove them:

*"Because there is no money to lift them. Because if you get a mobile crane to lift them, then the crane owner will rightly want at least €100. The port authority doesn't have the funds, the council doesn't have jurisdiction, so you get damage to the environment, damage to tourism, damage to us fishers. And [the boats] just stay where they are."*⁹² [Ponente]

⁹⁰ Original text: "Arrivavano barche nuove, ma nuove veramente, sia di legno e di motore, barche belle, grandi, da poter fare quelle cose erano perfette. Solo che la burocrazia in Italia, parliamo sempre di quelle cose, che poi tutte queste barche, le tiravano, le mettevano a secco, poi finivano così, e poi hanno triturato tutto."

⁹¹ Original quote: "Immaginavo che una cooperativa di giovani avrebbe potuto fare di tutto con quel legno, dagli arredi urbani, alle panchine, agli oggetti anche gadget da vendere per il turismo [...]"

⁹² Original quote: "Perché non ci sono i soldi per tirarle su. Perché se tu chiami l'autogrù per sollevarle quello poi almeno €100 li vuole, giustamente. L'autorità portuale non ce

While all borderisation-related issues were under the control of regional, national, or supranational public authorities, the local population had no resources to remedy the substantial environmental impact caused by the by-products of border control.

9.3 Environmental harm and the military frontier

While the environmental damage examined in the two sections above was directly connected to the borderisation process, environmental harms linked to the presence of state forces were not exclusively linked to irregular migration and its management. As mentioned in previous sections, the militarisation of Lampedusa had long preceded the arrival of migrants (NY Times News Service, 1986). For instance, the stationing of the Italian Air Force dated back to 1958, although their presence at the time was more limited. According to Orsini (2016), only a few dozen military and law enforcement agents would normally be present on Lampedusa at the time, but numbers increased dramatically as the island's role within Mediterranean migration became more prominent. As one of Orsini's respondents stated, there would usually be hundreds of military and law enforcement agents on the island, increasing to thousands during crises, an unprecedented presence in times of peace (Orsini, 2016, p. 142).

While the size of contingents would change in accordance with migration-related events, however, the military significance of Lampedusa did not. As Levant noted, Lampedusa's strategic geographical position made of it a frontier regardless of whether anyone crossed it:

"But you need to understand one thing: Lampedusa is the door to Europe, it's closer to Africa than to Sicily, even if migrants didn't come it would remain a border, so a degree of militarisation is part of the border. Even if... I mean, the military presence on the island is not all due to migrants, ok? Unfortunately, that's the fate of the border."⁹³ [Levant]

Still, the formerly unobtrusive military presence had in recent years escalated to the more visible stationing of troops and, crucially, the proliferation of military infrastructure. Land-based radars in particular had been a source of much apprehension for the community, and the Askavusa Collective represented the loudest dissenting voice (Collettivo Askavusa, 2018; Tucci, 2018). In spring 2018, Askavusa members

l'ha, il comune è fuori dalla competenza portuale, perciò subisce danno ambientale, danno turistico, danno a noi pescatori. E rimangono lì."

⁹³ Original quote: "Tu devi avere chiaro però una cosa, che Lampedusa è la porta d'Europa, è più vicina all'Africa che alla Sicilia, anche se non arrivassero i migranti è confine, quindi una dose di militarizzazione è nel confine. Anche se... Cioè, non è tutta da addebitare ai migranti, la presenza militare sull'isola, ok? È il destino purtroppo del confine."

were collecting signatures to mobilise the population against a new military radar being assembled in Cape Ponente, the western tip of the island. The Fixed Air Defence Radar RAT-31DL, depicted in Figure 19 below, is a long range air reconnaissance radar operated by the Italian Air Force as part of NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (Aeronautica Militare, 2019). With a detection range of circa 500km, the radar can detect and track a variety of airborne threats such as aircraft or ballistic missiles (Del Genio *et al.*, 2015). The RAT-31DL is likely the most powerful radar on Lampedusa, and certainly the largest: as the image shows, its radome easily dwarfs the surrounding landscape.



Figure 19 - Completion of the radome of RAT-31DL in May 2018

The size and power of this radar were a source of environmental and health concerns for some locals. For example, the strong electromagnetic radiations it would emit once operative were feared to be dangerous to humans and animals:

"There are two opposing hypotheses on the correlation between radiation and tumours, the causation cannot be demonstrated, but it is proven that heavy exposure is a co-cause, and that it disturbs insects' flight." [Forum Meeting – 24 May 2018].

While the meeting attendant acknowledged the lack of a proven causal link between electromagnetic radiation and tumours, retrospective studies have shown an increased risk of cancer among personnel exposed to military radars (Richter *et al.*, 2000; Degraeve *et al.*, 2009). The radar company's own safety report acknowledged that powerful electromagnetic radiations could be harmful to humans, but concluded that, since most of RAT-31DL's transmissions would be directed upwards for air surveillance, there would be no danger to those on ground level (Felolo, 2005). It did not consider, however, what impact radiations may have on flying fauna such as insects and migratory birds, particularly considering the radar's location within both a Site of Community Importance (SCI) as defined in European Commission Habitats Directive

(92/43/EEC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (European Environment Agency, 2019). In addition, adjacent the radar laid a recently reforested area which had become a haven for the many species of migratory birds flying through Lampedusa every year. According to a literature review by Balmori (2009), there is ample evidence in the field of pathophysiology that continuous exposure to electromagnetic radiation can have negative long term effects on both vegetal and animal wildlife. The potential risk to birds was eventually acknowledged in the radar's building company's announcement in 2019 that it would sponsor a two-year research programme to monitor RAT-31DL's impact on the habitat of the Eleonora's falcon on Lampedusa (Leonardo, 2019).

Beyond RAT-31DL's specific safety credentials, however, Askavusa were concerned about how it would contribute to the cumulative impact of all radars and transmitters present on the island. The area of Ponente was already mostly occupied by military installations, such as the now disestablished LORAN-C transmitter NATO station, the Italian Air Force base, and various military equipment which formed what Tucci describes as a forest of radars (2018). According to Askavusa, at least eight military radars were present on Lampedusa as of 2018, plus a non-specified number of antennas and other transmitting/receiving equipment whose purpose was not always known (Collettivo Askavusa, 2018). One of these, the Advanced Coastal Surveillance Radar (ACSR) model ELM-2226, was the subject of a long-standing dispute due to suspected non-compliance with national safety regulations:

"Near Capo Grecale, where the lighthouse is, there is an ELTA System on a lorry. There are 3 of these, 2 near Ponente. These were removed in Sardinia. The one in Capo Grecale belongs to the Guardia di Finanza, charges were pressed in 2015, since then it has been turned off, but it is still there." [Forum Meeting – 24 May 2018]

As the attendee mentioned, approval for the installation of several models of this radar was revoked by the Regional Administrative Court (TAR) in Sardinia in 2011 due to environmental and safety concerns. These were summarised in a technical report compiled in 2010 by Sardinia's Regional Agency for the Protection of the Environment (ARPAS, 2010). Asked to evaluate the impact of the installation of an ELM-2226 in the town of Tresnuraghes, the Agency found that electromagnetic radiations emitted from the radar were likely to exceed the safety limits within a range of 100 meters established by Italian law. Following a legal challenge relying on Tresnuraghes as a precedent, Askavusa obtained a commitment that the ELM-2226 radar in Lampedusa would be turned off. However, as pointed out by the meeting attendant in the field note above, there was no way of verifying whether this had actually happened.



Figure 20 - Finance Police ACSR ELM-2226 in Capo Grecale, north-east tip of Lampedusa

As Figure 20 above shows, during my stay in 2018 radar ELM-2226 was still in place, mounted on top of a Finance Police lorry and parked just a few metres away from the road leading to the lighthouse of Capo Grecale. The tall, rusty antenna on the left of the picture appeared to be unrelated to the radar, and not currently in use. The area surrounding the radar was flat and open, with a short fence being the only obstacle preventing members of the public from getting closer than a couple of metres. It was not possible for me to establish whether the radar was indeed shut down at the time, although I found it implausible that it had been left in place for years if there were no plans to use it again. As another informant noted, residents had no means of knowing whether institutional promises made in response to their protestations were genuine. Another example was the city's civil telecommunication antenna, located near the roof of the local elementary school:

"The power of the telecommunication antenna in the middle of town was lowered, or at least that's what we were told. The issue is not power, but the proximity with the school. There were many letters sent on this. There is nobody to check that emissions were actually lowered." [Forum Meeting – 24 May 2018].

There was a widely perceived lack of scrutiny by local authorities when it came to radars and similar installations, particularly when it came to the assessment of environmental and health risks. The Capo Grecale radar depicted above, for instance, had not gone through the same approval process as its counterparts in Sardinia, according to residents:

"We asked for a census of all radar installations and the regulation of new installations. The radar in Capo Grecale was put there without any permission or

request for authorisation. Three mayors have ignored our request for census and regulation.” [Forum Meeting – 24 May 2018].

Mounting the radar on a lorry, residents suggested, had simply been a way to circumvent national regulations that might apply to fixed installations. At the same time, residents believed that the local administrations had failed to impose any local regulation at all to restrict the proliferation of radiation-transmitting equipment on the island, allowing unmonitored levels of electromagnetic pollution.

Askavusa’s request for a public register or other record allowing residents to scrutinise the functions of installations aimed to remedy a perceived lack of scrutiny by the local authority. Despite efforts to create a census independently, Askavusa found that even when military radars could be identified by sight, their specifications and purposes remained confidential (Collettivo Askavusa, 2018). It was also impossible to establish what the real-life impact of the electromagnetic radiations emitted by military and civilian radars might be, as their ranges would inevitably overlap given the small size of the island. A further issue, as previously mentioned by Tucci (2018), was the possible duplication of functions, given that Finance Police, Italian Navy, and Coast Guard each appeared to operate their own network of coastal radars.

As I mentioned earlier on in this section, Askavusa members argued that electromagnetic pollution may be linked to the high prevalence of cancer on Lampedusa. According to data collected by Sicily’s Department of Health, the islands of Lampedusa and Linosa showed the highest standardised mortality rate (SMR) for all cancers among males in the whole region (Regione Siciliana, 2016). Askavusa campaigned for the commissioning of an epidemiological study to investigate the upward trend of Lampedusa’s SMR over the last decade, which had put this small island ahead of large metropolitan areas like Catania or notoriously polluted industrial centres such as Augusta (Collettivo Askavusa, 2019). When speaking with me later on, however, members acknowledged that the harmful effect of radars on Lampedusans’ health might never be proven, partly because they did not expect an epidemiological study to ever be commissioned, and partly because the small population and its particular circumstances would likely prevent a causal link from ever being conclusively established. I was surprised by the member’s privately fatalistic attitude, given the vehemently ideological battle they continued to wage in public. This apparent contradiction was part of a deliberate engagement strategy:

“The collection of signatures is not meant to stop the radar, as the Collective are aware that they can do nothing about it. The purpose is to talk to people and raise awareness, and to leave a documented trail of Lampedusa’s objection” [Field note]

The Collective was fully aware of Lampedusa's lack of bargaining power and the consequent inevitability of militarisation, whatever its consequences on the local community. The purpose of their protest was instead to establish a record of resistance, so that future generations could find proof of the population's objections and counter claims of acquiescence. Despite the lack of conclusive supporting evidence, raising the issue of the environmental and health harms linked to the proliferation of radars was considered the best way to attract the interest of the community.

Despite general agreement with these concerns, however, the community remained reluctant to openly show support. The field note below summarises my attendance of an anti-radar protest organised by Askavusa at the end of April 2018, which was due to begin at 9am:

"[...] despite it being later than 9am there is still nobody in the square collecting signatures. The only person waiting there is a Jehovah's witness, whom I am surprised to see. Closer to 10 some young people arrive and set up a table to collect signatures. After a while I approach them to ask for info, but I am given almost no information." [Field note]

At lunchtime, I raised the topic of the event with two friends: informant A, a member of Askavusa, and informant B, their parent:

"[Informant A] expresses disappointment at the small number of people attending. [Informant B] says that when there is a cause like this one where people should fight for the common good only Lampedusan residents who actually come from outside seem to care enough to want to do something." [Field note]

Informants A and B had always lived in Lampedusa, but as they noted, some of the more vocal supporters of Askavusa originated from elsewhere and had moved to the island in recent times. This view was consistent with Tucci's observations that Askavusa's resistance against military presence was much more effective outside of the island than inside of it (2018). Askavusa's struggle against militarisation was an example of a glocal conflict which fit within wider movements of resistance, attracting the support of interested communities away from the island. The island's local community, on the other hand, seemed visibly apathetic towards the issue. According to Forum attendees, Lampedusans' priority remained safeguarding the tourism industry from negative publicity:

"Some opposition to the raising of these issues is possible due to usual fears for the success of the tourist season." [Forum Meeting – 24 May 2018]

Nevertheless, this does not mean that outsiders were more likely to be approached by protesters than residents. For instance, my obvious foreignness did not seem to encourage those collecting signatures at the anti-radar protest to engage with me; on the contrary, they appeared suspicious and reluctant to provide me with any information at all. A possible explanation is that I might have been mistaken for a tourist, to whom protesters would not wish to be seen advertising Lampedusa's problems. My impression, however, was that protesters simply mistrusted my expression of interest; rather than suggesting solidarity, it raised suspicions over my intentions. This reminded me of when I was suspected of being a Frontex spy due to my familiarity with basic nautical terms, as I mentioned in Chapter 6. These episodes of mistrust were indicative of persistent suspicion towards national and supranational institutions, whose interests were perceived to consistently override local concerns.

Despite these displays of resistance, therefore, the whole community was aware of its powerlessness in the face of militarisation and its environmental impact. This was, at least in part, linked to Lampedusa's role within Mediterranean migration. The Finance Police's installation of ELM-2226 radars, for instance, was part of a wider project of coastal surveillance financed by the European Union's External Borders Fund for the purpose of combating irregular migration (di Paolo, 2012). On the other hand, the equipment operated by the Air Force (such as RAT-31DL) or by the Military Intelligence Service had clear defence and security functions. Residents were aware that many military installations on Lampedusa had purposes other than border control:

"[T]he radars are just ears on Tunisia and Libya rather than monitoring the sea around Lampedusa. Radar may not intercept boats at all, something people suspected back on 3 October 2013, when the migrant boat sank." [Forum Lampedusa Solidale 24 May 2018]

The reference to the shipwreck of 2013, when a large migrant boat capsized just off the coast of Lampedusa killing almost 400 passengers, exemplified residents' reservations over the usefulness of military presence. As the proliferation of forces and equipment had corresponded with the borderisation of Lampedusa, it was generally understood that the two would be linked. However, since migrants kept coming to Lampedusa, and many of them kept dying at sea, then residents had concluded that the military presence served neither border control nor humanitarian purposes. While the threat of irregular migration had been used to justify all forms of state presence, the militarisation of Lampedusa was not rooted in popular support or consent, but in the essential powerlessness of the local population in the face of national and supranational defence strategies and alliances. In the next section I examine the mechanisms of insecurity

used to strongarm the population into accepting the military use of Lampedusa which could be detrimental to its own wellbeing.

9.4 Ecological justice in the state of exception

The management and disposal of the boats used by sea-crossers had an undeniable negative impact on the natural environment of Lampedusa. As the evidence presented above shows, much of this negative impact was both foreseeable and preventable, and there was no sign that measures were being implemented to at least minimise this damage in the future. While different scholars embrace different definitions of environmental harm, topics such as pollution, illegal disposal of waste, and general interference with wildlife and habitats have all featured heavily within green criminology (Ruggiero and South, 2010). These definitions are succinctly summarised by White (2013), who describes environmental harm as having two components: firstly, the presence of injury to the environment, including humans or other animals; secondly, the facilitation of such injury by state, corporate, or other actors who have the power to influence its legitimacy. Environmental harm is thus frequently examined as one of the structural harms produced by neo-liberal societies, usually as a consequence of environmental concerns being subordinated to economic interests (Tombs and Hillyard, 2004). However, the case of Lampedusa is different.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the arrival of tourism on the island changed its economic order towards a neo-liberal model, favouring competition and ever-expanding growth. This undoubtedly had negative repercussions on the environment, massively increasing production of waste and vehicle pollution. However, these effects were relatively short-lived, and manageable at a local level. During my stay in 2018, for instance, measures were being taken by the council to ban single-use plastic and encourage recycling. The environmental damage caused by borderisation, on the other hand, was continuous, long term, and beyond the control of the local community. Rather than being subordinated to market forces, environmental concerns were subordinated to the priorities of border control, and environmental social harms were facilitated by political and legal structures rather than socio-economic ones.

The link between borderisation and environmental social harm has so far remained evidently unexplored, but the case of Lampedusa illuminates the mechanisms through which it can be perpetuated. Similarly to the compensation mechanisms for economic losses by the fishing industry highlighted in the previous chapter, the disposal of migrant boats relied on regularly resorting to emergency powers, which allowed for customary environmental safeguards to be circumvented. The expediency of emergency powers was contingent on the presence of a crisis to trigger their authorization. Ironically, the

crisis was often environmental in nature, as shown by the case of the fishing boat *Maka* summarised earlier in this chapter; this created an incentive for authorities to wait for bad situations to become worse in order to deal more quickly with the aftermath. Rather than building environmental protections within a standardised system to regulate the disposal of migrant boats, current practice was instead based on the routine accumulation of environmental damage. The routinisation of environmental harm was based not on a lack of environmental regulations, but on the ability of state institutions to make exceptions to them. As argued by Agamben (1995, 2005), the power to legally make exceptions to the law is a routinised form of government which is intrinsic to state sovereignty. Building on this concept, Smith suggests that nation-states cannot be entrusted with the legal protection of the environment precisely because of the power to make exceptions constituting state sovereignty itself (2009). On Lampedusa, the framing of irregular migration as an emergency sustained a perennial state of exception which affected not only migrants, but also the resident community, who were deprived of their environmental rights.

The prioritisation of border control may explain why equipment such as Advanced Coastal Surveillance Radar (ACSR) model ELM-2226, which had been removed elsewhere due to non-compliance with Italian law on radiation safety, appeared to have been installed in Lampedusa without the submission of planning applications or safety assessments. What it should not explain, however, was the impunity with which military installations continued to proliferate on the island despite the population's concerns over health outcomes. During peacetime, international obligations apply on military activity to prevent environmental harm (Shelton and Cutting, 2015). Since military surveillance was separate from migration control, there was no reason to grant it official exceptional dispensations. However, I suggest that the militarisation of Lampedusa was intertwined with its borderisation, which opened the door for the effective expropriation of Lampedusa's territory from its population. This would also explain why, as observed by Tucci (2018), Lampedusa's activist movements had such limited impact on their own communities. The result of this expropriation is the continuing, state-facilitated infliction of social harm on Lampedusa's natural and human environments.

