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# The Border Enacted: Unpacking the Everyday Performances of Border Control and Resistance

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

*The University of Edinburgh*

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## *Declaration of own work*

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

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31<sup>st</sup> October 2017

## Abstract

For over a decade European governments have invested in technological systems to develop new forms of border security in their attempts to regulate migration. Numerous innovations have been designed in order to grant border agencies an unbroken vision of the borderspace, thus allowing states to *continuously* enact the border beyond their territorial boundaries. Meanwhile, other strategies have been designed in order to control the movements and actions of ‘irregular migrants’ and asylum seekers following their successful attempts at reaching the territorial boundaries of the European Union (EU). In this thesis I seek to tease apart these technocratic claims of omni-*voyance* and pervasive control by focusing on the everyday realities of border control and the ways in which these are negotiated and resisted by those who seek to evade them.

To this aim, I approach the border by drawing on assemblage theory, as well as feminist geopolitics’ attention to performance and embodiment. Such an approach re-centres attention on the human performances of border control, emphasises the agency of ‘non-human’ actors, foregrounds the messy realities of borderspaces, and engages with the multiplicity of borders. In applying this approach, I argue that the border should not be thought of as a static entity; neither in its location in space, nor in terms of the actors that perform it. Instead, I have oriented my approach towards conceptualising the border as in a constant state of *becoming* – with actors being continuously added to and subtracted from the security assemblages which constitute the border. In particular I focus on the ways in which ‘non-state’ actors are increasingly being coerced into performing the border and what the effects of this are on those who seek to evade its violent

gaze. In order to put this approach to work, I employ a multi-sited ethnographic study of three European borderspaces: the Frontex headquarters in Warsaw, the Straits of Gibraltar and an anonymised city in the United Kingdom (UK).

In Warsaw and the Straits of Gibraltar (specifically the cities of Algeciras and Ceuta) my research was focused on two border surveillance assemblages: (1) The European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) operated by Frontex and (2) Spain's *Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia del Exterior* (SIVE) maritime surveillance system. I argue that the 'messiness' of the borderspace proves too complex for the surveillance system to control, the vision produced through SIVE being fragmented and stuttered through both human and technological flaws. I also highlight how securing the border is as much a temporal negotiation as it is a spatial one; the struggle for control over the borderspace comprising a contest of *speed*. The effect is a geography of the border that foregrounds the 'little details' of borderwork; exposing the flaws behind a scopic narrative that claims unceasing vision and an unhindered reach.

While in Ceuta I also challenged the formal performances of the enclave as a 'humanitarian space'. Indeed, I argue that it is as a result of framing the enclave's detention centre as a reception centre for humanitarianism that irregular migrants can be detained in the autonomous city indefinitely. Yet the actors that perform the borders of the enclave do so in an untidy alliance which regularly springs leaks. I also discuss the tactics of the migrants who have made it to the enclave and who now seek to leave it again. In particular I note how their tactics of resistance have become entangled with the bordering strategies specific to the enclave. I also question the extent to which the border enclave and the specific identities forged

by the migrants who pass through it will remain with them as they pass through future checkpoints of the European border – the evidence of their time spent in Ceuta locked in their fingertips.

In the anonymised city in the UK my aims were to question the *reach* of the state into the everyday lives of asylum seekers. While the lives of asylum seekers are often described as being in ‘limbo’, I sought to question the temporalities and materialities of urban living for people stuck in the asylum system. I argue that the strategies used by the UK Home Office are intended to limit the movements and actions of asylum seekers in the city through securitising the support that asylum seekers are entitled to. I focus on the ways in which the border is carried by asylum seekers in the city through their use of ARC and Azure cards, especially, and the ways in which these cards serve to ‘fix’ people with the negative qualities and stereotypes associated with asylum seekers. Through volunteering for a group offering solidarity support to asylum seekers in the city, I also argue that this strategy of limiting movements can be resisted. Like the tactics encountered in Ceuta, however, these tactics frequently become entangled in the strategies of border control.

## Lay Summary

In this thesis I have sought to come at the studies of borders from a new angle. Instead of asking 'What are borders?' or 'Where are borders?', I have sought to understand 'How are borders applied?'. In other words, what I want to achieve with this thesis is an examination of how borders come into being on a daily basis if we take into account the actions and interactions between the various people and things that work to create the border. Key to this line of thinking is the foregrounding of the everyday complications that can arise during these interactions. Instead of eliminating them from the research process, my aims have been to use these moments of confusion, or messiness, as starting points for my research.

I have applied this research methodology to three separate 'borderspaces' in the EU in order to tease out how the border comes into being in these spaces and to question the relations between these borderspaces. Indeed, I argue that the EU border is present in each of these spaces, but it is not performed in the same way and not is it experienced in the same way by the migrants who come into contact with it. Based on this methodology, I put forward a number of arguments concerning the importance of speed in the application of borders, the role of 'mess' in critical border studies, and the importance of un-romanticising resistance efforts vis-a-vis the border





## Acknowledgments

I am grateful to so many people who have helped me craft this thesis. Together we have laughed, cried and pondered.

The first thanks must go to my parents who, aside from putting me on this Earth (though I choose to believe the initial tale that involved storks), provided the financial support and encouragement for me to pursue this PhD. I have also been lucky enough that they have provided a very cosy roof over my head for the final two years of this endeavour. I am so grateful to you, even though I don't always show it.

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*For my grandparents... who migrated quite a bit.*

## *List of Acronyms and Abbreviations*

<b>AMIF</b>	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (of the European Union)
<b>CAR</b>	<i>Centro de Acogida a Refugiados</i>   Reception centre for asylum seekers in mainland Spain
<b>CEAR</b>	<i>Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado</i>   The Spanish Commission for Refugees Aid
<b>CETI</b>	<i>Centro de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes</i>   Reception centre for migrants in Ceuta and Melilla
<b>CIE</b>	<i>Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros</i>   Immigration Removal Centre
<b>CPAP</b>	Common Pre-Frontier Awareness Picture
<b>EASO</b>	European Asylum Support Office
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EFS</b>	Eurosur Fusion Services
<b>ENP</b>	European Neighbourhood Policy
<b>EMSA</b>	European Maritime Safety Agency
<b>ESP</b>	European Situational Picture
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU SAT CEN</b>	European Union Satellite Centre
<b>EURODAC</b>	The finger print database of asylum seekers in the EU
<b>EUROSUR</b>	The European Border Surveillance System
<b>FMM</b>	Frontex Media Monitor
<b>FRONTEX</b>	The European Border Agency
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>IRC</b>	Immigration Removal Centre (UK)
<b>JRC</b>	Joint Research Centre (of the European Union)
<b>LOBOS</b>	Low-time Critical Border Surveillance
<b>NCC</b>	National Coordination Centre
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation

<b>MS</b>	Member State (of the European Union)
<b>MSF</b>	<i>Médecins Sans Frontières</i>   Doctors Without Borders
<b>PFIP</b>	Pre-Frontier Awareness Picture
<b>SAGRES</b>	Services Activations for Growing Eurosur's Succes
<b>SIVE</b>	<i>Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior</i>   Spain's maritime border surveillance system
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHRC</b>	United Nations Human Rights Council
<b>Vessel AIS</b>	Vessel Automatic Identification Systems

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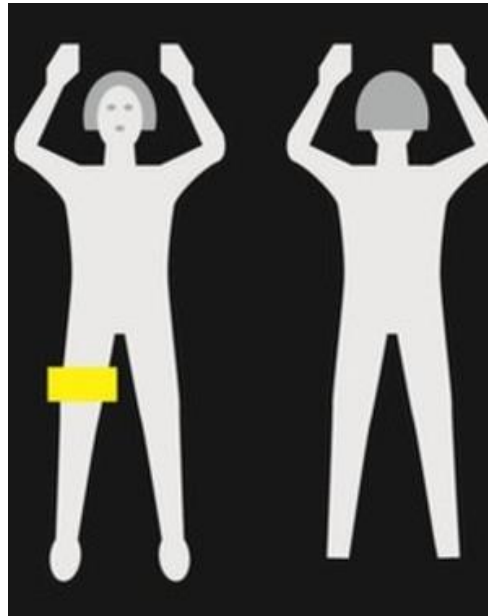


# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Frontier Stories

Airport security at Edinburgh Turnhouse. An automated barrier scans your boarding pass and the retractable belt barriers direct the flow of people towards a number of queues where hand baggage will be checked. Once the baggage is on the conveyor belt headed towards the X-Ray machine, it is time for the body to also pass through the new 'full body scanners' which utilise millimetre-wave scanners to bounce electromagnetic waves off a passenger's body. The body is then visualised on a computer screen as a cartoon-like character, the locations of potentially suspicious items appearing as small yellow boxes or patches on the body (see Figure 1). A security guard stands to one side of the machine and glances at the image as each soon-to-be-passenger passes through the small cubicle. I am next in the queue, awaiting to be pelted by these invisible magnetic waves. Unfortunately, I also have a fever. Nothing so serious that I would miss my ski trip, but enough to make me intensely uncomfortable. As a result, I am shifting balance from side to side in the queue while the paracetamol takes effect. Moreover, the pyjamas I am wearing underneath my two other layers of clothing mean that I have now started to sweat profusely despite still feeling cold. As I enter the small cubicle and lift my hands above my head I realise I must look quite suspicious; my agitation could read as nervousness, my sweat could be interpreted as anxiety and this is, after all, an airport. I exit the cubicle and note with alarm the raised eyebrows of the security guard as he looks at the computer screen. On the screen the cartoon version of me is almost entirely bright yellow as all but my feet and head have remained

passive grey. I hastily explain my extra layer of clothing to which the guard replies, “Aye. You’re lit up like a Christmas tree.” A quick pat down and swab with a handheld metal-detector later, however, and I am on my way.



*Figure 1 shows an image similar to the one displayed at Edinburgh airport - the location of the suspicious object is identified through a yellow box. Image available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-20042494>*

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A beach in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, northern Morocco. Four men sit beneath the stars, gazing out at the twinkling lights of mainland Europe. The empty beer cans that surround the group are testament to the excitement with which the night had begun. The approach of the witching hour combined with the silence of the enclave, however, give rise to a new

feeling amongst the group. The topics of the stories being told slowly shift from humorous encounters with local Spaniards to darker tales of persecution and hardship, but also of the mysterious and unearthly. The Christian man from Algeria in return tells of his murdered brother and estranged wife in Russia, whom he hopes one day to join. The second man, from Guinea, describes his meeting with the masked '*chaman*' who organised his brief stay in the woods across the border in Morocco and notified him when the time had come to make an 'attempt' on the border. While the third man remains silent, the fourth narrates the ordeal he witnessed while making the short journey along the coast from Morocco to the Spanish enclave in an inflatable craft. Following a cramped drive in a transit van, the smugglers had loaded the group onto the vessel, left a Nigerian 'captain' and a 'lieutenant' in charge and had departed. Embarking under cover of darkness, the vessel made slow progress in the sea's choppy waters and, despite the short distance of the intended journey, the captain and his passengers soon became worried that they would not make it to Ceuta. Convinced that sea spirits were hampering their journey, the captain instructed his lieutenant to find the women on board the vessel and to bring them to him. Once before him, the captain demanded which of the women was on her period and, therefore angering the sea spirits. After a short argument and threats from the other passengers, one woman confessed that she had started to menstruate that day. Following her confession, the captain returned the inflatable boat near enough to the shoreline for the woman and her husband to disembark and make it safely to land. 'Safe' from the sea spirits, the group successfully navigated their way to Spanish waters. "Perhaps he was crazy, or maybe he wasn't" remarks the fourth man when he sees my stunned expression, "After all, we made it."

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On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 a charter flight is due to depart from Gatwick for Afghanistan. It will be one of eleven chartered to Afghanistan between January and March 2015 by the United Kingdom's Home Office – more than any other European Union Member State. In an effort to counter the forced removals, the legal firm Duncan Lewis engage the Home Office in a last-minute legal challenge on the basis that the Afghan Minister for Refugees and Repatriations himself, Sayed Hussain Alemi Balkhi, had announced to a number of politicians and activist groups that 80% of the country was now unsafe as a result of the departure of international forces. The legal challenge, however, takes the form of judicial reviews<sup>1</sup> made by the legal firm at the Upper Tribunal on the day of the departure itself and on behalf of the Afghani asylum seekers they represented *individually*.<sup>2</sup>

On the evening of the 9th of March, Saleh, an Afghani detainee contacted the Solidarity Group – a voluntary organisation that works with asylum seekers and other migrants and for whom I was a volunteer – to inform the group that he was going to be transported to a detention centre near Gatwick airport and that he was going to be put on the charter flight scheduled for the next day. Prior to being detained and issued with his removal orders, Saleh had been living as an asylum seeker in the United Kingdom (UK). During this time, large aspects of his life had been curtailed; he had been unable to work, move

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<sup>1</sup> A judicial review is a type of court proceeding in which a judge reviews whether or not there has been an error in the application of the law in a decision made by a public body.

<sup>2</sup> See Bell (2016) for a first-hand account of the efforts of the Duncan Lewis solicitors at:  
[http://www.duncanlewis.co.uk/news/Is\\_this\\_the\\_end\\_to\\_Charter\\_Flights\\_to\\_Kabul\\_Probably\\_not\\_\(30\\_June\\_2016\).html](http://www.duncanlewis.co.uk/news/Is_this_the_end_to_Charter_Flights_to_Kabul_Probably_not_(30_June_2016).html)

freely, or spend what little support he was receiving as he wished. Instead, he had been forced to use a Home Office-issued 'smart card' which monitored his spending practices and permitted only the purchasing of essential items. Nor were his time and mobility his own to control; as he was forced to report to the Home Office every week – knowing that on each occasion he might be detained. Embarrassed by his status as 'an asylum seeker', moreover, Saleh had also kept his legal status a secret from those few 'locals' whom he had met and befriended. To them, he was simply there one day and gone the next.

Prior to having his phone confiscated and being put in a blacked-out immigration enforcement van, however, Saleh expressed a wish to change his legal representation and to be put on the list of names for whom Duncan Lewis was fighting. My task on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, therefore, is to obtain his legal files from his current solicitors in order to transfer them to Duncan Lewis in time (as the file transfer between the two legal firms can take hours, if not days depending on their schedules). Despite having previously obtained a legal mandate from Saleh, I have to make three phone calls to the legal firm to obtain the documents as neither the secretary, nor the first solicitor with whom I speak will release the files given that this would mean the loss of their client. My third phone call late in the day, this time with the head of the firm, secures the immediate transfer of Saleh's documents and which I then fax to Duncan Lewis who have already commenced the long and arduous process of lodging dozens of judicial reviews for their Afghani clients.



Near Gatwick airport, meanwhile, a group of *No Borders* activists were protested the charter flight outside Brook House Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) where detainees were being loaded onto a private coach and cuffed.<sup>3</sup> The protestors, however, observed that while detainees were being forced on to the coach others were being taken off and reached the conclusion that successful legal proceedings must be taking place in an after-hours court session. When the coach departed for Gatwick at 18:00, despite the ongoing court cases, a number of *No Borders* activists used their bodies to delay the coach's journey to the airport by forming a blockade in the street and succeeding in delaying the coach's travel time by about an hour. In total, twenty people were taken off the flight – the last four at 22:30, the original scheduled time for the departure of the flight.

Despite the best efforts of Duncan Lewis and the volunteers of the Solidarity Group, however, Saleh is nonetheless removed from the UK as, prior to his arrival in the UK, Saleh had spent a number of months in Kabul. As a result of Saleh's previous 'safe' movement in Kabul, the judge rules that his return to Afghanistan is justified as his life will not be in danger if he remains in Kabul upon his return.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/michael-segalov/uk-activists-prevent-deportation-of-afghan-migrants>



*Figure 2 shows an image taken by the No Borders activists outside the airport. Image available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/michael-segalov/uk-activists-prevent-deportation-of-afghan-migrants>*

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## 1.2 Thesis Aims and Themes

According to data gathered by the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM 2017) Missing Migrants Project, at least 7,934 people either lost their lives or went missing while migrating towards an international destination. Of those, the majority (5,143) either died or went missing in their attempts to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea; although many more are expected to have died crossing the Sahara Desert in an attempt to reach their point of departure on the Mediterranean's southern shores. While many were unsuccessful in reaching the European Union (EU), therefore, many more did survive the journey. Almost 400,000 people reached Europe in 2016 without being authorised to do so, while over a million people arrived the previous year during what was called the height of "*Europe's* refugee crisis". During the European Parliament's debate on the relocation of 120,000 asylum seekers from Italy, Greece and Hungary to other EU Member States, no solution appeared complete without strengthening the EU's outer borders. Dimitris Avramopoulos, the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, concluded the debate by stating:

“[W]e will ensure swift implementation of our plans in close coordination with the national authorities and the EU Agencies Frontex, Europol, and EASO<sup>4</sup> [...] But today's agreement is a two way street. We ask from Member States [...] to reinforce their national asylum systems. Especially in the areas of finger-printing, border management and surveillance.” (European Commission 2015)

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<sup>4</sup> The European Asylum Support Office.

The message was clear: border security and asylum must go hand in hand. Moreover, border security should be ensured beyond the external territorial boundaries of the EU through *integrated* border management techniques between the EU Member States and their databases, the various EU agencies, but also through the development and application of new means of border surveillance. Yet Avramapoulos' words also highlight the diffusion of what the EU border *is* and the actors that constitute it. The European border can be found not only in the speeches of EU diplomats; indeed, it is enacted through a multitude of assembled people, technologies, strategies and geographical projections of space. Seen instead through the actors and strategies that perform it, pinpointing what *the* EU border is and how it functions on a daily basis becomes almost an impossibility. What becomes especially evident from focusing on the actors and their actions, moreover, is that the border enacted cannot be conceived of as a singular entity, yet nor is it fragmented into fully-bounded spaces or closed-off collections of actors. Drawing influence from Mol (2002, p55) and Law (2002, 2004), the border *enacted* can instead be conceived of as “more than one – but less than many.” While the larger narrative coming from the EU parliament might attempt to smooth together the complete integration of the EU border through seamless cooperation, divisions and alternative ways of working nonetheless persist.<sup>5</sup> Equally, although the UK has its own asylum laws and systems of support, for example, an asylum seeker who has previously been fingerprinted and entered into the EURODAC asylum database will likely be forcibly returned to the EU Member State in which they were registered. Or will they? As Schuster (2011) has previously shown, in practice, asylum seekers who move on from the Member State in which they were fingerprinted

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<sup>5</sup> Indeed, to date, the EU's Member States have relocated less than 10% of the agreed quota (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/02/european-countries-have-carried-out-8-per-cent-promised-refugee-relocations>)

regularly enter a Catch-22 situation in which neither Member State is willing to accept responsibility for processing their asylum claim.

On a daily basis, therefore, the EU border is performed by multiple assemblages containing immigration officials, airport security guards, security programmers, asylum case owners, radars, infrared cameras, satellites, asylum case files, risk analysis reports, cross-continent border management conferences and Integrated Border Management (IBM) strategies. To the consternation of many EU officials and Frontex, the European border agency, however, the European border has also become increasingly enacted by various concerned Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) attempting to save the lives of those at sea.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, as the opening vignettes highlight, a multitude of unexpected objects, bodies and affects can also disrupt the ways in which border strategies are translated from paper to practice. My pyjamas and sweaty body, though innocent in the setting of a bedroom, for example, fooled the biopolitical security apparatus at the airport that singled me out as a potential threat to the wellbeing of the population in the context of the airport (see Adey 2009). The immobile bodies of the *No Borders* protestors blocking the road, moreover, ensured the successful completion of a number of judicial reviews for people who would have otherwise left the country before their cases could have been brought before a judge. The inflatable zodiac boat used by the migrants attempting to reach Ceuta in the second story, utilised primarily because of its low cost and the ease with which it can be transported on land, will have also reduced the likelihood of the Spanish border guards' radar technologies from detecting the group. Enacting the border can also rely on the use of hidden

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<sup>6</sup> See for example: <https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/tag/seawatch/>

techniques and actors; the retractable barriers at the airport playing as important a role in the securitising of airport space as the body-scanner and the practice of removing detainee's access to mobile phones as they are partially removed from society before even stepping foot on the airport tarmac.

The ways in which the border is enacted, negotiated and resisted on a daily basis, therefore, differ from its often-simplified projected functioning in government discourse. As Mountz (2010, p35) puts it, for example, “written policies [...] tell only partial stories – idealized versions of what might be or what should happen.” The central question that has driven the empirical enquiry of this thesis, therefore, can be summarised as: ‘How does the European border become enacted on a daily basis?’ This conceptualisation of the border as an entity in a constant state of *‘becoming’* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Anderson 2011) affords me the opportunity of developing a non-essentialist understanding of the border in which the ‘vibrancy of matter’ (Bennett 2004) and the ‘messiness’ of the social are incorporated into the analysis, rather than quietened and ignored (Law 2002, 2004). By eschewing conceptualisations of the border as a stable *‘thing’*, therefore, I approach the border not by questioning what it is, rather, *how* it is. In doing so, I push against geographical representations of the border as stable, static and capable of demarcating a rigid inside/outside divide (Mitchel 1991); Allen 2004, 2009). Instead, I focus on the diffuse and shifting ‘elastic geographies’ of the border and the messiness that results from the multiple and diffuse sources of power that perform it (Weizman 2007).

I have developed three often-overlapping conceptual themes through which to unpack the border and how it becomes enacted. The first of these themes is the role of non-human actors in the enactment of the border. Weizman (2007, p5) argues that we need to examine the architecture of the border not as something that is merely ‘politics’, rather as “politics

in matter”. Allied with recent work on material politics (e.g. Barry 2014) and post-humanist political ecologies (e.g. Sundberg 2011), therefore, a central analytical starting point to the thesis is that neither the material nor the (bio)physical systems that form part of the borderspace are considered to be ‘stable foundations’ upon which politics takes place. Rather, they form an integral element to the unfolding of political controversies that concern the border. Specifically, I am interested in the ways in which the various technologies designed for the purpose of bordering are used and encountered on a daily basis both by border guards and migrants alike. I utilise assemblage theory to question the extent to which these technologies successfully ‘fit’ within the existing socio-technical systems and workings of border guards to effectuate ‘more-than-human’ surveillance capabilities (Whatmore 2002; see also Williams 2011), and the extent to which actors remain ‘loyal’ to the border regime (Meehan *et al* 2013). I also seek to clarify the ways in which the border becomes forcibly manifested or imposed upon the bodies of migrants in their daily lives and journeys through the border technologies. In doing so, I draw on non-representational theories in geography (see Thrift 2008; Ingold 2010) and spatial theories of power (e.g. Allen and Cochrane 2010) to further the development of a spatial politics of asylum. This focus also serves to de-essentialise the spaces I encounter in my analysis as I refuse to reduce these spaces being sites of either domination or resistance. Instead I explore the possibilities for contestation in intensely controlled spaces, as well as the impact of the border in sites of resistance. As a result, I aim to draw attention to new forms of ‘political’ behaviour and action, in particular on the part of those being forced out of circulation by the border.

The second theme concerns the temporalities of border control. I draw on the works of Virilio (1989, 1994), in particular, in order to critique the efficacy of new ‘omni-voyant’ border controls. Aside from being hindered by the ‘friction’ presented

by the non-human elements in the borderspace (see Scott 2009; Sundberg 2011; Boyce 2016;), I argue that the challenges posed by maintaining a persistent vision over the borderspace in ‘real time’ mean that the border can be found less in a specific line to be defended and, rather, in the *time* it takes to detect, target a ‘threat’. Moving beyond the issue of speed, however, I also highlight the impact of the (sometimes unanticipated) rhythms built-in to border security systems. These rhythms concern, for example, the ‘natural’ time it takes for a satellite capturing pictures of the borderspace to orbit the earth or the border guards’ daily routines and distractions; both of which reduce the capacity of the border systems to be ever-vigilant. As part of the aim to increase the speed with which border controls can act, however, I also argue that another tactic of border controls is to *slow* and constrain migrant mobility throughout the borderspace. In other words, I argue that border technologies, which might be invisible to those with citizenship status, are not solely designed to filter out ‘bad migration’. Rather, I demonstrate how many are designed to track and ‘affectively limit’ (Massumi 2013) the everyday movements of those ‘irregular migrants’ throughout the borderspace.

The third theme concerns migrant agency and their available opportunities to resist the border (see Scott 1987). I argue that another benefit of acknowledging the ‘messiness’ of the border is that it allows for the ‘cracks’ within its socio-technical systems to become more apparent (Walters 2011b). I examine what ‘tactics’ are available to migrants and those who support them and how their use of these, in turn, affect the ways in which the border is performed (de Certeau 1984). I bring de Certeau’s (1984) work on ‘tactics’ together with feminist geopolitics’ push to analyse the routines of power and the often-ignored spaces and places of everyday life (see Hyndman 2004). As a result, I question both the ‘reach’ of state power in the everyday lives of migrants (Allen 2009; Painter 2006) and their opportunities to resist this encroachment. I also focus



on the extent to which migrants are able to use or usurp the border technologies used against them, or utilise their own temporalities to hinder the intended rhythms and speeds of the border. Just as the performance of the border can be described as ‘messy’, however, so too can attempts at resistance result in the long-term strengthening of the existing strategies of sovereign power (de Certeau 1984; Gill *et al* 2014). In my analyses of resistance to the border, therefore, I draw on Shaw *et al*’s (2000) conceptualisations of ‘entanglements of power’ in order to unsettle dichotomous views of domination and resistance in border literatures, specifically in the context of ‘camp geographies’ (e.g. Diken 2004; Minca 2015; Isin and Rygiel 2007; Johnson 2013). I also pull this form of analysis through into my study of the border as it appears in urban spaces within the territorial boundaries of the EU. Here, in particular, I focus on the pervasiveness of state power in the everyday lives of asylum seekers which is hidden from view and discuss to what extent this reach succeeds in ‘affectively limiting’ the agency and mobilities of asylum seekers in the city (Massumi 2013).

The three themes through which I approach the border, therefore, are (1) the role of non-human actors and the ‘politics in matter’, (2) the temporalities of border control and, (3) migrant agency. I hold the three themes together through another key idea that has shaped my claims to knowledge and research practices in different sites, namely the concept of ‘situated knowledges’ as discussed by feminist political geographers (see Haraway 1988; Fluri 2009). In particular, my focus on ‘situated knowledges’ allows me to re-introduce the importance of the corporeal and lived experiences of place and space in the discussion of power over the borderspace. I also draw attention to the movements, performances and epistemologies of both the border guards as well as migrants in the borderspaces explored within the thesis (see Williams 2011; Yuval-Davis *et al* 2017). Secondly, by acknowledging that my understanding of the border (and development of the above themes)

is dependent on the locations of my research and the ‘partial connections’ I have been fortunate to make (Haraway 1991; Law 2004), I have sought to situate the empirical analyses of my research in three separate case study locations rather than seeking a unifying ‘truth’ concerning these themes and the border. In addition, by being mobile and emphasising a reading of the border at multiple scales within and beyond nation-state territorial boundaries, I further disturb the ‘territorial trap’ – the geopolitical understanding that the border is bound to the fixed territorial limits of the nation-state – and follow the border to both unexpected and ‘hidden’ places (Agnew 1995; Hiemstra 2005; Mountz 2011a; O’Neill 2012). Another benefit of opting for multiple fieldwork locations is that it allows me to demonstrate not only the *mobility* of the border, but also to highlight the multiple ways in which it can be performed depending on the actors and environment. By focusing on the everydayness of bordering, in particular, I am also able to highlight the extent to which control exerted over the borderspace can be patchy and uneven (Painter 2006), both in terms of location as well as the particular bodies that become singled out. In the following section I set out which fieldwork sites were selected and offer an initial justification for how each relates to the themes I discussed above.