Chapter 10: The border spectacle: trauma, media abuse, and the harms of crisis-driven research

In this chapter I examine a fundamental dimension of borderisation, what De Genova calls border spectacle (2002, p. 436). I show how the border spectacle was a recognisable reality on Lampedusa, and how its effects were visible to its community. While reluctantly playing different roles in the performance of the border spectacle, residents had little to no power to influence its overarching narrative. In fact, the spectacle consistently brought unwanted media, political, and academic attention to Lampedusa, all of which interfered with life on the island in deep and long-lasting ways and perpetuated the disempowerment of its community. I examine the implications of giving space to Lampedusan residents' voices when this was not accompanied with an awareness of the border trauma that afflicts this community. This raises critical methodological and ethical issues for border and migration research, which I argue must be addressed as part of a zemiological framework to avoid conducting research that perpetuates border harms by being oblivious to its structural facilitators. Acknowledging the so far unexplored cultural social harms of intensive research on marginalised communities is an essential contribution to migration-related critical scholarship.

10.1 Border spectacles: Lampedusa as stage

According to De Genova, while much unauthorised migration is the result of legal processes which are largely invisible and often "*not terribly dramatic*" (such as overstaying visas), the spectacle of border enforcement offers a visible representation of illegality as a natural fact, detached from its wider legal and political context (2002, p. 436). Cuttitta has written in depth about Lampedusa as the stage of one such border spectacle, where the spectacularised exclusion of sea-crossers is performed for the benefit of faraway audiences (2012, 2015). The spectacle has long turned Lampedusa into a symbol, or in Cuttitta's words, a synecdoche not only of borders, but of migration in general (2015, p. 32). This transformation, Cuttitta maintains, is an inevitable feature of the borderisation process (2012): indeed, as I show in this chapter, the production of the border is inextricably linked with its representation, and each influences the other. Any analysis of the impact of borderisation would thus be incomplete without due consideration of the role played by the border spectacle.

In Lampedusa, residents appeared acutely aware of their island's position as the stage of a border spectacle, often using words such as scene, staging, narrative, theatre, and indeed spectacle when describing key moments in the island's recent history and their representation by media, politicians, humanitarian organisations, or researchers. This

was particularly true for Ostro, who stated that, while different in nature, these representations had the common element of serving a purpose for their narrator:

*"Lampedusa as you know has been for years a symbol and has been repeatedly used for this or that purpose."*⁹⁴ [Ostro]

The spectacle was therefore a form of objectification and exploitation of Lampedusa, removing from its inhabitants the power to control their own narrative. As I examine in this chapter, while Lampedusa was the main stage of the spectacle, its residents alternatively played the role of passive bystanders, background actors, spectators, or at times protagonists, but were rarely authors. Even when playing an active part, however, residents had no control over how they would be represented by outsider narrators. In the following sections I detail the ways in which Lampedusans' lives were altered by the border spectacle, examining how the spectacle impacted on daily life on the island, how it fostered conflict within community and prevented the social cohesion needed for its political empowerment, how it affected residents' understanding of their own reality, and the ways in which it interfered with the community's self-perception and identity.

10.1.1 Finding the plot: narratives of crisis

As repeatedly demonstrated in previous chapters, the management of migration on Lampedusa was characterised by the recurrence of crisis. According to De Genova, the representation of crisis is a key feature of borderisation: setting crisis management as the border's *raison d'être*, it makes it essential for this function to be performed visibly to justify and normalise the border's existence (2013a). Peripheral zones such as islands are ideal locations for these representations; while becoming hyper-visible in times of crisis, they simultaneously remain hidden from the public's gaze, allowing narratives go unchallenged (Mountz, 2010). Ostro recounted two such representations of crisis in Lampedusa's recent history:

*"In 2011 Lampedusa was used as a set, as a stage for the invasion, with Berlusconi. So, the whole world or at least the whole of Italy was looking at Lampedusa expecting an invasion from North Africa which was in turmoil and would have invaded us all. In 2012 it was Ebola, same framework, more or less."*⁹⁵ [Ostro]

⁹⁴ Original quote: "Lampedusa come sai anche tu stessa è da anni un simbolo, ed è stata utilizzata tante volte per un motivo o per un altro"

⁹⁵ Original quote: "Nel 2011 Lampedusa è stata utilizzata come set, come stage dell'invasione, con Berlusconi. Quindi tutto il mondo o almeno tutta Italia guardava Lampedusa aspettandosi l'invasione da parte del Nord Africa che era in tumulto e ci avrebbero invaso a tutti. Nel 2012 abbiamo avuto l'ebola, più o meno, stesso framework."

Ostro here referenced two key events. The first was the large increase in arrivals to Lampedusa from North Africa which had followed the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011, defined by then prime minister Silvio Berlusconi as a "*human tsunami*" (Triandafyllidou, 2014, p. 15). The other was the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa, placed by Ostro in 2012, but which had in fact begun in 2013 and most affected Lampedusa in 2014, when baseless claims that migrants carrying the disease were landing on the island were widely shared on Facebook. Once again, Lampedusa's economy was severely impacted by the negative coverage, as frightened tourists cancelled their bookings en masse (Burato, 2015). Ostro's statement that the two events followed the same framework referred to a common narrative of Lampedusa as an omen, a symbol of the Italian and European publics' worst fears over migration coming to fruition, and inviting decisive action to stop the danger from spreading to the rest of the region. Importantly, these moments were not mere representations, but productions of crisis. As mentioned in Chapter 7, the events of 2011 were widely understood as the result of deliberate policy by the then Italian government, whereas the Ebola crisis was the result of fabricated news (Campesi, 2011; Cuttitta, 2014; Burato, 2015). Ostro saw these events as part of a pattern of cyclically manufactured crises:

*"Obviously all these moments in the public narrative are artificial. I mean, in 2011 there was no invasion, in 2012... well, they are controversial. In 2011 there wasn't this great risk of invasion, in 2013, people had died the previous year too, in 2014 when here it was all about hospitality, we did the same the previous year, we do the same today. Now they talk of a tired and racist Lampedusa, but actually nothing has changed."*⁹⁶ [Ostro]

The media and political attention on Lampedusa did not faithfully depict reality, but produced biased, exaggerated, or false accounts which created artificial emergencies. This remains true as I write this chapter in the summer of 2020, when Lampedusa has been in the news following unfounded claims published by a right-wing national newspaper alleging that migrants steal and eat residents' pets (Ravana, 2020). The story is quickly exposed as fabrication, but a new crisis follows at the end of August as migrants are accused of infecting tourists with COVID-19 and causing the disease to spread further afield (Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2020).

⁹⁶ Original quote: "Chiaramente tutti questi momenti della narrazione pubblica sono artificiali. Nel senso, nel 2011 non c'era un'invasione, nel 2012... cioè, sono controversi. Nel 2011 non c'era questo grande rischio di invasione, nel 2013 le persone erano morte anche l'anno prima, nel 2014 quando qua si accoglieva lo facevi anche l'anno prima, lo fai anche oggi. Adesso che si parla di una Lampedusa stanca e razzista in realtà non è cambiato nulla."

Such purported emergencies were recurrent, with successive years becoming emblematic of an overarching narrative tied to specific events. According to Ostro, 2011 and 2012 were symbolic of the so-called 'Tunisian invasion' and of the Ebola scare, with Lampedusa becoming a symbol of the dangers of irregular migration; 2013 and 2014, on the other hand, were linked to the major shipwrecks of 3 and 11 October, followed by the institution of the Italian Navy's SAR mission Mare Nostrum and a renewed emphasis on Lampedusa as symbol of safety and hospitality for migrants. However, as Ostro pointed out, fluctuations in the number of arrivals, public health concerns, shipwrecks, and the rescue of migrants at sea had long been part of Lampedusa's reality, and were by no means limited to the majorly publicised events mentioned above. Nevertheless, each year was now a metonymy for specific events and related narratives. I found this to be true even among Lampedusans, suggesting that Ostro's misplacing of the Ebola crisis in 2012 might have been due to 2013 and 2014 being tied so strongly to other events in the island's collective memory. Indeed, although the Ebola crisis had had substantial negative impact on the island's economy, it was never mentioned to me by any other resident.

The major shipwrecks of October 2013 catapulted Lampedusa on the front page of media outlets throughout the world. The sudden hyper-visibility of border deaths was followed by a shift in the media and political narrative around Mediterranean Sea migration, moving from the language of invasion to that of humanitarianism and rescue (Mazzara, 2016). The newly created humanitarian crisis temporarily redefined Lampedusa's border spectacle:

"Mare Nostrum begins and in Lampedusa [...] the spectacle of hospitality is staged. So, you have a Lampedusa which is famous worldwide as a place of first aid, safety, hospitality. However as the years go by the national and European political discourse changes; Lampedusa is no longer needed to show that Italy is welcoming [migrants], instead we got a bit tired of being welcoming, and so the narrative changes again. This winter for example many newspapers told of a tired Lampedusa, a bit racist, that does not cope anymore and that must be left alone to live off tourism and nothing else."⁹⁷ [Ostro]

⁹⁷ Original quote: "Avviano Mare Nostrum e a Lampedusa [...] viene messo in scena lo spettacolo dell'accoglienza. E quindi tu hai una Lampedusa che è famosa in tutto il mondo come luogo di primo soccorso, salvezza, accoglienza; se non fosse che più passano gli anni più cambia il discorso politico nazionale e europeo, Lampedusa non serve più a dimostrare che l'Italia accoglie, e anzi ci siamo anche un po' stufati di accogliere, e quindi ricambia la narrativa. Quest'inverno per esempio molti giornali hanno raccontato di una Lampedusa stanca, un po' razzista, che non ce la fa più e che deve essere lasciata in pace, deve vivere di turismo e basta."

According to Levant, the narrative of rescue and hospitality was part of efforts by the Italian government to encourage other EU member states to increase their contribution to the management of irregular migrants crossing the external borders:

*"Immediately afterwards there was a phase during which the topic rose to the top of the European agenda, also through the language of... the language of solidarity, because the response should be one of solidarity."*⁹⁸ [Levant]

Levant was referring to the EU's refugee relocation scheme, the mechanism through which asylum seekers would be transferred to member states with lower numbers of arrivals (Trauner, 2016). Levant believed the scheme represented a step forward in relieving the burden put on border states such as Italy by the Dublin regulations, which usually required countries of first entry to process the asylum claims of migrants entering the European Union. However, Levant thought that this had not lasted long:

*"So between 2013 and 2015 it seemed they had started to think differently, agreeing on the principle that countries of first arrival, Italy and Greece, could not be the sole recipients of a humanitarian emergency that became more severe each year. And then everything stopped, and we moved backwards. Then in 2015, what happened is that Europe imposed the Hotspot model on Italy and Greece, so a commitment to identify all those who get off the boats, also because of a fear of terrorism... I'm making a summary now, but a lot of things happened in those two years."*⁹⁹ [Levant]

According to Levant's and Ostro's accounts, representations of Lampedusa in the media and political discourse were determined by the interests of the Italian government, which in turn were strongly influenced by its relationship with fellow EU member states. However, Lampedusa's usefulness as a political symbol relied on the construction of crisis narratives, which in turn depended on the representation of emergency. Emergency and crisis thus remained a necessary feature of Lampedusa's borderisation, as argued by Cuttitta (2015).

⁹⁸ Original quote: "C'è stata una fase immediatamente successiva in cui il tema si è imposto sull'agenda europea, anche in termini... In termini solidaristici, perché la risposta dovrebbe essere solidale."

⁹⁹ Original quote: "Insomma, dal 2013 al 2015 sembrava che si stesse iniziando a ragionare in maniera diversa, che fosse passato il principio che appunto non potevano essere i paesi di sbarco, l'Italia e la Grecia, i destinatari di una emergenza umanitaria che anno dopo anno si fa sempre più importante. E poi tutto si è arrestato e si è tornati indietro. Poi, nel 2015 cosa è successo, l'Europa impone gli hotspot all'Italia e alla Grecia, quindi l'obbligo di identificazione di tutti coloro che sbarcano, anche per la paura del terrorismo... Ora stiamo facendo una sintesi ma ne sono successe di cose, in quei due anni."

Indeed, residents generally equated Lampedusa's borderisation with its state of emergency. Sirocco, for instance, commented that the emergency had begun in the 1990s, with the arrival of the first sea migrants. A similar timeline was agreed by Gregale, who bitterly commented on the paradoxical nature of such perpetual state of crisis:

*"So, Lampedusa's emergency has been going on for 20 years, so either we agree a new meaning for the word or there's something wrong, because if you look up any definition in any dictionary the concept of emergency is time-related, an emergency lasting 20 years is not an emergency. Otherwise as I said we are changing the meaning of emergency."*¹⁰⁰ [Gregale]

As I argue in previous chapters, the perpetual state of emergency negatively affected the local economy, increased economic anxiety, fostered precarity and insecurity, and frustrated environmental protection and anticorruption measures. In the following section I consider the role of the media in creating Lampedusa's conditions of recurring, self-fulfilling crisis.

10.1.2 Salience and misdirection

The perpetual representation of crisis on Lampedusa was facilitated by the high salience of migration-related news. For instance, in the case of the recent allegations of migrants eating Lampedusa's pets, the news were initially spread on right-wing publications by individuals and groups with an open anti-immigration agenda (Gauri, 2020). However, given their newsworthiness, such allegations featured prominently in the mainstream media, amplifying their reach. Migration-related items involving Lampedusa are always reported widely, regardless of their outlandishness. According to Levant, migration and crime bulletins represented go-to items for Italian journalists during the slow news season. Common events such as violent acts or migrant landings would thus be covered very intensely at some point during the summer, and largely ignored the rest of the year:

"But this news coverage, which happens during certain times of the year, which happens when politics goes on holiday, they have nothing to cover, so what do they do? They have specific news items, I don't know, there are times when they say "wait, how many women are they raping?", four women per day on average are raped in Italy, but you hear nothing about it all year, and then for 15 days in

¹⁰⁰ Original quote: "Allora, l'emergenza di Lampedusa dura da 20 anni, quindi o ci mettiamo d'accordo sul significato delle parole oppure c'è qualcosa che non va, perché se tu cerchi qualsiasi definizione di qualsiasi vocabolario il concetto di emergenza è legato al tempo, un'emergenza che dura 20 anni non è un'emergenza. Oppure ripeto cambiamo il concetto di emergenza."

*August they tell you every day that two women were raped, and it works the same way with migrant landings.*¹⁰¹ [Levant]

While the high salience of migration-related news played a major role in keeping Lampedusa under the spotlight, it also ensured that outsiders' interest in the island consistently prioritised certain events and narratives over others. As a result, little attention was paid to Lampedusa's local problems and the concerns of its residents, as remarked by Ostro:

*"Lampedusa is a symbol, everyone talks of Lampedusa, few are really interested in the island, in the many problems it has, it's a complicated place for many reasons."*¹⁰² [Ostro]

It seems only natural that certain events or aspects of life on Lampedusa would be more newsworthy than others. However, the gaze of the outside world was so intense and persistent that it could be expected to at least occasionally trickle down to cover local concerns. Gregale drew attention to this apparent contradiction through the example of the recent wastewater treatment scandal, which I briefly described in Chapter 8:

*"There's never been a wastewater treatment facility on this island, never! If you think that in the past 20 years this island has been invaded, literally invaded, by journalists from all over the world, to the point I believe that Lampedusa is the place in the world that received the most attention from media. Recently we were thinking how there are whole periods of time, I'm talking whole years, for which it would be theoretically possible to recreate the history of this island day by day, simply putting together all the film footage, footage by journalists, footage by... So you really could have some sort of webcam of what happened on this island for whole years, because every day there was somebody on this island who asked questions, who enquired, who recorded, who searched... the surveillance is so constant, so continuous, so insistent, in such a small island, but did anybody ever notice there was no wastewater treatment?"*¹⁰³ [Gregale]

¹⁰¹ Original quote: "Però, questo racconto dei telegiornali, che avviene in determinati periodi dell'anno, che avviene quando la politica è in vacanza, non hanno un cazzo da raccontare, e allora che c'è? C'hanno alcuni temi di cronaca, che ne so, ci sono momenti che dicono "ma, quante femmine stanno violentando?", 4 donne al giorno in media vengono violentate in Italia, ma tu hai un anno che non lo senti, e poi quei 15 giorni d'agosto che ogni giorno ti dicono che 2 donne sono state violentate, e così funziona con gli sbarchi."

¹⁰² Original quote: "Lampedusa è un simbolo, tutti parlano di Lampedusa, in pochi veramente si interessano dell'isola, dei tanti problemi che ha, è un posto comunque complicato per tante ragioni."

¹⁰³ Original quote: "Il depuratore su quest'isola non c'è mai stato, mai stato! Se tu pensi che negli ultimi 20 anni quest'isola è stata invasa, veramente invasa, dai giornalisti di

The lack of a proper sewage disposal system was just one example of two related issues on Lampedusa: endemic corruption, and the chronically inadequate provision of public services and infrastructure¹⁰⁴. The disposal of untreated wastewater into the sea, Gregale continued, was the real emergency, causing long term damage to Lampedusa's most valuable environmental and economic resource. However, even when the news of the investigations finally broke, no attention was paid to the wider context of the longstanding paucity of services for Lampedusan residents.

In fact, the relentless surveillance of Lampedusa did not simply ignore local concerns as of little interest to outside audiences, but actively deflected attention from them. Even when residents were approached directly, questions would focus on migration-related matters, and local issues would rarely be openly discussed. Rather than providing a voice to residents, the hypervisibility of Lampedusa thus reinforced its status quo by normalising the routinised neglect of local concerns. According to Gregale, the lack of open conversation about local issues kept most Lampedusans in a state of obliviousness about their own basic rights, such as for instance the provision of drinking water:

*"The first requirement for rights to be in some way claimed, defended, etc., is for them to be recognised by people. Here we live on an island which has never had drinking water, and doesn't know what it means to have drinking water; so often when we ask questions, when we interview Lampedusans to ask what they need, what they are missing, they never even mention drinking water as a need, because they have never known what it might be like to have drinking water coming out of a tap."*¹⁰⁵ [Gregale]

This mixture of hyper-attention and institutional neglect, normalised by the island's perpetual state of crisis, made it difficult for Lampedusans not just to join forces to make

tutto il mondo, per cui credo che Lampedusa sia il posto al mondo che abbia ricevuto la maggiore attenzione da parte dei media. L'altra volta pensavamo che ci sono interi periodi, ma parlo di anni, in cui sarebbe possibile teoricamente ricostruire la storia di quest'isola giorno per giorno, sommando semplicemente le riprese cinematografiche, le riprese dei giornalisti, le riprese dei... quindi potresti veramente fare una sorta di webcam di quello che è successo su quest'isola per anni interi, perché ogni giorno c'era qualcuno su quest'isola che faceva domande, che chiedeva, che registrava, che cercava... è un controllo così assiduo, così continuo, così pressante in un'isola così piccola, ma nessuno si è mai accorto che non c'era il depuratore?"

¹⁰⁴ More detailed information on these events as they unfolded can be found in my field diary: <https://inlampedusa.wordpress.com/2018/04/28/shit-happens/>

¹⁰⁵ Original quote: "Il primo presupposto perché i diritti vengano in qualche modo affermati, difesi, eccetera è che essi siano conosciuti dalle persone. Qui viviamo in un'isola che non ha mai avuto l'acqua potabile e che non sa cosa vuol dire avere l'acqua potabile, per cui ti capita spesso di fare domande, interviste ai lampedusani per chiedere di che cosa avete bisogno, cosa vi manca, ma loro l'acqua potabile neanche la mettono tra i bisogni, perché non hanno mai saputo cosa potrebbe voler dire l'acqua potabile che esce dal rubinetto."

their needs heard, but even to conceive a different status quo for their community. In fact, the border spectacle even interfered with residents' understanding of their reality.

10.1.3 True fiction and imagined realities

While news reports about Lampedusa were rarely comprehensive or accurate, the line between reality and fantasy was further blurred by fictional representations of the island's life and key events. This affected not only outside spectators, whose opinion of migration-related issues would inevitably be influenced by these dramatizations, but also the residents of Lampedusa themselves, something I had occasion to witness during my stay. In May 2018, for instance, the film 'Nour' was being shot on location in Lampedusa. The film told the story of Pietro Bartolo, for many years Lampedusa's doctor and coordinator of health care services for both residents and migrants. While generally unobtrusive, the filming still interfered in several ways with the life of the island, with drama and reality becoming ever more closely intertwined.

My first encounter with the crew happened one morning in mid-May. Making my way to the post office, I found the main street cordoned off; a handful of young black men stood in the middle of the square, as a small crowd of residents silently looked on. Wondering whether I might have run into a protest staged by residents of the Hotspot, I found the scene inexplicably puzzling, as I described in my field diary:

*"Something about the scene however feels incongruous, and it suddenly hits me that it's because of the colour of the young men's skin. Nowadays the migrants who reach Lampedusa depart from nearby Tunisia and tend to be of North African rather than sub-Saharan origin. A group of dark-skinned migrants such as these has not been seen in Lampedusa for quite some time, and that's when I realise that these are not migrants at all: they are actors."*¹⁰⁶ [Blog post – 15 May 2018]

The anachronistic presence of dark-skinned migrants was not in itself inconsistent with the film's focus on past events; however, to me it raised questions about privileging the representation of dark-skinned bodies as humanitarian subjects, reinforcing those racialised representations of victimhood I explored in Chapter 7:

*"But I also wonder about the reinforcement of false dichotomies, of black victims and white saviours, of deserving refugees and economic migrants."*¹⁰⁷ [Blog post – 15 May 2018]

¹⁰⁶ "Show and Tell", posted on 15 May 2018. Available at <https://inlampedusa.wordpress.com/2018/05/15/show-and-tell/>

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

On the occasion described above, bystanders were aware of witnessing a scripted event; indeed, some revealed they were watching the performance of friends and relatives working as background actors. Other times, however, fiction merged with reality, as exemplified in this note taken at a Forum meeting:

"Talking about information office for migrants, meant to begin today, but there are currently only two migrants on the island, and they were approached by [volunteers] last week already. They are here because when everybody was moved on the ferry they were outside the Hotspot, so they were left behind. Earlier in the day they were at the Caffè del Porto, surrounded by 'fake' Tunisians who are working on the film." [Forum meeting 17 May 2018]

The forum attendant chuckled as they described how the last two migrants on Lampedusa had accidentally been left behind by authorities during the latest transfer to the mainland, and how they were seen sitting in a café among a crowd of actors who played the role of migrants in the film. The actors termed as 'fake' Tunisians were mostly olive-skinned, and residents could not easily distinguish them from actual migrants. The actors' chatting, laughing, and buying food and drinks in the café caused discontent among some locals, who thought they were migrants behaving in an 'un-victimlike' fashion, thus reinforcing existing views of North Africans as undeserving of humanitarian assistance.

At the same meeting, an attendant with a long experience of support work with migrants revealed they had also mistaken the filming of a scene for a real-life event. The scene in question was a migrant landing at Molo Favalaro:

"[Attendant] says [they were] also fooled by the film crew and thought that there had been a new arrival, but then noticed that there were way too many law enforcement agents and figured out it was fake." [Forum meeting 17 May 2018]

Interestingly, the attendant had been alerted by the exaggerated representation of law enforcement rather than, for instance, the presence of cameras. However, as previously discussed in this chapter, journalists and media crews were so frequently found on Lampedusa that the presence of filming equipment was not in itself evidence of an event being staged. Indeed, an UNHCR worker later told me that they too had been fooled during the filming of a landing scene, only realising it was not real when all disembarked migrants were provided with thermal blankets. This, the worker joked, only happened in films. While the cinematic representation emphasised symbols of crisis such as a large state presence or the provision of first aid kits, the routinised and mundane nature of real-life migration reception worked as discriminator between film and reality for those with sufficient inside knowledge. For other residents, life and fiction continued to imitate

one another. As the film crew continued their work on the pier, passing residents could be heard muttering their dismay at the sight of yet another landing, unaware that the island was in fact virtually empty of migrants at the time.

The absence of migrants was a rare occurrence. Aside from the two men inadvertently left behind, the latest transfer had emptied the Hotspot. However, only residents working closely with migrants appeared to know this, despite it having been a long-publicised aim of the then administration. An informant commented bitterly that migrants had been transferred so promptly only to allow filming inside the Hotspot; to them this was evidence that, despite protestations to the contrary by authorities, the Hotspot could be emptied at will, and past failures to do so had been the result of deliberate inaction. As Figure 21 below confirms, the Hotspot was indeed used as a filming location shortly after migrants had been transferred, supporting the informant's belief that authorities had cleared the Hotspot for the benefit of the film crew. To my informant, this was further proof that outside interests had more weight than local people's concerns when it came to influencing migrant management on the island. To me, this episode also symbolised the extraordinary power of fiction to shape the lives of Lampedusa's residents.



Figure 21 – Film crew for 'Nour' inside Lampedusa's Hotspot in late May 2018

At times, however, within fiction would hide surprising kernels of realism, as some of the 'fake' Tunisians had in fact been migrants in Lampedusa in the past. Gregale told me the story of one such young man, who had arrived on a boat years before, and who had now returned to Lampedusa to play the role of a migrant in the film:

"It was the first time he returned to Lampedusa, it was quite funny because we met again in the same place we had met the first time around, except the first time

*we met there he was crying, and now he was all smiles. He told me: "Oh we met here; do you remember? I was sitting there", and I said "Yes, yes, but you were crying", he said "Yes, now I don't cry anymore".*¹⁰⁸ [Gregale]

The actor was one of many who, after their arrival to Lampedusa, had been supported by the local network of workers and volunteers in navigating the bureaucracy of the asylum system, eventually regularising his status and finding employment as interpreter and cultural mediator. The actor's real-life experience was a story of successful integration, and an example of the long and supportive relationships Lampedusans would sometimes maintain with migrants they had helped on the island. His fictional role, however, required him to focus on his time of crisis and despair to elicit the sympathy of spectators. At the same time, his present real-life happiness made him look out of place on Lampedusa, perhaps exposing him to the tut-tutting of residents mistaking him for an insufficiently miserable victim and contributing to their distrust for North African migrants. This was yet another example of how inextricably intertwined life and fiction had become on Lampedusa, something which inevitably affected its social reality.

10.1.4 Through the looking glass

Lampedusa was deeply affected by its own fame. On the one hand, some residents took great satisfaction in appearing in movies and documentaries shot on the island, as I discovered whenever informants would proudly list their filmography without the need for a prompt. On the other hand, there were obvious signs of resentment against the celebrity status of well-known individuals such as Giusi Nicolini, the former mayor, or Pietro Bartolo, the island's former doctor. According to an informant, this was because the fame of these individuals was not thought to benefit the community:

"Lampedusans didn't like that Giusi Nicolini was powerful enough to have dinner with Obama when they were still going past the same unrepaired potholes day after day. Fame was not solving the island's problems, and population felt left behind." [Field note]

Nicolini and Bartolo had become internationally famous as vocal advocates for safer migration routes following the 2013 shipwrecks. Their numerous media appearances, however, were seen by some as a way to personally profit from the world's increasing interest in Mediterranean migration, while deflecting attention from residents' day-to-day

¹⁰⁸ Original quote: "È la prima volta che tornava a Lampedusa, è stato abbastanza divertente perché ci siamo rincontrati nello stesso luogo in cui ci eravamo incontrati la prima volta, solo che la prima volta in cui ci siamo incontrati in quel posto lui piangeva e invece adesso era bello sorridente. Lui mi ha detto "Ah, ci siamo incontrati qui, ti ricordi? Io ero seduto lì" e ho detto "Sì, sì, ma piangevi", lui ha detto "sì, adesso non piango più"."

struggles. Over time, an involvement in migration issues had come to be equated with a quest for fame in some residents' minds, something of which I was accused myself on more than one occasion and upon which I reflect more in-depth in a later section.

Regardless of their personal level of involvement in the production of Lampedusa's border spectacles, residents also played the role of spectators, as they too were exposed to the media's narrations of their lives and experiences. According to Ostro, media representations of Lampedusa had a strong impact on how residents saw themselves:

*"Now they talk of a tired and racist Lampedusa, but actually nothing has changed. The island is more or less always the same. However, as you know as well since you study social sciences, the public discourse influences reality. So, the more you produce a certain kind of narrative, the more you also influence what happens in real life. Especially in a small place like Lampedusa where everyone rightfully watches television; if television tells them that Lampedusa is racist, they become racist themselves."*¹⁰⁹ [Ostro]

Media representations of crisis certainly affected Lampedusa's reality, as shown for instance by the real life booking cancellations which had followed the Ebola hoax (Burato, 2015). Ostro's assessment of residents' susceptibility to media narratives was perhaps hyperbolic, but not unfounded. While small, Lampedusa's community was by no means homogenous, and unless directly involved in working with migrants, most Lampedusans had little knowledge of migration-related events on the island beyond what was shared on the news. As I mention in previous chapters, for instance, media reports that the Hotspot had been emptied and closed in March 2018 had been believed by most residents, until the presence of Tunisian migrants walking through the town could no longer be ignored. Media representations of Lampedusa had thus become closely intertwined with the lived experience of its residents.

In the overarching, politicised narratives earlier described by Ostro, Lampedusa was alternatively depicted either as overrun and overwhelmed by migrants, or as a place of safety and hospitality. Within these opposing narratives, migrants were labelled as either delinquents in need of control or as refugees in need of humanitarian help, and as I argue in Chapter 7, these categorisations in turn defined Lampedusan residents either as the migrants' victims or as their saviours. These identities artificially divided residents in

¹⁰⁹ Original quote: "Adesso che si parla di una Lampedusa stanca e razzista in realtà non è cambiato nulla. L'isola è sempre quella più o meno. Solamente che come tu saprai benissimo, visto che studi scienze sociali, il discorso pubblico influenza anche la realtà. Quindi più tu produci un determinato tipo di narrazione, più vai a influenzare anche quello che veramente accade. Specie in un posto piccolo come Lampedusa dove giustamente tutti guardano la televisione; se in televisione gli raccontano che Lampedusa è razzista loro stessi lo diventano."

two antithetical groups, ignoring any nuance or diversity of opinion. This stark dichotomy made residents reticent to delve into their views in their full complexity for fear of being mislabelled. This was evident, for instance, in the angry refusal by some residents to take part in this study, stating their belief that I would label them as racist if not fully supportive of migrants' presence. Similarly, participants who I knew to be supportive of migrants were reticent to discuss any negative impact that borderisation might have had on Lampedusa, for fear of being misconstrued as blaming migrants or as being opposed to their reception. This was evident for instance in my conversation with Ponente, who repeatedly insisted that rescuing migrants' lives was paramount and that Lampedusans' issues were less important, even when describing the serious dangers posed by sunken boat wrecks to the fishing fleet. These rigid narratives thus constricted residents' ability to freely express their true feelings or even lived experiences. In the next section I examine how these dynamics impacted residents' ability to take charge of their own narrative, and their methodological implications for migration research.

10.2 Heavy burdens: the emotional impact of borderisation

In this section I focus on residents as first-hand narrators of the border. While the privileging of residents' own voices may address the issues of misrepresentation described in the first half of this chapter, being addressed directly was not necessarily empowering for the community. The first apparent issue was long-term trauma; while the vulnerability of migrant communities is well-recognised in the literature (e.g.: Düvell, Triandafyllidou and Vollmer, 2010; Bosworth and Kellezi, 2017), no attention is given to the border trauma in resident populations and their prolonged exposure to migrants' suffering. Instead, the persistent attention given by researchers to the community had altered its landscape in visible ways, raising both qualitative and ethical questions about much of the research conducted on Lampedusa. Nevertheless, local initiatives which shunned outside intermediaries and allowed residents to take control of their own narrative appeared to be beneficial in challenging entrenched narratives of crisis, even though on a very small scale.

10.2.1 *Border trauma*

During its existence as a border community, Lampedusa had been exposed to considerable levels of trauma, both on an individual and a collective level. Lampedusan residents' personal memories of migration-related events invariably contained tales of pain and suffering, regardless of the first-person level of involvement in the event itself. This was particularly true whenever the community was involved in the response to shipwrecks and border deaths. While it was not the purpose of my research to gather painful testimonies, respondents nonetheless shared some with me. I report some of

these stories because they provide a window into the repeated psychological social harms suffered by the community by virtue of living in a borderised space.

The most harrowing and graphic memories were shared by those who had played an active response role after tragedies at sea. One such individual was Mistral, a local scuba diver. Following shipwrecks, local divers such as Mistral acted as first responders on behalf of authorities and aided the recovery operations of migrant bodies from the sea, whether alive or dead. Mistral had been one of the first to attend the scene a few hours after the 3 October 2013 disaster. They described the scene as so *"apocalyptic"* to seem fictional:

*"At first I couldn't understand whether it was real or it was part of a film, there were lifeless bodies everywhere."*¹¹⁰ [Mistral]

By the time Mistral had become involved most survivors had been recovered, but hundreds of bodies remained in the water. Despite having participated in similar operations since the late 1980s, Mistral was overwhelmed by the magnitude of this tragedy. Hoping to find more survivors, Mistral dove all day recovering the bodies of people all of ages, including small children and pregnant women. After local fishers found the sunken wreck later that day, Mistral dove and saw the wreck mostly intact, sitting at the bottom of the sea, corpses scattered all over it and the surrounding area. The sight proved too much for Mistral, who quit the operations for good:

*"Psychologically I could not cope anymore, so I quit, I went back to land. From the psychological point of view, I don't know, you never overcome it, I mean something always remains inside you, I mean... it takes very little to trigger the memory... you never recover, let's say you get used to it a little, but it always weighs on you, it's something that remains inside you forever."*¹¹¹ [Mistral]

Mistral spoke openly about having been deeply affected by the events of 2013, and the interview only took place after they insisted that speaking about this helped them cope. Mistral had received no professional help to deal with their trauma, something they regretted, and seemed to lack the language to articulate their feelings. The sole image they used to convey the emotional impact of their experience was one of heaviness, of being weighed down:

¹¹⁰ Original quote: "All'inizio non capivo se era reale o se fosse parte di un film, c'erano corpi senza vita dappertutto."

¹¹¹ Original quote: "Psicologicamente non ce la facevo più a tenere, e quindi io ho smesso, sono tornato a terra. Invece dal punto di vista diciamo psicologico non so, mai lo somatizzi, cioè ti rimane dentro sempre un qualcosa, cioè... Basta pochissimo per riaccenderti la lampadina... Non recuperi mai più diciamo che ti abitui un po', però ti pesa sempre, è una cosa che ti rimane dentro per sempre."

*"It was heavy, very heavy. You never forget it. You never forget it."*¹¹² [Mistral]

Similar language was used by the usually eloquent Levant, who had participated in the coordination of the emergency response to the 3 October shipwreck:

*"It was a very long, heavy time."*¹¹³ [Levant]

Both Mistral and Levant stated that these events had affected the whole community, as residents had played an active role in the response, side by side with the authorities. Describing the different ways in which residents had been affected, Levant told me the story of the local man who drove the lorry transporting migrants' bodies from the harbour to the airport's hangar, the only place large enough to contain them. One morning, the driver failed to attend; thinking that perhaps he was worried about being paid for his work, Levant paid him a visit. Levant found the man crying, refusing to leave his house. He had spent the night being sick and could not cope anymore with the horrors he had been witnessing. A new driver had to be found to move the bodies that continued to pile up on the harbour. The injustice of these senseless deaths, Levant continued, weighed heavily on the whole community, regardless of their personal opinions on migration:

*"Another aspect is that of shipwrecks and of deaths because it's a pain that... [struggles to find words]. From my point of view, I am speaking for myself, but I think this is the same for the community, it's better to have 600 people arriving alive every day than a shipwreck every month. Because it's a heavy state of affairs. In these cases Lampedusans also get involved, volunteers, divers, fishers, to recover the bodies, the... and it's a terrible thing, a... heavy thing to... to... to... to live, to manage, and you feel the weight of an injustice, of something that should not have happened. You see? Because sometimes shipwrecks happen, like on 3 October [2013], when the sea was very calm, because the engine broke down, it was not bad weather that killed them. So, you realise that it's all a huge injustice that weighs on Lampedusa, on its community."*¹¹⁴ [Levant]

¹¹² Original quote: "È stata pesante, molto pesante. Non te lo scordi più. Non te lo scordi più."