## 1.3 Fieldwork Sites

### 1.3.1 Frontex Headquarters

The first fieldwork location selected for this ethnography of the European border was, perhaps counter-intuitively, Warsaw (Poland). Warsaw, however, is where the headquarters of Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency,<sup>7</sup> are based. The agency's overall 'mission' is to "is to promote, coordinate and develop European border management in line with the EU fundamental rights charter and the concept of Integrated Border Management"<sup>8</sup>. At the time of my fieldwork, Frontex had six main tasks to carry out this end:

- a. "coordinate operational cooperation between Member States in the field of management of external borders;
- b. assist Member States on training of national border guards, including the establishment of common training standards;
- c. carry out risk analyses;
- d. follow up on the development of research relevant for the control and surveillance of external borders;
- e. assist Member States in circumstances requiring increased technical and operational assistance at external borders;

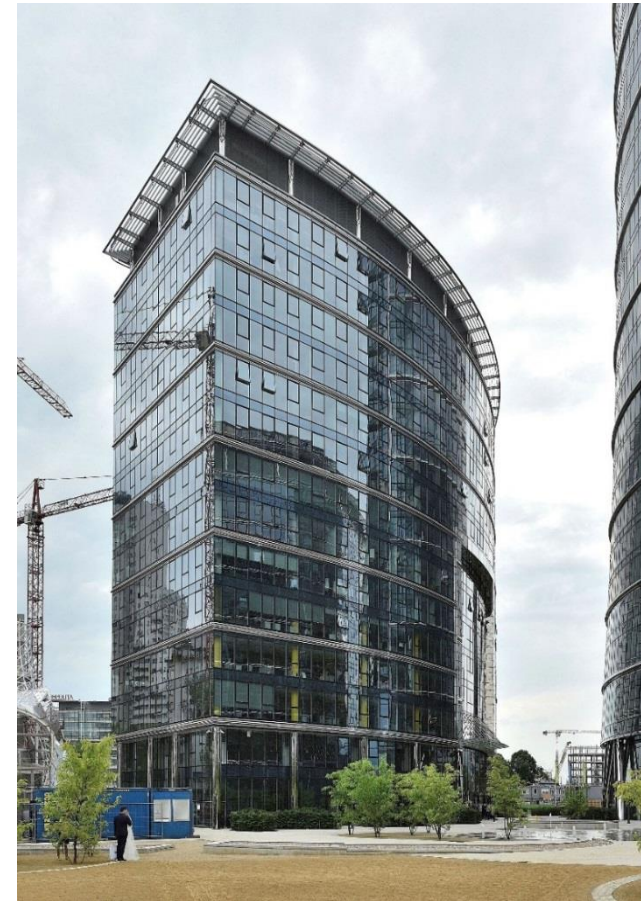
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<sup>7</sup> At the time of my fieldwork it was the "European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union." Indeed its location in Warsaw alone already demonstrates the need to think of the border as being composed of disparate networks that connect across topological space. According to the Frontex website, moreover, "[s]ince the role of Frontex is that of a coordinator, the location of its HQ is practically irrelevant as its operations take place at all external borders – land, sea and numerous international airports in Spain, Italy, Greece, Bulgaria to mention just a few." Available at: <http://frontex.europa.eu/pressroom/faq/about-the-agency/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/mission-and-tasks/>

- f. provide Member States with the necessary support in organising joint return operations” (Council of the European Union 2004: Art. 2(1))

Following the agency’s transformation in 2016, however, Frontex’ powers and remit were expanded such that the agency now controls a ‘rapid reaction pool’ for speedy border interventions, provides support at ‘hotspot’ areas through screening, debriefing, identification and fingerprinting, assists Europol and Eurojust in their ‘fight’ against organised cross-border crime, and can deploy forced-return escorts and return specialists.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the most significant change, however, is that the agency has now also been tasked with the monitoring of EU Member State’s external border ‘capacities’ and, following the permission of the European Council, can intervene directly in the case of urgent ‘situations’ *without* being invited by to by the relevant Member State (European Commission 2016). Clearly these changes to the border agency greatly alter any discussions concerning the agency’s potential power over the

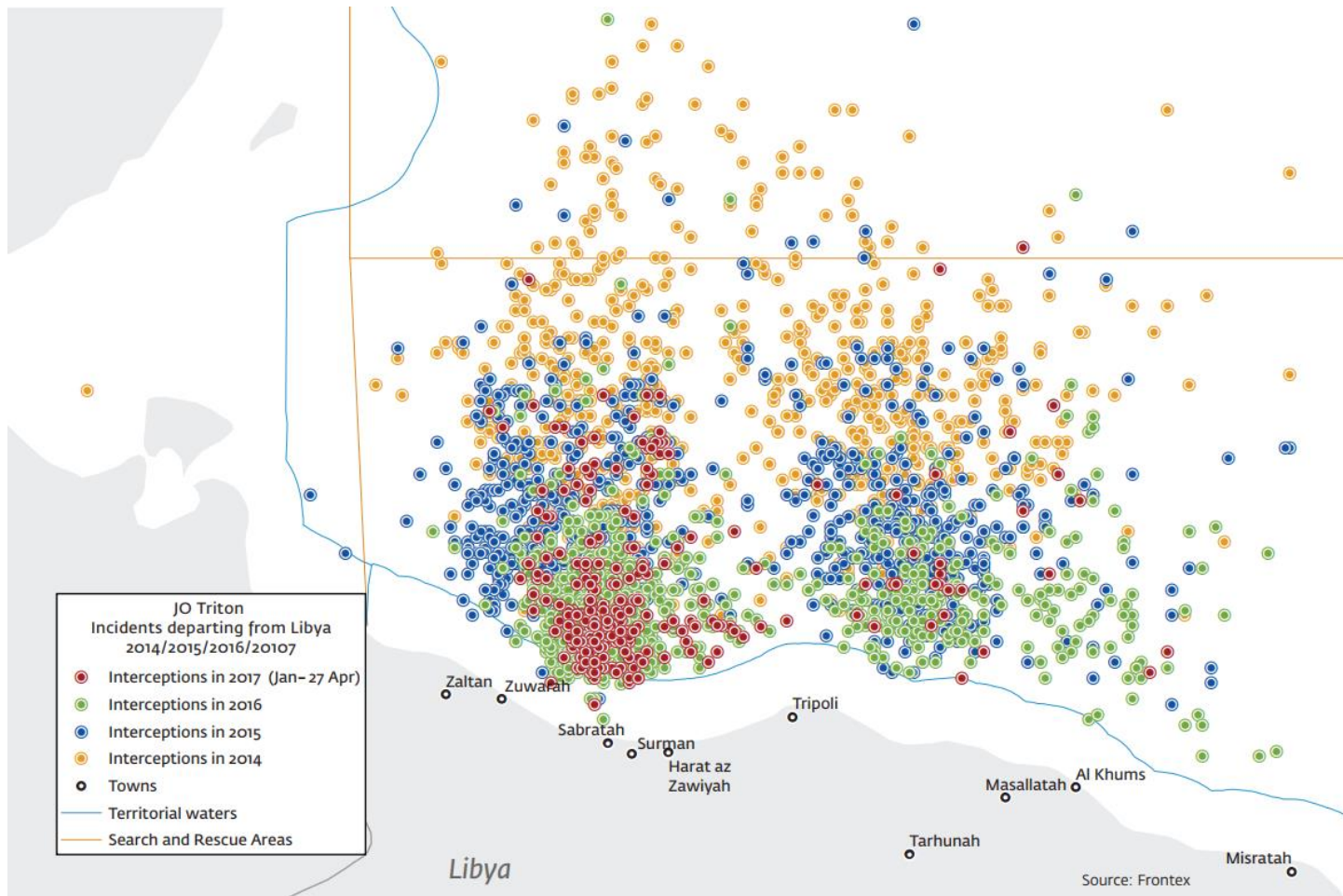


*Figure 3 shows the new Frontex’ new headquarters in Plac Europejski, Warsaw. Image source: Wikipedia (Frontex publish many images of their operations but none that I could find of their headquarters).*

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<sup>9</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/mission-and-tasks/>

sovereignty of nation-states (see Sagrera 2014). My main interest in Frontex, however, concerns its imaginative geographies of the border and the ways in which it acts as a centre of calculation by seeking to develop knowledge and influence over what the agency has termed ‘the pre-frontier’ – predominantly through the application of Eurosur (the European Border Surveillance System), the writing of Risk Analysis Reports and through its role of granting technical support and mediation between Member States and ‘third countries’ outside the European Union. Frontex’s performed reality of the border, therefore, is one that is composed of (state-based) maps, data points, satellite images, graphs and statistics. Figure 4, published in Frontex (2017, p18) and which maps points of interception off the coast of Libya (or border ‘events’), for example, was used in order to demonstrate the “correlation between search and rescue activities carried out by vessels patrolling in international waters getting closer and closer to Libya’s shore and the increased number of irregular migrants departing from Libya.” Moreover, this particular performance of the border is also shifting to the aforementioned ‘third countries’, as EU funds are being used to support the implementation of Frontex’ Integrated Border Management (IBM) concept so that the border control practices of governments and agencies within the EU and its hinterland are in alignment with EU standards and practices.



*Figure 4 is taken from the latest Frontex Risk Analysis document (Frontex 2017, p18). The original caption reads: “Location of interception/rescue of boats that departed from Libya and were bound for Italy – since 2014 the incidents have been taking place ever closer to Libyan territorial waters”*

Of my three main interests, Eurosur, in particular, became central to my focus on the performance of border control in this so-called ‘pre-frontier’. The surveillance system, born out of the Eurosur Regulation,<sup>10</sup> is considered essential by Frontex for combating cross-border crime and simultaneously ‘tackling irregular migration’ while also saving lives at sea. It consists of Member States’ National Coordination Centres (NCCs) which gather data of the ‘national picture’ of ‘their’ borderspace (concerning criminal activity and undocumented border crossings) and share these with Frontex. These data come from a variety of sources including migrant interviews post-arrival, border guards’ observations and trends concerning unauthorised entry and forced removals. Using these national situational pictures and combining them with data from their own sources (covered in detail in chapter 4), Frontex aims to create a European situational and what they call the ‘common pre-frontier intelligence picture’ (Frontex 2013). In addition, Frontex provides the Member States with satellite images and other surveillance tools through their ‘Eurosur Fusion Services’ such that duplication efforts can be reduced and costs saved. My aim, therefore, was to follow the practices and enactments required to hold together this technological assemblage and its particular political performance of the border.

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<sup>10</sup> See [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Legal\\_basis/Eurosur\\_Regulation\\_2013.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Legal_basis/Eurosur_Regulation_2013.pdf)

### 1.3.2 The Straits

The straits of Gibraltar separate Morocco and Ceuta (a Spanish autonomous city) from Gibraltar and the Spanish peninsula and connect the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. The straits are flanked by ‘the Pillars of Hercules’; the Rock of Gibraltar on the European continent and Jebel Musa on the African (although this is disputed).<sup>11</sup> The straits are also one of the world’s most congested marine traffic areas (see Figure 5), with close to 100,000 identified transits occurring per year (Walliser *et al* 2011). Geopolitically the situation in the straits is tense and contested; Ceuta is referred to as an ‘Occupied Town’ by Morocco (Saddiki 2010),<sup>12</sup> Gibraltar is still subject to an irredentist claim made by Spain (Grant 2002), and a number of rocky islands off the coast of Morocco still controlled by Spain yet considered part of Moroccan territories by Morocco

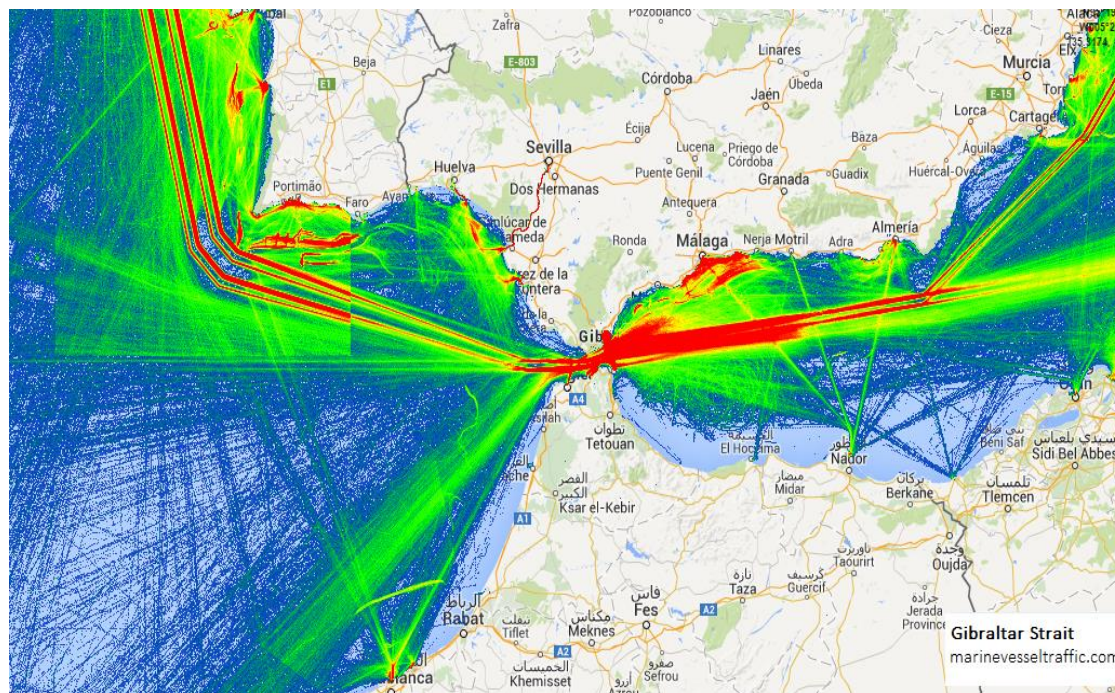


Figure 5 shows a shipping traffic density map for the Straits of Gibraltar. Image source: [marinevesseltraffic.com](http://marinevesseltraffic.com)

<sup>11</sup> The alternative being ‘Monte Hacho’, located in Ceuta.

<sup>12</sup> A Facebook page for the nearby Moroccan town of Fnideq, for example, regularly posts videos and pictures showing the queues (and occasional chaos) at the border checkpoint at El Tarajal whilst condemning the ‘occupation’ of Ceuta.



(Saddiki 2010).<sup>13</sup> Following Spain's accession to the European Union in 1986 and subsequently to Schengen in 1991, however, changed the geopolitical significance and dynamic of this borderspace entirely (Ferrer-Gallardo 2008). Firstly, Ceuta (and its twin Melilla) became '(EU)ro-African territories', which, although not part of the Schengen accord, became seen as gateways to Europe (Mutlu and Leite 2010). By joining the EU and Schengen, moreover, Spain (and its territories) had to acquiesce to Schengen border control standards and, consequently, tighter border controls, visa restrictions and stricter asylum policies asylum policies were enforced (Ferrer-Gallardo 2008). These border controls largely restricted the access of Moroccan citizens to Ceuta without European visas (excluding citizens of the nearby province) and greatly reduced the rights of Moroccan nationals living in the enclave (Ferrer-Gallardo 2008). It was only months later, however, that the first victims of irregularised migration would die whilst trying to cross the straits (Ferrer-Gallardo 2006). Ceuta and Melilla were not 'fenced off' (literally) from the surrounding Moroccan hinterlands until 1995 following significant social tension and continued sub-Saharan migrant arrivals in the enclaves (Mutlu and Leite 2010). A second fence was subsequently added due to the inadequacy of the first operating on its own and the enclaves' borders were made almost inaccessible without documentation by 1999 (Ferrer-Gallardo 2008; Saddiki 2010).

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<sup>13</sup> These islands include: the Chafarine Islands (las Islas Chafarinas), Badis Peninsula (Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera), Nekor Island (Peñón de Alhucemas), and the Parsley Island (la Isla Perejil or Laela).



*Figure 6 was taken from Monte Hacho (as high as I could walk as there is a military base located at the very top). In the background rises Jebel Musa, while in between the two mountains sits city of Ceuta.*

In 2002, moreover, the Spanish Guardia Civil implemented a maritime surveillance system designed to prohibit irregular migration to Ceuta and mainland Spain by migrant boats.<sup>14</sup> This system, entitled SIVE (Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior) and comprised of a fixed and mobile radars, heralded the use of ‘high-tech’ border control technologies in the region. In the years since, SIVE has been promoted as a ‘success’ by the Guardia Civil and its range was increased to the Canary Islands in 2002 (following the shift in migration routes) and later, its range covered the entirety of the Andalusian coast by 2005 (Carling 2007). Yet this self-pronounced success of SIVE and the border fences could do nothing to stop the now-infamous border ‘attacks’ on the fences of both Ceuta and Melilla in 2005. Critically, these ‘attacks’ (comprised of around 500 migrants rushing the border fences) occurred after Morocco had received €40 million from Spain to carry out border control operations which effectively dismantled most organised groups of sub-Saharan migrants and forced out those encamped in the hillside terrains of Benyounes and Gourougou (Collyer 2012). The solution to the shocking scenes captured by the security cameras on the border fences (and subsequently circulated by the world’s media) was further investment in fortress-like border control infrastructure to include heightened barbed-wire fences, automatic tear-gas dispensers and helicopter surveillance (Carling 2007; EC 2005).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Although, as will be discussed in the following chapter, it was primarily designed to limit drug smuggling between Morocco and Spain. The plan was initially approved in 1999 by the Partido Popular (PP) government at a cost of roughly €150 million over five years despite the largescale opposition of NGOs and the Church (Carling 2007). Despite being opposed to SIVE in 1999, the Spanish Socialist party (PSOE) continued the development and expansion of the system after they won the elections of 2004 (Carling 2007).

<sup>15</sup> To be added to the existing infrastructure in Ceuta that already boasted 37 movable cameras along the border fence, infrared surveillance, pressure pads, infrared surveillance, as well as 626 Guardia Civil officers and 316 policemen (EC 2005; Guardia Civil interview).

The straits of Gibraltar, therefore, can be considered one of the most intensely controlled borderspaces on the planet due to the intensity of technological fixes to control circulation present in this space. Undocumented migrants hoping to reach Europe must also evade Moroccan raids in the hills and nearby cities,<sup>16</sup> Spanish border controls along the fences and the Guardia Civil's SIVE maritime surveillance system. Nonetheless, many do still succeed in their journeys to Spain – conspicuous in Ceuta especially by the fluorescent jackets that many wear while asking for money in the city's streets (discussed further in chapter 5). The region, therefore, offers a fascinating insight into both the ways in which border control technologies work on a daily basis given the everyday difficulties presented by the changing climatic conditions of the environment which is almost always neglected from border-related studies, as well as the opportunity to analyse how these control technologies are negotiated by migrants who make use of what opportunities are available to them. Another reason for selecting the straits of Gibraltar as a fieldwork site and, moreover, to focus on SIVE, is that the infrastructure for Frontex's Eurosur surveillance system was based on SIVE following the latter's perceived success (Guardia Civil 2008). In choosing to study the performance of border control through SIVE, therefore, I hoped to also to further understand and question the functioning of Eurosur. I had, moreover, found several references in online material mentioning the use of satellite imagery from Eurosur's Fusion Services being applied to the borderspace in Ceuta and the straits (e.g. GMV 2015). By making use of Gregson and Rose's (2000) theories of space as being brought into being through performance and their

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<sup>16</sup> See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/11/morocco-destroys-migrant-camps-melilla-spain-border>

argument that ‘dominant space’ can be present in ‘alternative space’,<sup>17</sup> I wanted to interrogate the extent to which the border performances of the respective surveillance systems would support or impact on each other in their daily functioning. Similarly, I decided it would be interesting to compare the extent to which both surveillance systems rely on external actors to ‘succeed’ and how each respectively applies control at a distance. Lastly, my interest in the straits centres around the ways in which migrants who have successfully crossed the border fences or escaped SIVE’s sight encountered the border in the weeks and months following their arrivals in Spain. Indeed, the border fences and SIVE only form parts of the border regime acting upon this space. I therefore arrived in Ceuta hoping to understand their next steps, the technologies and links they had used to get so far, how they would negotiate the detention centre and police in Ceuta (tasked with organising returns) and, above all, how they would engage in the politics of claiming asylum.

### 1.3.3 A City in the UK

My third fieldwork site is a city in the United Kingdom (UK). Given the nature of the research methods used in this location (see below), I have decided to anonymise the city in order to protect the identities of my respondents. As stated previously, borders are not ‘tied’ to territory, increasingly pushing beyond the physical domains of nation-states. It therefore follows that borders are also on the move *within* these physical boundaries (Mountz 2011a). As Khosravi’s (2010) autobiographic

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<sup>17</sup> Gregson and Rose (2000, p446) base these theories on their work on car-boot sales in the UK, where the power of retail capital infiltrates that of the car-boot sale as “pricing strategies, haggling decisions, and, indeed, the very definition of a ‘bargain’ are all constructed in relation to the prices demanded by retail capital and the caché of particular high-street brands and labels.”

However, a study along these lines has been conducted concerning Frontex and border control practices in the Aegean by Dijstelbloem *et al* (2017).

account of his journey from Iran to Sweden and also from the status of 'illegal migrant' to refugee demonstrates, there is still an 'invisible border' to contend with for months and/or years following a migrant's arrival. This 'invisible border', constituted by the frequent stares of locals and more overt acts of everyday racism, is not a border to be negotiated solely by asylum seekers and refugees. Yet hidden within the city are 'other spaces' which could be said to form part of a security continuum (see Mountz 2011a). These spaces can include hidden inner-city detention centres, 'portals' between nations" (Coutin 2010), or consist of the mundane sites we pass through freely in our daily lives (such as shopping malls, bus stations and car parks) which, for the asylum seeker or undocumented migrant, can be spaces of intense control due to regular police/border enforcement checks. Yet cities, in particular those with large numbers of migrants and 'uncontrollable spaces' can nonetheless potentially offer refuge for those attempting to hide from the border. As Sassen (2013, p67) writes, for example, cities have become "strategic frontier zone for those who lack power, those who are disadvantaged, outsiders, discriminated minorities. The disadvantaged and excluded can gain presence vis-à-vis power and presence vis-à-vis each other." I therefore opted for a city as a fieldwork site in order to further shed light on these urban spaces and practices of control and resistance. In particular, my focus was on the ways in which technologies and actors outside the 'typical' border assemblage can become imbricated into the border regime and, consequently, what 'tactics' of resistance are available to the weak in the city to resist these forms of control.

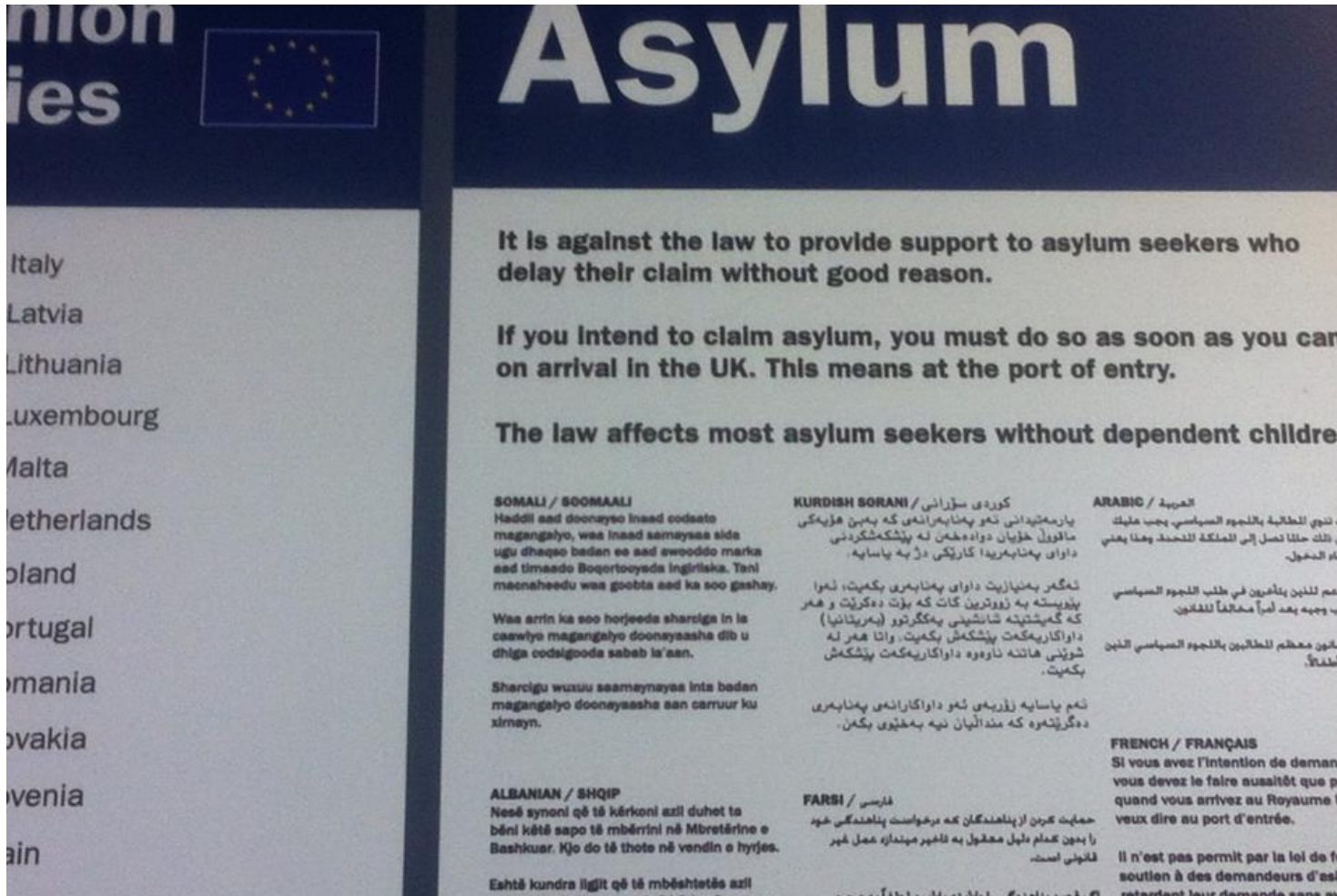


Figure 7 shows a hastily taken picture by the author in a UK airport. I have spotted some small signs indicating that people claiming asylum should report themselves to border security. However, this sign which highlights the illegality of assisting asylum seekers who delay their claim was by far the biggest and most obvious one I encountered.

I chose a UK-based city as it has been well documented that since the introduction of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act and the subsequent publication of the 2002 Home Office White Paper entitled '*Secure Borders, Safe Haven*', especially, conditions for asylum seekers in the UK have been significantly worsening (see Sales 2005; Amnesty International 2005; Yuval-Davis *et al* 2005; Hall 2010). The Immigration and Asylum Act was passed in order to alleviate the 'burden' on housing and services in London and the south east of England, which had historically received and housed high numbers of asylum seekers (Home Office 1998). The solution has since been to disperse asylum seekers throughout the UK by offering accommodation on a 'no choice' basis outside London. As Spicer (2008, p495) notes, "[w]hile the programme attempts to house asylum-seekers in areas with existing minority communities, in practice they are often located in areas with surplus inexpensive housing." As a result, many asylum seekers have been housed in low-income, high-unemployment areas – often resulting in a reinforced cycle of social exclusion (Boswell 2001; Sales 2002; Woodhead 2000; Zetter and Pearl 2000). Set against the backdrop of serious civil disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley (which were blamed on Asian 'youths' despite several racist gang-related attacks on Asian communities) and sensationalist journalism in the popular press declaring a crisis of 'bogus asylum-seekers, the 2002 White Paper was introduced in order to modernise the nation's immigration and asylum policy (Walters 2004). The White Paper aimed to "send out a signal around the world that we are neither open to abuse nor a 'Fortress Britain'" as the then Home Secretary David Blunkett stated (in Home Office 2002, p.4). Aside from the toughened political rhetoric, a series of measures were announced in order to tighten and speed up the existing asylum system, these included: "a streamlining of the asylum appeals process



to allow for only one right to appeal, an increase in removals of those whose applications for asylum fail, the introduction of asylum registration and identity cards” (Darling 2011a, p264).

The ‘spaces of asylum’ (Mountz 2011a) have been constantly shrinking in the urban environments of the UK, therefore, with asylum seekers constantly subjected to a barrage of disciplining strategies on a daily basis (Squire 2009a; Darling 2011a). Aside from the aforementioned identity cards and dispersal, examples of these disciplining strategies and techniques of control include regular reporting dates at the Home Office or police stations, the imposition of curfews (in certain areas through ankle tags), home checks, issuance of pre-paid Azure cards instead of cash and the regular transportation of detainees across the detention estate (see Gill 2009; Klein and Williams 2012; Hasselberg 2014, 2016). Concurrent with the practice of shrinking spaces of asylum has been the increased involvement of ‘for-profit firms’ in the running of not only the detention estate, but also the organisation of housing support following dispersal. As Bosworth (2007) and Klein and Williams (2012) argue, aside from the (potential) financial savings of outsourcing asylum support/detention, outsourcing provides the government with a new form of ‘risk management’ as policy makers become distanced from tragedies and scandals when they occur. The for-profit firms’ involvement in the running of the UK detention estate, moreover, “creates a network of beneficiaries who lend an appearance of normality and an implicit justification for the existence and expansion of the detention regime” (Klein and Williams 2012, p743; see also Andersson 2014c). As I discuss in chapter 6, however, it also results in asylum seekers’ everyday lives becoming increasingly controlled by private companies and sub-contractors without proper training or respect for their rights.

## 1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis argues for a new orientation to the border that takes seriously the messy and multiple performances of bordering. Focusing on the doing of bordering, it offers new insights into how (human and non-human actors) actors come together or are coerced into enacting the border; into how the border is experienced and negotiated by those deemed to be ‘threats’; as well as into the spatial reach and intensity of the border within the fractured geographies of the borderspace. In the literature review I continue with an in-depth discussion of what I mean by asking ‘How is a border enacted?’ Drawing on assemblage theory and Actor-Network Theory (ANT), especially, I set out how I view the border as being in a constant state of *becoming* – made and coming apart through the continuous addition, integration and removal of new actors (Jacobs 2006). Building on this, I argue that a focus on the ways in which the border becomes performed by these various actors assists in un-seeing the border as being solely a ‘project’ of ‘the state’ as such a viewpoint offers too narrow and essentialised a reading of both the state and the ways in which the border comes into being. A focus on performance, instead, allows for a more developed account of the ‘messy’ (inter)actions between the people and things that come together to enact the border on a daily basis and help me conceptualise how I will engage with the three themes of the thesis (i.e. roles non-human actors, temporalities of border control and migrant agency). Following Salter (in Johnson *et al* 2011), I set out three registers of border performances to help think through how such a focus changes the ways in which we view how borders function and how it might create new avenues for enquiry in the three empirical chapters:

1. Formal performances – these include the descriptions of the border and discourses surrounding its protection.

2. Practical performances – the everyday politics that occurs in the process of enforcing the filtering processes of the border.
3. Popular performances – the overtly political contestations over the meaning of the border and to whom it applies.

In the following chapter I set out the methods I have developed and applied in order to explore the three themes of the thesis. I argue for a ‘care-full’ approach to doing research, which Law and Singleton (2013) liken to the slow process of ‘following the grain’ in carpentry such that the ‘messy’, often-contradictoriness, of the spaces and processes can not only be laid bare, but also included into the analysis instead of being silenced. Building on my conceptualisation of the (European) border and its realities as being ‘multiple’ (Mol 1999, 2002), I also set out the empirical benefits of conducting a ‘multi-site ethnography’ and by ‘following’ the things, actors, stories and lives that become entangled in the process of bordering Europe (Marcus 1995). I therefore utilise the opportunity to offer a reflexive account of the various ways in which I entered the ‘field’ and performed my role as researcher in the three fieldwork sites. Indeed, given the particularities of each fieldwork site as well as the specific actors and performances that I wished to follow in each, a variety of different ‘methods’ were employed within the enactment of this multi-site ethnography. Throughout the chapter I also draw attention to the numerous ethical challenges that have arisen in the process of conducting not only the fieldwork, but in the writing of this thesis. In particular, I highlight how being ‘ethical’ has not stopped since my return from ‘the field’ – how it is, instead, an ongoing process. I also emphasise the extent to which good ethical practices are *‘situationally accomplished’* (Calvey 2008) and, therefore, I reflexively discuss the main ethical challenges I have experienced in these specific sites.

The structure of the empirical sections of the thesis is organised around the fieldwork locations. Chapter 4, focuses on the socio-technical systems of border control that perform Europe's 'pre-frontier', namely; Frontex' EUROSUR and the Guardia Civil's SIVE systems. In order to target, slow, re-route and consequently 'rescue' migrants, these systems have become increasingly diffuse – thereby supposedly giving border agencies the power to continuously enact the border beyond territorial boundaries. In the chapter I tease apart these technocratic claims of omni-voyance by focusing on the everyday performances that, combined, enact the 'pre-frontier'. To this aim, I approach the border regime by drawing on assemblage theory, as well as feminist geopolitics' attention to the importance of geopolitical inquiry at the scale of the body. Such an approach re-centres attention to the human performances of border control, whilst also emphasising the agency of 'non-human' matter and actors outside the full control of the Guardia Civil and Frontex. In particular, I argue that the 'messiness' of the borderspace proves too complex for the surveillance systems to control, especially given the imperative of reacting to border events in 'real time'. Indeed, following Virilio (1994), I argue that the border is found less in a line that needs to be defended and, instead, in the time it takes to target and respond to border events. I also argue that the surveillance systems' incomplete incorporation of disparate actors beyond their vision technologies is proving to be their Achilles heel. Finally, the daily breaches of control are exposed through a literary narrative which assists the conceptualisation of the borderspace as being 'messy' and produced through conflicting performances. The effect is a geography of the border that draws attention to the importance of the 'little details' of borderwork, such that the weaknesses and temporary 'fissures' of systems of omni-*voyant* border control systems might be uncovered.

Chapter 5 picks up where chapter 4 ended: in the bounded border enclave that is the autonomous city of Ceuta. Instead of focusing on the pre-emptive strategies of border control, however, the aim of this chapter is to explore the actors and performances which have been drawn together to effectuate a space seemingly outside the realms of Spanish and EU laws. Like many other academic works on camps and bounded spaces, I draw on Agamben's (1998) camp and near-inescapable figure of the *homo sacer* (see Ramadan 2013) in order to establish a conceptual base from which to explore Ceuta. My aim is not, however, to establish whether or not Ceuta is a 'camp' in the Agambenian sense. Instead, the chapter contrasts Agamben's camp with Foucault's (1986) 'Other spaces' – *heterotopia* – in order to generate a productive tension between the two conceptualisations alternative, yet necessary, spaces. I utilise the 'fault lines' created by holding both works in tension as analytical entry points into Ceuta which, to the migrants detained there, appears as a landlocked peninsula. As a result, I argue that Ceuta functions as a space that is *temporally* separated from mainland Europe yet one that is simultaneously designed to be interwoven with other actors and spaces in the border regime. Moreover, I detail how migrants can be held in the enclave indefinitely through Ceuta being officially performed as being both a dualistic space of both 'humanitarianism' and as Europe's last 'defence' against irregular migration. However, I also argue that the control exerted by the Spanish authorities upon the migrants in Ceuta was, in part, undone by their lack of control over all the actors engaged in the border regime. While Ceuta is therefore shown to be a borderspace held together through a messy assemblage of actors, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the imprint which Ceuta leaves on those who (eventually) pass through its boundaries. For the most part their journeys do not end in Ceuta, yet by the time they reach mainland

Europe, many find that their ‘data-doubles’ have already preceded them (Salter 2008b), while evidence of the enclave remains forever etched in their fingertips.

Chapter 6 follows those migrants who have successfully arrived in the UK – whereupon they commence a new journey through the asylum system. While asylum seekers in the UK are often spoken of as living in a state of ‘limbo’ as their asylum cases progress through numerous legal forms of stagnation and dead-ends (e.g. Griffiths 2014), the aim of this chapter is to develop an in-depth account of the spatial politics of asylum that takes place within the city and which considers the urban as an extension of the borderspace. Conceptually the chapter draws on Allen’s (2009) discussions on the *reach* and *intensity* of government authority, as opposed to its spatial extent. In particular, I focus on the actors and strategies employed by the UK Home Office to ‘affectively limit’ asylum seekers’ movements and establishment of connections with local citizens (see Massumi 2013). Just as their ‘legal limbo’ is filled with lawyers, judges, case files, courtrooms, fax machines and translators, asylum seekers’ experiences of their ‘lived limbo’ is replete with smart cards, immigration officials, security guards, flat inspections, threats of being detained and immigration removal vans. Taking these everyday realities into account, therefore, the chapter critically considers the spatialities, temporalities and *intensities* of government power vis-à-vis asylum seekers in the city. In accordance with the empirical chapters that precede it, however, power is not conceptualised as a zero-sum game between resistance and domination (Hinchcliffe 2000). Building on my experiences volunteering with the Solidarity Group, especially, I discuss the ways in which the group’s efforts to deliver practical support to asylum seekers in the city run the risk of shoring up the legitimacy of the Home Office and its

punitive restrictions. Lastly, the thesis concludes with a brief summary of the main theoretical contributions of the thesis and sets out various avenues for future research based on those.

## Chapter 2 The Border Becoming

At some point during my last night in Ceuta, my mobile phone crossed the border into Morocco, seemingly of its own volition. By this I mean that it lost its signal from the Spanish telephone network and picked up a Moroccan network instead. This was not wholly out of the ordinary; the apartment I was staying in was in the cheaper (mostly Muslim) area of the principality and just two kilometres from the main border crossing point at ‘El Tarajal’. I had also chosen my ‘Lyca mobile’ phone provider not for its extensive signal coverage, but because it allowed free calls to other users of the same network and is, therefore, the phone provider used by most migrants throughout their journeys. Ordinarily then, the picking up of a Moroccan network signal would not have been an important event, however, that morning I was to board an early ferry from Ceuta to the Spanish mainland for my final interview with the Guardia Civil before returning to the UK. As there is a one hour time difference separating the autonomous city from the surrounding Moroccan provinces (and my phone updates its clock automatically), I slept in by an hour.

I packed my belongings in a panic, called a taxi and sped off in the direction of the ferry terminal. Twenty minutes later, I rushed past the group of Algerian men who were waiting for an opportunity to stowaway on board and entered the ferry terminal. Before I could board, however, I had to pass through the ferry hall’s passport control.<sup>18</sup> Upon my arrival I noticed that the border guard on duty was not Spanish. Instead he wore the uniform of a Dutch border guard with a light blue

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<sup>18</sup> As will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5, Ceuta is located outside of Schengen space.



Frontex armband and I suddenly remembered that the Frontex Operation ‘Minerva’<sup>19</sup> would be in its inaugural week. Upon presenting the border guard with my UK passport he remarked in English that its front cover looked very faded. Perhaps keen to impress his new international colleagues, he proceeded to scrutinise my passport while asking what line of work I was in and if it involved a lot of travel. “Yes,” I replied in Dutch, “I do travel a lot for my PhD in border studies. And how are you enjoying Operation Minerva so far?” Without another word I was handed back my passport and I ran towards the departing ferry, all the while feeling very smug.

My smugness disappeared within about fifteen minutes of having boarded the ferry as I soon became seasick. Upon arrival at the port of Algeciras almost an hour later, I was amongst the first to disembark. Dragging my 20kg luggage behind me, I ran to the nearest bathroom and spent the next fifteen minutes attempting to pull myself together. When I exited the bathroom, however, I was immediately intercepted by two uniformed officers of the Guardia Civil who proceeded to usher me into a separate interview room, despite the main ferry hall now being completely empty. Thoroughly confused, I was then asked by the stern-faced Guardia Civil men what my purpose was for coming to Algeciras. Both appeared nonplussed when I replied I had an interview at the Guardia Civil headquarters, especially as neither recognised the name of the person whom I was scheduled to be interviewing. My passport was consequently examined for the second time that day, whereupon I was asked what I had been doing in Morocco after the guard spotted the tell-tale stamp on one of its pages. I explained that I had crossed the border for a weekend to go mountain biking but was cut off with the question, “Did you

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<sup>19</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/operations/archive-of-operations/q1RyOO>

buy hashish while you were there?” Suddenly realising why it was that I had been taken aside, I denied having bought drugs whilst in Morocco and proceeded to explain in a rather embarrassed tone why it was that I had been acting ‘suspiciously’ following my arrival. The guards nodded and told me I was free to go. Surprised, I asked if they wanted to search my bags first. “No need,” one replied, before ushering me out the door.

\* \* \*

The border is a performance; a powerful performance that interpellates subjects and is bound up with the production of state effects. In other words, the border acts as more than just ‘the skin’ of sovereign power (Guillermina 2003), framing its limits within territorially fixed delimitations (Vaughan-Williams 2009). Instead, the border and its continued inscription are vital to the manifestation of the sovereign – or the state, which performs itself as sovereign. Borders are key to this performance due to the meanings and forms of belonging that arise from a bounded, political-geographic space inscribed with cultural traditions and narratives (Mitchell 1991; Coplan 2012). The border is also the site at which, through the frontier examination which polices and subjects, the sovereign is performed vis-à-vis the citizen (Salter 2007b) and reaffirms its claim to authority over that territory (Jones 2009). While borders are integral to the performance of sovereignty, however, they are also the sites at which the performance is most likely to slip – where the state’s control over its populations, territory, political economy and culture can be most readily challenged (Johnson *et al* 2011). These ‘slippages’ and border transgressions, moreover, are also moments when norms become most forcibly reinforced.

The performance of sovereignty, therefore, is always incomplete; the inscription of the border demands an incessant deployment of resources in order to maintain the perceived ‘inside/outside’ divide that is key to the functioning of nation-states (Walker 2008). In the vocabulary of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) then, the border is in a constant state of ‘becoming’; “never separable from its relations with the world”, the border ‘becomes’ through its inter-connections with multiple and distinct things (Deleuze 1992a, p628 in Coleman 2008, p168, see also Paasi 2009; Kaiser 2012; Bernes 2014; Sohn 2015). Although due to the resonances with performativity, I prefer to draw on the work of Jenkins (2002), Jacobs (2006) and Swanton (2013) who conceptualise ‘big things’ (e.g. the apartment block or steel plant) not as static entities, rather as being “*building events [...] always being 'made' or 'unmade', always doing the work of holding together or pulling apart*” (Jacobs 2006, p11, emphasis in original). The border *event*, therefore, refers to a continuous struggle across multiple spaces and requires a ‘complex choreography’ between a multitude of actors which occasionally slips or fails (Anderson *et al* 2012; Gielis and van Houtum 2012). In focusing on the enactments of the border, therefore, I am attempting to acknowledge and further the calls for ‘critical border studies’ to widen conceptions of geopolitics as being confined to ‘elite’ practitioners of statecraft by instead drawing attention to the ‘little things’ which are crucial to how the geopolitical is translated into being and becomes entangled within our everyday lives (Thrift 2000a; Henry 2007). Secondly, “reconceptualising borders as a set of performances injects movement, dynamism, and fluidity into the study of what otherwise are often taken to be static entities” (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012, p729). Or, as Sundberg (2011, p322) puts it, “a performative approach attends to embodied practices, doings, and actions, becoming rather than being.”

With this in mind, the over-arching question of this chapter (and thesis) becomes less ‘What is a border?’ and rather, ‘*How* is a border (achieved)?’ If, as Henry (2007, p491) argues, borders “represent one example of the orchestration of the ordinary in the pursuit of the extraordinary,” then it should be possible to analyse how these complex arrangements are held together and effect geopolitical imaginaries on a daily basis. My aims here, therefore, are to (1) interrogate how borders are made, maintained and come apart and (2) to use this knowledge to delve deeper into the fractured geographies of the spaces and sites in which the border becomes manifested. In doing so, I hope to set out several critical conceptual avenues from which throughout this thesis I shed light on the reality of borders, subject border-making practices to scrutiny and re-evaluate the spatial dimensions of bordering strategies.<sup>20</sup> The rest of the chapter is structured around the three registers of border performativity as identified by Salter (in Johnson *et al* 2011, p66) which are:

“First, formal performances of the border include the description and defense of particular territorial borders; second, practical performances of the border include the actual politics of enforcing the admission/ expulsion and filtering process of the border; and third, popular performances of the border include the overtly public and political contestation over the meaning of the border.”

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<sup>20</sup> Here I attempt to follow Parker and Vaughan Williams *et al's* (2009, p583) main aims for ‘critical border studies’ which is to “extrapolate new border concepts logics, and imaginaries that capture the changing perspective on what borders are supposed to be and where they may be supposed to lie.”

In this chapter I utilise these three registers as a heuristic device around which to base my enquiry into *how* borders are enacted, the (human and non-human) actors that are brought into its performance and the temporalities/speeds of border control. Through use of the vignette recounting my journey from Ceuta to mainland Spain, therefore, I aim to unpack each of these three registers to lay bare (without attempting to untangle) the messy power of bordering processes. Through its orientation towards the epistemological challenge of viewing the border as a performance and questioning how the border becomes enacted at various scales and times, moreover, this thesis sits at the intersection of various bodies of literature and, of course, ‘Theories’. The secondary purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to set out how this focus on how performance affects or displaces previously-held border logics or sets up analytical entry points to the three empirical chapters of the thesis. By remaining attuned to the contested power within border assemblages, for example, I argue that the panoptic claims of Frontex and the Guardia Civil can be challenged. Similarly, I make the claim here that a focus on the border as a performance and its fractured geographies guides an analysis of the diffusion of the border into everyday urban spaces and allows for a critical discussion concerning the spatial politics of asylum. I also set out how the agency and performances of those on the move, often left out of geopolitical discussions of border-making, contest power relations in spaces such as detention centres otherwise thought to be under ‘state control’.

In line with Salter’s third register of border performativity, I also demonstrate the potential for ‘counter-mapping strategies’ to undermine and unsettle the ‘formal’ border performances by ‘state actors’ by presenting contrasting visual representations of the border and border-crossers throughout the chapter in the style of a photo-essay. These maps and images are ‘counter-maps’ in that they attempt to appropriate state techniques of mapping and forms of representation in

order to re-territorialise the same areas by demonstrating the ‘silences’ of state-sponsored maps (Peluso 1995, see also Tazzioli 2015). While the focus of this chapter is explicitly on performance and performativity, it will also highlight my rationale for going to different spaces where the border might be performed and confronted differently – an argument which will be picked up again in the methods chapter.

## 2.1 Formal Performances: Threats, Risk and Lines in the Sand

There is a sad irony in the opening vignette concerning the Algerian men who sit by the roadside opposite the ferry terminal, willing to risk their lives by jumping aboard the ferry as it leaves the docks who watch as the European citizen speeds past in a taxi, red passport in hand. Through an ‘accident in geography’ which determined our respective birthplaces, their mobility had been halted where mine had not. Of course that particular expression belies and conceals the considerable efforts made by government actions over hundreds of years to institutionalise the limit of free circulation of certain groups of people while ensuring the continued movement of goods and services. Similarly, by considering their position to be an ‘accident’ removes the part which these men play in the continued performance of the state as sovereign through their representation as ‘threats’ to the safety of the population. This section, therefore, is focused on the formal performances of the border. Specifically, I briefly set out the historical importance of bordering-making for the purpose of performing the nation-state and legitimising the state. I do this to highlight the ways in which modern maps and, specifically, geopolitical projections of the world by institutions such as Frontex and Europol are remarkably similar in their intent to create an ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’, as well as legitimising their place and methods of control in the maintenance of the geopolitical status quo. In this section I also argue that the events of 9/11 have fundamentally affected

the ways in which undocumented migration is performed. The securitisation of migration control has led to the creation of abject populations performed as threats to the wellbeing of the population. These arguments are crucial for understanding the justifications for the criminalisation of migration and the strategies used to control and inhibit their mobilities discussed in the empirical sections of the thesis. Indeed, Figures 8 and 9 (discussed in more detail below) are typical maps produced by both European institutions which paint undocumented migration as a threat through their portrayal of migrants as penetrating (unidirectional) arrows, suggest a 'naturalness' to the division between Europe and beyond while minimising the importance of internal borders and, finally, performing a 'scientific' knowledge/understanding of the migrant threat through an all-seeing view from above.



*Figure 8 Frontex representation of the border and the main migratory routes taken by land and sea (through 'irregular' means). Image accessed at <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map/>*



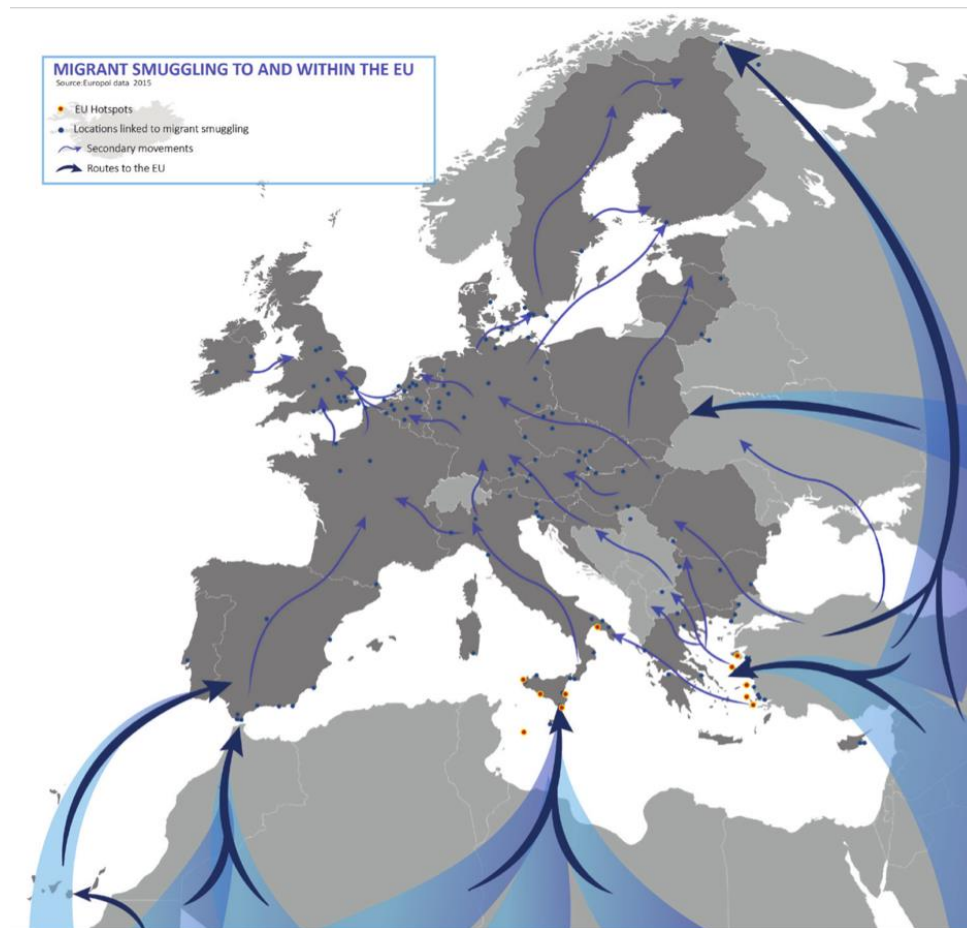


Figure 9 shows Europol's representation of the border and the existence of particular locations 'linked to migrant smuggling'. Image accessed at <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/migrant-smuggling-in-eu>

The art of mapping the world is both a form of knowledge a form of power (Poster 1982; Jacob 2006) frequently utilised and adapted as an ‘intellectual weapon’ of the state system (Harley 1988, 2009). Indeed as Lefebvre (1991, p280) puts it, “every state is born of violence, and [...] state power endures only by virtue of violence directed towards space.” It is no great stretch, therefore, to say that the ‘*national ordering of things*’ (Malkki 1995, p5) brought about the (national) *b/ordering* of space (van Houtum *et al* 2005) as the contours of rivers, mountains, forests and abstract spaces became subsumed into the new world order of territory as constitutive of the nation-state and performed through ‘truth-speaking’ maps. By projecting an all-seeing view over the territory from nowhere, therefore, these maps performed what Haraway (1991) in another context refers to as the ‘God trick’ (Law and Benschop 1997). In other words, the ‘natural’ world and its borders became legible for the disembodied viewer through these maps yet, as and Blomley (2003) argues, their effect is to ‘enframe’ objects in space (and indeed space itself) as desocialised and depoliticised. As a result, the borders that appear on maps are given legitimacy every time they are reproduced (Weizman 2007), yet they also appear to have always been ‘there’ and give the impression that they should also always remain. Enframing, therefore, conceals the politics behind borders while concealing the ways in which it simultaneously functions as an ‘ordering device’ (Blomley 2003). Thus, while borders express a “regime of meaning and power under which the world is represented as a ‘unity’ of different ‘parts’” (Balibar 2009, p201), the ‘lines in the sand’ represented on maps also perform the sovereignty of the state to make decisions concerning the mobility of goods and people over these bounded territories.

These performances of sovereignty through mapping techniques are no less relevant today than they were 300 years ago following the Treaty of Westphalia – especially when one considers the argument that many modern practices of border

militarisation represent the “waning relevance and cohesiveness” of the nation-state under globalisation (Brown 2010, p24). Unlike their historical counterparts, however, the modern map-based performances I will discuss here are less concerned with accurately portraying the ‘bounded nature’ of territory (and its properties) and focus instead on portraying new, mobile threats to the population of the nation-state through a lexicon of ‘risk’ and risk-based maps. To understand the ‘success’ of these performances, however, it is crucial to first recognise the long-term processes which, prior to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, forcefully reduced whole populations and groups to a position of abject-ness (see Nyers 2003). Indeed, for the purposes of this thesis, it is important to understand not just how formal performances make groups abject, but also how these performances fuel justifications for enacting the border *beyond* the territorial boundaries of nation-states and for the mistreatment and segregation of ‘irregular migrants’ from local citizenry if they have succeeded in surpassing the border controls beyond the territorial frontier.

The notion of performing sovereignty over a bounded territory signifies control over the circulation of goods and people, rather than a halting of movement altogether. As Salter (2004, p72) writes, “[t]he problem of borders” has long been “a result of two powerful governmental desires: security and mobility.” Indeed, in his lectures at the Collège de France, Foucault (2009) highlights the development of ‘an apparatus of security’; a form of governmentality concerned with both ensuring the protection of the population as well as its movement and freedom. In other words, in seeking to ensure the security of the *population*, “we see the emergence of a completely different problem [...] of allowing circulations to take place, of controlling them, sifting the good and the bad, ensuring that things are always in movement, constantly moving around, continually going from one point to another, but in such a way that the inherent dangers of this circulation are

cancelled out” (Foucault 2009, p65, see also Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008). Unlike discipline, therefore, security operates outside of artificially-created spaces in which actions can be moulded with intense precision and accepts that to ‘make life live’, others must ‘be left to die’ (Foucault 1991, 2003) – this ‘thanatopolitics’ is what is referred to as “the dark or reverse side of biopolitics” (Cupples 2012, p21). The apparatus of security, therefore, applies the calculation of risk to minimise harm to levels which would be considered average across the population as a whole.<sup>21</sup>

This abandonment of the totalizing possibilities of power resonates strongly with Walters’ (2006) application of Deleuze’s (1992b) concept of control in order to explain the changing topology of the border – that is the increased diffusion of border enforcement across space through actors predominantly considered within the realm of the civil society. Walters (2006, p192) draws attention to the way in which “[c]ontrol de-emphasizes or even abandons the quest to train, moralize, reform and remake the individual. It relinquishes the dream of an all-encompassing, normalized society. It is less bothered with reforming the young offender, than with securing the home or the shopping mall against their presence.” Again, unlike discipline, neither security nor control is focused on the subject as a whole or on altering the subject’s identity/personality. Deleuze stresses that under a regime of control, the inner ‘selves’ of individuals are ignored as they are instead transformed into *dividuals*. There are two key outcomes to this fragmentation relevant to the performance of borders regarding this process of fragmentation of the subject and the slow transformation of society to one governed through control. Firstly, safe

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<sup>21</sup> In the case of the medieval town, for example, the security apparatus would involve the calculation of the expected number of carts, passers-by and thieves and the expected changes in their behaviour following changes to the ‘milieu’ of the town<sup>21</sup> (e.g. widened streets and elongated docks). Some instances of thievery were still to be expected following these changes (Lemke 2001), as well as the possibility rioters within the widened streets, but these would have to be “built into the plan” (Foucault 2009, p20).

passage beyond the border ‘checkpoint’ is determined by the possession of the correct *password*, which can take the form of a passport, identity card, credit card or even the supposedly inescapable biometric fingerprint (van der Ploeg 1999). The second outcome is what Walters (2006, p192) terms “the underside of the control society”; as those on the move without the correct password are singled out as ‘deviant’, to be placed in detention, questioned, or removed (Pötzsch 2015). Being born on the wrong side of the EU’s ‘positive and negative’ visa list (van Houtum 2010), for example, can signify an automatic membership of the world’s non-exclusive group of ‘abject cosmopolitans’ (Nyers 2003) – those whose deaths at the extremities of the border nation-states are willing to tolerate (Mbembe 2003; Khosravi 2010).

This explanation for the creation of abject populations, however, is incomplete as it ignores the formal (political) performances that have also been complicit in the making of abject populations. As the transnational flows of people, production, investment, information and ideas associated with globalisation continue to threaten the traditional power of nation-states and state sovereignty (Brysk and Shafir 2004; Dauvergne 2004), state actors attempt to regain control through the granting or denial of access to citizenship and its benefits (Wonders 2006).<sup>22</sup> It is partly for this reason, therefore, that the “mobility of population has to be depoliticized by the state – interpreted to be a sign of individual freedom rather than resistance or rejection of the state contract” (Salter 2007b, p8). Asylum seekers and refugees, however, act as a direct contradiction to this performance through their continued existence, agency and demands for (human) rights despite their lack of attachment to the sovereign they had been linked to from birth (Agamben 1995; see also Long 2006).

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<sup>22</sup> Lahav (2004), for example, argues that an intended result of combined border control initiatives amongst EU Member States was not just to keep irregular migrants out, rather to keep citizenship, resources and privilege ‘in’.

In this struggle to maintain the sovereignty of the state, Wonders (2006, p75) argues that “[p]erhaps the most powerful tool in any nation’s arsenal is the ability to frame discourse and how citizens imagine the world around them.” Indeed, politicians and other state actors are increasingly seizing upon this concern and are demonstrating a willingness to frame immigration as a ‘zero-sum’ game in which the current citizenry’s rights will become further reduced. The infamous social construction of asylum seekers in the UK as being ‘bogus’, for example, can be traced back to the 1998 White Paper (‘Fairer, faster, firmer’) introduced by the New Labour government in which it was established that the government’s approach towards asylum issues would be one of ‘deterrence’ (Fekete 2001; Vaughan-Williams 2010). In response to ‘migration events’, especially, asylum seekers’ bodies have been performed by government sources and the media as being ‘diseased’ and as posing a threat to the nation-state (Mountz 2004, see also Cresswell 1997).<sup>23</sup> In other words, ‘sticky’ adverse qualities (Tyler 2006) are regularly attached to the bodies of asylum seekers and other irregular migrants in an attempt to justify forms of border control that aim to deter irregular migration and limit their access to state welfare due to their deviancy and unworth.

The attacks of September 11 and other subsequent high-profile terrorist attacks (in the West) have, however, had a profound effect on the imaginative geographies of the other. The institutionalising of a ‘state of exception’ (Agamben 2005) as a result of the global ‘war on terror’ has created a politics of fear and a renewed colonial imagination of ‘wild zones’ beyond the

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<sup>23</sup> Drawing on the work of Imogen Tyler (2013; see also Tyler 2006; Tyler and Marcinak 2013), Jones *et al* (2017) assert that asylum seekers are ‘*made abject*’ (Rose 1999) by government performances intended to “encourage populations to align themselves as ‘good citizens’ against these ‘revolting subjects’, and thereby the limits of their own access to rights and citizenship are obscured” (p123).

territorial limits of spaces deemed to be 'safe' and 'known' (Gregory 2004; see also Amoore 2006). Agamben argues that a state of exception occurs during a period of emergency when the sovereign authority suspends the legal protection of individuals while committing acts of violence against those it deems to be a threat.<sup>24</sup> Although emergency powers had long been places at the heart of the rule of law in order to govern capitalist modernity (Neocleous 2006), the events of September 11 "provided the necessary affect to reorder the status quo" such that governments across the globe have been justified in expanding their powers and security practices indefinitely (Jones 2009, p882; Ó Tuathail 2003). Entrenched within this new security paradigm, migration has become constructed as a threat to the safety of Western society and a problem of security – to the extent that it has become elevated "above the realm of normal politics where considerations of social justice are evaded and questions of 'effectiveness' emerge as paramount" (Wilson 2015, p505; Loader 2002).

No longer constructed solely as 'deviant', therefore, unauthorised migration has become criminalised and construed as analogous to organised 'cross border crimes' and the threat of terrorism in the performances of elite professionals on migration (Huysmans 2006; Aas 2011; Cetti 2012). The supposed danger posed by 'irregular migration', has resulted in the suspension of human rights and, in the UK, indefinite detention of migrants (Yuval-Davis *et al* 2005). Unauthorised migration has also increasingly become perceived as a cat-and-mouse game to be played out in the 'pre-frontier' borderlands of Europe through anticipatory security assemblages lead by a faith in risk management practices (van Houtum 2012). This

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<sup>24</sup> This is based on Agamben's (1998) assertion, through drawing on the works of Benjamin (1940), Foucault (1978) and Schmitt (1985, 1996), that sovereign power is based on its capacity to call a state of emergency and, consequently, to operate both within and outside the legal system simultaneously. In other words, the political realm is 'originally' biopolitical because it is founded upon the sovereign's right to exclude (Vaughan-Williams 2015). Agamben goes on to make the distinction between a political citizen and 'bare life', or *homo sacer*, who becomes the embodiment of the state of exception as their rights and guarantees are stripped away (Jones 2009).

view is both evidenced and reinforced through the production and circulation of ‘statistically-accurate’ maps such as those portrayed in Figure 8 and Figure 9 in the media and through ‘official discourses’ by governments and border institutions which present the likeliest routes through which undocumented migrants will penetrate the borders of European nation-states. Frontex, for example, refer to their Risk Analysis Unit as being ‘the Brain’ of the border agency with which they can gain a better understanding of ‘illegal’ border crossing patterns and those of ‘other illegal activities’ (Frontex 2010, 2014).<sup>25</sup> Thus, despite the 1951 United Nations Convention for Refugees clearly stating that asylum seekers have the right to cross borders without prior authorisation or documentation (Squire 2009a), their actions and identities are being presented as ‘illegal’.