¹¹³ Original quote: "Fu una pagina molto lunga, pesante."

¹¹⁴ Original quote: "L'altro aspetto è quello dei naufragi e dei morti, perché è veramente un dolore... [struggles to find words]. Dal mio punto di vista, ma parlo per me, ma penso che questo sia anche per la comunità, meglio uno sbarco di 600 vivi al giorno e non un naufragio ogni mese. Perché è una condizione pesante. In quel caso vengono coinvolti anche i lampedusani, i volontari, subacquei, pescatori, per il recupero dei corpi, delle... Ed è una cosa tremenda, un... Pesante da... Da... Da... Da vivere, da gestire, e senti il carico di un'ingiustizia, di qualcosa che non doveva succedere. Capito? Perché a volte i naufragi succedono, come il 3 ottobre, con il mare calmissimo, perché c'era stata

While Mistral and Libeccio explicitly asked not to discuss the wider political circumstances of Mediterranean migration, Levant made their own opinion clear:

*"It could all be much easier, with humanitarian corridors, with legal and safe routes. Because they will come anyway. It's all political propaganda, they should have the honesty to tell the people: they will come. I mean, you forbid entrance, close everything down, deliver them to organised crime, make them die, and then frontier places, places of first entrance, are subjected to this kind of events."*¹¹⁵
[Levant]

Sea deaths in Lampedusa were thus not an inevitable feature of a geographical frontier, but the result of deliberate policies restricting safe migration routes, making Lampedusans' trauma a direct consequence of the island's borderisation.

Even when not personally involved in the recovery effort, residents closely witnessed the pain of victims' families who had travelled to Lampedusa to identify the bodies. The identification, Levant said, was done by showing relatives the photographs of recovered corpses. As recovery efforts continued, some corpses spent longer time decomposing in the water, meaning that the bodies' pictures became increasingly grotesque:

*"They showed them a photo album, of which, well, you could look at the first four pages, because they were of those recovered immediately, but the other ones..."*¹¹⁶
[Levant]

Many of the grieving relatives had been hosted by residents in their home, with some returning on following years to commemorate the tragedy's anniversary. This had not been the first time that residents had closely shared in the pain of relatives and survivors. Libeccio, for instance, told me of a shipwreck in 2009 by which they had felt particularly affected:

"On 4 April 2009 [...] a tragedy had happened off the coast of Lampedusa and 316 migrants had died. Most of them were Eritrean. So, back when a boat had arrived in Lampedusa, not on that day, 4 April, but a few days earlier, basically that boat that had arrived, they had been waiting for this boat which had sunk. But this boat

un'avaria al motore, non era il maltempo che li aveva uccisi. Quindi ti rendi conto che è tutta una grande ingiustizia che ricade su Lampedusa, sulla comunità."

¹¹⁵ Original quote: "Potrebbe essere tutto molto più facile, coi canali umanitari, con gli ingressi legali e sicuri. Perché tanto arrivano lo stesso. È tutta propaganda politica, cioè ci vorrebbe l'onestà di spiegare alle persone che: arrivano. Cioè, non si può arrivare, è tutto chiuso, li consegniamo alla criminalità organizzata, li facciamo morire, e poi ci sono luoghi come appunto le frontiere, luoghi di primo arrivo, che sono sottoposti a cose di questa natura."

¹¹⁶ Original quote: "Gli mostravano un album fotografico, che vabbè, le prime 4 pagine si potevano guardare perché erano quelli presi subito, ma le altre..."

*never arrived in Lampedusa because it had sunk 50 miles from Lampedusa, but there were the testimonies of those on the boat that had arrived, because they had left Libya together. On that boat there were relatives, somebody's parents, the mum, or the wife, or the son [of those] who were on the other boat and who never arrived in Lampedusa. It was a tragedy... we got to know all the faces of those people who arrived in Lampedusa, crying, tearing their hair out, suffering, because they had their children on there, their husband, their relatives. And I was full of anger that time because these things had happened before, it was not the first shipwreck. But this was a big one, it was big, and we were seeing the faces of suffering people, of relatives, we were involved."*¹¹⁷ [Libeccio]

The recurring nature of major incidents at sea meant that residents would cyclically relive these events. Mistral believed that the cumulative emotional impact of these tragedies had deep, lasting negative repercussions, exacerbated by the fact that history was bound to continue repeating itself:

*"Regrettably, I don't think it will be the last time. I hope so, because you never get used to this kind of situation. Every time it leaves you something that... I mean, it damages your personality, your being, your character, it's heavy, so I hope it will never happen again, but regrettably I believe the opposite will be true."*¹¹⁸ [Mistral]

In late 2019, about a year and a half after my conversation with Mistral, a shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa once more saw the community involved in aiding survivors and searching for victims, most of whom were children. As my acquaintances on the island posted on social media images of body bags piling up on the back of a lorry by the harbour, I was reminded of Levant, who had told me how the sight of lorries crossing the town to carry corpses to the hangar in 2013 had been very traumatic for residents. At

¹¹⁷ Original quote: "On 4 aprile del 2009 [...] era successa una tragedia al largo di Lampedusa ed erano morti 316 migranti. La maggior parte erano tutti eritrei. E allora quella volta che arrivò un barcone a Lampedusa, non quel giorno 4 aprile ma giorni prima, e praticamente quel barcone che è arrivato aspettavano quest'altro barcone che se ne era andato a fondo. Ma quel barcone non arrivò mai a Lampedusa, perché si era abissato a 50 miglia da Lampedusa, però c'erano le testimonianze di quel barcone che era arrivato perché erano partiti assieme dalla Libia. Su quella barca c'erano parenti, i genitori di qualcuno, la mamma, insomma o la moglie o il figlio che erano sull'altro barcone e che non sono mai arrivati a Lampedusa. È stata una tragedia... Noi abbiamo conosciuto tutti i volti di quelle persone che erano arrivate a Lampedusa, piangendo, strappandosi i capelli, stando male, perché avevano i figli lì, avevano il marito, avevano parenti. E io preso di rabbia quella volta perché erano successe altre cose prima, non era la prima volta che succedeva un naufragio. Però questo era grande, era grande e avevamo i volti delle persone sofferenti, dei parenti, in cui ci hanno coinvolto."

¹¹⁸ Original quote: "Secondo me non sarà l'ultima volta purtroppo. Me lo auguro, perché non ci si abitua mai a questo tipo di situazioni. E ogni volta ti lasciano un qualcosa che... Insomma, come dire lede proprio la tua personalità, la tua persona, il tuo carattere, è pesante, quindi spero che non succeda più, sono convinto purtroppo del contrario."

the time, Levant claimed, local authorities had asked for the bodies to be removed via boat directly from the harbour, to mitigate the distress caused to the community, but their plea had gone unheeded. Deaths at sea and their aftermath remained recurring local tragedies on Lampedusa, no matter how large the institutional response or how wide the event's political resonance. Border trauma, however, was not only linked to times of visible crisis such as shipwrecks. Trauma was not exceptional, but a routine aspect of the functioning of the border. This was made clear to me during a conversation with two Frontex screeners, who were tasked with interviewing arriving migrants to establish their nationality and, whenever possible, screen them out of the asylum system:

"[Frontex screener] says he doesn't mind not having landings. I laugh and ask if it's because he likes this better, pointing at his cocktail and all the food. He laughs too, and agrees, but then says he doesn't like hearing the stories from migrants, especially the ones coming from Libya, they are distressing, and he is happy not to have to hear any." [Field note]

Professional border workers such as Frontex employees would undoubtedly have much closer contact with migrants than most community members, but their stay on the island would be limited to a few months. Over the decades, many in the community had hosted passing migrants and their families and bore witness to their stories. Border communities were not simply spectators of migrants' suffering, but suffered trauma of their own, which was compounded by the recurring nature of border crises. However, as I examine below, little consideration was given to the vulnerability of this community by outsiders conducting research on Lampedusa, or to the impact that repeated outside attention had on the community. This raises important ethical questions about re-victimisation in migration research, and the harmful effects of persistent academic scrutiny.

10.2.2 Research fatigue and exploitation

Lampedusa's high profile made it the recipient not only of extraordinary media and political attention, but also of interest from researchers from all over Europe and beyond. This is an unsurprising effect of the increasing academic salience of irregular migration, as summarised by Cabot: "[j]ust as refugees and migrants 'flow' across borders, as we often say, scholarship these days is flowing toward the study of border crossers themselves" (2019, p. 261). The EU's southern borders, Cabot continues, make refugee research easily accessible to scholars in the Global North, providing a low-risk and low-cost alternative to travelling to refugee camps in the Global South.

Having perused existing research for this project, I was of course aware of Lampedusa's prominence in the literature and expected that a degree of research fatigue among residents would make them less likely to engage (Clark, 2008). However, the magnitude of researchers' ongoing scrutiny and its impact on the island became clear only after my arrival. As I mention in Chapter 4, I was occasionally subjected to abuse when informing residents of my project and accused of exploiting Lampedusa for personal gain and visibility. Such hostility seemed quite justified once I discovered just how often residents were contacted by scholars. During my two months on the island, for instance, I met four other researchers, in addition to several journalists and documentary-makers. This intense scrutiny appeared to cause not just research fatigue, but outright resentment towards the presence of researchers. However, this reaction was far from universal: while some residents refused to engage, others had become serial respondents. One of my informants, for instance, revealed they were recruited for interviews on average four times every week. Another one once invited me to assist as they simultaneously gave five interviews, as interlocutors sat in a circle around them. Undoubtedly time-efficient for the informant, this bizarre reversal of a focus group struck me as unlikely to be beneficial for the interviewers. I did not participate, but as I looked on from afar, I wondered whether the researchers had any power to meaningfully steer the conversation or were instead being directed by a savvy respondent. In some cases, repeat respondents openly welcomed the gaze of outsiders, for instance by inviting them to Forum Lampedusa Solidale meetings:

"About 20 people attend, including [...] 2 journalists, some tourists, 3 academic researchers including me, and 2 more people filming for a documentary they are making. Only one [person] is originally from Lampedusa" [Forum meeting - 17-05-2018]

While securing the engagement of participants was at times difficult, successful recruitment did not necessarily mean that the interests of the participant were aligned with the needs of the researcher. On one occasion, a fellow researcher excitedly told me they had managed to secure an interview with a famous island figure, only to later express their deep disappointment with the experience. The famous respondent, they said, had a message to put across and an upcoming book to promote, so the researcher's questions had played a limited role in shaping the conversation or eliciting spontaneous answers. This colleague's experience and the simultaneous interviewing format adopted by the previously mentioned informant raised questions about the usefulness of approaching repeat respondents. Research fatigue and the refusal to engage were foreseeable consequence of such intense, long-term research attention, but the experience prompted me to pay closer attention to those who continued to

participate in research and to their motivations. As Clark points out (2010), participation in qualitative research is time-consuming, disruptive, and often dull for respondents, whose engagement may be driven by personal aims sometimes at odds with those of the researcher. In my case, respondents' motivations were varied: for instance, Mistral expressed what Clark calls a therapeutic interest in being interviewed, as it helped them process their trauma; Ponente, on the other hand, had a material interest in making the damage caused by sunken migrant boats more widely known, even though they seemed worried about being perceived as selfish for it. The motivations of repeat respondents such as Ostro and Gregale however appeared to be less personal; rather, they seemed to position themselves as spokespeople for migrants, highlighting their plight and defending their interests. According to Clark, aiming to advance or politically empower a group of people is an example of collective rather individual interest, and it can be a particularly powerful motivator to engage in research (2010). In the case of Lampedusa, these residents made themselves accessible to researchers and acted as advocates for the migrants who transited through Lampedusa, whose voice was rarely directly sought. As I argue in Chapter 7, this advocacy was often rooted in a form of racialised humanitarianism which undermined any empowering of migrants. These respondents' well-rehearsed interviews were not necessarily without value, but only if their limitations could be recognised and contextualised. For instance, some respondents would occasionally steer the conversation away from topics they thought uninteresting or irrelevant, giving me answers to the questions they thought I should ask rather than the ones I did. This was particularly the case with Ostro, who at times even finished my questions for me:

"I: And is this something that...

Ostro: ...was successful? Not really [...]".

The repeated recruitment of some residents was also driven by difficulties in accessing other respondents. This was not just due to the research fatigue and hostility mentioned above, but also to the inaccessibility of actors officially involved in border-related work. Institutional actors, for instance, were particularly difficult to approach, as noted by a fellow researcher in a conversation summarised in the note below:

"Afterwards I have coffee with [...] a researcher from [Germany] who researches humanitarianism. [They are] only here for a week for now. [They are] shocked by the lack of transparency and the difficulties in getting in contact with international organisations working in the Hotspot, as it is hard even to find contact numbers for them. [They find] it odd that nobody has access to the Hotspot, even the mayor or firefighters, who are stationed outside. [They think] there is a gap between international and local organisations here. [They are] also aware of the difficulties

in getting interviews with people and the feeling of saturation. [They have] worked in difficult or saturated fields before, as [they have] lots of experience of working in Asia and the Global South.” [Field note]

Despite the researcher’s vast experience accessing respondents within international humanitarian organisations in several countries, they had hit a brick wall in Lampedusa due to the lack of transparency by organisations working with migrants on the island. Other institutional respondents were equally difficult to approach. For instance, when I approached the local Coast Guard to enquire about participation in this research, I was told they could not discuss any issue related to migration without written authorisation from the ministry in Rome. Local law enforcement agencies similarly required an official authorisation to share any type of information, even local crime data. At the same time, they hinted that requesting such an authorisation would likely be a long and probably pointless exercise, suggesting that the main purpose of this bureaucratic mechanism might have been to discourage research enquires. The difficulty of accessing institutional or migrant respondents thus made it more likely for residents to be approached directly by researchers.

In many cases, however, researchers only spent a short time on the island, and lacked the time to cultivate relationships with their respondents, fostering a view of academia as a hit-and-run industry. The fellow researcher I mentioned above only stayed for a week, cramming as many interviews as possible within this time. This practice was not uncommon:

“So in the midst of this whole lot of politicians, journalists, academics who in various ways tried to exploit Lampedusa, our goal in residing here long term was to narrate the island through a different perspective, because usually all those who talk about Lampedusa do so after spending a day, two days, a month, two, on the island.”¹¹⁹ [Ostro]

Such small windows of opportunity could breed aggressive recruitment practices, as residents reported having been harassed by strangers trying to ask questions in the streets or their places of work. Fishers, for instance, would be approached by the harbour by individuals wanting to discuss their encounters with migrants at sea. While it is impossible to know what proportion of these harassers were indeed scholars rather than journalists or other media workers, I witnessed in person the relentless pressure to

¹¹⁹ Original quote: “E quindi diciamo in mezzo a questo casino di politici, giornalisti, accademici che in vario modo hanno provato a sfruttare Lampedusa, lo scopo un po' di stare qua fissi era raccontare attraverso una prospettiva diversa l'isola, perché tendenzialmente tutti quelli che parlano di Lampedusa lo fanno dopo aver passato un giorno, due giorni, un mese, due, sull'isola.”

participate in research experienced by residents. It is also noteworthy that much of this research was conducted without obtaining ethical approval or collecting informed consent. As a UK-based researcher, I was bound to ethical considerations that seemed to be ignored by my continental colleagues; as a result, even frequent respondents such as Ostro and Gregale were puzzled by my requests for them to sign written consent forms. It was also apparent that not all scholars appropriately anonymised research participants. As I discussed with a respondent which measures I would take to ensure their anonymity, they assured me that they did not care about being recognised. However, once I mentioned I had once recognised their words in a journal article, they suddenly looked very alarmed. I reassured them that their full name had not been used, but other details had given them away. They sighed and stated that this was not an isolated occurrence, as other researchers had also anonymised them in ways that made them easily recognisable. As seen in Chapter 6, some residents had suffered threats and acts of violence due to their perceived allegiances when it came to migration issues, so the inadequate anonymisation of respondents could put them in serious danger, on top of fomenting social conflict within the community. Outside research attention thus had a real life, cumulative impact on all Lampedusa's residents.

10.2.3 Taking back control

While the story of Lampedusa was overwhelmingly told by outsiders, some locally driven efforts aimed to challenge these narratives. An example of this was Porto M, an initiative of the Askavusa Collective; over the years, Askavusa members had been recovering from landfill the objects left behind on migrant boats, such as clothes, documents, and photographs. As seen in Chapter 9, migrant boats were usually not emptied before being dumped in landfill. Furthermore, migrants were routinely separated from their clothes



Figure 22 - The entrance to Porto M

and other personal belongings once taken to the Hotspot, and these were likely thrown away by authorities (Gatta, 2016). By collecting migrants' personal objects and showing them to the public, Porto M emphasised the humanity of sea-crossers, countering the dehumanising language common in much media and political discourse (Mazzara, 2018).

Based inside a cave right by the harbour and decorated with fragments of migrant boats (see Figure 22 above), Porto M was not a curated museum. As noted by Mazzara, it looked rather like a lost and found office, with objects scattered around the place seemingly waiting to be reclaimed by their rightful owners. It was a deliberate choice by Askavusa to refrain from any form of cataloguing or explanation of the objects on show. As declared on their website:

*"Exactly because we believe that these objects need to be shown, not studied, not catalogued, not restored, not "locked away", but shown, without adding anything more. Doing this without [providing] any didactic information is not a neutral act, but a political choice. It's not a search for objectivity, because the object is largely created by the observer."*¹²⁰ (Collettivo Askavusa, no date)

Askavusa's decision to open Porto M as a non-curated space had followed unsuccessful attempts over past years to establish a formal Museum of Migration on Lampedusa. The story of this failed project is detailed by Gianluca Gatta (2016). Gatta is a member of the Archive of Migrant Memories (AMM), a Rome-based association collecting and disseminating migrants' personal stories through various media. In the early 2010s, Askavusa and AMM joined forces to plan a formal museum and document archive on Lampedusa using the objects Askavusa had been recovering. However, by 2013 the ideological disagreements between Askavusa and AMM had reached breaking point, and the project was abandoned. The main driver of disagreement, according to Gatta, had been Askavusa's anti-capitalist stance, which eventually led to their refusal to collaborate with any organisations supported by foundations or institutional funders. As Askavusa declare on their website:

*"[...] we do not accept money from banks, foundations, institutions, but only from individual people or collectives and associations who share our political path."*¹²¹ (Collettivo Askavusa, no date)

The turning point, however, was precipitated by the intense media and political pressure which had followed the October 2013 shipwrecks. In Gatta's own words:

"It is clear that this decision, without wanting to underplay the underlying ideological tensions, was affected, or at least brought to the fore, by the shipwreck

¹²⁰ Original text: "Proprio perché crediamo che questi oggetti vadano mostrati, non studiati, non catalogati, non restaurati, non "rinchiusi", ma mostrati, senza aggiungere altro. Farlo senza alcuna informazione didascalica non è un atto neutrale, ma una scelta politica. Non è ricerca di oggettività, perché l'oggetto è fatto per buona parte da chi osserva."