This projection of migrant mobility is also demonstrated through the Risk Assessment maps regularly produced by the border agency, which depict migration ‘flows’ as threatening arrows converging towards Europe in a style reminiscent of WWI trench maps (van Houtum 2012). The world in Figure 8 and Figure 9, has become flattened – creating a central viewpoint from ‘nowhere’ (Alpers 1989) through which the subject can also be centred (Law and Benschop 1997; Law 2002) – while ‘bad circulations’ of migrants are performed as illegal and threatening. Meanwhile the territories of the EU have become homogenised in the face of the migrant attacks and in comparison to those territories that surround the EU. In chapter 4, I argue that this view from nowhere acts as a performance of panopticism – or of a ‘God’s Eye View’ as it were – through the portrayal of knowledge over the borderspace from a point located outside of Euclidian space. Despite this

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<sup>25</sup> These other activities concern the “smuggling of illicit drugs, trafficking in human beings, terrorist threats, smuggling of weapons, stolen vehicles (on exit), smuggling of excise goods” (Frontex 2013a, p45).



portrayal of omnipotent knowledge, however, in both figures it is not the border that is given agency, rather migrants are performed as (masculinised) arrows piercing (feminised) seemingly defenceless European territories (it should also not be forgotten that at the scale of these maps, migrants would appear completely invisible). By presenting irregular migration solely as a ‘threat’,<sup>26</sup> moreover, the political/economic/historical contexts of migration are silenced in the risk analyses and risk maps produced by agencies and institutions such as Frontex, Europol and the IOM – thus further creating the impression of migration as an autonomous force (Sassen 1998). Indeed, both maps present a sense of Europe’s territories being besieged on all sides by migrants whose sole intent is to penetrate while Europe’s borders remain static. As a result of such performances, argues Walters (2009, p124), it “is not difficult to see how the politics of re-bordering, whether understood as the fortification of frontiers or the trend towards greater surveillance of mobile populations, follows almost logically from such representations.” By being performed as penetrating arrows, moreover, the people on the move are almost completely dehumanised. The role of *human* agency is also removed, moreover, making the effects of eventual ‘punishment’ or securitised border management appear impersonal and without human consequences (see Law 2002).

By utilising enframing techniques (Blomley 2003), these maps perform not just the illegalised migrant, but also the spatio-legal fiction of the territorial subject and the justification for the sovereign power to ban or exclude illegalised migrants who have made the *choice* to risk their lives in attempting to reach Europe (see for example Miller 2016). These performances of masculinised migrants and feminised borders, however, are not constant. As will be discussed further in

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<sup>26</sup> Frontex (2013a, p11) lexicon defines a ‘threat’ to be “a force or pressure acting upon the external borders that is characterised by both its magnitude and likelihood.”

chapter 4, for example, border authorities also attempt to perform the border as being high-tech, capable of conducting pre-emptive missions in order to ‘rescue’ helpless migrants and, crucially, worthy of investment. The border, therefore, is simultaneously performed by border agencies and authorities in seemingly contradictory forms, which, as will be discussed further in this chapter and in chapter 4, represent a source of strength rather than of weakness (Law 2002). In a similar vein, migrants are also performed in various contradictory ways; as threatening arrows in Figure 8 and Figure 9, but also as powerless creatures in between subject and object in need of humanitarian support. As I argue in chapter 5, the formal performances which paint Ceuta as a humanitarian space and migrants as in need of humanitarian aid in fact serve to strengthen the boundaries of the enclave. Indeed as Long (2006) argues in the context of the Israel/Palestine border and by drawing on Agamben (1994, 1998), when people become categorised as ‘humanitarian cases’ this is not to say that they have been placed above and beyond biopolitical sovereign power. Rather, they become embedded more deeply in it as humanitarian attempts to operate outside the framework of citizenship “not only acknowledge but reify bare and sacred life in the form of the abjected refugee” (Long 2006, p116).

In performing the threat of migrant mobility, both Frontex and Europol maps also partially depict the folding of the European borderpace (see Hinchcliffe *et al* 2013). The locations of the arrow-heads in both maps, for instance, point to the creation of what I (following Salter 2008b) am calling ‘pinch points’. In contrast to Salter (2008b, p149), whose use of the term refers to the “physical exultation of the filter” that routes passengers in airports through pre-determined intensely-controlled spaces, at the scale of the European border as a whole, however, both maps perform these ‘pinch points’ as being determined by the routes chosen by migrants. Through this reading, therefore, the ‘pinch points’ are those sections of the

border which, in a topological vein, are the closest to the imagined wilderness beyond and those spaces which must be most heavily defended.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the Europol map's main focus is on the portrayal of 'EU Hotspots'<sup>28</sup> and 'Locations linked to migrant smuggling' which are deemed to be areas in need of increased policing. Unsurprisingly, these locations include Calais, Dunkirk, London (various), Paris, Patras, Thessaloniki, Palermo and Zeebrugge – all well-known locations used by migrants throughout their journey to rest, work and find connections to reach their desired destinations. What these maps silence, however, are the ways in which practices of mobility are partitioned, governed, monitored or detained *within* the territorial limits of Europe through a variety of legal limits, technologies of control and enforced stasis (Tazzioli 2015; see also Casas-Cortes and Cobarrubias 2007; Vukov and Sheller 2013).

In contrast to the Frontex and Europol maps, the 'counter map' presented in Figure 10, therefore, has purposefully attempted to subvert these formal performances of Europe's borderspaces by specifically highlighting the spatial dimensions of the EU's border practices. Journalist and cartographer Philippe Rekacewicz, for example, uses data collected by the activist organisation Migreurop<sup>29</sup> to present a map which depicts not just the spaces in which people are dying

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<sup>27</sup> Influenced by a recorded conversation between Serres and Latour (1995), Hinchcliffe *et al* (2013, p538) discuss this imagined pinching of topological space through an analogy of a handkerchief: "Where the flat, well-ironed surfaces of a handkerchief stand in for a geometry of fixed distances and defined borders, the fabric, once folded, draws together threads previously held apart and vice versa. In a topological vein, weaves of cloth that were once close are now distant and, conversely, points previously at separate ends of the handkerchief are now in contact with one another."

<sup>28</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/2\\_hotspots\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/2_hotspots_en.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Migreurop have also created an online visualisation platform entitled 'closethecamps' which includes statistics (e.g. total capacity and legal time limits) for each detention centre (<http://www.migreurop.org/article2489.html?lang=fr>).

within the borderlands, but also the ‘corridor of exile’ (Agier 2010); made up of the network of detention centres within and outwith the EU in which migrants’ journeys are slowed or halted. The colour choices of the map (orange for nation-states which make up the ‘buffer zone’ while grey for Europe) also demonstrate the conscious change in focus of the map *away* from the ‘formal’ Eurocentric performances above. The map pushes the reader, therefore, to question what other arrangements have been made between Europe and the governments of these nation-states through ‘third country agreements’ with Frontex<sup>30</sup> or through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to perform the border on Europe’s behest (see Collyer 2007; Geiger and Pecoud 2010; Bejarano *et al* 2012).<sup>31</sup>

The most ‘powerful’ aspect of this map, however, is that it is drawn in pencil. Whilst this textured rendering creates a smooth and comforting image of the border from a distance, it also allows the map to appear warmer and more accessible to the reader such that the ‘formal’, almost sanitised performance of the previous maps can be subverted. Moreover, the roughly traced lines and the unevenness of the paper serve to highlight the asymmetrical spaces of the borderlands as well as the uncertainty of *where* the border might be located and *how far* the influence European bordering practices, or ‘pedagogical sovereignty’ (Tazzioli 2015), has spread. The ‘threat’ performed in this map is not the migrant, rather it is the mobility and nebulosity of the border ‘line’. Indeed the extent of the deaths both within and beyond the bounded territories of Europe force us to question whether or not Western governments are willing to passively *tolerate* refugee casualties (Khosravi 2010), or whether refugees have been purposefully *abandoned* to “an unconditional power of death”

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<sup>30</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/partners/third-countries/>

<sup>31</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp_en)

(Agamben 1998, p90) in the hostile environments of the borderlands (Vaughan-Williams 2015). Indeed, the inclusion of the detention centres and spaces in which migrants have died also reasserts the humanity of those crossing the border and otherwise being portrayed as red arrows and brings into question the extent to which state apparatuses are capable exerting power over the borderspace.

The contradictions between the ‘official’ maps published by Frontex and Europol and the map created by Rekecewicz spark a number of productive tensions which I seek to explore further in the empirical chapters. In particular, I am concerned with the concentration of bordering efforts at these topological ‘pinch points’ compared to the more ubiquitous portrayal of the European border as a number of buffer zones on Rekecewicz’ map. In chapter 4, therefore, I seek to determine the spatial extent of what Frontex terms ‘the pre-frontier’ and the level of control the agency and border forces such as the Spanish Guardia Civil are able to exert in this space. In doing so the chapter evaluates the powers of the technologies available to these various border-making bodies and critiques the aforementioned God-like knowledge that is produced in the maps produced by Frontex. I also utilise Rekecewicz’ performance of the borderspace as being rough by re-introducing Scott’s (2009) work on ‘friction’ and conceptualisations of non-human agency to further disrupt this performed ‘eyeless gaze’ over the borderspace (Virilio 1989).

Secondly, Rekecewicz’ map highlights the continuation of migrants’ encounters with the border and bordering practices beyond initially setting foot in Europe. By contrast, there is a performed finality to migrants’ journeys represented in the tips of the arrows of the formal maps – as if the journey has been completed following the successful piercing of European soil. The arrows also speak nothing of the *time* that migrants spend in the ‘pre-frontier’, in camps upon arrival, or navigating

asylum and immigration systems for months and years after. Chapters 5 and 6 therefore, critically examine the ways in which the rhythms and temporalities of asylum seekers' and migrants' lives are caught up in the security infrastructures of the border. As I have argued in this section, moreover, the repeated acts of making populations abject and (since 9/11) threatening is bound up in the management of migration through ideals of security and control. These ideals and formal performances have resulted in irregular migrants become illegalised and dehumanised such that their predicaments can be ignored in the context of providing security for the European body politic – their journeys to be halted as close as possible to their initial point of departure. As I discuss in the following section, however, performing a knowledge of the borderspace from above is very different from utilising border technologies in order to enact the border at a distance. A discussion of the powers of these bordering technologies, therefore, first requires a more intimate understanding of the practical performances of the border and of the integration of new technologies into pre-existing networks control. It is to this matter that I now I turn. In the following section, therefore, I discuss the everyday challenges that become foregrounded if we shift focus to the 'practical performances' of border control. I focus on the varying human performances of border guards, the difficulties of maintaining the assemblages of border control and the roles and powers of non-human elements in the borderspace to either enact the border or hinder it.

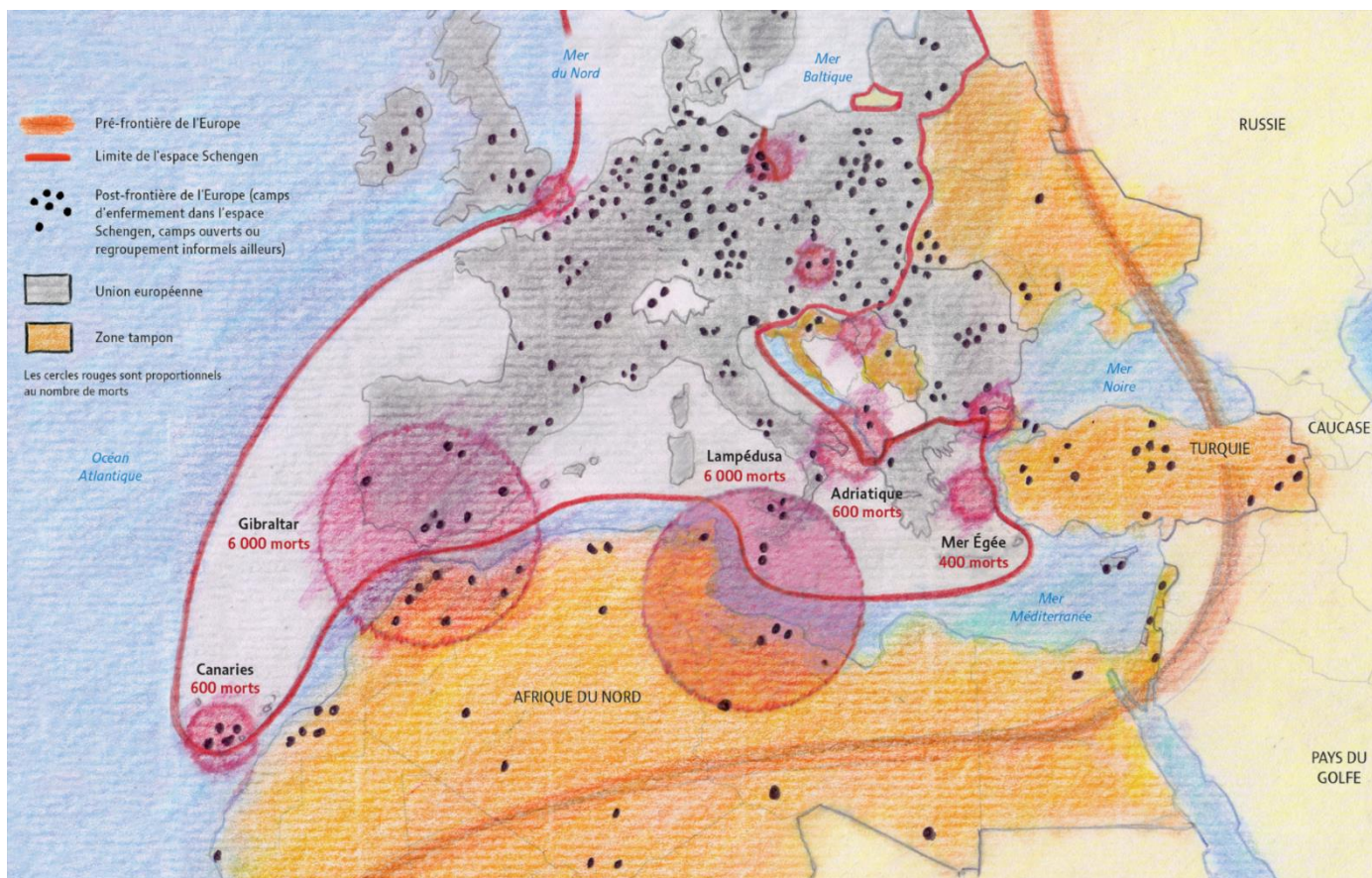


Figure 10 shows a 'counter map' drawn in pencil by Philippe Rekacewicz (permission to publish granted). The map denotes the changing spaces of the border (detention centres in black), the multiple textures of the borderlands and the spaces of death for migrants (in red). Image accessed at <http://www.internationalboulevard.com/mapping-europes-war-on-immigration/>

## 2.2 Practical Performances: The dance of force relations

### 2.2.1 Human performances

Writing in the context of theorisations of the state, Painter (2006, p761) makes the observation that: “it is striking how infrequently the gap between state institutions’ claims about their effectiveness and their actual effects is recognized in academic state theory.” Indeed, the more disembodied state actors or institutions become (or rather, perform themselves to be), the easier it is to forget that the functioning of these institutions relies on a multiplicity of mundane actions by ‘ordinary’ employees and actors (Mountz 2004). Similarly, Wonders (2006, p66) argues that “although states attempt to choreograph national borders, often in response to global pressures, these state policies have little meaning until they are ‘performed’ by state agents or by border crossers.” In other words, although state institutions might pass legislations concerning desired bordering practices, *how* the border is performed (as well as *where* and upon *whom*) will be determined by border guards, bureaucrats, police officers and private security guards among others. Bigo (2007, 2014), however, points to the fact that much of the contemporary border research lacks an attention to the dispositions of border agents and the contexts in which they work. This attentiveness to the importance of reorienting the scale of what is a geopolitical enquiry owes much to the works of many feminist geographers who have successfully worked to problematize and rethink the issue of scale to critique and deconstruct dominant geopolitical narratives which have largely silenced the contributions of most women and many men to the realm of ‘politics’ (Jones 1997; Kofman and Peake 1990; Staeheli 1996; Secor 2001). Building on this, feminist geopolitics attempts to build a politics of security at the scale of the body in order, especially, to contest the militarisation of states and societies (Hyndman 2004).



In particular, a shift to the scale of the body opens up interesting avenues for enquiry concerning the border and its enactment if we start to examine the grounded performances of these actors not as single subjects located in single subject positions, but as “citations<sup>32</sup> infused with multiple subject positions” (Gregson and Rose 2000, p446; Mountz 2004). Moreover, as Mahtani argues concerning performativity and race, “[c]hoosing *what* performance *where*, depends on a myriad of conditions – a complex exchange among a variety of characters, where everyday interactions occur across gendered and racialized terrains. These exchanges are complex because places are not ‘inert, fixed backdrops’” (2002, p431 emphasis in original). Relating this information to the human performances of the border, the Dutch border guard in the opening vignette was, I think, not solely occupied with ensuring the passage of only EU citizens and visa-bearers onto the ferry. Instead, he was simultaneously concerned with maintaining a good impression with his new international colleagues and demonstrating the validity of his secondment towards the Spanish border guards present and who might not have been best pleased with the situation. The Dutch border guard was also simultaneously embodying Frontex and, as evidenced by his reluctance to discuss the operation with me, perhaps uncomfortable at doing so. All in all the events described above lead only to my passport being examined for longer than I would have liked and, in the worst case, a missed ferry. Conceptually, however, even in this short snippet the border guard’s actions highlight the ‘messiness’ and unpredictability

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<sup>32</sup> Gregson and Rose (2000, p434) define ‘performance’ as what “individual subjects do, say, ‘act out’”, whereas ‘performativity’ can be seen as the “citational practices which reproduce and/or subvert discourse and which enable and their performances.” In this thesis, however, I have followed an approach more akin to Moll’s (2002) (who uses the word ‘enact’ which has less “academic history”) and have not maintained a strict distinction between ‘performance’ and ‘performativity’.

of border performances (Law 2004), as well as the opportunities for slippages and disruptions to occur (Gregson and Rose 2000).

More often than not, however, those most likely to suffer from the unpredictable human performances of the border are not white travellers confident in the power of their passport, but those with the most to lose. Fassin (2011), for example, describes how members of the French anticrime squads, who regularly choose to perform the border when feeling frustrated or when needing to boost arrest statistics, categorise residents of low class areas and members of minorities or working class youth as ‘bastards’ – therefore susceptible to committing crime or to being complicit in crime and deserving of a higher level of punitive action and physical abuse. Indeed, when border agents ‘embody the state’ (Mountz 2004), this should “not be read as a process that completes the programme. Like any translation it has the potential to supplement the rule or programme, it is both traduction and trahision – transmission and treason” (Hinchcliffe 2000, p231). In a study of immigration officers in the Unites States, Heyman (2001), for example, demonstrates that while the officers might be able to recite immigration laws by rote, they are not ‘robotic’ in their application of these laws. Instead, the officers engage instead in what Heyman refers to as ‘thought-work’ as they use informal interpretations of migrants’ performances to influence their classifications. Thus, Heyman (2001) documents how officers might offer an undocumented arrestee voluntary return if they are perceived to have a positive moral worth, but deport those who act with defiance upon capture or show signs of a potential criminal background (determined by the presence of tattoos or a muscular physique).

Border guards, therefore, are forced to rely on this ‘thought-work’ as the facts they are given will never completely ‘add up’ within the twelve seconds they will on average have to make their decision (Frontex 2014), nor will many of the everyday

events which occur while they are on duty be completely legislated for (Amoore 2006). In the opening vignette, for example, it was my irregular actions following the arrival of the ferry that alerted the Guardia Civil officers in Algeciras. Similarly, it was their 'gut feeling', rather than an X-ray machine, which allowed me to pass their checkpoint (though only following a convincing performance of innocence on my part). The human performances and how they differ from the practices described in the 'formal performances' of border control is also an analytical entry-point for the empirical chapters of this thesis. In chapter 4, for example, I analyse the ways in which Spanish border guards negotiate the high-tech machinery at their disposal through Spain's SIVE border control technologies and discuss how they utilise their situated knowledges of the borderspace in order to complete the vision of the border produced through the non-human components of SIVE. Similarly, in chapter 6, I discuss how the performances of Home Office employees at reporting centres varies and adds to asylum seekers' stress when attending these compulsory events as certain employees appear to take pleasure in being vigorous in their enactment of the border in their aim of extracting confessions of fault.

For Salter (2007b) the policies, procedures and practices of 'borderwork' (see Rumford 2006), therefore, rely on the discretion of those working on the 'front-line' to perform the sovereign's irreducible decision of who to ban or to include in the law. In other words, border officials' decisions of who to exclude operates outside of the space of law, while the "legal recognition of administrative discretion is the bureaucratic fig leaf of this executive power. This discretionary admit/expel decision is entirely extra-judicial" (Salter 2007b, p4). According to Salter, therefore, all travellers enter a state of exception when they are examined at the border (even the border of 'their' nation-state); forced into an identity crisis and a moment of 'irreducible surrender' to the sovereign of the nation-state at the point of inspection. This description of

border guards' thought-work and the state of exception that one enters at every border examination, however, implies an incontestable level of control over events at the border, glossing over the difficulties and crises that they too might experience. In her description of the events following the arrival of migrants smuggled by boat out of China to British Columbia in 1999, Mountz (2004), by contrast, offers a much more nuanced description of the power dynamics at play when the state is face by a moment of crisis. Mountz argues that the state of exception<sup>33</sup> in which the migrants found themselves developed less out of a pre-determined strategy and was, rather, the result of overwhelmed civil servants 'fumbling through' an environment of crisis in which they appeared more fearful of the state appearing weak in the eyes of the media than of the migrants' agency. Indeed, it is this concern for the media, as documented by Mountz (see also Prokkola 2013), that leads me on to a discussion of the importance of taking into account the performances of other, non-state actors, in the enactment of the border. In particular, I seek to complicate Salter's (2007b) assertion of border guards being responsible for the enactment of a 'state of exception' by examining the instabilities of border assemblages as they expand, contract and fail to function cohesively.

### 2.2.2 Assembling the Ban-Opticon

As was demonstrated in the opening vignette to this section, the border cannot be thought of as a static 'line in the sand' under the full control of a bounded entity such as 'the state'. For example, my passport was initially checked by a Dutch

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<sup>33</sup> The migrant arrivals were detained on a military base which was officially constructed to be a 'port of entry' rather than a detention centre, such that access to legal council could be restricted and migrants could be deemed to have not yet set foot on Canadian soil (Mountz 2004).

border guard who had been seconded to Spanish soil through his involvement in a Frontex' operation. It might also come as a surprise to some readers that my passport needed to be checked at all on a journey in which, notionally at least, I never 'crossed' an 'official' border. The Dutch and Spanish border guards, however, were also not the only actors performing the border during this crossing as the port's private security service, for example, as well as the local police force are locked in a constant 'cat and mouse' game with the group of mostly Algerian men waiting in the street outside. Moreover, my 'data double' (Haggerty and Ericsson 2000) had already commenced the journey weeks prior to the described events and its fragments been automatically checked against numerous databases when I originally purchased the tickets online and had been required to enter my passport details into the ferry company's computer system. While the 'formal' maps discussed in the section above might have been drawn by a single actor<sup>34</sup> (i.e. Frontex and Europol), the performance of the border requires the functioning and cooperation of an ever-increasing variety of actors beyond the traditional border guard. In the following two sections, therefore, I consider how an attentiveness to assemblage theory and 'thing power' augments understandings of everyday performances of the border.

Returning to the argument that the attacks of September 11 have ushered in a new paradigm of governance through a 'state of emergency', Bigo (2006, p63) argues that this 'governance of unease' has led to the so-called 'securitisation' of the border. Whilst I have already demonstrated above that the governing of borders through the apparatus of security is not wholly

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<sup>34</sup> Although even here we could question whether or not the employees for these agencies were all in agreement when designing the maps and question what 'slippages' have occurred following the dissemination of these maps in the media and on online sources such as Twitter.

novel, Bigo's influential concept of the 'ban-opticon' is useful for understanding how a network of heterogeneous and transversal practices function to sort and exclude certain groups while achieving the normalisation of the majority. Building on Nancy's (1993) notion of the 'abandoned being' (which also influenced Agamben), the aim of the ban-opticon is not to extend Bentham's idealised panopticon to the level of the society as a whole, rather to make surveillance more targeted and pre-emptive (Bigo 2006). Just as Walters (2006) argues that governmentality of 'control' no longer seeks to retrain the offender or potentially risky migrant, so too Bigo (2002) asserts that the ban-opticon seeks to 'play with fear' in order to designate potentially dangerous minorities and remove them from global circulation. In chapter 5, therefore, I use the concept of the ban-opticon to argue that migrants detained within the boundaries of Ceuta are being forcibly removed from circulation in the hope that a removal can be organised through the relevant embassies. However, due to the peculiarities of the situation that the migrants have found themselves in, I argue that they do in fact discipline themselves into what they believe is required of them to be given permission to travel to the mainland.

Alongside the fact that such 'actuarial practices' limit surveillance to minorities rather than the population as a whole (Ajana 2013), they are effective as they do not produce individual or collective identities akin to those produced through 'discipline' (e.g. the prisoner, the juvenile delinquent or the factory worker) (Rose 1999). Thus, the potential for a collective resistance in the name of that identity is reduced as individuals instead become sorted through 'objective' software codes and statistical profiling (see Dodge and Kitchin 2004). In chapter 6, for example, I discuss how asylum seekers in the UK are put under surveillance through the ARC and Azure cards – which act as the technologies through which they can access their financial support. In particular, I highlight how these cards are designed either to issue an alert to the Home Office

should there be irregularities concerning the pattern of their use (e.g. new locations or breaks in usage). I argue, however, that these two technologies form part of a wider strategy to reduce the levels of solidarity that can exist between people stuck in the asylum system.

As a political technology, therefore, the ban-opticon is based on proactive and malleable techniques; able to morph over time as required through the addition of new surveillance technologies and actors (Ajana 2013). Thus, Bigo (2006, p6) draws our attention to the “convergence of defence and internal security into interconnected networks, or into a ‘field’ of professionals of management of unease that lies at the heart of the transformations concerning global policing.” Following this logic, security management transcends the internal and external divisions of security, which were previously held along geopolitical and civil/military lines (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2010; Graham 2011; Cowen 2014). Indeed, the distinctions between ‘state’ and business, private and public, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion are becoming increasingly obscure as a result of the new opportunities and challenges posed by contemporary technologies and securitising motivations (Pöttsch 2015). ‘Domination’, as Bigo (2006) puts it, is no less powerful in this new transnational form in which accountability shifts between businesses, politicians and other actors that have been drawn into the security ‘field’. As Rumford (2006) and Côté-Boucher *et al* (2014) argue, ‘borderwork’ has been delegated to an ever-growing list of local, transnational and private actors outside the state apparatus; these include airline staff, private security firms, software developers, risk consultants, engineers, designers and systems experts (Walters 2006; Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012; Vukov and Sheller 2013) – such that ‘front-line’ border guards can even consider themselves to be constrained by security algorithms and risk categories which have been pre-determined by security programmers (Lianos and Douglas 2000;

Amoore 2006; Bigo and Guild 2006). This process of privatising European border control can also be traced to the increasing efforts of European Member States to outsource bordering practices (which includes the transference of governance) to ‘Third Countries’ in North Africa and Eastern Europe (Bialasiewicz 2012). Andersson’s (2014) work has demonstrated that these third states, in turn, often rely on private security companies and militias in order to fulfil their obligations and who amplifying the perceived threat of ‘irregular’ migration – creating a circular illegality industry. In an effort to maintain legitimacy in the face of disappearing territorial sovereignty, therefore, governments have responded by “embedding their regulatory functions in various networks of global flows with the help of digital technologies, so that sovereignty prerogatives can travel with the flows” – with the aim of creating a border regime of continuous filtration (Jones *et al* 2017, p4).

The increasing role of non-state actors in security, however, has meant that it can become almost impossible to define who or what is ‘in control of’ borders or ‘leading’ the ban-optic sorting process. In the context of the European border, especially, there is evidently no single institution or set of (unified) actors that can be said to be ‘the bordering state’. Bialasiewicz (2012, p844), for example, argues that the European border is performed through a “fluid assemblage of functions, mechanisms, and actors; a series of loose institutional arrangements, recomposed in variable geometries ‘as necessary’.” Assemblage theory,<sup>35</sup> systematised by Delanda (2006) following Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) work on *agencement*, offers a non-dualistic approach in which society can be viewed as rhizomatic, nodal networks that come together and fall apart,

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<sup>35</sup> Ong and Collier (2004, p4) define assemblages as “systems that mix technology, politics, and actors in diverse configurations that do not follow given scales or topographies.”



rather than as a series of static wholes (Dittmer 2013). Anderson and McFarlane (2011, p124-5) have identified four inter-related sets of processes that assemblage theory has been used to draw attention to and to unpack. Firstly, assemblage emphasises the constant, diffuse and tangled effort that goes into the assembling and re-assembling of socio-technical systems and sociomaterial practices. Assemblage, therefore, “emphasises spatiality and temporality: elements are drawn together at a particular conjuncture only to disperse or realign, and the shape shifts.” The ‘big things’ mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, for example, are in a constant state of change and becoming, with new elements being constantly added and detaching (Jacobs 2006). Secondly, assemblages are wholes characterised by ‘relations of exteriority’; the argument that the form of the whole is constituted through the interaction of the parts as opposed to the sum of the parts (Delanda 2006). Moreover, the component parts of the assemblages form parts of multiple wholes at any given time and, by extension, the assemblage cannot be reduced to the function of its component parts (Dittmer 2013). Moreover, entities are never fully actualised within the relations of the assemblage (Anderson *et al* 2012), their properties only partially encountered and incorporated (Shaw 2012).<sup>36</sup> As a result, the insertion or removal of actors from the assemblage can have unpredictable effects. Anderson *et al* (2012), for example, utilise Jane Bennet’s (2010) case study of a largescale blackout in North America to illustrate this point; where a series of minor happenings (routine generator withdrawals and a bush fire) transformed the *interactions* between the component parts of the assemblage such that cooperation became impossible and the grid failed. Relating to this, the third process highlighted by Anderson and McFarlane (2011, p125) is

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<sup>36</sup> Following Harman, (2002), Shaw (2012, p620) argues that whenever objects encounter each other “they translate, change, and reshape each other [...] objects reduce each other to caricatures – they literally ‘objectify’ each other.”

the emphasis that becomes placed on the fragility and provisionality of assemblages; “the gaps, fissures and fractures that accompany processes of gathering and dispersing.”

Finally, part of the appeal of assemblage lies in its reading of power as “multiple co-existences – assemblage connotes not a central governing power, nor a power distributed equally, but a power as plurality in transformation” (Anderson and McFarlane 2011, p125) Indeed, one of the conceptual benefits of viewing the border as a complex mix of assemblages is that the trap of state-centrism can be avoided (Salter 2013). While Frontex has been the target of numerous protests, for example, it is notionally only a ‘regulatory agency’ that is accountable to the European Parliament and to the Council and was, until recently, dependent on Member States’ (voluntarily provided) equipment and invitations to act through ‘Joint Operations’.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the governments of the individual Member States cannot be said to even be in the position to decide on their border practices or technologies due to the influence of international organisations such as the International Civil Aviation Organization; which develops and promotes international standards for passports (MacKenzie 2010), and the International Organization for Migration; which assists with organising ‘voluntary returns’ and provides technical assistance related to border policies and practices (Andrijasevic and Waters 2010; Collyer 2012). Through a series of interviews with a variety of security professionals, moreover, Bigo (2014, p211) demonstrates how there are three separate

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<sup>37</sup> In October 2016 the operational powers of Frontex were greatly increased following the European Council’s acceptance of the proposal to form the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. A key change includes the creation of a ‘standing corps’ of 1,500 border guards that can be mobilised within five days. More importantly, however, strengthened mandate includes new monitoring and coordination responsibilities, including possibility to intervene in urgent situations either at the request of a Member State or on the basis of a Council decision when a Member State is unable or unwilling to act ([http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-16-3308\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3308_en.htm)).

‘social universes’ in which the contemporary EU border controls operate: the ‘military-strategic field’ in which the border is seen as a line needing to be defended and migrants and professionals have a disposition towards disciplining migrants through force; the ‘internal security field’ that views the border as a filter and where the main challenge is to differentiate and detain those deemed to be ‘illegal’; and a ‘global cyber-surveillance social universe’ which is characterised by the ‘virtualisation’ of borders, their computerisation and the use of ‘big data’ in order to predict movements in the name of a preventative agenda. The agents working in each ‘field’, therefore, operate according to different core assumptions, logics and justifications and with diverging effects – leaving potential gaps for exploitation. Bigo’s (2014) study, therefore, has obvious resonances with Mol’s (2001) seminal work on arteriosclerosis, the body and the hospital; in which she demonstrates how multiple performances create multiple realities and, as a result, multiple versions and ‘enactments’ of working – yet despite this multiplicity, the body on which the doctor’s must work is not fragmented (see also Law 2002).

Instead of viewing the globalised border as a totalising whole, therefore, assemblage theory breaks its performance down into a series of overlapping and sometimes competing assemblages of social, commercial, state and supra-state actors vying for legitimacy over the management of circulation. The shift to a fluid network or border assemblage has, in particular, also resulted in the almost total uncoupling of border control practices from the territorial boundaries to which they were (notionally) espoused such that the point at which the border has become ‘crossed’ by the traveller (or object) has almost completely vanished. While Guiraudon and Lahav (2000) write of the ‘remote control’ techniques of modern bordering, Bigo (2006) argues that the pressures on states to collaborate and globalise security have made national borders effectively obsolete. Instead of acting as a ‘membrane’ (Walters 2004) at the site of the borderline, therefore, the imperative of the

networked border the management of mobility – to channel flows in such a way that the movement of ‘bad circulation’ can be pre-emptively sorted out (Jeandesboz 2011). In the process, writes Cowen (2006, p3, in Graham 2011, p132), borders become transformed “from a two-dimensional line across an absolute space that divides inside and outside, to a transitional zone, defined by exceptional forms of government that blur established categories, jurisdictions and spaces.” These transitional zones, or ‘seam spaces’ (Cowen 2014), operate as liminal zones between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ space – in which the lines between police/military and crime/terror are also blurred. Although the border forms a spatial continuum, therefore, from within the territory of the nation state through to the point of departure (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012), not all spaces within this continuum are subject to equal levels of surveillance or legal codes. In chapter 4 I discuss the way in which the Mediterranean Sea and frontier of the EU, though criss-crossed with lines denoting the territorial waters and SAR zones, has become securitised as a liminal zone through the interactions between EU border authorities, EU agencies, NGOs and private vessels. As a result, I argue that the border ‘lines’ in this space have become almost completely blurred. When the technologies, materialities and practices that perform the border in this space are foregrounded in the analysis, however, I argue that the border can be found less in a line to be defended and, rather, in the *time* it takes for border guards to target and negotiate an interception of a migrant boat. In particular I highlight the agency of non-human actors in the creation of friction which hampers the human border guards attempting to maintain a watchful over the borderspace.

The existence of these liminal zones, moreover, brings into question the conceptualisation of the *exceptional* spaces of the border, as instead they appear to form a necessary part of the current mobility assemblage and international biopolitical

regime.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, for Salter (2013, p12) a methodological benefit of assemblage theory is that “we need not rely on the metaphors of panoptic self-disciplining or sovereign exclusion only, but rather in addition to these forces, we see also a governmental mobile biopolitics that comes to manage circulation through the security techniques of inclusion, facilitation, and acceleration as well as exclusion, detention, and imprisonment.” As a result, security and the facilitation of mobility can be seen as two techniques of the same mobility assemblage, rather than opposing parts of the system (Shamir 2005; Turner 2007). The rhizomatic network of the extraordinary rendition process (O’Neill 2012), as traced by Paglen and Thomson (2006), for example, demonstrates the extent to which security/exclusion and the facilitation of speed are intertwined. Indeed, the same forms of knowledge are what facilitate the movement of ‘trusted travellers’ as what facilitate the movement of detainees travelling through these hidden spaces. In the case of the EU’s borderwork, in particular, Bialasiewicz (2012) demonstrates how despite the technocratic and depoliticised language of ‘efficiency’ and ‘customer experience’, the human cost of increasing the speed of movement for ‘bona fide’ travellers across European borderspaces has been the transformation of the Mediterranean into a graveyard. Despite the number of lives being lost, however, with every blocked entry or permitted crossing the border becomes constituted (and gains legitimacy) through the repeated performing of the authority over the decision-making process of inclusion and exclusion (Salter 2013).

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<sup>38</sup> Alternatively, one could argue that these liminal zones and the proliferation of ‘hidden’ spaces of extradition signify that the exception has already become the rule (Jones 2009).

The disappearance of the border ‘line’ as a result of a reliance of border networks is also clear from some ‘official’ performances of the border. Figure 11, for example, demonstrates how Frontex (2015) conceptualises the border as being divided into four separate ‘Tiers’ within which a variety of actors engage in the enactment of the border. Moreover, with ‘Tier 1’ effectively including all countries of origin and ‘transit countries’ and ‘Tier 4’ including all of Schengen space, it is not just the ‘line’ that has disappeared, rather the notion of the border as a single entity. Despite the inclusion of many of the actors engaged in the labour of the border, however, there are a number of deafening silences within this portrayal of the border. These silences can be most easily demonstrated by contrasting Frontex’s portrayal of the border with Figure 12, a geopolitical ‘counter map’ of the straits of Gibraltar in 2004 designed by the radical cartographic group ‘Hackitectura’.

The most immediate difference between both representations of the border is the violence that comes with Hackitectura’s map; the vibrant colours as well as the shift of the North-South axis acts as an attack on the viewer’s senses and unsettle their previously-held perceptions of the world. In turn, the violence of the networked border becomes more accessible as the viewer’s eyes are drawn towards the vast range of actors and technologies designed to detect, detain and remove ‘unwanted’ migrants (including the Moroccan army who have been known to violently beat migrants).<sup>39</sup> Yet Hackitectura’s map demonstrates that these migrants are, in fact, not ‘unwanted’, Included in the map are the sites at which undocumented migrant labour is used to sustain the production of fruit and vegetables due to the cheap cost of undocumented labour as a result of their ‘deportability’ (see De Genova 2002). Although it might not appear to at first sight, the economy of the border

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/02/10/abused-and-expelled/ill-treatment-sub-saharan-african-migrants-morocco>

network also takes centre stage in this representation as both the levels of investment in the technologies offered by private security firms are shown, as well as the mafias and smugglers whose pockets are lined due to as a result of these efforts (Lutterbeck 2006).



Figure 11 shows Frontex' representation of the 'four-tier access-control model' for border management (Frontex 2015).

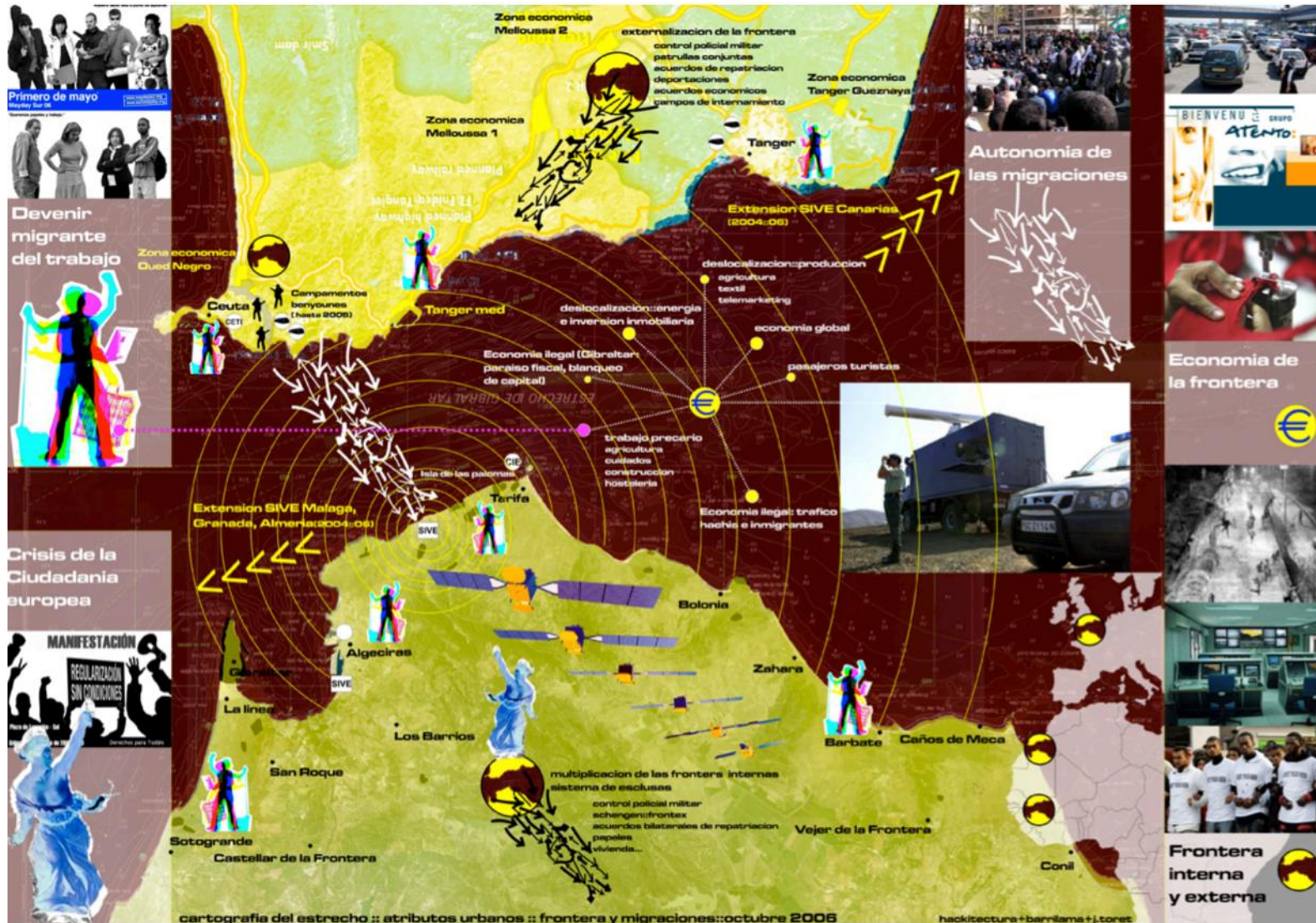


Figure 12 shows Hackitectura's 'counter-map'. Image available at <http://www.walkinginplace.org/iprh/map.htm>



Finally, the map does not attempt to hide the ‘constellations of resistance’ which act against the ‘constellations of control’ (Raley 2013) in the straights; migrant agency is demonstrated both through the spaces of collectivised action as well as the positioning of the routes taken by the migrants’ boats going through the heart of the technologies of control used to halt their progress. Indeed, the presence of the migrants’ routes and the spaces which migrants inhabit while in transit demonstrates both the injustice of the border assemblage, and the sites and practices that resist the border assemblage’s attempts to control mobility. As Walters (2011b) and Bigo (2006, 2007, 2014) argue, we should avoid apocalyptic conceptualisations of the border as being all-powerful and everywhere at the same time and which leave no space for the ‘microphysics’ of power and the capacities of ‘the weak’ to resist (Scott 1985). Similarly, Rose (1999) offers the reminder that Foucault’s disciplinary societies were not necessarily ‘disciplined societies’, rather societies within which discipline was the predominant strategy of governance and executed in particular spaces (e.g. the school, the barracks and the hospital). This argument can also be extended to the mechanisms of power which attempt to assemble the ban-opticon; these are not all-encompassing systems from which there is no escape, especially if one remains attuned to the dissonances and discords played out by the various branches, interests and agents operating within the bureaucratic modern state (Bigo 2014) and between the various assembled networks of actors involved in performing the border. In a similar vein, Walters (2011b, p55) argues that critical border research should focus on the “fissures and limits” of the sociotechnical mechanisms of power in order to demonstrate that these systems “are often not as purposeful and coherent as they might otherwise appear.”

While the assemblages that make up the border are able to transform the borderspace into a continuum rather than a border line and ‘concertina time’ through pre-emptive sorting efforts (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012), therefore, the processes of de-territorialisation which have made these feats possible are the same as those which have created new vectors or ‘lines of flight’ allowing for escape from the state apparatus (Sohn 2015). The constant provisional holding together of a group of entities over which no single actor has complete control, moreover, means that there can be no guarantees concerning the process of movement and transformation as relations and terms change (Andersson *et al* 2012). In particular, constant addition of new technologies or actors to the border assemblage with unknown differential capacities can expose new ‘fissures’ and opportunities for resistance. In chapter 5, for example, I discuss the appearance of cracks in the untidy alliance between the police, ministry of Interior, African embassies, the detention centre and the law courts in the Spanish border enclave of Ceuta – which has resulted in the transformation of enclave from a de facto detention centre into a temporary holding and sorting zone. Resistance, or rather, refusal (Jones 2012) is possible as a result of these fissures – yet migrant bodies are ‘tagged’ before they move on, meaning that their residence in Ceuta will become part of their electronic identity in computer databases as they travel throughout Europe. As will be discussed in more detail in the following section, however, the capacity for ‘non-human’ actors, especially, to ‘work’ can be read beyond the *singular* ways in which they have been designed or imagined to fit into a particular system (Law and Singleton 2000).

### 2.2.3 Object power and the non-human

*My*phone and *my*passport. Both are undoubtedly under my possession and to do with as I please – assuming I am prepared to suffer the consequences of a Facebook and travel-free life. At the same time, however, both of these objects acted in ways outside of my control and against my best interests in the story recounted in the opening vignette. If we were to follow the classic way of thinking about performance (e.g. Goffman’s 1968), however, these two objects would be considered as no more than the material props with which the actors framed and enacted their performances. The ‘new performative approach’ (Law and Singleton 2000), by contrast, “tries to understand the role of *everything* in a performance, people and objects alike” (p771 emphasis in original). Thus, the new performative approach follows a central tenet of actor-network theory (ANT)<sup>40</sup> which is that there should be symmetry in the analytical treatment of human and non-human actors in the discussion of a performance or within an assemblage (Mackenzie and Wajcman 2012). To clarify, non-human actors do not always have the same power within a network as their human counterparts and neither does each object have the same level of agency, rather ANT accords no significant methodological distinction between human and non-human actors (Latour 2005, see also Thrift 2008 on ‘non-representational theory’). Within these networks, both humans and non-humans have interests which cause them to act or which must be leveraged to draw them into the network. To become part of the network, moreover, actors can be “moved and changed, interests are translated in both place and form. In this way [...] the actors of ANT are *actants*, things *made to act*” (Sismondo 2010, p82 emphasis in the original). In particular, the

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<sup>40</sup> ANT can perhaps be best thought of as a “general attitude and an attempt to be sensitive to the multitudes of circulating forces that surround us, affecting both each other and ourselves” (Hitchings 2010 p100), rather than as a defined methodology for inquiry.

methodological tool-box offered by ANT has been used in order to unpack '*black boxes*' – those objects and configurations which are taken for granted as stable and completed projects – and uncover the performances which have gone into these performances of stability (Law 2002; Latour 2005). In other words, ANT can be used to uncover the disjunctions that develop between formal organizational structures, material technologies and tacit knowledge embedded within these systems to challenge notions of 'rationally designed', 'functionally optimised' or "the primacy of management in a hierarchy of organizational functions" (Kaghan and Bowker 2001 p259).

Law and Singleton (2000) find similarities between this core argument of ANT and feminist literatures on performance; arguing that works on performance and performativity have highlighted that while some things remain consistent in the way they act, in principle, this could change depending on the circumstances, locations, actors involved and the ways in which these interact (see also Henry 2007). Mol (2002), for instance, demonstrates that the body's reproductive organs are not always necessary for performing gender everywhere. In the street, for example, the performance is material; requiring *things* such as ties, glasses, bags and razors – the body too becomes a prop with which to create a performance. As was discussed above, however, the translations that take place when new actors are added to network are never perfect, resulting at most in 'caricatures' which cannot be fully controlled, or their actions predicted (Shaw and Meehan 2013). The manner in which an assembled network can be said to 'work' can, as a result, be questioned. Law and Singleton (2000) demonstrate this through an example of 'Little Dexter', an old farm tractor composed of many component parts all of which interact together through a multitude of performances such that the tractor 'kinda works'. Simultaneously, 'Little Dexter' can be

said to ‘work’ in ways in which it was never designed to by its engineers, namely as a safe toy for Singleton’s son John and as a thing around which the whole family can bond.

Similarly, up until my recent border-crossing events, I had viewed my passport solely as a means of demonstrating my identity and my ‘right’ of presence in European space – the stamped pages within being interesting conversation pieces for passport queues and the golden coat of arms on the cover a frivolous extra.<sup>41</sup> To the border guards I encountered on my journey, however, both the passport’s stamped pages and the faded coat of arms acted in ways I had not previously imagined; far from staying ‘loyal’ to me, it both alerted the border guards to the potential that malfeasance had been committed. My phone in the above story was also an actor constituted of multiple performances which can be described as ‘kinda working.’ The event which kick-started my border-crossing escapade, moreover, was as a result of the phone being capable of being part of multiple networks; a design ‘success’, rather than a failure. By joining the Moroccan phone network, the component parts of my phone might have been left unchanged, yet this action nonetheless resulted in a ‘failure’ as a result of the in-built differential capacities of the component parts of the phone – which resulted in the automatic change of the phone’s time zone settings. While ordinarily this failure would have resulted in nothing more than slight confusion and a quick fix through use of my own localised tacit knowledge of how my phone can be made to ‘work’ again (i.e. by switching on and off of the phone’s ‘Airplane mode’ option and uttering a few choice curse words), on this

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<sup>41</sup> This level of care-free thinking concerning my passport also demonstrates my hitherto carefree nature concerning my passport – no doubt born out of a sheltered childhood which included regular travel both within and beyond the boundaries of the EU.

occasion it nearly resulted in a missed ferry departure and a missed opportunity to view the SIVE control station in Algeciras.

Whilst my passport and phone in the vignette above are indicative of my own lack of power over the objects in my possession at times, they also offer an interesting starting point for a discussion of the power-dynamics at play relating to the technologies and techniques of border management. In other words, if *my* technologies and objects are not fully under my control, then to what extent are surveillance technologies under the control of the border guards and (sub-contracted) agents of the state operating them? In the empirical chapters that follow, therefore, I put the conceptual apparatus of the border assemblage to work to foreground the effects of the messy social performances, ‘intermediaries’ and ‘lash-ups’ of non-state actors that constitute the everyday workings of the border. Through the different empirical focus of each chapter, this problematising of agency in the formation and maintenance of networks helps me make slightly distinctive conceptual arguments concerning the border. In chapter 4, therefore, I utilise assemblage theory to draw attention to the human actors of the border surveillance systems in Warsaw, Algeciras and Ceuta to argue that, as a result of the imperfect fit between the humans and technologies (see Williams 2011), the systems fail to enact a constant, unblinking gaze over the borderspaces they have been designed to monitor. Drawing on works from the US/Mexico border, in particular, Sundberg (2011) and Boyce (2016), chapter 4 focuses on the agency of the non-human actors within the borderspace (e.g. waves, rocks, birds and even whales) that further work to destabilise the border regime’s vision and force it into blinking.

In chapter 5, meanwhile, I discuss the untidy alliance that exists in Ceuta that works to maintain to halt the progression of irregular migrants to mainland Spain. In particular, I highlight the ways in which the boundaries of the enclave are enforced

through a formal performance of humanitarianism which falls apart in the everyday realities of migrants in Ceuta. Moreover, highlight how different bordering objects and intents are viewed and interpreted in contradictory ways by the migrants who pass through the enclave and the police who attempt to exert control over it. While to the police and judges the expulsion orders issued to the migrants signify the migrants' deportability, for example, they are instead viewed as tickets to the mainland by those who receive them. In chapter 6, in contrast, I focus on how the ways in which the support that asylum seekers in the UK receive is 'securitised' such that they have limited control over their funds, can be subjected to abuse in public spaces and have limited connections with both local citizenry and others in the asylum system.

In other words, there is a strong focus in the empirical chapters of the everyday challenges for the state in maintaining control over the borderspaces of the EU and its surveillance assemblages, as well as the ways in which migrants seek to negotiate and subvert such intentions. As a result, conceptions of everyday state powers and effects, as well as the objects that produce stateness have been central to my analysis of the border. In Painter's (2006) discussion of the prosaic manifestations of the state and the ways in which the state practices have become permeated throughout society and everyday life in various guises, for example, the state becomes defined as these prosaic sets of practices that work themselves into, for example, "giving birth, child rearing, schooling, working, housing, shopping, traveling, marrying, being ill, dying" (p 753). As Meehan *et al* (2013) argue, however, while Painter's work is critical for capturing the 'intimacy of state power' through legislative and phenomenological techniques, it has an ontological blind spot in that it ignores the role of objects in the production of 'stateness'. An extraordinary example of this construction of stateness through objects is the series of checkpoints and roadblocks which Palestinians must pass through to travel between, and sometimes within,

cities and towns (Zureik 2001; Parsons and Salter 2008). These checkpoints and roadblocks create spaces in which the sovereignty of the Israeli state can be performed in a manner which influences the daily lives of Palestinians by slowing their movements and regularly forcing them into a state of exception when they encounter the checkpoint. Moreover, the architecture of the checkpoints as well as the objects used within play an important role in achieving the production of stateness; Palestinians are forced through a number of stages within the checkpoints which include a series of turnstiles (which have been altered to fit the Israeli Ministry of Defence's (IDM) smaller specifications such that the metal presses against peoples' bodies resulting in crushed parcels and bodies); X-Ray gates, X-Ray machines for bags and inspection booths manned by Palestinian guards but monitored by Israeli observers (Weizman 2007).

Within these checkpoints, however, are also 'humanitarian' gates and waiting rooms for those with mobility issues, while the technologies and Israeli guards, too, are described as being 'humanitarian'. For Weizman (2007) this performance of humanitarianism and the cooperation between the IDM and humanitarian organisations is part of a dangerous process through which the IDF attempts to normalise its actions. In the creation of these spaces of stateness, therefore, humanitarianism becomes mixed with surveillance through the use of 'humanitarian' technologies. Similarly, in Ceuta, for example, the enclave's detention centre has been termed an 'open reception centre' in order to circumvent Spain's laws on maximum detention periods. This formal performance of humanitarianism is also supplemented by allowing the Red Cross and other charities access to the centre in order to run language classes. Through what I call 'securitised support', I argue in chapter 6 that asylum seekers in the UK are caught in a 'Catch-22' situation in which the support they receive also forms the strategy through which they are placed under surveillance on a daily basis. I demonstrate how the specifically-designed



identity cards, which also function as pre-paid cash cards, also serve to increase the intimacy of the surveillance practices exerted upon asylum seekers in the UK as the border becomes performed not just within everyday spaces (e.g. the post office or supermarket), but also by (often-unwitting) members of the public who become de-facto border guards. In other words, these ‘humanitarian technologies’ result in the uneven production of stateness as asylum seekers bodies become automatically sorted and made abject in the urban spaces through which they attempt to travel. It is also important to note, however, that these forms of ‘securitised support’ have been implemented as a result of the aforementioned formal performances portraying asylum seekers as being ‘bogus benefit-seekers’. As I discuss in chapter 6, therefore, the securitised forms of support have been regularly challenged by civil society groups, yet they are nonetheless defended and upheld by Westminster MPs as, until receiving the Leave to Remain, asylum seekers are either seen as being in the country illegally or as being ‘failed asylum seekers’ if their initial cases fail.

The issue of ‘securitised support’ also leads us on to the uneven spaces of stateness as it highlights how particular bodies are coded in unequal ways such that security can be re-framed as a political issue. In the context of CCTV cameras, Meehan *et al* (2013, p5) similarly argue that the “camera shapes where crimes occur, how power is exercised, how proof is assembled, how ‘reality’ is conceptualized and understood.” CCTV technologies, therefore, mainly make only the practices of non-elites visible (e.g. sex work, drug dealing and drug smuggling), the spaces of non-elites policeable and the bodies of non-elites threatening. Yet while such technologies are widely thought to be outwith the realms of human fallibility and subjectivity, Thrift and French (2002) demonstrate that they are instead mediated at all levels by the social practices that involved in all aspects of the making and functioning of the technological systems. As Graham and Wood (2003, p229) put

it, “[t]he broad social effects and policy implications of digital surveillance are thus contingent and, while flexible, are likely to be strongly biased by the political, economic and social conditions that shape the principles embedded in their design and implementation.” Indeed, as I argue in chapter 4, the border surveillance systems of Frontex and the Guardia Civil are not designed to offer an all-seeing view of the borderspace. Instead, they have been designed specifically to offer a vision of the borderspace that fits with the formal performances of the border as being under threat by irregular migration and other forms of ‘cross border crime’.

CCTV cameras and other surveillance technologies, moreover, do not function in isolation. Instead they are reliant on numerous ‘intermediaries’ – Latour’s (2005) term for things which carry force or information without transformation – such as computer databases, human operators, software programs and technical services (Meehan *et al* 2013). There is no guarantee, however, that these intermediaries will not do more than pass on information or force without changing it or without attempting to bring in other actors. Klauser’s (2009) study of the CCTV system in Geneva airport, for example, demonstrates how the everyday practices and decision-making processes concerning the CCTV system are mediated between the users of the system (the police), the owners of the system (airport management) and the technical managers of the system (the airport’s technical service). Moreover, the CCTV system in the airport is limited by the environmental conditions which constrain the technical installations and configurations of the system (Klauser 2009). In other words, although security systems might be advertised as ‘immutable mobiles’ which will hold their shape on the move in Euclidian

space (Law 2002),<sup>42</sup> the performances of the actors within the network and the environment itself can alter their structure or implementation.

Like Law and Singleton's (2000) tractor example, therefore, CCTV systems can be conceived of as a series of multiple performances which, together, 'kinda work'. Indeed, although still CCTV systems are still marketed to governments by security industries as giving the law enforcement agencies a God's eye view over the urban environment, it has become evident that CCTV technologies cannot reduce levels of violent crime and nor can they stop terrorist threats (Welsh and Farrington 2003; Graham 2011). Through this understanding of multiple performances, therefore, in chapter 4 I challenge the efficacy of the supposedly panoptic power of the vision technologies being used and promoted by the Guardia Civil and Frontex. In particular, I question the extent to which the 'more-than-human' assemblages (Williams 2011) manage to 'fit' and hold together on a daily basis without losing sight of the borderspace. This analysis, moreover, includes the performances of actors of the non-human world, which at times clutter the scopes of the vision-machines and serve to present danger where there is none. Unlike the 'empty' performance of the borderspace in the maps analysed above, therefore, the borderspace is filled with non-human actors with agency that cannot always be tamed through technology.

Objects need not, however, remain loyal. Indeed, as Meehan *et al* (2013, p6; emphasis in the original) argue, "[o]bjects also *refuse* the straightforward production of stateness" or counteract the assumed aims of the assemblage within which they

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<sup>42</sup> Law and Singleton (2005, p335) suggest an immutable mobile is "something that moves around but also holds its shape. In this way of thinking, it holds its shape in two importantly different ways. On the one hand, it does so in physical or geographical space. On the other, it holds its shape in some relational and possibly functional manner where it may, to say it quickly, be imagined as a more or less stable network of associations."

are located through ‘technological rebellion’ (Boyce 2016). Police officers in the U.S. have, for example, been recorded using excessive force upon mainly dark-skinned men by their own body cameras,<sup>43</sup> CCTV footage<sup>44</sup> and vehicle dashboard cameras.<sup>45</sup> In other words, although these technologies of vision are predominantly owned by ‘state institutions’, they can also work to destabilise or deterritorialise state space. In terms of adding to our conceptual understandings of the border, therefore, construction and destabilisation of stateness through/by objects can be used to deconstruct the border as a singular entity capable only of engendering dichotomous notions of inside/outside and inclusion/exclusion. Indeed, as Balibar (2002, p81) has noted, “borders do not have the same meaning for everyone.” Instead, the diversity of performances of humans and non-humans means that for some, “the border also presents opportunities for passing, transgression and unfamiliarity” (Sohn 2015, p184). Just as CCTV camera footage can act for or against law enforcement agencies, a wall can simultaneously act as a provider of protection for some, an obstruction between persecution and freedom for others, a political promise through which to be elected, a financial boon for mafias and security services alike, a blank canvas for an artist, tourist destination and, as has already been discussed, a means through which to perform sovereignty (see Naim 2005; Khosravi 2010; Anderson *et al* 2012; Jones 2012; Sohn 2015).