¹²¹ Original text: "[...] non accettiamo soldi da banche, fondazioni, istituzioni ma solo da singole persone o collettivi e associazioni che condividono il nostro percorso politico."

of 3 October, and particularly by the excessive media coverage, the semantic overload about what had happened in those days (and had been happening for years), and the exploitation of the tragedy on the part of politicians.” (2016, p. 186)

For Askavusa, *“representation is simulation”* (Collettivo Askavusa, no date); just like migrants’ bodies were redefined to fit within fictitious categories and reconstructed into symbols by media representations, the objects shown in Porto M would also be depersonalised and transformed beyond recognition by being described, catalogued, and studied (ibid). Porto M embodied what Mazzara calls *“aesthetics of subversion”*, using art to resist the exploitative gaze of outsiders and subvert the dominant narratives imposed by the border spectacle (2018, p. 154). The existence of Porto M was thus an example of resistance to the intrusive gaze of the outside world, with residents taking charge of the memorialisation of migrants’ lives while seeking independence from external institutions and their agendas. For Mazzara, Askavusa had found their *“subversive way to frame a very complicated issue that deals with memory, ethics and trauma”* (Mazzara, 2018, p. 167).

At the time of my visit, Porto M was one of several destinations for school trips, which had become more frequent over the past few years thanks to the efforts of residents. For instance, while Askavusa would manage visits to Porto M, other residents would take charge of guiding visits to places such as the local cemetery, explaining the community’s long-standing role in receiving sea-crossers and providing a burial for those who did not survive the journey. At times, residents would leave the island to visit schools and meet students around Italy. These encounters with young people were considered an important tool for residents to challenge myths about Lampedusa and override spectacularised narratives:

“We, I have been doing this for years when they call me, I go outside, two or three times a year, often more, I go when they want me to bear witness to this. And I see that when schools are taking part, the kids are bit sceptical, but when I start telling them how it really works in Lampedusa, and what arrives, and all the tragedies, and everything... you see them change, their attention changes, their focus is incredible, and they ask you questions... and I understand that they were told a lot of things that were not true. Because that’s convenient for someone. But often it was their own parents.”¹²² [Libeccio]

¹²² Original quote: “Noi, io ormai da anni faccio questo che mi chiamano, vado fuori, 2-3 volte l'anno, anche di più molte volte, vado che mi vogliono per testimoniare questo. E vedo che quando ci sono la partecipazione delle scuole, i ragazzi sono un po’ così, però quando io comincio veramente a dirgli veramente come funziona per quello che riguarda

In addition to their educational value, residents such as Levant saw school trips as a sustainable form of year-round tourism which, unlike the presence of military and law enforcement agents, did not require a continuous state of crisis to be sustained. Most of all, they provided an outlet for residents to process what they had experienced and narrate it on their own terms, unfiltered by the agendas of journalists and researchers. As I highlight in a previous section, border-related trauma was widespread among residents, and could be aggravated by having to relive them over and over for the benefit of outside narrators. An example of this was the experience of Mistral, who returned several times to the site of the 3 October 2013 shipwreck to escort journalists or documentarists:

"We know where the shipwrecks have happened and sometimes we happened to escort there some journalist or some TV cameramen who maybe were doing a reportage about this, and so we would escort them. I have to say personally I did it with much difficulty at first, but this was helpful to me, I mean returning for example to the wreck of 2013, I returned several times, let's say for TV reasons as they were filming reportages, documentaries, and so I returned to it; I returned with a heavy heart I must say, I was not untroubled, but the fact I returned anyway was helpful to me, because then after a while those wrecks, especially the one from 2013 which was quite large because it was a 20-metre-long boat, I mean quite a large fishing boat, I mean it wasn't... not huge considering it contained 500 people, but let's say it was a substantial boat, 20-25 metres, I don't remember now. And returning after one year, two years, it was helpful because you... it's like, let's say... an image was superimposed on another, so you superimpose the image of a wreck which was already about to be contaminated, assailed by life, I mean the wreck after being in the water for a while is really assailed by nature, so it becomes a means for nature to grow, and on that wreck which was a tool of death for many people now is born new life, and it becomes a home for some fish, it's assailed by flora, by fauna, so in a way it is repopulated. So, this has been helpful in some way, so you superimpose a positive image on the one you had before, right? So, let's say it becomes... I mean, it's not like I return with pleasure, but little by little let's say that from that instrument of death as I said before new life is born, so it brings something positive."¹²³ [Mistral]

Lampedusa, e cosa arriva, con tutte le tragedie, con tutto quello che... Poi li vedi che cambiano, ma cambiano anche l'attenzione, l'attenzione è incredibile, poi ti fanno anche delle domande... E capisco che avevano raccontato molto di quello che non è veritiero. Perché a qualcuno conviene anche così. Ma molto anche i genitori fanno questo lavoro così."

¹²³ Original quote: "Si sanno dove ci sono state diciamo gli affondamenti e quindi qualche volta è capitato di accompagnarci qualche giornalista piuttosto che qualche operatore

While considering it a way to process their traumatic memories, Mistral still found it difficult to revisit the wreck site, something they did regularly for the benefit of outsiders. Like Mistral, residents who had suffered border-related trauma relived it over and over whenever approached by interviewers. By telling their story to students and young people, however, residents could do so in their own terms, and focus on creating tangible positive change.

10.3 Under whose eye? Cultural harms and the exploitative gaze

Having showed how the border spectacle impacted the community of Lampedusa and the various ways in which it disempowered its residents, I now discuss how these issues fit within the zemiological framework and in what ways they may be conceptualised as social harms. Importantly, I argue that these findings call for increased attention to the methodological and ethical implications of doing migration research, highlighting the need to look beyond the single interaction between researcher and the field, considering instead the historical impact of sustained research attention on a marginalised community.

10.3.1 Collateral damage? Border communities' role in the border spectacle

As I established in the first part of this chapter, Lampedusa's residents' lives were affected by the border spectacle in various ways. The persistent representation of crisis not only negatively affected the economic and social stability of the community, but simultaneously side-lined local issues and normalised Lampedusa's routinised neglect. The island's transformation into a perpetual stage was not just metaphorical; instead,

televisivo che magari stesse facendo un servizio legato a questo, e allora lo accompagni. Devo dire personalmente diciamo con molta fatica all'inizio, però mi è servita questa cosa, cioè quello di tornare per esempio nel relitto del 2013 ci sono tornato altre volte, perché diciamo per esigenze diciamo televisive che hanno fatto dei servizi, dei documentari, e quindi ci sono tornato; ci sono tornato molto a malincuore devo dire, non serenamente, però il fatto di esserci tornato comunque mi è servito, perché poi dopo un po' diciamo questi relitti, specialmente quello del 2013 che era già abbastanza grosso perché era una barca di una ventina di metri, insomma un peschereccio abbastanza grosso, insomma non era... Non grossissimo da poter contenere 500 persone, però era già una barca importante diciamo, 20-25 metri, adesso non me lo ricordo. E l'esserci tornato dopo 1 anno, 2 anni, mi è servito perché diciamo ti... È come se, diciamo... Si sovrapponesse una immagine a un'altra, quindi tu sovrapponi una immagine di un relitto che già sta per essere contaminato, aggredito dalla vita, cioè il relitto dopo un po' che è sott'acqua viene aggredito proprio dalla natura, quindi dà modo che alla natura di svilupparsi e su quel relitto che è stato diciamo uno strumento di morte per molte persone invece nasce della nuova vita, e diventa la casa per dei pesci, viene aggredito dalla flora, dalla fauna, quindi si ripopola in un certo senso. Quindi questa cosa qua mi è servita in un certo senso, cioè tu sovrapponi un'immagine positiva a quella che avevi prima, no? Quindi diciamo diventa... Insomma, non che ci torni con piacere, però a poco a poco diciamo da quello strumento che è stato di morte come dicevo prima nasce una nuova vita, per cui diventa positiva."

real life and fictional representations had become so closely intertwined to be at times indistinguishable, to the point of affecting the community's social dynamics. The negative impact of the border spectacle on Lampedusa's community is evident and can be understood as a form of preventable social harm linked to the island's borderisation. A possible categorisation of this impact within a zemiological framework is that of cultural harm. As put forward by Tombs in his analysis of the aftermath of London's Grenfell fire (2019), cultural harm is suffered by a community when its way of life is destroyed or significantly disrupted by institutional acts or omissions. In the case of Grenfell, Tombs identifies as culturally harmful the rehoming of survivors away from their neighbourhoods and support networks, removing any sense of stability. Cultural harm, Tombs argues, is thus closely related to psychological and emotional harm, but warrants a separate categorisation due to its cultural dimension. Boukli & Copson further summarise Tombs' understanding of cultural harm as "*harms that arise from the destruction of people's ways of being in the world*" (2019, p. 28). In the case of Lampedusa, the island's way of life was certainly altered by the border spectacle's ongoing impact on economic and social stability. Furthermore, overarching media and political narratives interfered with residents' personal histories and identities, consistently presenting Lampedusans with a distorted image of themselves; for example, the artificial dichotomy between victims and saviours forced residents to fit within homogenous roles, limiting individuals' ability and willingness to express personal opinions. These impacts could be understood not just as harms to culture, but as harms by culture, which as explained by Boukli and Copson may include mechanisms of cultural colonialization or repression (2019). In this case, cultural factors such as the salience of migration and the sensationalising of sea-crossing acted as drivers of border spectacles. Nevertheless, the severity of the socially harmful effect of living under the spotlight of a border spectacle may be better understood when looking specifically at its psychological and emotional dimensions.

The repeated border trauma suffered by residents over the years was undoubtedly linked to the island's borderisation, as changes in the enforcement and patrolling of the Mediterranean border influenced the modes and outcomes of irregular sea-crossings (Dines, Montagna and Ruggiero, 2014). As an inextricable part of borderisation, the border spectacle exacerbated this trauma, as seen for instance following the 3 October 2013 shipwreck. According to Giubilaro's analysis (2018), the widely circulated images of hundreds of coffins lined up in the airport's hangar was key to the representation of the humanitarian border spectacle. The visibility of the dead was instrumental to the expression of public grief, which included two days of national mourning and the posthumous bestowing of Italian citizenship, a gesture whose symbolic value seemed in contradiction with the concurrent prosecution of survivors as illegal immigrants. This

visibility, however, came at a price for Lampedusans, not only those who were involved in recovery operations, but also those who witnessed the lengthy transport operations needed to carry hundreds of bodies between the harbour and the airport. As reported by Levant, local authorities had pleaded for bodies to be transported via ferry straight from the harbour rather than driven through town to the airport, as the hyper-visibility of the bodies exacerbated residents' grief. Denying this request allowed the production of images consistent with what Giubilaro calls the "*contemporary aesthetics of migration*", that is the objectification of black bodies and their reduction to political symbols (2018, p. 106). By virtue of residing on the border spectacle's permanent stage Lampedusans were inevitably witnesses to the production of these images, to which they would be exposed yet again via the media. The border spectacle effectively turned residents into spectators of their own existence, objectifying them and reducing them to political symbols; to paraphrase Rancière (2011), a spectator is powerless because they are stripped not only of agency, but of knowledge. Just as Rancière recommends the emancipation of spectators through active participation and learning, residents' acts of resistance against the spectacle of the border saw them reclaim their right to narrate their experiences and life stories without being filtered through the eyes of outsiders. These attempts to reject outsiders' narratives, however, raise questions about the role played by researchers in disempowering Lampedusa's residents.

10.3.2 Research as social harm

At this point it is necessary to acknowledge that academic scholarship plays a part in perpetuating the border spectacle, and with it the ongoing harms caused to border communities such as Lampedusa. Increasing attention is paid to this issue in critical migration studies; Cabot (2019), for instance, denounces the anthropological study of the so-called European refugee crisis as a growing business, attracting funding and prestige for researchers, but doing little to challenge the harms of refugee regimes. Attracted by crisis, academic attention focuses on the need to produce policy-relevant outputs, consequently reproducing artificial policy categories and legitimising emergency responses (Bakewell, 2008). The issue of over-research and its social impact has been raised before, most notably by Sukarieh & Tannock (2013), who highlight widespread research fatigue and alienation in the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon; importantly, they also describe research as "*part of a system of surveillance and control that leads directly to the disadvantage and disempowerment of local community members.*" (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2013, p. 497). Shatila has little in common with Lampedusa, and yet both places share three characteristics common among over-researched communities: marginalisation, crisis, and convenient travel links (2013, p. 496). In Lampedusa, residents described the gaze of researchers as equally objectifying

as that of the media, meaning that scholars (myself included) were part of the border spectacle they had come to study. While episodes of questionable behaviour, such as the harassment of residents or the inadequate anonymisation of respondents, were certainly problematic, it was the cumulative effect of researchers' intrusive presence which residents found oppressive, and the way in which this attention and Lampedusa's perpetual crisis fed each other in a never-ending cycle. Resentment towards researchers extended to residents who helped them, considered complicit in the misrepresentation of Lampedusa and the marginalisation of its true problems. Beyond Sukarieh & Tannock's work, little consideration is given to the social impact of over-research; in fact, attention is more likely to be given to its impact on future engagement (Clark, 2008). Ethical considerations, on the other hand, usually focus on the potential negative outcomes of research on individuals, such as physical, psychological, or legal jeopardy (Israel and Hay, 2006). Key to understanding the severity of over-research in Lampedusa is to consider its impact over time. In Chapter 4 I argue for the zemiological framework to be based on Archer's morphogenetic understanding of social reality (Archer, 1995), where autonomous agents and emergent structures, while ontologically distinct, cyclically impact each other over time. Over the years, each researcher impacted in some way Lampedusa's social reality, in turn informing the actions of the next researcher, and so on until my arrival. While I took every possible precaution to minimise potential harm to my respondents, I had not anticipated I would have to contend with the harm caused by others before me, whether through aggressive recruitment, misrepresentation, or the unexpected triggering of traumatic memories. Regardless of my conduct, my presence on Lampedusa re-affirmed the power of the border spectacle and impacted in some way the social reality encountered by researchers who arrived after me. Critical scholarship requires self-critique, so zemiology must include the social harms caused by research itself in its analysis and recognise their structural causes, such as for instance the impact of media salience and policy relevance on research funders' priorities, or the increasing precarity of workers within a marketised academia as a driver of context-poor hit-and-run research (Hatton, 2018; Sukarieh and Tannock, 2019).

Chapter 11: Social harm and borderisation: understanding the case of Lampedusa

In the previous five chapters I have charted the impact of borderisation on Lampedusa's community and on its natural environment. These findings have shown that the borderisation of Lampedusa has brought to the island unprecedented wealth by increasing its notoriety and ushering in the age of tourism; new entrepreneurial opportunities have followed for residents, and the growing hospitality infrastructure also accommodates border workers, journalists, researchers, law enforcement, and military agents. In many ways, borderisation can be said to have decreased Lampedusa's isolation, as the increased flux of visitors has brought new transport connections to the mainland during the tourist season. These positive outcomes notwithstanding, the findings show that borderisation has also had a variety of socially harmful consequences for Lampedusa. In this chapter I re-examine these social harms, critically discussing how I conceptualised each of them, and exploring alternative explanations. In the second half of the chapter, I then look at the ways in which these harms are interconnected, and the structural causes they have in common. I conclude with some reflections on the implications of this work for future research.

11.1 Conceptualising border harms

In the following section I briefly summarise and critically analyse my research findings. I examine them individually, considering counterfactual statements and possible alternative explanations. I also explore the strengths and limitations of my methodology, and how research and theory have informed one another.

11.1.1 Insecurity, neglect, and criminal harms

The considerable presence of law enforcement and military agents was the most visible aspect of the borderisation of Lampedusa, and something upon which residents commented often during my fieldwork. These comments were invariably accompanied by further reflections on crime in Lampedusa, showing that the two phenomena were closely related in residents' minds. Orsini (2016) argues that the large state presence has been a source of insecurity for the local community, due to routine exposure to authorities' unlawful border management practices and evident unwillingness to tackle illegality on the island. Following Yar's understanding of social harm as the non-recognition of a basic human need (2012a, 2012b), the denial of security identified by Orsini could be categorised as the socially harmful failure by the state to keep Lampedusa's residents safe by protecting them from crime and illegality; a causal

relationship might also be theorised between the experience of non-recognition suffered by residents (i.e. witnessing authorities engaging in illegal behaviours and neglecting law enforcement duties) and the perpetration of further social harm (i.e. residents feeling justified in committing illegal acts). Such a conclusion would be consistent both with Yar's theorisation of recognition theory's explanatory power (2012b, p. 122) and with Orsini's understanding of the causal link between securitisation and insecurity in Lampedusa (2016, p. 145).

However, such conclusions rely on the assumption that Lampedusa's community shared a negative view of illegality, and a common acceptance of state authorities as protectors. It also suggests a counterfactual of pre-border Lampedusa as a place with a lesser incidence of illegal behaviour. As my findings show, these assumptions are ill-fitting with Lampedusa's social reality, where residents expressed contrasting views about illegality and the role of state authorities. Some viewed the presence of law enforcement to be useless due to the absence of local crime, considering the control of migrants as authorities' sole purpose; conversely, others maintained that crime was under-policed in Lampedusa because authorities excessively focused their attention on migration-related issues, purposefully neglecting their law enforcement duties. State authorities seemingly failed to meet the expectations of both groups, as no residents reported positive feelings about their presence; on the contrary, those who engaged in solidarity work with migrants viewed police and other agencies as oppressors who elicited fear and mistrust, and whose attention should be avoided. If the community overall did not consider law enforcement to be desirable, then it is hard to see why its neglect should be considered a misrecognition, calling into question Orsini's generalised assumptions about residents' perception of, and desire for, state-provided security. Reliance on normative assumptions which may be at odds with the case's specific context must thus be avoided in the study of social harm, particularly in the inference of causal mechanisms. This is especially the case when examining socially constructed phenomena such as crime, which, as shown in the findings, are impacted by socio-economic, historical, even geographical circumstances.