While state actors might perform the ‘project’ of the border (or an aspect of the border) as having a singular purpose (see Law 2002) for the purpose of creating a space of stateness, the performance might not necessarily be convincing (Rai 2015),

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jul/13/body-camera-footage-released-dylan-noble-police-shooting>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/05/police-shootings-caught-on-tape-video>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-ln-sacramento-police-shooting-20161001-snap-htmlstory.html>

nor would it necessarily ‘fit’ with the existing efforts and performances that have gone into the production of certain spaces (see Lefebvre 1991). As Linda McDowell (1997) demonstrates in her seminal study on embodiment in the labour market, for example, material performances are not always convincing, nor are they always complete. In her case study of women in merchant banks, McDowell argues that despite their performances of disembodied ‘rational intellect’ (considered to be ‘ungendered’ but instead read ‘masculine’), women’s imprisonment inside their bodies still leaves them Othered in the overwhelmingly masculinised workplace. Similarly, Jones’ (2012) work on the border between India and Bangladesh, demonstrates how the imposition of territorialisation through a highly securitised border fence has been met with residents’ ‘refusal’ of the border as they continue their transnational movements and trade through pre-established networks despite the efforts made to create a space of stateness. Even when delocalised or made virtual, therefore, the border is performed in places filled with existing textures, materials and relations, which may or may not disrupt the intended security practices.

### 2.3 Popular Performances: Contested lines

*“Technology is also used to involve the public in borders’ security, both creating public participation (based on e-Government concepts) and building public resilience. Some external borders cameras are monitored from home by volunteers from the public. The EU and Frontex now involve ‘Crowd sourcing’ in operations across the EU on a regular basis through social media, as well as in soliciting input from the public towards R&D.” (Frontex, 2011, p79)*

The above quote is taken from a Frontex publication entitled ‘Futures of Borders’, in which the agency attempts to predict how border management strategies will evolve depending on differing future scenarios (‘probable’, ‘alternative’, ‘plausible-

preferred' and 'wild-card'). While the public's active participation in border management is imagined in the 'plausible-preferred' scenario, rather than the 'probable' option, the publication excitedly references the (now offline) border web cameras initiative along the US/Mexico border – where Texans could register to monitor camera feeds from their home computers – as an example of where this had been achieved in the past and how this could work in Europe.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the 'border hawk' vigilantes of the US/Mexico border have already been used as an example by Rumford (2006) in order to demonstrate how the business of bordering (what Rumford terms 'borderwork') is not the sole business of 'the state'. While Frontex, for example, represents the 'passing upwards' of borderwork to supra-national levels, borderwork has also 'shifted downwards' to a wide range of societal actors including interest groups, citizens, enterprises and residents' associations (Rumford 2008, p54).

Rumford's conceptualisation of borderwork ties in with Balibar's (1998, 2002) arguments that borders are polysemic; existing differently for individuals depending on their social group, and that borders are becoming increasingly dispersed throughout society. By asking border scholars to 'see like a border' (as opposed to 'seeing like a state'), Rumford's hope is that we remain attuned to the ways in which borders do not always work in the service of the nation state, nor at the extremes of the territory of the nation-state. Gated communities, private CCTV zones, securitised public zones all represent spaces in which an exclusionary, non-state border is performed by making space 'jittery' and 'prickly' to potential intruders

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<sup>46</sup> Article referred to in the Frontex (2011) document: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/border-web-cameras-along-texas-mexico-border-go-online-again>

and those who are Othered (Flusty 1994). In his auto-ethnography of escaping Iran and eventual asylum claim in Sweden, Khosravi (2010) details the ‘invisible border’ that he was subjected to following his receipt of refugee status and which ensures immigrants remain as strangers for generations. Performed by both the government and citizenry alike, “[t]he border gaze does not operate through a simple function of exclusion. It situates immigrants on the ‘threshold’, between inside and outside. They are given no chance to develop a sense of belonging but are nonetheless expected to participate” (Khosravi 2010, p75).

While the ‘border hawks’ along the US/Mexico border represent an example of the downward ‘shift’ in border management happening voluntarily, there are also many instances where the responsibility of enacting the border has been forced upon reluctant shoulders. In the UK, for example, the UK Immigration Act 2014 obliges landlords to check the immigration status of tenants or face fines and, since the Asylum and Immigration Act of 1996, employers have been tasked with verifying employees’ immigration statuses.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, academics have been asked to act as proxy border guards and monitor the attendance of non-EU students.<sup>48</sup> As a result, Jones *et al* (2017) argue that these ‘domesticated bordering’ policies increase levels of suspicion or fear directed towards Othered individuals and carry into everyday personal interactions. This diffusion of border management simultaneously raises questions concerning the conceptualisation of the border – as the use of the term ‘border’ is becoming increasingly used as a synonym for other forms of exclusionary social control (Sohn

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<sup>47</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/d5c52c16-c5de-11e5-b3b1-7b2481276e45>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/mar/02/universities-border-police-academics>

2015) – and the extent to which these new means of border control at the level of citizenry can be resisted by either those being sorted out or by those now tasked with performing the border.

This ‘downward shift’ in bordering also brings to the fore the ways in which people are being confronted by the border in increasingly mundane spaces, the extent to which the border is becoming increasingly pervasive in their everyday lives and the affective intents of bordering strategies. Two infamous examples of such developing strategies include Arizona’s SB1070 Act and ‘Operation Vaken’ in the UK. By making the failure to possess appropriate immigration documents a criminal offense (as well making it a state crime for irregular migrants to seek employment or for citizens to ‘harbor’ or ‘transport’ irregular migrants), the Arizona SB1070 was purposefully designed to make ordinary life for illegalised families so unliveable that they would ‘self-deport’ – by making it a criminal offense for irregular migrants to seek employment, (Michalowski 2012). The infamous case of the trialled ‘Go Home’ vans in the UK as part of the Home Office’s ‘Operation Vaken’, meanwhile, was intended to instil fear through the van’s performance of border in the everyday space of the street would create something akin to a ‘confessionary complex’ (Foucault 1980), otherwise located in heavily securitised spaces such as the airport (Zureik and Salter 2007; Salter 2007a), thus forcing undocumented migrants or asylum seekers with rejected claims to ‘confess’ their illegitimacy (Forkert *et al* 2016).

Aside from demonstrating the affective power of the biopolitical border (see Anderson 2011), the eventual failure of Operation Vaken due to overwhelming public opposition towards the ‘Go Home’ vans, especially, exposed the precariousness of border management strategies dependent on public engagement and the incompleteness of the border performance. The ‘Go Home’ vans, meanwhile, were shown to not be under the full control of the UK Home Office; their



affective power becoming instead co-opted as a symbol around which to assemble and utilised an object of ridicule (Jones *et al* 2017) (see Figure 13). Similarly, the infrastructure supporting Operation Vaken was co-opted into the ‘tactics’ of resistance, to use de Certeau’s (1984) phrasing, as Home Office staff were reportedly inundated by over a thousand hoax messages and calls to the hotline advertised on the vans – creating hours of wasted time and effort for Home Office staff.<sup>49</sup> This notion of actors in border assemblages becoming co-opted is crucial for understanding the tactics of resistance which I identify in the empirical chapters. In particular, I discuss how migrants and their supports are frequently able to succeed in resisting the border as a result of the ‘weak links’ in the border assemblages – where actors have not been fully actualised within the relations of the assemblage (see Anderson *et al* 2012). In chapter 4, especially, I focus on how the attempts at resisting the border in the Mediterranean context are increasingly being structured around making use of the same technologies that are used to in the surveillance assemblages and by constructing what has been termed the ‘disobedient gaze’ (Pezzani and Heller 2013) to challenge the primacy of the vision produced through surveillance systems such as Eurosur and SIVE. Secondly, I argue that migrants’ tactics regularly involve the co-option of ‘non-state’ actors such as the international coast guard (that form a crucial part of the border assemblage) to ensure their safe passage to mainland Europe.

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10417987/Home-Offices-Go-Home-immigration-vans-campaign-overwhelmed-by-hoax-texts-and-calls.html>



*Figure 13 shows one of the vans used in operation Vaken*

The protests and co-optation of the 'Go home' vans are also constitutive of post-national dimensions of borderwork performed through acts of solidarity; acts "in which political relations are reconstructed in terms that contest the exclusionary renderings of a (de)territorialised order" (Squire 2009a, p159). In contesting the national order of things, these acts of solidarity are also consistent with what Isin and Nielsen (2008) term 'acts of citizenship' – where the deed is prioritised over the legal status of the doer. In other words, these acts of citizenship and, more broadly, borderwork, need not be carried out solely by those who are already possess citizenship rights (Nyers 2008). These post-national performances

of citizenship “disrupt habitus, create new possibilities, claim rights and impose obligations in emotionally charged tones; pose their claims in enduring and creative expressions; and, most of all, are the actual moments that shift established practices, status and order” (Isin and Nielsen 2008, p10). For Rumford (in Johnson *et al* 2011), therefore, this disruptive form of borderwork (vis-à-vis the state) takes the form of claims-making practices; not just for national belonging or citizenship, but also for the assertion of human rights and of transnational mobility. Performing the border, in other words, can mean both its securitisation along national identities, as well as its dismantling through, for example, humanitarian assistance or trans-border claims that ‘No One is Illegal’. By remaining attuned to the possibilities of resistance to contest or exceed bordering practices along national lines, contemporary borderzones can be conceptualised not as exceptional spaces but as sites of political struggle (Squire 2009a). In developing this argument, Squire draws from Isin and Rygiel (2006) who, in their discussion of the abject spaces developing within global cities, define them not as spaces of abjection but as ‘spaces of politics’. Building on this, Squire (2011, p8) argues that an emphasis solely on “the way in which irregularity is produced through technologies of control risks overlooking both the struggles inherent to such productions, as well as the different ways in which irregularity is contested, resisted, appropriated and/or re-appropriated – often by those who are constituted or categorized as such.”

As I have already demonstrated with the counter-maps above, for example, the formal performances of the border, their enframing of space and categorising of people especially, can be resisted through the presentation of alternative performances of the borderspace that consider the human agency and suffering of irregular migrants and the deadly powers of border controls. In chapters 5 and 6, however, my attention shifts to the ways in which migrants and asylum seekers

inhabit and resist their formal labels. In chapter 5, therefore, I examine the how migrants in Ceuta are both forced to assume the migrant identity of the '*moruno*' because of the existing structures of humanitarian support, but I also argue that they accept this identity as a tactic of resistance to move on from the enclave more quickly. This is contrasted against the tactics of resistance employed by asylum seekers and solidarity groups in chapter 6 wherein I demonstrate how the urban environment, which should offer the opportunity for solidarity actions to occur (Sassen 2013), constrains these possibilities due to the forced mobility of migrants throughout the city by the UK Home Office and the privatisation of housing provision. Nonetheless groups offering solidarity and support are present in the city and assist the forced movements and strategy of enforcing destitution upon asylum seekers and, using my own experiences of having volunteered for one such group, I set out some of the tactics that can be used to exploit the cracks left in the strategy of the UK Home Office. The tactics described in both chapters, however, also point to the ways in which resistance is frequently entangled in the dominating intents of the state (Sharp *et al* 2000). I therefore discuss not only how such groups attempt to deliver practical support to asylum seekers in the city, but also how they attempt to negotiate and, occasionally reconcile, with the fact that their tactics run the risk of validating the strategies of the state (see Gill *et al* 2014).

## 2.4 Towards a new Orientation

In this chapter I have set out the conceptual architecture through which I orientate myself towards a study of the border in the empirical chapters to come. While I have used Salter's three registers of border performances as a heuristic device around which to organise the chapter, I have not sought to adopt a singular theoretical position from which to analyse the everyday performances that enact the border in Europe's fractured borderspaces. Instead I have demonstrated how a focus

on performance is shaped by and expands on the conceptual arguments put forward by current work on assemblage theory, ANT, state theory, critical geopolitics, feminist geopolitics and critical border studies. There are a number of key outcomes from this pulling together of various literatures which have been crucial to formulating my analysis of how technologies and actors are deployed to monitor and extend the reach and intensity of the border. These can be summarised as follows:

- The border is in a constant state of *becoming* as new actors (human and non-human) are regularly added and removed from the various assemblages of disparate mechanisms, institutions, discourses and performances that enact the border.
- As a result of the formal performances of EU institutions and Member State governments, unauthorised migration is becoming illegalised such that irregular migrants are increasingly being considered framed as ‘illegal’ on top of their previous categorisations of ‘deviant’ and ‘threatening’. These formal performances form much of the justifications for the EU’s intent to halt their movements to reaching the territorial boundaries of the EU and the intense measures they are subjected to following their arrival.
- The securitising of bordering strategies is predominantly focused on the sorting *out* of bad forms of circulation that have been deemed to be ‘threatening’ to the survival and benefit of the population, rather than prioritising the reforming of irregular migrants.

- By focusing on the everyday politics of bordering at the scale of the body (of both migrants and border guards) the ‘messiness’ of border performances becomes foregrounded as the everyday realities of space interfere with the idealised imaginations of the border.
- Similarly, the non-human actors that are brought into the border assemblages do not always perform as expected, nor do they remain ‘loyal’ to the state. There is also no guarantee that the technologies enrolled in the enactment of the border will ‘fit’ with the human actors.
- Non-state actors are being increasingly coerced into performing the border. As a result, the border is becoming increasingly pervasive into the everyday realities of asylum seekers and migrants as it creeps into the mundane spaces of the city.
- Despite this pervasive creep of the border, there are nonetheless multiple footholds from which resistance can gain purchase. Specifically, migrants and activists can target the ‘weak links’ within the border assemblage – predominantly the actors that have not been fully incorporated.

While the conceptual arguments I make in each of the empirical chapters are distinct and draw on their own sets of literatures as a result of the settings and events that I witnessed, the arguments denoted above form the conceptual architecture with which I approach each chapter and form the basis of many of the chapters’ analytical entry points. In chapter 4, therefore, I utilise these arguments to foreground the agency of non-human actors in the borderspace (Sundberg 2011; Boyce 2016) and how they complicate the intentions of bordering agencies to create a God-like view over the entire ‘pre-frontier’ (as opposed to focusing on specific ‘pinch points’). In chapter 5, meanwhile, I consider how both Agamben’s

(1998) theories of ‘the camp’ and Foucault’s (1986) arguments about *heterotopia* might apply to the borderspace that I encountered in Ceuta. Determining that neither theory ‘fits’ this messy borderspace in which the border assemblage designed to detain the migrants in the enclave can be described as both ‘untidy’ and ‘leaky’. Instead I focus on how both theories can be put into a state of productive tension to explore the multiple realities of the enclave. In the third empirical chapter I utilise Allen’s (2004, 2009) theories on the ‘reach’ of state power and Cupples’ (2009) application of Deleuze’s striated and smooth space in order to contribute to works seeking to establish a spatial politics of asylum (e.g. Squire 2009a, 2009b and Darling 2009, 2010, 2011). Specifically I draw attention to the ways in which the border becomes pervasively enacted within the everyday spaces of the city through which asylum seekers must pass and highlight the extent to which tactics of resistance can easily become entangled with the bordering strategies. In each empirical chapter, therefore, I follow distinct sets of border guards, migrants, activists, stories, technologies, things and histories. In the following chapter I discuss how I entered/constructed these fieldwork sites and negotiated these numerous forms of ‘following’.

## Chapter 3 Methods

### 3.1 Untangling Mess?

In the previous chapter I highlighted the extent to which the border is enacted through a tangle of messy and oftentimes conflicting performances. Far from being produced through an uncontested top-down power structure at the top of which sits a nebulous 'state', I have argued that a multiplicity of actors contributes to doing 'borderwork' in a variety of networks (Rumford 2006). It is amid this 'messy' borderspace that I aim to question how the European border is *performed*, how it is *unmade* and how the power relations of the border becoming manifest affect those who encounter and engage with the border on a daily basis. The focus of this chapter, therefore, is on the methodological approach I used in order to answer these questions without simplifying the abovementioned conflicting performances and describing a vision of the social world that is far less complicated and messy than what actually exists (Herbert 2000). Indeed, as (social) scientists our methodological instincts are often to clear up mess and to present linear stories in much the same linear ways as realities can be presented to us by our research respondents (Law 2002). As a result, writes Hine (2007), our 'methodological instincts' can often be to attempt to clean up and de-clutter the mess we encounter in the field and, worse, to exclude descriptions and stories which highlight ambivalence and multiplicity and therefore refuse to fit this simplified performance. This argument is made explicitly by Law (2004, p2) when he asks, "If much of the world is vague, diffuse, or unspecific, slippery, emotional, ephemeral, elusive or indistinct, changes like a kaleidoscope, or doesn't really have much of a pattern at all, then where does this leave social science?" Indeed, social enquiries and their methods do not simply



describe the world as it is, rather they *enact* it – frequently working (though admittedly not always purposefully) to reproduce nineteenth-century, nation state-based politics in an attempt to provide coherence (Law and Urry 2004).<sup>50</sup> Thus, politics, ontology and ethics are bound up in the ways in which research is both conducted and its critiques performed (Mol 1999; Law 2002).

To counteract the tendency towards (over)simplification and to assist our understanding of social complexities, therefore, research methods are required that recognise the importance of inconsistency and multiplicity (Hedges 1985). Similarly, rather than attempting to hide the embodied presence of the researcher throughout the research process (Cupples 2002; Hiemstra 2011), a self-reflective position can be adopted which acknowledges that fieldwork *is* mediated and messy (Hyndman 2001). Indeed, for Crang and Cook (2007), it is precisely the ability of the (ethnographic) researcher to engage with, rather than withdrawing, from the messiness of the ‘real world’ that possibly offers the greatest critical advantage.

Law (2004) presents the ‘method assemblage’ as a possible means of including multiplicity and the previously unwanted noise back into social science research. This method assemblage aims to bundle relations into three parts: “(a) What is in-here or present; (b) Whatever is absent but is also manifest in its absence; and (c) whatever is absent but is Other” (Law 2004, p84).<sup>51</sup> In the context of this thesis, method assemblage allows me to follow the actors, perspectives, practices,

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<sup>50</sup> This is discussed in more detail in the section on ethnography.

<sup>51</sup> What is ‘present’ can be thought of as representations, objects or processes – “any kind of in-here enactment” writes Law (2004, p85). By contrast what is manifest absence can be thought of as the ‘out there’ realities that these representations reflect but is often simplified and made singular (Oppenheim 2007). Finally, what is absence as Otherness can be thought of as the myriad of routines and actions that take place but which are not noticed until they go wrong or cease to be carried out.

technologies and interactions involved in the enactment and circumvention of the border. Not only does the method assemblage make space for the agency of ‘things’ in social science research, therefore, it functions by gathering perspectives into productive tension and exposing the friction thereby produced. Finally, Law’s (2004) method assemblage explicitly recognises the vibrancy of the world/fieldwork site such that ‘truth’ is not simply ‘found’, thus allowing me instead to use methods which impact upon the spaces in which I conduct my fieldwork, while offering a reflexive opportunity to think through these methods and the ways in which I later perform these ‘truths’ in writing. In particular, I utilise Mol’s (1999) writings on ‘ontological politics’ to perform the numerous realities of the (European) border in each empirical chapter as they are experienced by my research respondents. I do not perform the border in this thesis as a singular entity, therefore, instead the reader will be confronted with the border as being multiple – the various realities overlapping but not always holding together neatly (Mol 1999, 2002).

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to offer a self-critical and reflexive account of the ways in which I entered ‘the field’ in a variety of ways in order to ‘gather’ (Law 2004) a mixture of voices, readings, effects and interpretations of the border. In the first section, I start by setting out my overall approach, which might be described as a ‘multi-site’ or ‘multilocal’ ethnography. Following this, I describe different ‘methods’ that were employed at each of my chosen fieldwork (set out in the introduction) sites within the enactment of this multi-site ethnography. Alongside the description of these methods I also include an in-depth discussion of the ethical considerations taken and negotiated throughout the research process.

### 3.2 Multi-Site Ethnography

Ethnography can be considered “a uniquely useful method for uncovering the *processes* and *meanings* that undergird sociospatial life” (Herbert 2000, p550, emphasis in original). Ethnography then can be thought of as the study of people in their everyday settings or ‘fields’ by means of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities. Thus, ethnography is focused on events and what can be said to be happening and, through its advocacy of in-depth data collection, attempts to explain why things happen the way that they do (Heller 2009). It is expected, therefore, that the ethnographer engages and participates in some way with the people and everyday productions of space in the research setting in order to uncover these processes and meanings (Herbert 2000). In this process the researcher is, in fact, reliant on their human-self and their embodied situated-ness in the field site through which they can explore the processes of which they intend to become a part (Smith 1984). As Herbert (2000, p559) puts it, “observer’s reactions, initial stumblings, discomforts, confusions and hard-fought competencies are all instructive in teasing out the broader background knowledges and meaning structures invoked in daily action [...] Reactions to the observer’s presence are similarly instructive.” Modern interpretations of ethnographic studies, therefore, frequently embrace the researcher’s personal experiences and thoughts to the extent that an ethnography can become the intertwining of the ethnographer and their ‘subjects’ (Cragg and Cook 2007; Hoey 2014).

Historically, however, ethnography has been primarily concerned with the study of people and, in particular, the study of ‘marginal groups’ where “poverty, lack of infrastructure, illiteracy, or political violence impede [other forms of] research” (Schatz 2009, p34). In this respect, 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropologists, convinced by the boundedness of cultures to discrete

regions, would frequently embark upon self-fulfilling prophetic studies of distant cultures and report back more secure in the knowledge of the tropes with which they left.<sup>52</sup> Massey (1991, p28) has decried geographers' search for defining regions and has argued that "this question of 'definition' has almost always been reduced to the issue of drawing lines around a place. But that kind of boundary around an area precisely distinguishes between an inside and an outside. It can so easily be yet another way of constructing a counterposition between 'us' and 'them'." Whilst these bounded cultural viewpoints were largely discredited on their own terms (see for example Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Amselle 2002; Gille and Riain 2002; Kubik 2009), the advent of globalisation has forcefully demonstrated the impossibility of culture in a single place as 'it' is now "simultaneously supralocal, translocal and local, simultaneously planetary and, refracted through the shards of vernacular cultural practices" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2003, p151; see also Appadurai 1990; Edwards 1994; Wilding 2007). As a result, ethnographers' field sites regularly include respondents in disparate locales, people, and frames of meaning (Cloke *et al* 2004). Simultaneously the ethnographer's research methods can also become more footloose as they attempt to inhabit and negotiate translations of meaning between these disparate sites – such as through the collection of data by phone, Skype and email (Crang and Cook 2007). Indeed, as Hannerz (2003, p201) argues, 'being there' has now been reconfigured into a state of "being there, and there, and there!"

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<sup>52</sup> See for example Coan's (1899, p24) descriptions of the 'brown Polynesian' who was described as "everywhere substantially the same", which contributed to the identification of culture as being essentialised, self-perpetuated and with definitively bounded units such as nation-state borders (Cloke *et al* 2004; Heyman 2012). A worldview which Rosaldo (1989) terms 'monumentalism'.

Marcus (1995, 1998), in particular, advocates the need for ethnography to become more explicitly ‘multi-sited’ and proposed a number of multi-sited strategies: 1) follow the people; 2) follow the material objects; 3) follow the metaphor; 4) follow the plot, story, or allegory; 5) follow the conflict; and 6) follow the life or biography.<sup>53</sup> Rather than presenting a holistic representation, therefore, Marcus (1995, p99) argues that “any ethnography of a cultural formation in the world system is also an ethnography of the system, and therefore cannot be understood only in terms of the conventional single-site, *mise-en-scene* of ethnographic research.” These ideas were not entirely new as, in migration studies especially, researchers were already in the process of ‘following’ migrants on their journeys, in particular along the U.S. – Mexico border (e.g. Watson 1977; Alvarez 1995). For Cook (2004) the methodological value in ‘following the thing’, however, comes not from observing and comparing the same phenomena between multiple locales, rather from tracing the connections and the entangled range of economic, political, social, and cultural processes that shape these connections.

Multi-sited studies in the field of migration have already succeeded in elucidating new understandings concerning the (multi)directionality of migration and how it should be viewed as an ongoing process (see Baldassar 2001; Schapendonk 2001), the potential for technologies to help maintain social networks while on the move (see Collyer 2007; Wilding 2006), the role of the Global Mobility Industry and how it manages ‘culture shock’ (Cranston 2016), and the extent and reach of the global illegality industry (Andersson 2013, 2014c, 2016). The approach I have taken, however, has *not* been to complete an ethnographic study of migration, nor of a particular nationality of people on the move in different locales. Instead, I

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<sup>53</sup> It should also be noted that Latour (1987) advocated the need to “follow the actors” in order to find out how they are shaped by assembled relations.

have conducted a multi-sited ethnography of *the border* by means of ‘following’ actors, stories, metaphors and biographies. In this respect my aims mirror those of Coutin (2000, p23) and of Hiemstra (2011, p107) who are explicit in their characterisation of their research aims as “an ethnography of a legal process” and an “ethnography of U.S. policy” respectively, rather than as ethnographies of a particular group of people considered to be ‘illegal aliens’ (see also De Genova 2002). Indeed, this thesis has been greatly inspired by Mountz’ (2004) ethnography of the nation-state in Canada<sup>54</sup> where, by drawing on feminist geographers’ work on embodiment and ‘situated knowledges’ (see Haraway 1988, 1991; Fluri 2009), Mountz is able to uncover the operation of power among institutional actors and migrants. In particular, Mountz (2004, p325) argues that “a shift in the scale of analysis of the nation-state, from national and global scales to the finer scale of the body, reveals processes, relationships, and experiences otherwise obscured.” In other words, by analysing the fluid, everyday interactions of those engaged in ‘borderwork’, the “[v]eneer of a seamless, transcendent entity is stripped away via intensive analysis, to reveal the processual, messy and ever-contingent reality of everyday state action” (Herbert 2000, p555). Similarly, ethnographies can draw attention to the ways in which ‘non-state’ groups engage in ‘borderwork’ (Rumford 2006), or the means through which borders can be contested through actions of solidarity or ‘Sanctuary’ movements (see Coutin 1993, 2005; Darling 2010).

In particular, ethnographies of ‘the state’ typically rely on Foucault (2007; 2010) for their conceptualisations of state power. As a result, if the state becomes treated as “a dispersed ensemble of institutional practices and techniques of governance

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<sup>54</sup> By conducting an ethnography with the federal department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

we can also produce multiple ethnographic sites from where the state can be studied and comprehended in terms of its effects, as well as in terms of the processes that shape bureaucratic routines and the designs of policies” (Hansen and Stepputat 2001, p14). Moreover, by adopting this dispersed view of state power, multi-sited research methods become necessary both to trace the extent of these assemblages of power and also to include attention to ways in which the border becomes altered, unmade and experienced by people on the move – especially those whose identities are forcibly crafted as ‘illegal’. For my own part I have attempted to ‘follow’ the (European) border as it expands to fill the everyday spaces of migrants both ‘on the move’ and during times of relative stasis. Similarly, I have traced the actors in the assemblages required to make the border mobile and extend its reach to spaces far beyond the territorial limits of the nation-state. I have also followed peoples’ asylum claims (and subsequent entanglements in the systems of control which also form part of the ‘invisible border’) through listening to oral histories of their lives(s) in Europe and by following the everyday frustrations and hardships of those coming to an asylum drop-in centre for help. Finally, I have followed numerous metaphors and stories that circulate throughout the borderspace, not only to understand their ‘validity’ but also to make sense of the events surrounding them. As I set out in the introduction, my mobility as a researcher took me to three fieldwork sites, namely; the Frontex headquarters in Warsaw, the Straits of Gibraltar and the anonymised city in the UK. In the following section I set out the various methods with which I conducted my fieldwork in each of these three sites and I discuss the various ethical questions that arose in each.

### 3.3 Method Assemblage

Fieldwork Location	2014		2015				2016
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
The City		Contact Solidarity Group	Participatory Action Research				
				Life Histories			
Warsaw		Frontex Interviews			Frontex Interviews		
Ceuta			Guardia Civil Interview			Guardia Civil Interviews	
			SIVE Field Visit			SIVE Field Visits	
						Deep Hanging Out	
Algeciras						SIVE Field Visit	
Edinburgh	Document Analysis						Document Analysis

Table 1 shows a timeline of my fieldwork starting with Q3 (March – May) in 2014.