Having contextualised residents' contradictory opinions with my own ethnographic observations, I state in Chapter 6 that the law was clearly under-enforced in Lampedusa, and this lack of enforcement entrenched an unequal distribution of security on the island between those who saw crime as absent and those who claimed it to be widespread but ignored. The first category seemed to predominantly include males who identified crime with certain street offences, such as mugging or vehicle theft, which were made less likely by the island's geography and the small size of its community. The second category, however, predominantly included women who emphasized crimes such as

gender-based violence or the exposure of children to harmful behaviours. Gender differences in fear and perception of crime are a well-known and widespread phenomenon (e.g.: Schafer, Huebner and Bynum, 2006; May, Rader and Goodrum, 2010), so there is no basis to causally link their existence in Lampedusa with the advent of borderisation. It might perhaps be argued that this difference was especially stark on the island, given that only women seemed to acknowledge that fear of victimisation led them to the adoption of defensive behaviours; for instance, pretending to speak on the phone with a man when walking alone. However, residents who denied the existence of crime also adopted defensive behaviours, as seen in the case of Tramontane, who would hire a guardian to deter burglars when away from home. Rather than in the perceived likelihood of victimisation, the key difference between the two groups seemed to lie in a heightened feeling of vulnerability by residents who voiced fears of violent rather than property offences. These fears were principally expressed by female residents; in addition, residents who believed that crime in Lampedusa was only perpetrated by migrants emphasised reports of Tunisian men harassing or sexually assaulting local women, once more highlighting the gendered dimension of violent victimisation on the island. As the findings show, it was this unequal distribution of insecurity among residents which was exacerbated by authorities' reluctance to police the community. In addition, the unlawful failures to promptly transfer Hotspot residents to the mainland aggravated feelings of unsafety linked to the prolonged presence of migrants, such as fear of sexual violence (Cuttitta, 2015). State authorities' acts and omissions thus disproportionately increased insecurity for female residents.

Nevertheless, it does not follow that such maldistribution of security was absent in pre-border Lampedusa; rather, I suggest it was likely linked to pre-existing inequalities within the community. Despite noticeable progress over the years, Italy still lags behind most other European countries when it comes to gender equality, with the gender imbalance remaining particularly stark in Southern Italy (Rosselli, 2014). For instance, the administrative region of Sicily, to which Lampedusa belongs, has the second highest rate of female unemployment among all EU regions (SVIMEZ, 2019). In addition to cultural factors, inadequate welfare policies continue to hinder women's participation in the labour market, perpetuating a still rigid division of labour by gender (ibid.). As Mohanty has argued, however, the presence of a gendered division of labour is not in itself synonymous with women's oppression (1988). Furthermore, according to my observations, it was not unusual for women to work in Lampedusa; in fact, aside from male-dominated fields such as fishing and construction, the daily operations of many family businesses were run by women. It should be remembered however that Lampedusa's survival has historically depended on the labour and cooperation of the whole community, including women and children (Orsini, 2015). Furthermore, given the

seasonal nature of tourism, it had become necessary for most residents to work as much as possible during the summer months to support their families the rest of the year. It is thus unsurprising that women's employment on the island might not follow the same trends as the rest of the region. Nevertheless, in addition to work commitments outside the home, the full weight of domestic labour continued to typically fall on Lampedusan women. According to my observations, women were more commonly expected to carry out unpaid or underpaid work compared to men, who retained their societal role as breadwinners and expected to receive higher compensation. This unequal division of labour disproportionately penalised women and hindered their empowerment. There was thus a socially accepted status imbalance which marginalised women in the community, perpetuating the power subordination which not only underpins gender violence, but also renders it invisible by embedding it within women's daily life (Cockburn, 2004; Walklate, 2008). Rather than a deterministic causation between borderisation and insecurity, I suggest that the latter was instead linked to a dual failure in state responsibility: one being the failure to address the lingering gender inequalities entrenched within parts of Italian society, and the other being the choice to neglect the local concerns of Lampedusa's community, normalising rather than addressing existing maldistributions of security. While borderisation is causally linked to the latter, the first instead acted as an existing structural facilitator. While Orsini's misrecognition-based conclusion is not entirely inaccurate, it nevertheless relies on an oversimplification of Lampedusa's social reality which prevents him from identifying causation and obscures the role of structures. The zemiological methodology I apply in this work instead allows me to identify the underlying distributive injustice affecting insecurity on Lampedusa, and to put the role of borderisation into perspective, uncovering a more complex and context-specific causal link between securitisation and insecurity on Lampedusa.

11.1.2 Hostility, hospitality, and colonial legacies

If the large presence of state agents and infrastructure was the most visible aspect of Lampedusa's borderisation, the presence of the migrants themselves was a close second. This is not to say that sea-crossers did not reach Lampedusa in pre-borderisation times; as mentioned in Chapter 7, back then arriving migrants would be hosted directly by the resident population, who would often buy their ferry ticket to the mainland. Residents' contact with migrants was now limited to fleeting encounters in the streets, whenever border authorities turned a blind eye to Hotspot residents exiting through the hole in the fence. As suggested by Friese, the unconditional hospitality offered in pre-borderised times had now been institutionalised and integrated with securitisation and control (2010). The findings suggest that residents now viewed hospitality as conditional, but it would be hasty to assume a causal role for borderisation

in this apparent shift without first contextualising residents' attitudes towards sea crossers. Unlike their representations in the public narrative, residents' opinions of migrants were far from monolithic. Lampedusa was often presented in the media as a symbol of hospitality and solidarity, a reputation which had become international following the 2013 shipwrecks (Kushner, 2016). National and international media narratives had somewhat shifted by the time of my visit in 2018, as media commentators suggested that the result of the recent mayoral election was evidence that the population had grown hostile towards sea-crossers (Cavallaro, 2017; Giuffrida, 2017). These broad categorisations often presented Lampedusa as a barometer of wider public attitudes towards incoming migration, ignoring that transit spaces like Lampedusa necessarily have different experiences of migration compared to mainland Italy and Europe. Issues such as integration, for instance, are irrelevant to the island's reality, as migrants' stay is temporary, and the two communities largely occupy different spaces. Arguments about the benefits of migration, such as the economic and cultural contributions made by migrants to receiving societies, also have little local relevance.

In Lampedusa, however, these differences went largely unacknowledged, allowing residents to instead present themselves as a virtuous exception to xenophobic attitudes found elsewhere in Italy and Europe. It is important to note that this distinction was further blurred by the semantics of the word *accoglienza*, which I translate as 'hospitality' in this work. A key Catholic precept, *accoglienza* broadly represents the duty to welcome others, increasingly understood in recent times as a duty to welcome migrants (Bianchi, 2018)¹²⁴. The close link between Catholic *accoglienza* and migration was further cemented by Pope Francis when he chose Lampedusa for his first official visit (Bergoglio, 2013). In addition to its religious significance, however, the word *accoglienza* also has a formal use in Italian administration, as it appears in the institutional name of reception centres for irregular migrants (*Strutture di Primo Soccorso e Accoglienza*) and of dispersal accommodation for asylum seekers (*Centri di Prima Accoglienza*) (Ministero dell'Interno, 2020). In Lampedusa, the use of the word *accoglienza* did not normally

¹²⁴ Even as a religious concept, hospitality has multiple interpretations in Italian, something which becomes evident when comparing its different translations in English versions of the bible. For instance, in Romans 15:7, where St Paul advocates for "*accoglienza*" in the Italian bible, the King James bible uses the word "reception": "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God". The New International Version, however, translates the same as "acceptance", which implies a more active role than that of a passive recipient: "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God". Similarly, "*accoglienza*" in Matthew 25:35 is given as "Ye took me in" in the King James bible, but as "You invited me in" in the New International version. These translations show how the precept of *accoglienza* has an ambiguous meaning which can be taken to signify both reactive and proactive behaviours, such as welcoming someone at the door, accommodating them as a guest, or accepting them as a new family member.

signify the acceptance of migrants into Italian society, nor did it refer to the accommodation system for asylum seekers, but it was usually limited to the first reception and first aid of sea-crossers at the border, regardless of whether they may then progress through the asylum system. As such, hospitality was closely intertwined with securitisation and control, and largely managed by state and supranational agents. Lampedusans' understandings of hospitality and their attitudes towards migrants thus cannot be generalised or uncritically compared to non-borderised places. Rather, Lampedusa bears similarities with Fassin's exploration of the humanitarian discourse at the frontier between France and the UK, where he defines the support offered to migrants as "*a furtive hospitality that conferred no rights*" (2012, p. 136). National and supranational discourses around migration, Fassin observes, exemplify a "*dialectics of hospitality and hostility*", where the two opposites are presented in constant tension (2012, p. 133). This tension originates from the inextricable link between the two concepts theorised by Derrida, who defines hospitality as a reaffirmation of the sovereign's prerogative to decide who to include and who to exclude (2000). This decision however does not typically take place at the border, or at least not at unauthorised points of entry such as Lampedusa, where migrants are offered a temporary place of safety while sitting in limbo between acceptance and rejection. DeBono describes the language of hospitality in borderised spaces such as Lampedusa as an "*empty signifier*", that is a signifier that has become separated from its signified (2019, p. 345); already an ambiguous concept by virtue of having different meanings for different people, hospitality becomes altogether detached from any recognisable value when incongruously applied to the exclusionary bureaucratic processes of the border.

In the eyes of many Lampedusan residents, even the limited hospitality offered at the border was meant only for those who embodied an idealised victimhood. While I was surprised to find this attitude among residents who supported migrants, it is nevertheless consistent with Furusho's analysis of the increasing emphasis put on migrants' vulnerability and victimhood within human rights discourse (2018). This emphasis, Furusho argues, originates from attempts to counter anti-immigrant arguments which present migrants as inherently dangerous. The result, however, is a double-edged discourse in which the recognition of the needs of some relies on the misrecognition of the needs of others; far from challenging exclusionary rhetoric, the idealised figure of the migrant victim further legitimises the rejection of those who are labelled unworthy. The idealisation of migrants' victimhood is thus an example of opposition praxis reproducing the categories it seeks to challenge, as argued by Henry & Milovanovic: "*critical opposition must be aware of the reconstitutive effects – the reproductions of relations of production – in the very attempts to neutralize or challenge them*" (1991, p. 295). Lampedusan residents' opposition to anti-migrant discourses thus

perpetuated the distributive injustice underpinning the exclusionary stance they sought to challenge. The striking similarities between the views of Lampedusans who identified as hostile to migrants and those who identified as supporters are a clear example of the "*reconstitutive effects*" mentioned above. I suggest that this was a result of the transformation of migrant hospitality that had accompanied borderisation; while humanitarianism had long become intertwined with securitisation and border enforcement, by idealising the victimhood of migrants locals could still preserve their self-image of charitable saviours (Aas and Gundhus, 2015; Williams, 2015). At the same time, the emphasis on victimhood facilitated the de-politicisation of migrants' suffering and justified the island's continuous state of emergency, normalising the border's presence (Mavelli, 2017).

This lens is essential to understand the seemingly inconsistent racialised hierarchy of victimhood I identify in the findings. According to Christie's theorisation of the ideal victim, empathy with a victim is usually facilitated by affinity, while the ideal perpetrator is viewed as foreign (1986). While some residents pointed out cultural similarities between Lampedusans and Tunisians, this apparent affinity was not linked to an increase in solidarity towards North African migrants; on the contrary, it seemed to undermine their claim of deservingness and need. Instead, victimhood seemed to be more readily recognised in migrants who could be more easily othered, such as sub-Saharan migrants. This 'humanitarian othering', I suggest, was rooted in the same white supremacist views that underpinned Italy's past colonial domination in the horn of Africa. The emphasis put by residents on the vulnerability and passivity of dark-skinned migrants highlighted their disempowerment and their position of dependence, mirroring views prominent during colonial times of feckless Africans benefiting from the civilising intervention of European rulers. The apparent privileging of sub-Saharan African migrants thus did not subvert their status subordination within Italian society; instead, it was this subordination which allowed black bodies to become the de-politicised and de-historicised symbols of a victimhood without perpetrators (Ticktin, 2011). This historical and social context is necessary to understand the attitudes held by Lampedusan residents towards migrants, and how they have been impacted by borderisation. It also raises an important challenge for zemiological research; if criminology has historically been built to serve the needs of colonial powers, as convincingly argued by Agozino (2003, 2004), then it is necessary for zemiology to avoid reproducing or normalising the power imbalances that underpin criminology by limiting itself to opposition praxis, instead continuously striving towards truly transformative praxis. A necessary first step, as shown in this work, is to recognise and acknowledge the colonial narratives that are reproduced within migration discourses, and to challenge their silencing effect by re-politicising migrant bodies.

11.1.3 The borderised economy

In addition to the distributive injustices highlighted above, the borderisation of Lampedusa was linked to maldistributions of wealth and of financial security. Borderisation had an undeniable impact on the economy of the island, bringing a complex web of benefits and drawbacks for the resident population. The constant publicity provided by the high salience of migration-related news, coupled with the transport infrastructure required for the management of the border, had largely driven the complete overhaul of the island's economy from fishing to tourism, bringing unprecedented prosperity to the community. On the other hand, the performance of the tourism industry remained firmly entwined with the performance of the border, as unfavourable media coverage could cause prospective holidaymakers to cancel bookings en masse. Lampedusa's new economic model was thus a major source of anxiety for residents, who constantly feared that their newfound source of wealth could be wiped out by forces beyond their control. This persistent and pervasive state of anxiety was not only psychologically harmful to residents, but it also entrenched divisions within the community based on wealth inequalities, as the unequal distribution of economic security meant that some residents were more affected by tourism downturns compared to others.

It could be argued that economic anxiety was an inevitable feature of Lampedusa's new economic model rather than an example of preventable social harm. Nissologist McCall (1996), for instance, argues that feelings of resource availability on islands are directly proportional to their reliance on the sea; while far less profitable than tourism, the island's traditional maritime industries (i.e. fishing and sponge diving) might thus have been perceived as more sustainable than the less stable tourism industry. This would also be largely consistent with Orsini's suggestion that the shift from fishing to tourism had corresponded with a move from community solidarity to increased individualism and competition, although some of Orsini's own respondents believed this to be a romanticised view of pre-tourism Lampedusa (2015, p. 530). Furthermore, wider negative outcomes such as pollution, unplanned urban development, and the waning of traditional activities are common effects of increased tourism penetration in small island communities (McElroy, 2003, 2006). Nevertheless, some negative outcomes remain indisputably attributable to border and state authorities' acts and omissions; for instance, emergency compensation given in recognition of economic damage caused by borderisation perpetuated a continuous state of crisis, increased economic uncertainty, and undermined calls for long term structural change. As I show in the next section, such emergency remedies also undercut existing measures to safeguard the island's natural environment, thus jeopardising the island's principal economic resource. At the

same time, the presence of the border impeded the implementation of alternative economic models, such as sustainable tourism initiatives, and stifled what was left of the island's fishing industry by depriving fishing boats of mooring space and hindering their operations at sea. In particular, the long-standing failure to deal with the wrecks of migrant boats caused not only economic and environmental harm, but physically threatened the lives of fishing crews.

It should be noted that the outcomes highlighted above are by no means meant to provide an exhaustive account of the economic impact of borderisation on Lampedusa. In fact, this research necessarily privileges the point of view of Lampedusa's local community, whether this was gathered through their words or through my experience as a temporary resident; as a result, my findings focus most on the local community's economy, but pay less attention to the workings of the border's own economy, what Friese calls Lampedusa's "*migration industry*" (2012). By no means limited to Lampedusa, the ever-expanding border control industry which has established itself at the EU's external frontiers over the past two decades has extensively been documented by anthropologist Ruben Andersson (2012, 2014b, 2016). This "*illegality industry*", as Andersson defines it, thrives on selling unrealistic levels of security and attracting ever-growing state and EU-level investment whenever overwhelmed by crisis, perversely incentivising a business model based on emergency and failure (2016). Furthermore, the privatisation of detention in the UK has been shown to incentivise mass confinement, effectively selling misery for profit (Bhatia and Canning, 2020).

Lampedusa's border industry, which included a complex web of local, governmental, supranational, charity, and private actors, was no exception (Cuttitta, 2015); in fact, years of declarations of states of emergency had funnelled huge amounts of public funds into the border industry without the need for transparency or public scrutiny, ultimately benefiting organisations linked to corruption and organised crime (Orsini and Sergi, 2018). These economic maldistributions were shielded from Lampedusa's residents because the border industry largely operated behind closed doors, so it is unsurprising they could not be examined in detail in this research; nevertheless, their systemic causes originated various other negative outcomes, some of which were more visible to the community, such as the environmental harms I discuss below.

11.1.4 Borderisation and the natural environment

The environmental harms of border control are largely unexplored in scholarly literature, the only exception being the effects of physical infrastructure such as border barriers (Trouwborst, Fleurke and Dubrulle, 2016; Roche *et al.*, 2017). As Trouwborst *et al.* note, border barriers are designed to disrupt mobility, so their interference with wildlife is

irremediable without compromising their intended function (2016). Despite their intrinsic hazardousness to the environment, border barriers fall outside the reach of both national and international environmental protection mechanisms thanks to exception clauses linked to reasons of national security, public interest, or states of emergency (Trouwborst, Fleurke and Dubrulle, 2016; Garbus, 2018). Border control in Lampedusa, while not relying on man-made physical barriers, still benefited from a routinised state of emergency to circumvent environmental regulations; in fact, as shown in the findings, the disposal of migrant boats seemed to depend entirely on the cyclical generation of environmental crises.

Academic discourse on the structural causes of environmental harms often focuses on the zemiogenic nature of economic systems; for instance, White highlights consumption-related environmental harms as inextricably linked to consumerism (2002). The greater capitalism's influence on social policy, White argues, the higher the likelihood that business interests will take precedence over environmental concerns (2013). Capitalism's global role in producing environmental harm is well documented and hardly disputable at this point in time (Gould, Pellow and Schnaiberg, 2016). Within criminology, recent debate has focused on whether a 'green' form of capitalism is possible (Shearing, 2015), or whether the two concepts are fundamentally incompatible (South, 2015). In Lampedusa, however, environmental damage linked to border activities seemed uncoupled from the island's economic system. This is not to say that economy-related environmental harm was absent, as tourism development had undoubtedly increased pollution, unplanned urbanisation, and habitat destruction. Furthermore, as I discuss in the previous sub-section, borderisation was itself an industry, creating a parallel economy within the island whose interests were often at odds with the community's. However, the generative mechanisms leading to the border-related environmental harms identified in this research were rooted not in socio-economic structures, but in the legal and political expediency of exempting border practice from scrutiny by exploiting loosely defined emergency exceptions, which allowed for environmental protections to be bypassed. Environmental damage was thus intrinsic to borderisation: not simply an accidental by-product, but a constituent part of the persistent state of crisis on which border control relied.