It is perhaps as difficult to resist presenting a rationalised account of the methods used in the pursuit of knowledge, as it is to resist presenting a simplified narrative of the results which silences ambiguity. A de-cluttered, sanitised representation of the methodological steps I took ‘in the field’ would look something like the information presented in Table 1. There is also a similar tendency in social science research to present the ways in which ethics (and positionality) were negotiated in the field through careful planning and adherence to University ethics committees and research group regulations. Broadly speaking, therefore, I followed the ethical guidelines as set out by Cloke *et al* (2004):

1. *Informed Consent* – throughout the research processes I have conveyed the aims and purposes of my research in a clear and comprehensive way to the researched. I have also obtained written or verbal consent from the researched for their participation and they have been made aware of their freedom to leave the research process at any time. All interview transcripts were made available to respondents who had agreed to be interviewed with a voice recorder for edits, redactions, clarifications or additional comments. In all cases, however, I retained responsibility for my interpretation of the data.
2. *Privacy* – All respondents’ names and identifying information have been anonymised, even where this was not specifically requested. I have also taken care to anonymise the names of my respondents in my notes, audio files and transcriptions. Information from conversations that were explicitly ‘between us only’ have not been discussed in the thesis.
3. *Harm* – As Bjarnason (2009, p23) has put it, the “doing of qualitative research with people in vulnerable situations can at times be captured by the metaphor of walking on eggshells.” Much of the research I have conducted has been

with migrants suffering from both physiological and psychological stress and conducting the research without doing harm has involved being honest about the benefits of assisting me in my research, being willing to stop data collection or interviews at any time, and being prepared with the numbers of potential agencies that can offer psychological help (Martínez *et al* 2013). While much of the thesis is concerned with the tactics of resistance employed against the border regime, I have also been careful not to make my respondents' lives more precarious by exposing information that is unknown to those conducting 'borderwork' or could be used to make migrants' more vulnerable (Núñez and Heyman 2007). I make no secret about my political commitment to wanting to improve the lives of those who are caught in the nets of world borders – where there is a conflict of interest I have sided with them.

4. *Exploitation* – Where possible I have attempted to avoid the unethical nature of 'flip' ethnographies, in which ethnographers 'flip flop' in and out of peoples' lives just long enough to conduct an interview and collect juicy stories (Cloke 1997).
5. *Sensitivity to culture difference, gender and power relations* – I have attempted to be as reflexively aware of the power relations between myself and respondents and the ways in which I and my networks have affected the research outcomes (Kobayashi 2001; Crang and Cook 2007).

From the outset of this project, however, I took Lorimer's (2010) notion of 'make-do-methods' and Law and Singleton's (2013) views on taking pleasure in being *led* by the research process to heart. Law and Singleton (2013, p488), therefore write of conducting what they call 'care-full' research and liken the slow process to 'following the grain':

“In woodwork you sense the grain of the wood. Craft research is shaped by the patterns of interaction and practice that it’s immersed in. You don’t assume too much. You let the research unfold. You do care-full research.”

In letting the research unfold, however, there is much about the practice of *doing* and *following* that will be ad-hoc, last minute or shaped by happenstance (Lorimer 2010). Although this section is dedicated to setting out my ‘method assemblage’, therefore, I have tried to convey the ways in which my research process was by no means solely shaped through diligent planning. While I identified people, things, processes and stories that I wished to follow and employed methods that I thought would allow me to do so, these often changed. At times it did indeed feel like all I had was a ‘toehold’ in the ‘science’ (Lorimer 2010, p269) as I let myself follow the events and rhythms I encountered in the borderspace. Similarly, adhering to the ethical guidelines set out above was far from straightforward and, in many senses, is still ongoing.<sup>55</sup> Indeed immediately following the setting out of these guidelines, Cloke *et al* (2004) highlight the challenges to implementing these ‘textbook’ ethical guidelines in practice. As Calvey (2008, p908, emphasis my own) argues, “research is a situated business [...] it is in the particular cases of the here and now with participants that ethics are *situationally accomplished*.” In the discussion that follows concerning my applied ‘method assemblage’, therefore, I have also set out the *situated* challenges I experienced while adhering to these ethical guidelines, as well as the situated challenges to gaining access performing research.

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<sup>55</sup> As Cutcliffe and Ramcharan (2002) argue, ethics is a *process* that continues to evolve as the research and dissemination of results progresses.

### 3.4 Participant Observation

Participant observation has historically been the core means through which ethnographers have attempted to understand the cultures, everyday interactions, lived experiences and world-views of the people/culture they are trying to study (Crang and Cook 2007). Put simply, participant observation can be thought of as ‘deep hanging out’ (Wogan 2004) as the researcher attempts to immerse themselves into the everyday rhythms and routines of the community. While previously the researcher may have been thought of as (emotionally) detached from the community as they dispassionately collect ‘scientific’ evidence (e.g. Maranhao 1986), though in all likelihood the researcher will experience a range of emotions *with* the community as the process evolves (Hunt 1989). In other words, participant observation is about ‘being there’ with the community; to “join in correspondence with those with whom we learn or among whom we study, in a movement that goes forward rather than back in time” (Ingold 2014, p.390). It is not unusual or undesirable for researchers to develop new relationships (see Wade 1993), or to develop new identities as they become increasingly accustomed to a new way of life or become aware of new processes (Crang and Cook 2007). Indeed, maintain a balance between these identities and the lifestyle of simultaneously being a part of a group, but not entirely so, can be very difficult.

The ‘doing’ of participant observation can imply many different *actions*. While the most obvious of these actions might be passively observing the community, group, or thing at hand, actions can also be significantly more active and ‘partisan’ (Crang 2003). Participant observation can also be a way of avoiding the oftentimes hurtful situation of researchers conducting ‘hit-and-run’ interviews (Booth and Booth 1994, p417), which can be especially damaging when the group contains people who are already emotionally or physically vulnerable. Given that a significant part of my fieldwork

involved working with vulnerable people on the move who, in many cases had discarded their paper-based identities or were enrolled asylum applications, I was particularly keen to avoid this ‘hit-and-run’ interview method.

The actions I chose, however, were largely influenced by the amount of time I could spend in each location and the *access* that I could negotiate. In ‘the city’ in the UK, therefore, I was able to engage in something akin to ‘participatory action research’ by volunteering in a drop-in centre specifically aimed at helping asylum seekers for between two and three days a week for a period of six months. Meanwhile in Ceuta I had originally planned to spend two months volunteering for one of the NGOs that works in the ‘open’ detention centre in the enclave. However, it was not until a number of weeks *after* I had arrived in the enclave that I was given permission to enter the detention centre by the Ministry of Interior – and then only to organise a formal interview with an administrator of the centre. As most of the residents of the detention centre spend most of the day in the streets of Ceuta, however, I was instead able to join them as they variously waited, ate, drank and celebrated Ramadan. In both the city and Ceuta I developed friendships and relationships more complex than the simple researcher/subject duality – these both helped inform and complicate the research process as I became more invested in what it was that I was studying (beyond the attainment of a PhD).<sup>56</sup> Finally, due to the constrictions imposed

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<sup>56</sup> As a result of having decided to write the thesis in Edinburgh (as well as the pressures of writing), however, I have largely lost contact with most of those whom I grew close to while ‘in the field’. Moreover, those whom I met in Ceuta are now spread out across the continent. Though we sometimes converse through online means, it has been hard to remain in contact. I still occasionally try to help members of the Solidarity Group, especially if they know of asylum seekers in Edinburgh needing housing as I am involved with the Positive Action in Housing project in the city. As a result, ‘leaving’ the field has been a slow process, but not one that I have attempted to hasten.

upon me by the Guardia Civil, I was only permitted to observe the Spanish border guards at work on five separate occasions and under various levels of supervision.

#### 3.4.1 Participatory Action Research

Although many researchers engage in activism outside of academia, relatively few have succeeded in making activism both a focus and strategy of their work (Pain 2003). As Fraser (1989) has argued, however, critical social theory should frame its attentions and aims to the activities of those who are engaged in opposition movements and with which the researcher has a partisan (though not uncritical) affiliation. To this Routledge (1996, p406) adds “that a process of engagement and collaboration is also of crucial importance, a situation of critical thought as action-oriented and engaged with the claims, goals, and actions of social movements.” For Routledge (1996) the purpose of this critical engagement with oppositional movements, therefore, is to create a place from which to write while recognising that the voices engaged in social struggles are distinct from those in social science literature. As a result, activism can become a means through which the researcher can think differently about the world and what it means to be a part of it (Ruddick 2003 Moren-Alegret 2002; see also Chatterton 2002 on squatting), whilst also working with and empowering the researched by enrolling them as co-researchers or by encouraging them to push the direction of the research questions (Kitchin 1999; Pain and Francis 2003; Hale 2006; Speed 2006).

There were a number of reasons why I decided that becoming involved in activism would be beneficial. I wanted to be able to focus on peoples’ everyday interactions with the border and daily issues regarding their asylum claims. Without any prior contacts in the city, however, I knew I would need to find a group or person through which I could gain access and

make connections. Volunteering for the 'Solidarity Group', which runs a drop-in centre in the city, presented the possibility of meeting people engaged with the UK's asylum system and border regime. It also meant I could become attuned to the major difficulties and concerns that were plaguing people daily, as well as how they and the Solidarity Group were attempting to develop tactics in response to these and to the disciplining strategies of the UK Home Office. The Solidarity Group assist those who come to their drop-in centre in several ways. Firstly, they offer tea, coffee and a chance to chat with someone who understands the asylum system and will not judge them for being 'an asylum seeker' or being between asylum applications. The Solidarity Group also engage in more 'active' forms of solidarity: by acting as a bridge between people being held in detention and their lawyers; helping people find new lawyers if they have been 'dropped'; organising anti-detention rallies; reading and receiving letters from lawyers or the Home Office; evidence-gathering for asylum claims; preparing responses to negative decisions, writing letters to relevant MPs concerning housing issues or detention; and, during the time that I was there especially, assisting people in their applications for Section 4 and Section 95 support (the means through which people can access government funds while applying for asylum as employment is forbidden in most cases). Following an induction of sorts and a basic training given by the other volunteers, I engaged with these practices of resistance/contestation of the border as a volunteer and, for the time that I was volunteering, was considered a member of the group.

These experiences as a volunteer were invaluable in terms of developing my understandings of the asylum system in the UK and the ways in which people must interact with it and the UK's border regime on a daily basis. The reasons for this are twofold; the first being quite counterintuitive as it is born out of failures. Despite efforts to make the research process

more of a two-way process in terms of determining the research aims and writing possibilities, the Solidarity Group became inundated with people needing help as the months in which I was a volunteer coincided with a switch to ‘Asylum Help’ as the main provider of ‘official’ support for asylum seekers.<sup>57</sup> As a result, the volunteers in the drop-in centre (myself included) often felt like fire fighters rushing between emergencies with queues sometimes ranging outside the door of the centre. Although people were keen to become more involved in the research process, this never materialised into anything concrete beyond suggestions as to what I should focus my research on. As it happens, those suggestions not unsurprisingly coincided with the causes of what was causing the additional distress the volunteers and the visitors to the drop-in centre; namely the switch to ‘assistance at a distance’ through ‘Asylum Help’ and the Home Office’s increased restrictions on Section 95 and Section 4 support. Indeed, these two issues play a central role in my analysis of the urban border in chapter 6.

Secondly, by *doing* volunteer-work at the drop-in centre I gained a much more in-depth understanding of the ‘messiness’ of everyday realities in the borderspaces and the myriad of Catch-22-like situations that migrants can find themselves in and the types of (re)actions that are open to them and to those trying to help them (which can then often lead to worse situations). While I cannot know how this thesis would have turned out had I not volunteered, I am confident I would have discarded a significant number of stories or accounts either or of mistrust of their validity or simply because they would have been too complicated to wrap my head around through an interview. I have not tried to unravel these stories and

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<sup>57</sup> This is explained in more detail in chapter 6.



experiences too much in the written sections of this thesis, to do so would present an idea of linearity and sense where often there is little. Experiencing peoples' troubles and spending time and (emotional) effort to try and help them find solutions also meant that I became emotionally involved in the research to an extent that I had not previously imagined.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, shortly after I started volunteering for the group, they agreed that nobody should volunteer for more than two days a week, in part due to the high levels of 'burnout' the group had experienced. Though an emotional strain, I would contend that my emotions during this time added a key dimension to my conceptual understandings the border regime, and its affects on migrants and those who try to help (see Mountz 2007, 39).

As a result, I began to understand the mixture of fear, stress, confusion and anger that many feel as they are embroiled in the asylum system knowing that any day they (or their friends) can have their claims rejected, their access to funds denied or their liberty removed through the use of indefinite detention. Moreover, I also became more attuned to the temporalities of the border regime which, for asylum seekers and migrants, can be characterised by long periods of anxious waiting penetrated by moments of intense pressure and fear pressure as their asylum case reaches a decision or they are (forcibly) moved from their location. As a result, I would follow the progression (or lack thereof) of peoples' asylum cases – and fear for them during times when I knew they were most at risk (of detention, removal or transportation). Indeed, although I had never intended to write about the temporalities of the border (both in terms of migrants' experiences and guards' efforts to control), the theme plays a large part in the discussion of each of the following empirical chapters. Nonetheless, the

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<sup>58</sup> Although experiencing strong emotions during the fieldwork period is not very unusual (see Herbert 2000; Bondi 2003).

emotional and physical strain of volunteering had adverse effects on the conducting of my research. On most days the Solidarity Group would be so busy that there would be no time to write down detailed field notes in between assisting other visitors. I would, therefore, write my field notes on the train ride back to where I was staying.

My role as a researcher/volunteer was agreed with the Solidarity Group after I sent a proposal to the group, which was discussed and approved during a group meeting (at which I was not present). As some volunteers were not present at this meeting, I also made sure to introduce myself as a volunteer/researcher to all the volunteers I met while at the drop-in centre. I had initially intended to wear a badge with the University logo while volunteering at the centre, however, it was agreed with the other volunteers that this would look too official and potentially damage the drop-in centre's welcoming and unofficial environment. I therefore also introduced myself to all those I helped as being both a volunteer and a PhD student at the University conducting research on migration and asylum in the city. Despite these efforts, however, I was aware that my identity as a researcher would occasionally slip from view and so I would regularly remind volunteers and visitors of this fact (Darling 2011b). There were also times where reinstating my position as a researcher would have been uncomfortable or stressing, moments where a person was in obvious distress, for example, and where clarifying my position might counteract the emotional care being given by myself and the other volunteers. One of the benefits of volunteering at the drop-in centre for six months and the repeated contact that this afforded, therefore, was that I would frequently see the same people again during calmer circumstances during which I could clarify my position and ask for their permission to write about what had happened. On a number of occasions, moreover, these conversations in turn lead to agreements to conduct 'formal' interviews at a later date.

### 3.4.2 Deep Hanging Out

As will be set out in greater detail in chapter 5, those who make it to Ceuta despite the panoply of surveillance technologies and actors that have been drawn into the border regime around the enclave are housed in an ‘open’ detention centre; called the CETI. They are therefore free to leave the detention centre during the day but must return at night if they want to retain their right to a bed. During this time, however, they are prohibited from travelling to mainland Spain. As a result, most CETI residents spend their days waiting in the streets of the tiny enclave working what they call ‘Dale Dale’ – helping residents park their cars or carrying their shopping in return for a small donation. Those who must wait their turn to Dale Dale generally spend their time hanging out in various secluded spaces around the enclave, most notably behind a factory near the CETI and a small space called the ‘Tranquilo’ where a small camp has been made for those who will sleep outside the CETI or want to cook on the campfire. For the best part of two months, therefore, I accompanied the men who were working *Dale Dale* under the hot summer sun. I think many of those whom I joined were glad to have the company as Dale Dale can be long, tiring and dull. I think many were also intrigued to find a young (white) European man so interested in them, especially as I think most are disregarded by the European employees and volunteers at the CETI.

Though not specifically on the search for ‘gatekeepers’, I quickly became on good terms with a number of people from the various national groups in the CETI and was regularly invited to spend time and ‘hang out’ with the various groups in the Tranquilo and behind the factory. The holy month of Ramadan also occurred midway through my two months in Ceuta (17<sup>th</sup> June to 16<sup>th</sup> July 2016) and, as many of the migrants in the CETI were Muslim, I fasted out of politeness while in their company during the day. Ramadan, however, also offered the opportunity to meet CETI residents at a local mosque, which

was organising free dinners for the local community (mainly for Muslims but others such as myself were also welcomed). These methods of meeting people could be considered somewhat ‘ad-hoc’ as I had to make do with my restricted access to the CETI. As a result, most of the people I spoke to were those who had decided not to engage in the language courses on offer and most had also not applied for asylum and were intending to travel on to the mainland. While my emotions volunteering for the drop-in centre in the city were of stress and anger, in Ceuta, by contrast, I became bored and frustrated. It took me a while to realise that these emotions were not specific to me, but were common amongst those who were literally stuck in the enclave – I have tried to convey these feelings as best I can in chapter 5.

I chose not to voice-record my conversations with the residents of the CETI, deciding instead to write down notes as we talked, sat and waited. This was because I knew most were already distrustful of Europeans – and understandably so, as many had thought they would be ‘free’ following their arrival in Spain but instead found themselves with less freedom than when they were in Morocco. I introduced myself as a student-researcher writing a book on borders and migration and was frequently asked to clarify that I was not a journalist, or an employee of the Guardia Civil sent to act as a spy. As a result, I did not want to request ‘formal’ interviews and nor did I seek signed consent forms as these, I believe, would have intensified their suspicions of me. I regularly explained that if they agreed to be a part of my research, I would anonymise them in both my notes and in the eventual thesis. Although I spoke to many who did not consent to be a part of my research, their words and actions do help to frame my thoughts, though they do not appear explicitly in the thesis.

While I would say that I became friends with many of the respondents in Ceuta, I also wanted to make it clear that I was there primarily as a researcher (Lofland and Lofland 1984). Initially I had started by jotting down notes on my phone in

what I had thought was an unobtrusive manner,<sup>59</sup> I quickly changed to overtly taking notes in order to make my position as clear as possible. With a few of my respondents this became a sort of running joke at my expense, however, as they tried to convince me to ‘relax’ or to ‘take a day off’. Sensing that their quips were in part born out of frustration, on these occasions I would often theatrically put the notebook away – thereby doffing my ‘researcher’s hat’. Where possible I attempted to also make the research process reciprocal. I was often asked questions about the various European countries; their climates, cities, economies and asylum systems and, using Google, I would do my best to answer their questions. I also attempted for a short while to act as a person through which they could send and receive money through Moneygram with their families – however after just three transfers my account was blocked as the company feared I was laundering money.

Most of my respondents in Ceuta were men, though not for a lack of trying to get women involved in my research. The number of men in the CETI greatly outweigh the women. Moreover, women do not engage in Dale Dale like the men and appeared to spend more time in the CETI during the day. My biggest obstacle to engaging women as research participants, however, was that my approaches kept being misconstrued as courtship – no matter how often I spoke of my partner in Scotland. Despite my efforts, being alone in Ceuta positioned me as sexually available. Cupples (2002) urges us to reflexively think through and acknowledge the impact of sex and sexuality on fieldwork in an attempt to overcome static understandings of our subjectivity. Indeed, these experiences made it very clear to me how the fieldwork site was not mine

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<sup>59</sup> Initially I had thought this would be a clever way of anonymising my respondents as I could upload the notes directly to a secure Dropbox folder and delete the notes from my phone in case it got searched or confiscated by the Guardia Civil.

to manipulate as I pleased. Moreover, I began to think about sex and the role it plays in the detention centre of the small enclave, which shaped some of my conceptualisations of power and its dynamics in chapter 5.

### 3.4.3 Field Visits

I obtained permission from the Guardia Civil head office in Madrid to conduct field visits at the SIVE stations in Ceuta and Algeciras, the border fence in Ceuta and one of the mobile night patrol units that overlooks the Ceuta/Morocco border. In Algeciras I was warmly welcomed by a senior officer who guided me to the SIVE operations room – where he introduced me to the on-site technician and border guards monitoring the SIVE screens and instructed them to answer my questions and demonstrate the functioning of SIVE. My field visits in Ceuta, by contrast, were accompanied by a senior Guardia Civil officer who also handles the Ceutí division’s external communications. Despite the senior guard’s presence (although he frequently wandered off or stuck up conversations with other guards), however, I was free in both Ceuta and Algeciras to introduce myself to the guards as a researcher interested in border control technologies, to ask my questions and to watch as they performed their tasks. Despite being granted access by their ‘superiors’, I also asked for their consent before asking them questions and explained that their answers would be anonymised.<sup>60</sup> I did not voice-record the conversations I had during these field visits, taking instead extensive field notes as the guards demonstrated how the technologies worked and explained their daily routines and challenges. Although direct quotes have been included in the thesis, occasionally opinions were shared with me that were “between us” – these have not been included.

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<sup>60</sup> Although in Ceuta, obviously, their answers were being monitored for the most part by their superior.

It was of course hardly textbook practice to have the senior guard present during these field visits in Ceuta, although he rarely interfered and I did not get the impression that the guards on duty were limiting their answers due to his presence. Indeed, in both Algeciras and Ceuta the guards were content to speak of the system's deficiencies and the challenges they experience on a daily basis. On these occasions the senior guard would remind me that "no system is perfect" and leave it at that. The only topic on which the senior guard did interject was during discussions of the role of the Moroccan forces in the enactment of de-facto push-back operations, where he would regularly add that everyone's main priority is that 'no lives should be lost at sea' – though he never appeared to obfuscate or deny the involvement of the Moroccan authorities in the functioning of SIVE. It was, however, made clear to me by the senior guard that the reason I would not be allowed to conduct a more lengthy participant observation at the SIVE control centre was that the Guardia Civil would need to be in full control of public relations in the event of a serious 'border incident'.

Crang (2003) quips that although qualitative research methods are often derided for being 'touchy-feely', qualitative methods have in fact been rather limited in touching and feeling. I raise this comment to highlight the importance of these field visits to my understanding of the performance of border security. During these field visits I was granted the opportunity of watching the border technologies being manipulated, to touch those technologies, ask for particular demonstrations and, perhaps most importantly, to *feel* the environment in which the border guards were working *in situ*. For example, in chapter 4 I highlight the disconcerting effect on the body generated by the bright representation of the world through the thermal cameras despite the surrounding darkness. Moreover, the technologies and settings functioned as useful props around which to base these conversations. Rather than receiving abstract answers concerning how the

guards applied the technologies to the border, therefore, I was able to see this first hand and ask them to demonstrate when something remained unclear. The main hindrance concerning this setting, however, was that it was much more difficult to ask the guards about the emotions they experience while operating the equipment than it might have been in a formal interview setting. I had wanted to draw out the parallels between the experiences of drone pilots who have “a front-row seat on war, from half a world away” such that, despite the distance, drone pilots develop an intimate feel for the ground and the people they kill (Zucchini 2010 in Suchman 2015, p9).

## 3.5 Interviews

### 3.5.1 Life Histories

In order to flesh out some of the stories and fill in the gaps left from my research at the drop-in centre in the city, I conducted a series of interviews with volunteers and visitors to the drop-in centre that either were, or had been, engaged in the asylum system. In the hopes of making the respondents feel as safe and comfortable, I let them choose where we conducted the interviews and whether they wanted a friend to be with them in the room or nearby. The interviews were therefore conducted in a range of places including the drop-in centre (out of hours), peoples’ homes, cafés in the city centre and a recording studio. One respondent also requested that another volunteer from the Solidarity Group to be present during the interview to ensure that what she said would not lead to trouble with the Home Office. In each case I obtained either verbal or written consent<sup>61</sup> following the (re)explanation of my research interests, their anonymity in the research project, that

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<sup>61</sup> On a few occasions the respondents were fearful of an official-looking document with their name on it declaring that they had partaken in the research.



they were free to end the interview at any point or to turn off the recording device and my guarantees not to publish quotes in the media. As a result of my involvement in the Solidarity Group and having helped some of my respondents, I was careful to avoid exploitation by ensuring that my interview respondents were not agreeing to be interviewed out of a sense of duty, debt or hope for future help (see Patai 1991; Stacey 1991). Each interviewee was also offered the original interview recording and a copy of the transcript in case they wanted to make any changes or redact sections; two respondents asked for these but did not ask for changes to be made. One interviewee did regularly request for the recording device to be paused during the interview and I complied with their requests. I was also careful not to be insistent when asking people if they would participate through being interviewed and accepted peoples' changes our heart when they occurred. Following the completion of the thesis, I also plan to delete the original audio recordings.

The interviews took the form of open-structured 'life histories', rather than the standard 'semi-structured' interview. Life histories are concerned with understanding cultural milieux and social worlds through personal accounts and narratives, with respondents free to choose which moments to focus on in more detail (Legard *et al* 2003). In this respect I drew on feminist research approaches to interviewing which are aimed at giving the interviewee free rein to shape their own narrative, to attempt to dissolve the distinction between researcher and participant and in the hope of making the interview process a generative experience for both parties (Olesen 2000; Oakley 1981; Legard *et al* 2003). Interview respondents were free to choose at which point of their life they wished to start; with most choosing to start with their journey to Europe. For the most part respondents opted to describe mainly their various interactions with the Home Office and focused on particular moments during which they felt they had been mistreated or abused. Where possible I would also recount

relevant short stories from my travels or experiences while volunteering at the drop-in centre (without mentioning identifying information) to reduce the subject/researcher barrier; these stories also helped to springboard new conversation topics or recounts of events. Another important reason for choosing this interview style was to get a linear narrative of peoples' experiences of their journeys and, in particular, experiences applying for asylum in the UK. This is important as past events greatly impact upon asylum claims, Home Office decision-making and forms of support that can be accessed.

### 3.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews

As my attempts to organise institutional ethnographies of the Guardia Civil and Frontex were rebuffed, I conducted a series of interviews instead. I visited the offices of Frontex on two separate occasions (in July 2014 and in April 2015), where I organised six interviews in total with employees capable of setting out the agencies aims, the functioning of Eurosur and the agency's role in facilitating cooperation with 'third countries'. In Ceuta the senior guard that accompanied me to the SIVE station and the mobile night patrol unit also agreed to be interviewed on three separate occasions (once in October 2014 and twice in June/July 2015). Although he was not in a position to explain the workings of SIVE and the interactions between the guards and the technologies, these interviews were invaluable in terms of understanding the relationship between the Guardia Civil (in Ceuta) and Morocco, the role of Frontex in Ceuta, and the protocols that are followed when a migrant boat is spotted through the SIVE technologies. In Ceuta I also conducted two separate interviews with a senior police officer and an interview with an administrator at the enclave's 'open' detention centre. In Algeciras, meanwhile, I was *not* granted permission to interview Guardia Civil officers working on the Frontex operation 'Indalo' (aimed at

“combating and monitoring illegal migration flows along the Mediterranean coast from North Africa”)<sup>62</sup> as the permission I had obtained to observe and speak to the SIVE operatives had come from Madrid, while the officers working on Indalo were under command from Seville and permission could not be scheduled in time.

In contrast to the interviews conducted with the volunteers and visitors to the drop-in centre, these interviews were conducted in the more traditional semi-structured approach. The first major factor in this change was the amount of time allotted to each interview, as most of the abovementioned respondents had allocated hour-long time slots. While I do not subscribe to calling the research subjects in this section ‘elites’, there can be no denying that the power dynamics felt very different from those conducted in the city. During my first three interviews with Frontex staff, especially, I felt both overly grateful at being granted the opportunity to conduct interviews at the agency and nervous about my inexperience (both as a researcher and knowledge of the subject matter) and I remember the first of these interviews being particularly unpleasant. This first interview aside, however, I am struck by how accommodating most of my interview respondents were – those in Spain especially, who had to endure being asked the same question multiple times as I made sure I had understood their meanings correctly due to my good, but imperfect Spanish.

The semi-structured interviews also differed from the life histories I conducted with asylum seekers in the city in the sense that it was much harder to use ‘real’ events to base my questions around or to contextualise their responses. I realised fairly early on that if I asked respondents from the Guardia Civil or Frontex about such events I was likely to get a short ‘PR-safe’

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<sup>62</sup> See <http://frontex.europa.eu/operations/archive-of-operations/CMMcoZ>

response, whereas if we used hypothetical situations they felt much freer to discuss what should or could happen under such conditions (see Campbell 2003). Despite this reluctance to discuss such events, I was occasionally surprised by how happy certain respondents were to talk about their ‘personal’ (political) opinions – and by how much they differed with their colleagues’. In Frontex, in particular, I was struck by this disparity as, in one interview, I was told repeatedly that the EU should be aiming to implement its own version of ‘the Australian solution to irregular migration’,<sup>63</sup> while in the next I spoke to their colleague who was clearly proud of Frontex’ humanitarian work in the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>64</sup> Overall, however, I was struck by how nice the Guardia Civil officers were... to me at least.

### 3.6 Document Analysis

My third primary research method for this project was an analysis of the written material published by Frontex, the Guardia Civil and the British government. Initially I considered conducting a full ‘critical discourse analysis’ of the published documents in which I would analyse the wording, framing, and assumptions inscribed therein (Gee 1999; Fairclough 2012) – focusing specifically on the institutions’ underlying assumptions concerning migration, border management and border technologies. The Guardia Civil has published a book specifically focused on SIVE, while Frontex regularly publishes publically available Risk Analyses, Joint Reports (written in collaboration with ‘third countries’), guides and trainings for border guards. As the project and the amount of primary data I was collecting continued to grow, however, I decided to

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<sup>63</sup> Where migrants are detained indefinitely in island detention centres such as Nauru, even if they have made it to Australian waters (see Mountz *et al* 2012).

<sup>64</sup> In some ways, this alone already highlights the multiple personality disorder of the agency.

reduce the scope of my documentary analysis. Instead, I focused my attention specifically on the ways in which border technologies were being presented in Frontex and Guardia Civil literatures, specifically through the use of visual materials in these published documents. In particular, I was interested in understanding how both organisations imagine the current and future roles of technologies in border management and how these ‘fit’ with the performances of (human) border guards.

I also followed a number of activist groups’ Facebook and Twitter accounts, blogs and websites in order to get regular updates on stories and events as they unfolded. Through this method I aimed to both expand my contextual understandings of the borderspace, the various projections of each story, as well as the actions and performances of the multiple actors engaged in the borderspace. In following the numerous stories covered in chapter 4, especially, I also conducted an analysis of media articles published and stored online, as well as publically available court decisions. Finally, for chapter 6, I utilised a range of statistics published by the UK Home Office and the Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP) concerning asylum applications, acceptance rates, appeals data and the percentage of applicants receiving Section 4 support.