This state of crisis decreased scrutiny for all border-related activities, allowing institutional actors wider discretion than they might normally be granted. Consequently, the environmental impact of the proliferation of military infrastructure on Lampedusa should also be considered a consequence of its borderisation. Research on the relationship between military activity and environmental harm overwhelmingly focuses on times of conflict (Hanson *et al.*, 2009; Shelton and Cutting, 2015; Killean, 2021);

nevertheless, routine peacetime military operations manifestly have large ecological footprints, for instance due to heavy reliance on fossil fuels (Solarin, Al-mulali and Ozturk, 2018), high production of hazardous waste (Jorgenson, Clark and Kentor, 2010), or long term public health issues (Esu and Maddanu, 2018). Military bases on Lampedusa were presumably exempted from environmental protection measures on the basis of national security, as is usually the case with military operations (Jorgenson, Clark and Kentor, 2010). It might be argued that the environmental harms linked to the militarisation of the island were due to military strategic goals which, while relating to the security of the border, had little to do with the control of irregular mobility, thus falling outside the focus of this study. However, this was not the case for infrastructure such as the ELM-2226 radar described in Chapter 9, whose stated purpose was to detect migrant boats, and which appeared to have been installed with little scrutiny or oversight. Furthermore, no regard was given to the cumulative impact of the numerous radars and other transmitting equipment on the island, despite the public health concerns repeatedly raised by the population. The environmental exceptions already afforded to military forces thus appeared to be widened even further by borderisation and its intrinsically zemiogenic exemption from environmental regulation.

This exemption effectively denied state accountability for border-related environmental damage by removing it altogether from the reach of the law. From a criminological perspective, scholars such as Brisman & South argue that criminalisation may be an effective tool to prevent some environmental harms (2018); if this was the case, however, it seems likely that legislators would continue to subordinate environmental concerns to wider national interests, making criminal law a blunt instrument to regulate state action. Similarly, some scholars have advocated for environmental crimes and harms to be prohibited under international law by establishing a strict liability crime of ecocide, which would hold states into account (Higgins, Short and South, 2013). Under this framework, the case of Lampedusa may fall under what Higgins et al. define as *"secondary environmental harms"*, which include *"major and minor practices whereby states violate their own regulations (either by commission or omission) and in so doing contribute to environmental harms"* (2013, p. 252). Such legal instrument, however, would also be limited, as by meeting the emergency exceptions written within environmental law the state is in fact not violating regulations, but rather following them to the letter. The example of Lampedusa demonstrates how the zemiological approach is clearly best suited to empirically analyse border-related environmental harms, which are facilitated by legal states of exception.

11.1.5 Spectacles of trauma: framing cultural harms

In his work, Cuttitta examines Lampedusa's role as the stage of a border spectacle, considering the island's transformation into a symbol to fit expedient political narratives oscillating between securitisation and humanitarianism (2012, 2015). The island's symbolic representations, being largely produced for consumption by faraway audiences, are inevitably divorced from Lampedusa's reality or the concerns of the local population. Cuttitta focuses on Lampedusa as the stage of the spectacle, and on political and state actors as narrators; however, he does not consider how these representations impact Lampedusa's existing community, or how media, political, scholarly, and even fictional narratives have become entangled with residents' real-life experience. As the findings have shown, Lampedusa's border spectacle has a deep and wide-ranging impact on the island's community, ushering in a perpetual state of crisis and blurring the line between fictional narratives and residents' lived experience.

The high death toll of manufactured border crises periodically shocks global audiences, but inevitably touches Lampedusan residents much more closely, causing persistent trauma which is further exacerbated by the spectacularised coverage. Since sea-crossers began reaching Lampedusa long before its borderisation, it could be argued that residents would have witnessed these deaths regardless, meaning that the resulting trauma might have been inevitable. However, borderisation plays two important roles in contributing to this trauma: firstly, it cements Lampedusa's role as a destination for irregular migration, as seen in Chapter 2, increasing both the volume and the lethality of sea-crossings; secondly, borderisation gives much wider resonance to migrant deaths, as was the case of the 3 October 2013 shipwrecks, exposing residents to heightened and persistent media, political, and research interest. The hyper-visibility of border deaths drives not only the objectification of migrant bodies, but also reifies Lampedusan residents by casting them as either saviours or as passive witnesses of tragedies they are then asked to relive over and over for the benefit of media, researchers, and other commentators.

In Chapter 10 I conceptualise Lampedusa's border spectacle as culturally harmful to the island's community. Referring once more to Boukli & Copson's typology of cultural harms (2019), which includes: a) harms to culture, b) harms by culture, and c) misrecognition, the findings show that the borderisation of Lampedusa is linked to all three by: a) being detrimental to islanders' traditional ways of life, b) privileging dominant institutional narratives, and c) interfering with the community's sense of identity. However, the idea that a distinct culture or identity exists on the island is to some extent challenged by Lampedusa's short history; as seen in Chapter 5, not only did the current population only begin to settle there in the 19th century, but its dependence on the mainland for

supplies, education, and health services means it has maintained very close cultural ties with the rest of Sicily. While islanders certainly valued their community as a distinct entity, with its own vernacular and way of life, its presumed cultural oppression is in no way comparable, for instance, to the cultural appropriation suffered by indigenous peoples such as Native Americans (Tsosie, 2002), or the racialised erasure of identity in the colonised Caribbean islands (Allahar, 2005). If we discount harms to and by culture as cultural harms in Lampedusa's context, then the cultural harm caused by borderisation would principally consist in its interference with the community's ways of life, arguably stretching far too broadly the definition of cultural harm. Such a view of cultural harm, however, would be based on a definition of harm solely as misrecognition, without considering the additional dimension of maldistribution, which is key to the zemiological framework developed in this work. In this case, the cultural status subordination to which islanders are subjected by borderisation manifests in what Mathiesen calls "*silent silencing*", that is the creation of acquiescence through informal means of social control (2004a). Drawing on Foucault's work on the panopticon, that is the surveillance of the many by the few, Mathiesen describes the plethora of border control and information-sharing systems implemented in the European Union following the Schengen Agreement as a tool to exponentially widen the state's surveillance capabilities while circumventing safeguards and evading accountability (2004b). In addition, Mathiesen develops the concept of the synopticon, that is the surveillance of the few by the many, to describe the advent of mass media and the creation of what he calls the "*viewer society*" (1997). Both panopticon and synopticon, Mathiesen argues, surreptitiously silence dissenting voices: the first by creating such a wide web of covert surveillance that the assumption of being watched discourages individuals from engaging in political activities; the second by turning viewers into receivers of pre-packaged messages whose content is dictated by the market-driven need to entertain, decontextualizing social problems and removing attention from their structural causes (2004a). Both effects are visible in Lampedusa, albeit targeting different populations: while arriving migrants are subjected to identification, fingerprinting, and registration by panoptical surveillance systems such as EURODAC, Lampedusa's resident community is subjected to the synoptical gaze of the world by the incessant media, political, and academic scrutiny. As I show in the findings, Lampedusans' awareness of being under constant observation inhibited residents' willingness to express nuanced opinions that did not readily fit within established narratives, whether for fear of being misconstrued and feeding sensationalist accounts, or of damaging the island's image and jeopardising tourism. By fixing the gaze of the world on the island, the border spectacle fostered political inertia; the community's local concerns were not just marginalised by more

newsworthy border-related narratives, but effectively erased by the synopticon's power to inhibit residents from speaking out.

In the methodology chapter, I quote Stacey's words when stating that engaging in critical ethnography requires one to be "*excruciatingly self-conscious*" (1988, p. 25). It was this excruciating self-consciousness that allowed me to recognise my unwitting role in perpetuating the border spectacle, thus contributing to the disempowering of Lampedusa's community, and driving the cultural dimension of social harm. While I had been mindful of my impact on the community, for instance through the careful consideration of the possible ethical implications of my research, I had not foreseen the cumulative impact of years of external intrusions on Lampedusa, and that my mere presence would represent yet another intrusion, regardless of my personal conduct. Literature on over-researched communities often focuses on practical issues and how they may affect the researcher's work, for instance how to deal with research fatigue (Clark, 2008). Within migration research, Sukarieh and Tannock have warned of the wider social impact of over-research within what they call the "*refugee research industry*", particularly in accessible sites such as the Shatila Palestinian Refugee Camp in Lebanon (2013, 2019). The population of Lampedusa can certainly not be compared to the captive residents of a refugee camp: Lampedusan residents have not suffered displacement, nor travelled through perilous irregular routes, and are free to come and go as they please; in fact, since academic research on Lampedusa mostly focuses on migrants, it could even be argued that residents can hardly be categorised as an over-researched population, as research rarely investigates their own lives or concerns. However, this argument overlooks the cumulative effect of Lampedusa's hyper-visibility and of the repeated secondary trauma suffered by the population.

My own presence on Lampedusa can thus not be considered in a vacuum, but situated within this historical context, in accordance with the analytical dualism embraced in my methodology (Archer, 1995); this entails reflecting on how Lampedusa's community was shaped by previous encounters with researchers, how this impacted my relationship with the community, and how my presence may have impacted the community itself and its future relationship with outsiders. However critical in its approach, this research constitutes part of Lampedusa's borderisation process by contributing to the hyper-visibility of the border spectacle; conversely, the research was made possible by the high salience gained by Mediterranean migration in the UK in 2015, attracting the interest of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2015a). The crisis-driven and potentially exploitative nature of migration research has long been highlighted by critical scholars (Kelly, 2005; e.g. Andersson, 2018; Hatton, 2018), and it is essential for zemiological research into border-related harms to avoid contributing to these issues.

The critical realist methodology adopted in this research was particularly well suited to inform my ongoing critique of my role and encourage reflexivity throughout the project, recognising my unwitting role in contributing to the silencing of Lampedusa's community, and guiding my efforts to instead highlight their voice and do justice to their concerns.

11.2 Border harms and the silencing of border communities

While the first part of this chapter looks at the research findings individually, it is important to note that these are closely interlinked, sharing underlying generative mechanisms. In this section I provide a more holistic view of border harms on Lampedusa, first by analysing the key role of border crisis, and then by delving into how zemiogetic mechanisms were identified and categorised in this work.

11.2.1 Crisis, insecurity, and exception as rule

The findings show how the borderisation of Lampedusa has been accompanied by a constant condition of crisis, causing residents to live in a state of persistent insecurity due to their lack of control over what takes place on their island. The concept of crisis is very prominent in migration and migration management discourse in the European Union, a prominence that has been widely critiqued and problematized in migration research (Holmes and Castaneda, 2016; Jeandesboz and Pallister-Wilkins, 2016; see among others: Baldwin-Edwards, Blitz and Crawley, 2018; De Genova, 2018; Campesi, 2020). The expediency of crisis in European migration is the theme of an essay series by the New Keywords project, a writing collaboration by critical migration academics including De Genova, Tazzioli, Heller, and several others (New Keywords Collective, 2016). In their work, the Collective examine the problematic use of crisis as a tool of social control, and argue that the labelling of complex migration phenomena as crisis is a way for institutional actors to conceal border violence and to perpetuate the conditions that have led to the purported crisis in the first place (ibid.).

The case of Lampedusa shows in close detail how crisis is created at the border, its ramifications on a local level, and how its spectacularisation gives it global resonance. Scholars such as Mazzara have examined the fabrication of crisis on Lampedusa, and the use of narratives of crisis by institutional actors to dehumanize migrants and conceal the routine erosion of their rights (2016). In this research I have shown how border crisis does not only affect migrants or those who engage in border work, but it has wider, long term implications for resident communities. For instance, I have shown how the routinized reliance on emergency measures to manage foreseeable consequences of borderisation, such as the accumulation of migrant boats, regularly causes preventable environmental damage to the island, favours harmful economic consequences such as

corruption and the waste of public funds, and causes serious losses to the already struggling local fishing industry. Borderisation measures are supposedly targeted at migrants, but they inevitably affect all those who occupy the borderised space. It is important to state that this does not mean that the extent of border violence suffered by migrants ought to be minimised, or that the suffering of Lampedusan residents takes priority. Rather, I argue that borderisation is socially harmful by design to both migrants and non-migrants, albeit in different ways and for different purposes; for example, while cyclical states of emergency limit protection and legal safeguards for migrants, simultaneously they play a silencing role for island residents, hampering their ability to bear witness to migrants' treatment by stymieing political activism and frustrating attempts to incite resistance to the presence of the border. This dual role means that parallels can be drawn between the condition of the migrants and non-migrants who share borderised Lampedusa.

In Chapter 6, I report residents' suspicion that Tunisian migrants who had been arrested for burglaries over the previous winter had intended to be apprehended in order to hasten their transfer to the mainland. The indeterminate length of migrants' stay on Lampedusa means they are effectively indefinitely detained, waiting for either deportation or asylum, but without the rights associated with humanitarian protection. By committing a criminal act, migrants would escape this right-less state and fall again under the protection of the law, a striking parallel of the condition of stateless people described by Hannah Arendt:

"The best criterion by which to decide whether someone has been forced outside the pale of the law is to ask if he would benefit by committing a crime. If a small burglary is likely to improve his legal position, at least temporarily, one may be sure he has been deprived of human rights." (Arendt, 1958, p. 286)

The condition of being outside of the law, as already summarised in Chapter 3, also lies at the heart of Agamben's concept of the state of exception, that is the sovereign's power to suspend the law by deciding whether or not it should apply in certain circumstances (2005). Agamben further argues that, while the state of exception is justified by the sovereign as necessary to deal with emergencies, it has in fact become a routinized system of government. In Chapter 3 I have argued against the conceptualisation of detention centres as spaces of exception where migrants experience a condition of bare life, suggesting that this overestimates the power of the state and underestimates migrants' agency. In the case of Lampedusa, however, migrants experience two types of confinement: while initially detained inside the Hotspot during identification procedures, they are then informally allowed to exit the facility whenever their stay stretches beyond the intended three-day limit. Allowed to wander the island,

but without access to money, documents, or other personal possessions, migrants are unable to leave Lampedusa independently. The whole island thus becomes a site of confinement, where migrants and residents share the same space, but without meaningful interaction. This amorphous, informal detention represents a suspension of authorities' accountability for migrants' wellbeing, and leaves migrants in a state of rightlessness which closely resembles Agamben's bare life. While Agamben's conceptualisation of the camp as the site of bare life usually focuses scholarly attention on detention centres, I suggest that borderised islands are wholly co-opted as spaces of exception. Their citizenship status protects Lampedusan residents from being placed outside of the pale of the law, meaning they never are truly beyond its remit; however, the routine under-enforcement of the law and the other forms of state neglect examined in this thesis suggests that residents in fact experience a form of lawlessness. This lawless state, while apparently freeing residents from legal duties and obligations, in fact ensures residents' acquiescence through the constant threat of punitive action. This silencing effect is openly acknowledged by Levant in Chapter 6, when they describe under-enforcement as a Faustian pact.

Borderisation's foundation on emergency not only justifies the border's presence and its securitisation to island residents, but simultaneously presents it as a temporary disturbance, as peaks of crises alternate with troughs of apparent calm. The spring of 2018 was one such time of calm, providing a respite that residents were quick to embrace; it was evident that the island's economy dependence on its image as a holiday destination made residents reluctant to discuss border crisis. However, residents' attempts to project an image of normality were tainted with an obvious sense of precariousness, whether fostered by economic anxieties related to tourism, difficulties in carrying out fishing activities, or uncertainties relating to the island's unreliable transport links to the mainland. This means that, instead of helping lay the foundations to prevent the next occurrence of crisis, states of calm contributed to perpetuating the island's state of insecurity; by keeping the resident population focused on survival, this state of insecurity had a silencing effect, discouraging dissent and increasing the social pressure to conform.

11.2.2 Untangling the dimensions of social harm: misrecognition, maldistribution, and misrepresentation

Using crisis as the example of a key zemiogenic factor in Lampedusa, in this section I consider more in depth the categorisation of the resulting social harms, how they fit within the wider zemiological framework, and how to untangle their underlying causal mechanisms. As I discuss in Chapter 3, social harm includes the interlinked dimensions of misrecognition and maldistribution. Misrecognition can be summarised as a lack of

recognition of the individual's fundamental needs, whether these needs originate from personal characteristics, social identity, or intrinsic human dignity. In the case of Lampedusa, examples of misrecognition include: the failure to enforce the law, resulting in a denial of security for individuals exposed to crime (micro-level); the hindering of traditional Lampedusan activities, such as fishing (meso-level); or the denial of basic facilities, such as health services or access to drinking water (macro-level). These misrecognitions represent preventable denials of residents' needs, but need to be contextualised further to be defined as socially harmful. A focus on distributive injustices is necessary in order to bring attention to underlying structures, and make causal claims possible; for instance, the lack of law enforcement in Lampedusa can only be labelled as socially harmful once contextualised within existing gender-based security inequalities, bringing to light the actual effect of state action or inaction.

Considering both misrecognition and maldistribution as constitutive parts of social harms, in Figure 23 below I summarise the ways in which border crises originate socially harmful outcomes for the community of Lampedusa. Starting from the centre of the diagram, crisis then triggers some or all of four typical institutional responses, with each subsequently leading to three key socially harmful outcomes for the community. Each of these outcomes is colour-coded in the diagram as an example of one of four main categories of social harm I identified in Lampedusa: cultural harms, environmental harms, economic harms, and security harms.



Figure 23 – How responses to border crisis link to social harms in Lampedusa

The diagram above is necessarily a simplification and cannot fully do justice to the complexity of the social phenomena it seeks to summarise; for instance, categories of harm I represent as distinct actually relate to social phenomena that are particularly interdependent on Lampedusa, such as the economy and the natural environment. Furthermore, while the diagram represents causation as linear, it should instead be understood as multi-factorial and multi-directional; for instance, while the diagram links 'silencing' to the border spectacle, I have shown in this work that other measures such as the under-enforcement of the law and the use of compensation mechanisms also have a silencing effect on the Lampedusan community. Keeping this degree of simplification in mind, Figure 23 nevertheless provides a useful overview of the intricate ways in which border crisis affects Lampedusa's social reality, and how this is mediated by institutional actions and inactions, illustrating the preventability of border harms.

A final consideration on the categorisation of social harm adopted in this work relates to the concept of misrepresentation, or misframing, that is the exclusion of some

individuals or groups from the fight for recognition and redistribution. Misrepresentation is defined by Fraser as a meta-injustice, and it embodies the political dimension of social harm (2006, p. 48). In the case of Lampedusa, two examples of misrepresentations have already emerged in this work: the first is the silencing of residents' political voice, which limits the community's ability to decide the fate of their own island; and the second is the distinction in the perception and treatment of Tunisian and sub-Saharan migrants, which I discuss in Chapter 7. It must also be noted, however, that as borderisation is socially harmful by design to both migrants and non-migrants, it follows that a drive for recognition and redistribution to the benefit of one group could not achieve social justice unless also seeking to benefit the other; in short, the social harms caused to Lampedusa's community by its borderisation cannot be ameliorated without addressing borderisation itself, and the structures that bring to the oppression of those who occupy bordered spaces.

11.3 Implications for future research

In this chapter I have critically assessed the empirical findings of my research, exploring the feasibility of possible alternative explanations. I have demonstrated that the theoretical framework and methodology adopted in this work are best equipped to illuminate multi-factored experiences of border harms, and the roles played by structural factors in exacerbating or ameliorating these harms. I conclude this chapter by discussing this work's wider implications for future research.

I begin with a reflection on methodology. The adoption of a critical realist framework, with its focus on context and historical circumstances, was paramount not only in unearthing a much more detailed picture of Lampedusa's social reality, but to contextualise findings in order to avoid overgeneralisation; for example, without an understanding of the Lampedusan community's unusual perception of crime, I would have been unlikely to note the role of existing maldistributions of security among the population. This allowed me to view any emerging causal links in context and critically evaluate counterfactual scenarios, supporting the argument for privileging a critical realist approach in zemiological research. I must also acknowledge that the loose definition of social harm means that the theoretical framework cast a wide net, at times making it challenging to synthesize results that stretched beyond my usual areas of expertise. On the other hand, this approach also allowed me to uncover findings that have not yet featured in the literature, such as border-related environmental harms, challenging how environmental harms have so far been conceptualised from a zemiological point of view. Future research may explore this link further, and perhaps examine in depth whether economic factors impact on border-related environmental

harms in hidden ways, for instance in light of the commercialisation of borderisation. A final consideration on methodology relates to the significance of adopting a reflexive approach, particularly in light of the cultural harms linked to over-research. As the salience of crisis and emergency drives research funding and priorities, migration studies risk playing an increasingly damaging role in targeting over-researched border communities, or ignoring the cumulative impact of media attention and of long-term secondary trauma. Researchers must be particularly sensitive to the footprint they leave behind on the field, looking well beyond the minimum requirements of institutional ethics approval procedures. Taking further Bakewell's plea for policy-irrelevant research as a way to escape the imposition of fixed categorisations in the study of forced migration (2008), perhaps a move is needed towards crisis-irrelevant research, acknowledging routinized states of emergency as the foundation of borderisation and examining its zemiogenic mundanity.

Furthermore, given the silencing impact of the border spectacle, it is essential to acknowledge that research into borderised spaces can contribute to this silencing, and further disempower border communities, an outcome at odds with any research effort to achieve social justice. In addition, the findings I have presented and discussed in this work raise the issue of how collective memory is constructed in a highly researched borderised space such as Lampedusa. In his research, Orsini touches on the issue of "*pluralistic ignorance*", finding that a reluctance to discuss controversial topics made Lampedusan fishermen likely to relay as fact their assumptions on how their colleagues might behave at sea (2016, p. 139). However, I found that a reluctance to engage in controversy was widespread among the whole community, due to the silencing effect of borderisation and the resulting social pressure to conform, suggesting that most Lampedusans may in fact be considered unreliable narrators. Research on borderisation must necessarily acknowledge its silencing effect and delve into what remains unsaid.

My final consideration relates to the inherently colonial nature of borderisation, and its ramifications for research. As Giuliani has noted, Lampedusa is one of many borderised places tasked with reproducing colonial dominance (2018, p. 76). This is evident in the subordination and exclusion of migrants, but also in the selective acceptance of those who are idealised as victims in need of salvation. A zemiological approach to the study of borderisation must thus be inherently counter-colonial. The theoretical framework developed in this work certainly points in the right direction by giving attention to misrecognition, maldistribution, and misrepresentation. However, given zemiology's origin as a form of radical criminology, questions remain over whether it can ever be truly decoupled from criminology's roots as tool of colonial control, particularly when so much zemiological research is still carried out by criminologists (Agozino, 2003, 2004,

2010). With this research thus I call for collective efforts to ensure the establishment of zemiology as a genuinely counter-colonial discipline, a global endeavour which will need to move beyond its currently western-centric knowledge base.

Upon reflecting on this issue, and in light of the findings of this research, I find I must contradict my previous categorisation of zemiology as being complementary to criminology (Soliman, 2021). Rather than a subset of or an alternative to criminology, it seems clear that zemiology can only achieve its transformative potential as a fully distinct discipline, albeit one that can also successfully illuminate crime-related issues, as shown in Chapter 6. As was the case in this research, I expect future border zemiology scholars will need to delve deep into scholarly literature from seemingly unrelated disciplines just to try and make sense of the wide variety of findings unearthed by this approach. This versatility, I am sure, will be labelled by some as a limitation, perhaps in the form of a lack of focus; nevertheless, I suggest this high degree of boundary-pushing is necessary to develop the creative, transdisciplinary thinking needed to strive towards transpraxis, and engage in the "*permanent revolution*" proposed by Arrigo and Bersot (2016, p. 561).

Chapter 12: Conclusion

A substantial body of work has examined the social (e.g. Bettio, Simonazzi and Villa, 2006; Czaika and Di Lillo, 2017), economic (e.g. Reyneri, 1998; Maroukis, Iglicka and Gmaj, 2011), and political (e.g. Geiger and Pécoude, 2010; Geddes and Taylor, 2013) impact of international migration, but less attention has been dedicated to understanding the social impact of measures taken to manage, control, or deter migration. Within the field of criminology, critical and radical approaches have long emerged that seek to dissect the social impact of the criminal justice system and of the state's penal power more in general (Becker, 1963; Sykes, 1974; Hulsman, 1986; Mathiesen, 1986; Michalowski, 1996; Muncie, 2000; Murray, 2007; Melossi, 2008), so it would seem reasonable to suggest that such theoretical approaches may be well-suited to unpack other forms of state power such as migration control. In actuality, the way criminological enquiry examines migration and its management often proves to be remarkably uncritical, showing a surprising reticence to deconstruct how migration is conceptualised, and to challenge its problematisation (Engbersen, Van der Leun and De Boom, 2007; Melossi, 2015; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 2020). The considerable body of critical research on crimmigration represents a notable and important exception (Stumpf, 2006; Bosworth and Guild, 2008; Zedner, 2013; Aas, 2014; Bowling and Westenra, 2015). Nevertheless, while crimmigration greatly contributes to our understanding of penalty and of the state's use of coercion, it also overestimates the state's power in controlling migration policy, often framing it as a domestic issue and normalising the association between migration and crime control (Velloso, 2013; Canning, 2018, 2020; Soliman, 2021). In fact, international migration necessarily involves a dialogic relationship between two or more sovereign entities, and so do any measures that aim to regulate it (Bosworth, 2008; Salter, 2008; Fabini, 2019). Furthermore, when state borders coincide with the external borders of the European Union, their management is informed by a complex web of supranational political and socio-economic interests, which are further mediated by national, regional, and international legislation (Green and Grewcock, 2002; Zapata-Barrero, 2009; Finotelli and Sciortino, 2013; Geddes and Taylor, 2013; Mitsilegas, 2015). In this thesis I have shown that a different conceptual approach is necessary to explore the social impact of contemporary border control policies.

By uncoupling the study of social harm from socio-legal definitional constraints, zemiology can offer the theoretical tools needed to overcome criminology's limitations. However, zemiology's credentials as a consistent approach, never mind a fully-fledged discipline, remain contested: no consensus has yet materialised on how to define social harm, or on which ontological and epistemological foundations a zemiological research methodology should be grounded (Canning and Tombs, 2021). To be empirically useful,

the zemiological approach needs both descriptive and explanatory value, relying on a coherent theory of causation that can establish the preventability of social harms by examining their generative mechanisms. In this thesis I have addressed this gap by achieving two key aims: first, I have developed a cogent zemiological framework for the study of border harms; and second, I have applied it empirically to a case study, uncovering the causal link between borderisation and economic, environmental, cultural, and security harms in the island community of Lampedusa. In this brief concluding chapter, I recap the thesis' research questions, concisely summarise my answers, and outline the key original contributions of this research.

12.1 How do criminological and zemiological perspectives differ in how they approach migration control?

I began this thesis by providing a critique of key traditional and critical criminological approaches to the study of migration and migration control. I have challenged the often uncritical problematisation of migration in criminological research, particularly when this prioritises the investigation of causal links between migration and crime. The dominant research focus on the presumed nexus between crime and migration, I have suggested, is the result of a desire to resolve the chasm between the outcomes predicted by criminological theory and the reality of migration and crime data. However, criminology's inability to square the circle when it comes to the relationship between migration and crime is the result of flawed ontological and epistemological assumptions made about both phenomena: for instance, migrants and non-migrants (and similarly, criminals and non-criminals) are presented as discrete categories, even though these labels have been shown to be historically determined and context-specific socio-legal constructs. Criminological research on migration-related issues must acknowledge and overcome these over-simplifications and be wary of how complex social problems are framed; indeed, greater emphasis of the socio-historical construction of the migrant label should function as a reminder of the need to remain critical towards definitions of crime.

I have argued that these issues are not universal, as crimmigration literature employs criminological approaches to its advantage in its analyses of state responses to migration; nevertheless, this approach is inherently crime-centric, and thus tends to prioritise specific forms of power. Furthermore, crimmigration literature is limited by its typically domestic focus, and is ill-suited to examining the overlapping sovereignties at work in contemporary migration control practice, particularly in the context of the European Union. Zemiology's focus on social harm, on the other hand, allows it to include the impact of forms of social control that are not related to criminal justice, such

as administrative measures or coercive social policy, and is unconstrained by legal or jurisdictional considerations. After concluding that a zemiological perspective is best placed to examine phenomena that transcend the state's borders, I have made the case for the development of a border zemiology as the ideal approach to overcome the limitations of existing border criminologies.

12.2 How well-equipped is the zemiological framework to describe and explain the social impact of borderisation?

My analysis of the social harm approach as a tool to understand and explain the impact of migration control has highlighted the need for more robust ontological, epistemological, and methodological bases for zemiology. This need expands beyond the framework's application to borders and migration issues; in fact, an explicit view of social reality and of how social phenomena come into being is necessary to make causal claims about any manifestation of social harm. In this work I have developed my zemiological approach specifically to address the issue of border harms, but the resulting framework provides both a coherent theory and a robust methodology that can be empirically applied to a wide variety of social problems. This framework thus constitutes a key original contribution both to the development of border zemiology as a specific field of inquiry, and to the furthering of the study of social harms more in general.

The wide impact of this work is already evident. In 2019 I published the framework developed in Chapter 3 as an article in the journal *Theoretical Criminology*; since then, it has been discussed in depth in the first pedagogical zemiology book, *From Social Harm to Zemiology: a Critical Introduction* (Canning and Tombs, 2021), and featured in a newly added chapter on social harm in the latest edition of *The Oxford Textbook on Criminology* (Smith *et al.*, 2021). The framework has informed other recent theoretical developments, such as new approaches to the analysis of technology harms (Wood, 2021), and it has been incorporated into the empirical work of scholars researching social issues such as the criminalisation of unaccompanied minors in Greece (Papadopoulos, 2020), and the decriminalisation of sex work in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Armstrong, 2021). In addition to furthering discussion in the general field of social harm, I believe this approach will continue to inspire critical work on the social effects of migration policy, providing novel ways to expose preventable border harms and giving a voice to those who suffer them.

12.3 What social harms, if any, have been caused by the borderisation of the island of Lampedusa to its resident community?

This research has uncovered the severe, long term, and wide-ranging socially harmful consequences of borderisation on the island of Lampedusa, identifying five key category of social harm: security harms, racialised humanitarianism, economic harms, environmental harms, and cultural harms. Existing research has touched upon some of the harmful consequences of the border for the local community: for example, Orsini has mentioned widespread insecurity on the island and the erosion of social ties (2015, 2016), while Cuttitta has analysed in depth the symbolic role of Lampedusa as a border spectacle (2012, 2014, 2015). However, in this research I have made several original contributions to the understanding of border harms in general and to the case of Lampedusa in particular.

First of all, the zemiological methodology developed in this work allowed me to not only identify border harms in a more comprehensive and systematic manner, but also to explain why they should be construed as socially harmful, to establish whether they are preventable, and to explore the ways in which they are linked to borderisation. Consequently, the distinct negative outcomes identified by Orsini and Cuttitta can now be conceptualised and linked together as part of an overarching theoretical framework. Furthermore, this framework has allowed me to identify border harms that have been so far unexplored in the literature, such as border-related environmental harms. In addition to highlighting a serious and ongoing problem for Lampedusa, this finding also challenges the prevailing understanding within zemiology and green criminology of environmental harms being strictly consumption-related; this opens a new area of enquiry for future research, pointing to the need to investigate how political and economic considerations may interact to facilitate this specific type of social harm, and which factors have so far kept it hidden from scholarly scrutiny.

Another key issue uncovered in this research is the impact of hypervisibility on borderised community. While featuring often in research about migration and border control, local communities are rarely given a voice in their own right, while the hypervisibility of borders keeps local concerns in the shadow. As I show in this work, the community of Lampedusa has historically been no exception. In this research I have sought to at least partially remedy the invisibility of Lampedusa's residents, and to provide them with a voice. Nevertheless, I have also had to face the harmful role of research as part of the border spectacle, and question commonly held assumptions

about ethical research and the assessment of respondents' vulnerability. The findings of this research have illuminated the true cumulative impact of sustained research attention on communities affected by borders, and the role of over-research in disempowering community voices. In this work I have shown how research can be one of several silencing tools at the border's disposal. The serious social and political consequences of conducting research on borderised communities must become a primary consideration for border scholars; indeed, while zemiology's reflexive approach means it is best placed to appreciate and acknowledge its impact on those it researches, as shown by this work, this does not mean zemiological research is inherently non-harmful. Similarly, while a zemiological approach has allowed me to understand and highlight the role of Italy's colonial legacies on racialized narratives of hospitality in Lampedusa, this does not make zemiology inherently counter-colonial. The perceived freedom of building a discipline almost 'from scratch' may suggest that it can be naturally immune from the imperialist influences ascribed to criminology; and yet zemiology's roots as a critique of criminology suggest the opposite: as pointed out elsewhere in this work, opposition praxis reinforces the categories it opposes (Arrigo and Bersot, 2016). The argument for true transpraxis I made in Chapter 3 is thus particularly important in light of the complex empirical findings of this research, and as the case of Lampedusa shows, a border zemiology requires researchers to use their voice and privilege wisely, and to acknowledge their role in the silencing and exploitation of those they seek to understand. In conclusion, the research outlined in this thesis has made numerous important original contributions to criminology, zemiology, migration studies, island studies, and theory and research practice. It has uncovered rich findings, raised challenging questions, and brought unexpected, and at times uncomfortable, new insights. Most important of all, it is an important step forward in the fight for recognition and social justice for the people of Lampedusa.

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Appendix 1

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THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh Law School

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

- *WHAT IS THIS?*

You are being **invited to participate in a study** as part of my PhD research at the University of Edinburgh. The aim of this research is to assess the impact of sea migration on the island and people of Lampedusa. This involves any changes, positive or negative, that island residents like yourself have observed since the beginning of sea crossings.

- *WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME?*

I aim to interview as many island residents as possible, as long as they are aged **18 or over** and have been mainly resident **on Lampedusa for the last 5 years**.

- *WILL YOU USE MY PERSONAL INFORMATION?*

Interview data is confidential and anonymous, meaning that only I will know your name, and any identifying characteristics that would make you immediately recognisable will not be mentioned in my PhD or any other related publication. If I quote you directly I may mention your gender, age bracket, the length of time you spent on the island, and your occupation, unless you ask me not to mention it. However, if you tell me that you or somebody else are in danger of **serious and imminent harm** I may have to stop the interview and share the information with others.

- *DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?*

No, participation is **voluntary**.

- *CAN I CHANGE MY MIND?*

You can change your mind at any time, even after agreeing to participate. You can stop your participation before or after the interview has begun, and you can also ask me to delete information you have already given me. You have the right to change your mind at any point without penalty and you do not need to give me a reason.

- *HOW DOES IT WORK?*

Participation involves a **face-to-face interview** with me, during which I will ask you some open questions on life in Lampedusa and on your experience as a resident. The length of the interview will depend on your answers, so I estimate it may take anything between 30 and 90 minutes. If you wish to take a break we can interrupt the interview and continue it at a later time.

- *WHY ARE YOU RECORDING ME?*

I will be audio-recording interviews **so I can transcribe your answers** at a later time. This allows me to listen to what you say without interrupting you to take notes. The audio-recording will be deleted as soon as possible after the interview has been transcribed.

- *WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH MY ANSWERS?*

I will use interview answers to gather a fuller picture of life on Lampedusa and the impact of sea migration. Interview data will be put together and used to inform my PhD research and any subsequent publication related to it. Anonymised interviews will be stored in an encrypted folder.

- *WHAT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?*

While I am in Lampedusa you can contact me on +39 340 7633285 or email me at Francesca.Soliman@ed.ac.uk. After I leave Lampedusa on Sunday 27 May 2018 I will be reachable via email or by post at the following address: Edinburgh Law School, Old College, South Bridge, EH8 9YL Edinburgh, UK.

Francesca Soliman
PhD student, University of Edinburgh
Email: Francesca.Soliman@ed.ac.uk



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh Law School

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information above and I agree to be interviewed.
- I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time and stop the interview.
- I agree to my interview being recorded for the purposes outlined above.
- I have been given the researcher's contact details in case I have further questions in the future.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's
signature _____