*Figure 14 is taken from the front cover of an 'Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community Joint Report'. Although most of the document is concerned with internal migration patterns, the image used on the front cover demonstrates the 'threat' of irregular migration and why Frontex is interested in these movements.*

### 3.7 Writing the Border

If ‘traditional’ methods in scientific research produce simplified ‘un-messy’ results that ignore complexity, then so too do the smooth narratives through which much research is disseminated (Law 2002, 2004). In other words, regardless of whether or not they are aware of it, academics engage in a practice of ‘ontological politics’ *both* when deliberating on which methods to use when conducting research and when electing how to subsequently *perform* their ‘results’ or the stories they have gathered. While the selection of research methods is political, so too, therefore, are the realities which are presented (Law 2002) – “description is never innocent” (Law and Benschop 1997, p175). Law and Urry (2004) argue that in a fractional and reflexive world, researchers no longer have the luxury of criticising from the side lines as doing so ignores the researcher’s performative power to enact new realities. I have previously argued that the (European) border is *multiple*, but not plural (see Mol 1999, 2002). By writing the border from three different locations and by holding together in productive tension the multiple *realities*<sup>65</sup> made through my engagements in these spaces and with those who encounter the border in these sites, I too am engaging in ‘ontological politics’. In this case, it is my decision *not* to hold one reality (e.g. the border as performed by Frontex) over the other, as though it were somehow more valid or more ‘real’. At times the multiple realities created within chapters to collaborate with one another, at other times these realities will clash (Mol 1999). The realities of the border created by those in the Frontex offices in Warsaw *overlap* and *interfere* with those of the migrants

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<sup>65</sup> Different (connected) realities, as opposed to perspectives. As Law and Urry (2004, p398) argue, “if method is interactively performative, and helps to make realities, then the differences between research findings produced by different methods or in different research traditions have an alternative significance. No longer different perspectives on a single reality, they become instead the enactment of different realities.”

and border guards in the straits of Gibraltar, or indeed, those of the asylum seekers and volunteers in ‘the city’ in the UK – their relations will be only ‘partially coordinated’, complex and messy (Law 2004, p61). As a result, the realities performed in this thesis will sometimes be muddled, or the conclusions open-ended

Finally, Stewart (2012, p524) argues that it is the practice of “writing itself which writing itself attunes us to how things are hanging together or falling apart or wearing out in time that compresses or stretches out into an endurance. Such objects of analysis register the tactility and significance of something coming into form through an assemblage of affects, routes, conditions, sensibilities and habits.” In other words, writing is not an act *after* the fact of having carried out and analysed findings (DeLyser 2013). “Writing matters,” stresses MacDonald (2014, p478) in a similar vein, “I do not see narrative and analysis as discrete projects, stories being subject to a detached and instrumental interpretation. Analysis does not always declare itself as such. It can find expression in allegory and be tucked away in the shadows of significant narrative detail.” Writing for this purpose, moreover, need not be limited to the narrative form. Krupar (2007), for example, utilises fable, satire and creative nonfiction in order to not only disrupt the normalisation of military violence in Western society, but also to open up a new space for political imaginings of ‘wild’ landscapes. Alternatively, Pred (1995) intermingles his own voice with differently situated voices which speak past one another as often as they speak to one another, as well as to the contexts in which they emerge, in the form of assembled montages.

In Cultural Geography and Science and Technology Studies, discussions have centred on the ways in which non-human actors’ agency can be represented in writing (see Lorimer and Parr 2014). Kennan *et al* (2010) for example have attempted to ‘give voice’ to non-human actors by anthropomorphising in writing through a technique of ‘actors’ speaking’ (Kennan



2008). Although I applaud their attempts, I find this writing method rather clunky and have preferred instead to make use of telling short stories, in particular in the form of vignettes at the start of my chapters. Aside from assisting my own analyses, the inclusion of these stories and narratives is, therefore, designed to position the reader in the midst of the ‘messy’ performances which produce the borderspace (see Swanton 2013; Law 2004) and work to “foreground material encounters” (Gregson 2009, 285) in the day-to-day rhythms of the borderspace.

### 3.8 Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the methods utilised in the completion of this thesis. I have demonstrated the ways in which I have attempted to draw through my epistemological thoughts of the borderspace into an ontological approach that makes space ‘mess’, networks connected across topological space and the vibrancy of matter. In the first section I have argued for a multi-sited ethnographic approach and set out my reasons for choosing three specific field ‘sites’. In the second section, meanwhile, I have set out the various methods employed within my ‘method assemblage’ through which I have followed various actors, stories, events and metaphors across the borderspace. I have made no attempt in either this chapter, or those that follow, to remove myself from the research – to present the research as having been conducted by an ‘objective’ floating head. Indeed, “objectivity, in the way Haraway redefines it, is possible if we acknowledge and take responsibility both for our necessary situatedness, and for the recognition that we are located in and produced by sets of partial connections” (Law 2004, p69). Indeed, the following empirical chapter makes direct use of Haraway’s ‘God trick’ to critique the vision aspirations of the security assemblages of Frontex and the Guardia Civil.

## Chapter 4 A God's Eye View

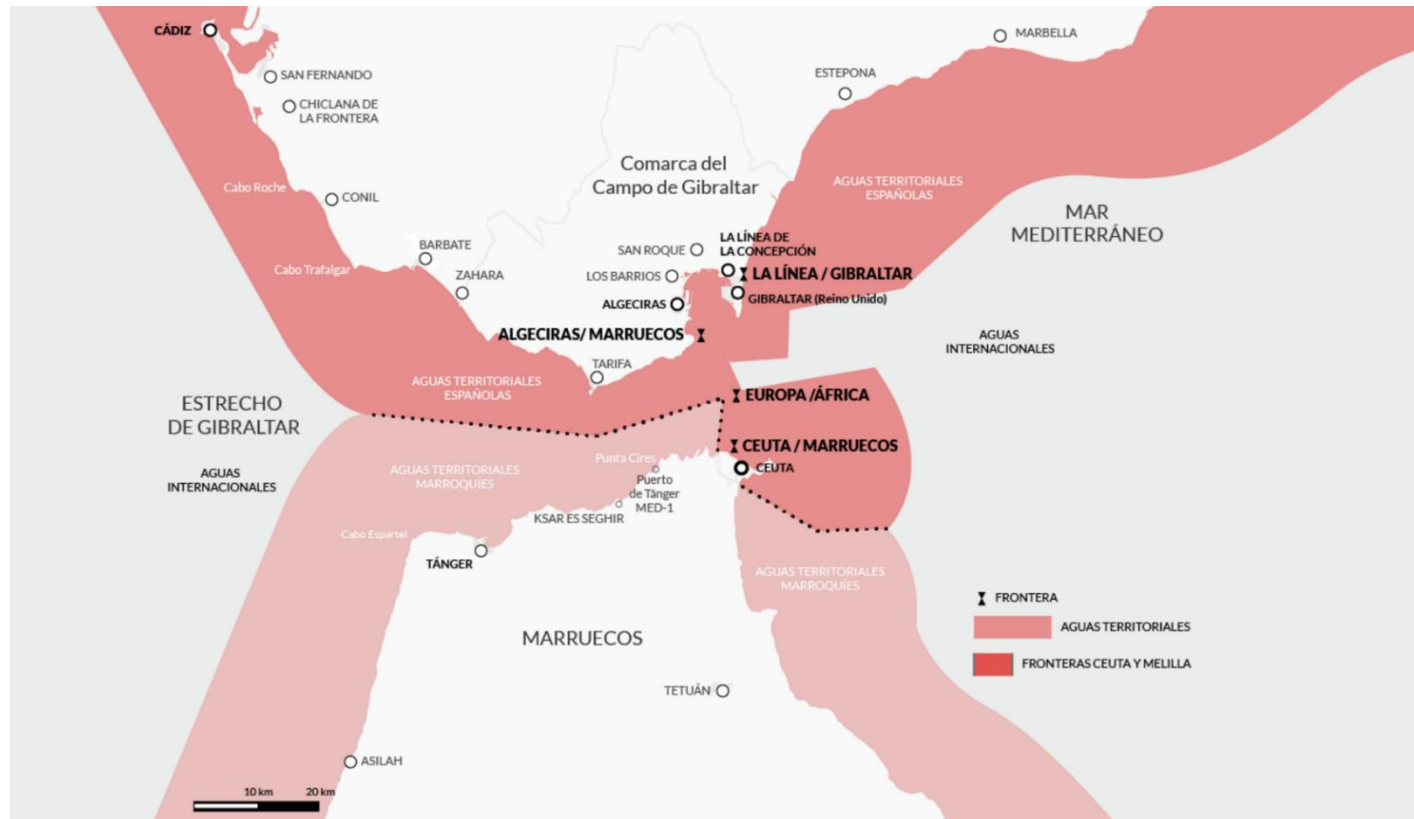


Figure 15 shows the territorial waters of both Spain and Morocco. The border between Ceuta and Morocco is also shown (image available at: <http://elpais.com/especiales/2015/desafio-estrecho/claves.html>)

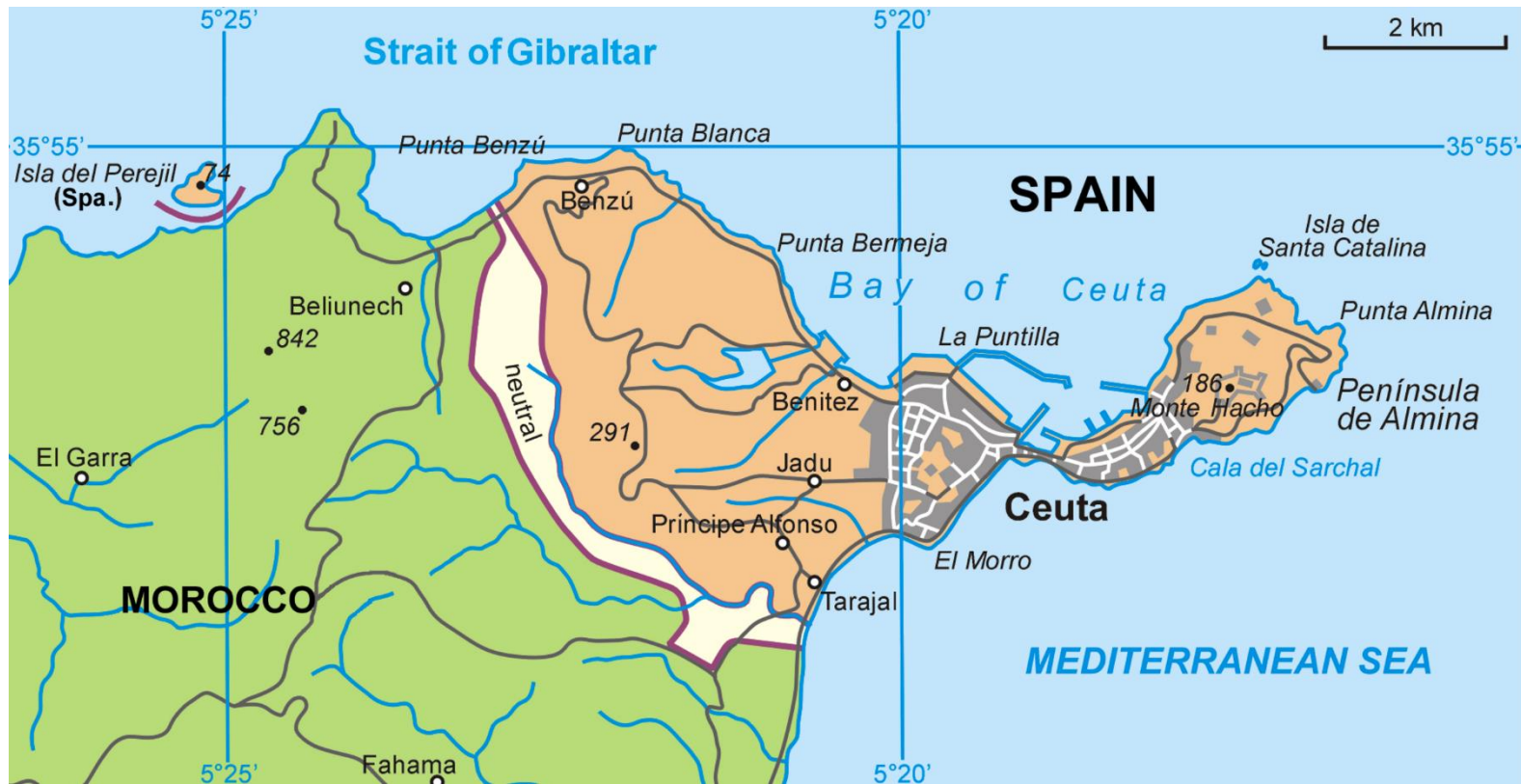


Figure 16 shows the border between Ceuta and Morocco in more detail. The border crossing point of El Tarajal is also shown.

## 4.1 From Warsaw to Nador

As I am escorted through the corridors of Frontex' new headquarters in Warsaw, passing the occasional (smart-casually dressed) Frontex employee, I am struck by the aesthetics of this space. The brightly lit corridors look like those of any EU institution – or even the corridors of any large company – rather than those of an agency tasked with the protection of the EU's borders. Outside the coffee room-cum-informal meeting space, the press officer introduces me to Kevin, an expert on EUROSUR. He smiles when I explain that I'm interested in EUROSUR's effect on modern bordering practices and its potential for saving lives at sea. He also exclaims that he is glad that university researchers are interested in Frontex and that more should come and see for themselves that “we are not monsters who kill migrants in the Mediterranean, you know?”

In a conference room, which could equally have been the boardroom of any business, Kevin and I start our interview by clearing up some Frontex lingo concerning the European Situation Picture (ESP) and the Common Pre-Frontier Awareness Picture (CPAP) – which together form the Pre-Frontier Intelligence Picture (PFIP). “[The] European Situational Picture,” Kevin explains, “is really what is happening at our external borders. So this is this kind of, I don't want to use the term ‘old-fashioned’ way of understanding of how we protect borders but [...] [this is] what is going on exactly at the border.” In other words, the ESP is the information that Frontex and the Member States (MS) have which is available at “the physical line”, as it were, of the EU's external borders. Gathering information at the ESP, Kevin informs me, is relatively easy as the MS have “their own technologies and human resources that patrol [the border].” Gathering information from the CPAP, by contrast, is far more difficult. “The CPAP is really where we moved our external borders basically to the global

environment,” explains Kevin, without acknowledging the magnitude of this task, “[here we] are talking about the global monitoring of events and incidents which might lead to risks at our external border [...] Because events today, events really thousands of miles from our external borders, they have direct consequences on our external borders.”

Armed with an understanding of this border lingo, the EUROSUR regulation and Frontex’s role in its implementation become clearer. Firstly, Frontex maintains and operates an information-sharing network between the Member States and itself. Member States are required to send information concerning irregular migration and cross-border crime from their National Coordination Centres (NCCs) to Frontex. The agency then executes its second and third tasks by collating this incoming knowledge of the ESP and its knowledge of the CPAP into a near-to-real-time interactive map of the European borderspace. “Maybe I will show you Hermes,<sup>66</sup>” says Kevin, “it will show you what scale we are talking about.” On the conference screen in front of us Kevin loads the Operation Hermes setting on the Frontex Situation Centre Dashboard, EUROSUR’s user-friendly interface. “One of our main aims,” Kevin explains as the map continues to load, “was to make it easy to use [...] you know, not like the old-fashioned border systems which used programs similar to Excel.” The map finally settles on an image of the Mediterranean Sea between the coasts of Italy and Libya and I watch as hundreds of small green dots pop up on the screen, mostly bunched close to the Libyan coastline. “These are all “incidents,” says Kevin, pointing at the green dots, “basically, different boats of migrants detected and apprehended.” Each ‘incident’, however, is more than a GPS coordinate on the map. One more click and various details related to the ‘incident’ appear: “So basically

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<sup>66</sup> Hermes was a ‘Joint Operation’ which was aimed at reducing arrivals of migrants to the Italian islands of Lampedusa, Sicily and Sardinia.

that shows the number of migrants involved (in this case 92), the point of detection, who apprehended it, the different nationalities [of those on board] and which port it was taken to.” In this case, despite having been apprehended off the coast of Libya, the boat had been rescued and brought to Croton harbour, Italy. Bearing in mind that this system stores information on ‘incidents’ from boat crossings to attempts at document fraud, the system can be used by the Member States to immediately identify patterns and to know what is happening at the ‘pre-Frontier’ of Europe: “basically,” Kevin summarises, “we want to provide Member States [...] [with] early warnings in respect to what’s going on far beyond our borders.”

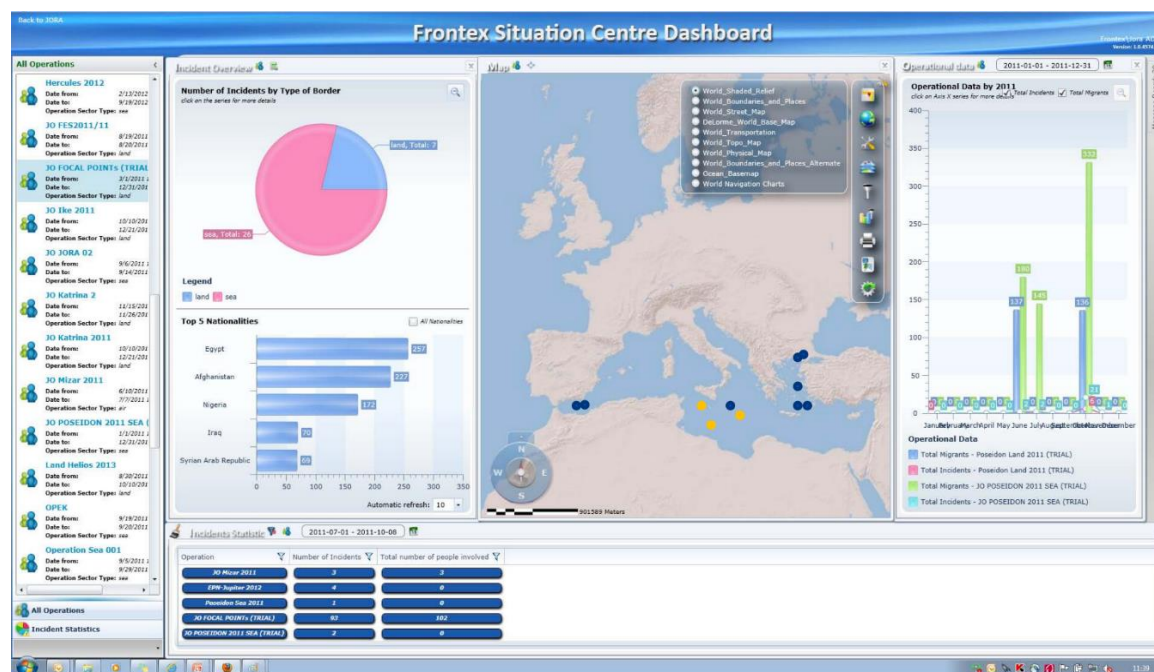


Figure 17 shows an example screenshot of the Frontex Situation Dashboard

In contrast to the conference room, the Frontex Situation Centre (FSC) would look out of place in most other EU institutions or corporations. Inside the FSC, Frontex employees monitor two banks of screens showing weather data and satellite pictures and live data feeds from various operations across Europe, while on the far wall Frontex Situation Centre Dashboard is projecting real-time events. Here, Eric, another Frontex employee and expert on EUROSUR sets out Frontex' third task as part of the EUROSUR regulation. Aside from maintaining the information-exchange network, Frontex cooperates with other EU agencies such as the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and the EU Satellite Centre (EU SAT CEN) to provide the EUROSUR Fusion Services (EFS). These services are used to further enhance the Member States' and Frontex' "situational awareness [and to] increase reaction capabilities [...] to save lives at sea" explained Eric. Examples of these services include the Vessel Tracking Service, Anomaly Detection Service and the Environmental Change Detection Service (see also Bosilica 2016). Member States can, for example, make use of Frontex' services by requesting the agency employ its satellite capabilities to verify the Member States' surveillance information in countries outside the EU. For example, Eric informs me that Spain had requested satellite pictures denoting the 'environmental change' of the forested area surrounding the Spanish autonomous city of Ceuta in Morocco. Specifically, the Spanish Guardia Civil were interested in knowing the size of the migrant camps near the border to estimate whether or not a large-scale border crossing attempt might be imminent. Similarly, France had recently made a request that Frontex use its satellite data to investigate a large ship docked in a port outside the EU which they suspected might be being prepared for use by people smugglers. Eric, however, remains coy as to how the French would have found out about this ship ("a liaison officer") and what exactly Frontex can look for given the fact that there is no live satellite feed of the port and the team in Warsaw are solely dependent

on snapshots. “Firstly, we can verify whether or not the information we have received so far is correct,” he explains, “and then we can learn as much as we can about the characteristics of the ship (such as build type and age) and compare these against what we know of other ships often used by smugglers”. Finally, continued surveillance of the port can also indicate when a suspicious ship has left the port so that the relevant Member State can be informed, and/or a Search and Rescue operation can be prepared.

Frontex’s surveillance tools, however, need not be solely focused on individual ports or vessels. As part of the Anomaly Detection service mentioned above, most vessels in the Mediterranean Sea have now become complicit parts of the surveillance assemblage. By combining satellite data with vessels’ Automatic Identification System<sup>67</sup> (AIS) data, Frontex can analyse hundreds, if not thousands, of vessels a day. ‘Cooperative’ vessels are deemed to be boats carrying AIS transponders. Using complex algorithms, alerts can be established to warn border agencies of vessels diverting from expected trajectories. In agreement with Member States, satellite pictures are also taken daily of areas where Frontex suspects there might be a boat carrying migrants or contraband and these are compared to the AIS data. Boats which show up on the satellite image but have no AIS transponder are then considered to be ‘non-cooperative’ and it is up to the analyst to decide what the vessel-like image could be and which authority needs to be contacted. “Here we are talking really about minutes,” says Eric, “this is not even a day event. The satellite picture is taken at seven o’clock am, five minutes later a

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<sup>67</sup> Vessel AIS is an automatic tracking system used on ships by vessel traffic services.



system is correlating all the objects from different reporting systems and then analysts have to assess if it is cooperative or not in a couple of minutes.”

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“What satellite images?” asks Lucas, the senior Guardia Civil officer acting as my guide, as we enter the Guardia Civil’s border control station in Ceuta, “We don’t use any satellite images here.” The control station is reminiscent of the Frontex Situation Centre, except here the constant stream of fuzzy walky-talky noise and intermittent alarms makes this space feel much less clean and controlled. “It could be that the satellite images get sent to Algeciras or Madrid,” continues Lucas, “but what I do know is that they don’t get sent to us here... Using satellite images is too slow, we don’t need them.” Instead of Frontex’ satellite images and complex algorithms, the Guardia Civil border guards are largely dependent on Spain’s SIVE (Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia del Exterior) surveillance system, a complex assemblage of radar technology, high-tech thermal & infrared cameras, vessel AIS and border guards.

In the control room, SIVE is embodied by Juan, a young border guard sitting at the quieter end of the room, his eyes glued to a computer monitor showing a radar image of the marine area surrounding Ceuta. “I’d like to give you a full demonstration of the system”, he says motioning to another blank computer screen, “but today they are installing a new software system for the camera, so only the radar is operational right now.” Nevertheless, Juan takes me through the SIVE system and how it is employed in Ceuta. Returning to the radar monitor, Juan points to the various yellow lines that criss-cross across the screen: “We call these the ‘Tracks’,” he continues, “they represent the current location of a vessel and how

far it has travelled during the last five minutes.” The SIVE system also allows the guards easy access to each vessel’s AIS data, meaning that a simple click on the screen can show the guard on duty a boat’s name, build type, port of departure, average travel speed and its stated destination. In a similar fashion to the Frontex algorithms, the Guardia Civil border guards use the radar system to look for vessels with ‘suspicious’ Tracks and then obtaining an optical image of the vessel using the camera.

On the noisier side of the room sits another border guard, noticeably busier than Juan, speedily operating an array of buttons and joy sticks in front of another bank of monitors. Standing behind him is his supervisor, dressed in civilian clothes, who appears to have been called in on his day-off. “It’s very windy today”, explains the supervisor, “it’s tripping all the sensors along the fence. And on top of that, today the gardeners are also clearing the area in front of it!” At the sound of each alarm, the guard punches the button that operates the camera nearest the tripped sensor and pans the area searching for what might have been the cause. Upon spotting a gardener he deactivates the alarm. Other times he waits to see if it might have been more than a gardener or the wind, occasionally he directs guards along the fence to check a specific area where he is uncertain. Meanwhile, the constant stream of walkie-talkie chatter coming back from the guards at the fence confirms the lack of suspicious activity at each alarm site. “We have to move fast”, says the supervisor with one eye still focused on the screens, “the fences only slow them down, we need to get to them before they make it across.”

\* \* \*

It's 12pm on a hillside overlooking both the harbour and the border fence between Ceuta and Morocco. While the fence might be brightly lit, the rest of the landscape is pitch black. I'm sitting inside what I had at first thought was an abandoned Volkswagen people carrier, but which later transpired to be one of the Guardia Civil's night patrol units, complete with a mounted thermal camera. Nicknamed 'búhos' (Spanish for owl), three units are located in stationary positions at key vantage points along the fence.<sup>68</sup> The main task for the guards of the *búhos* is to monitor the Moroccan side of the fence for any migrants hoping to climb the fence. Their other task, however, is to support the SIVE system by detecting small migrant *pateras* – especially in the area of Benzú where there is no radar coverage. A minimum of two more units (it transpires that the men from the third unit are on holiday) are equipped with less-powerful, handheld infrared cameras and flashlights. These secondary mobile units act as fast-response units whose main task is to track groups of migrants that have been spotted by the larger cameras and to point out their location to the Moroccan guards on the opposite side.

I watch as Miguel, the guard currently on duty in the stationary unit, uses his joystick to pan around the vast area that he has been tasked with patrolling. Staring at the bright screen which inverts black with white, one can almost forget the darkness outside the Volkswagen. Despite the artificial brightness of the world on the computer screen, however, objects that would be easily discernible with the naked eye during the day take on a fuzzy form through the camera lens at night. To an untrained eye like mine the entire landscape appears utterly foreign to me. Suddenly Miguel spots movement in the

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<sup>68</sup> Technically the *búhos* are outside of the SIVE system, however they have been included in this chapter as they still perform a vital part of the Guardia Civil's vision capabilities over the borderspace and the *búhos* often send information concerning potential migrant boats to the SIVE centres in Ceuta and Algeciras.

top-right corner of the screen. By using the camera's telescopic zoom, he attempts to get a clearer picture of what has alarmed him. Miguel clicks his tongue and points towards a small fuzzy form on the screen. "Just a Moroccan guard on patrol," he says, zooming out and resuming his video-game like surveillance.

\* \* \*

Seydou is not what I would call a people smuggler. Yet for the past few months he had been employed by a '*chaman*' in the forests near Nador, working to pay his way onto the boat to Europe. The '*chaman*' are the (usually sub-Saharan) men who permanently work in the forests near Ceuta and Melilla, gathering men and women together who want to make the dangerous journey to Europe. Some live in the nearby Moroccan cities, while others sleep in the forests, offering spaces at their campfires to those who have employed their services. Seydou's work often involved communicating with the Moroccan gangs who provide the boats and transportation to the embarkation points. These Moroccan gangs, the migrants call '*les clochards*<sup>69</sup> as they are notoriously untrustworthy. In Europe they would most likely be referred to as people smugglers, as would Seydou and the *chamans*. On Seydou's own journey to Europe, six *chamans* had combined to provide enough people for the two boats that the Moroccan gang had provided. "The *clochards* packed us into a van like sardines," he says pointing to a Ford Transit van, "and drove us through the area patrolled by the Moroccan army. They must have paid off at least one patrol because nobody stopped us." In total, 52 migrants were dropped off in a hidden area of the Moroccan patrol zone, less than a day's walk from the coast where they had been promised a boat was waiting for them.

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<sup>69</sup> The literal translation of which is, rather ironically, 'vagabonds'.

The group spent three days waiting in the forest, checking weather reports with a mobile phone and attempting to observe the patterns of the Moroccan patrol units and eventually set off for Spain on the morning of the third day. The plan was to head for the Spanish mainland and to wait for the Seydou's former employer to phone the Red Cross once they had reached Spanish waters. The plan, however, failed. "I phoned the *chaman!*" exclaims Seydou angrily, "but when I phoned him we were still in Moroccan waters [according to his phone signal]. He said he would phone once we reached Spanish waters or the Red Cross would take us back to Morocco." The *chaman* never phoned the Red Cross and the mobile phones on board the boat soon lost mobile phone coverage, while their engine was too weak to power the boat to the mainland. Eventually, Seydou and the others from that boat would become known in Ceuta as 'the living dead', their boat having been miraculously spotted and saved by a passing commercial vessel on their third day at sea.

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## 4.2 Introduction

Despite borders becoming increasingly decoupled from territory, to the extent that they (and the actors that comprise them) can literally be 'everywhere' (Balibar 1998), national practices still greatly impact on the construction of border security – even on the outer border of the European supra-state. In other words, despite Frontex celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015, the enactment of Europe's outer border is (unsurprisingly) far from uniform (Bigo 2014; Frontex interview). Indeed, as the opening vignettes to this chapter has alluded to, this both opens up the issue of scale (and research site location) to the researcher interested in studying a particular border. If national practices complicate the formation of a uniform international border, then surely local conditions, personnel, connections and, indeed, migrant actors will disrupt the

uniform top-down construction and maintenance of national borders (Rumford 2012). Such is the significance of local performances of border security that scholars have recently called for increased research focusing on the everyday experiences of the diverse actors engaged in the making and enforcement of borders (Côté-Boucher *et al* 2014). Indeed, according to Bigo (2014, p211), attempts to understand the (in)securitisation of European border control frequently suffer from a lack of “attention to the dispositions of the agents and the contexts” which form a crucial part of the geographies of border control.

Research into these everyday experiences is doubtless complicated by the difficulty of obtaining access to border guards and the spaces in which border security is carried out. Despite this, however, scholars have successfully tackled issues such as border officials’ discretionary and exceptional powers (Bigo 2007; Salter 2008a; Mountz 2004), the sometimes gendered and xenophobic dimensions of border security (Pratt and Thompson, 2008; Pickering and Cochrane, 2013), the legitimisation of border security through the criminalisation of migrants (Khosravi 2009; Aas 2011), and the acts of resistance and refusal of migrants (Nyers, 2011; Jones 2012). This chapter seeks to add to these works by critiquing the supposedly ever-vigilant surveillance and life-saving capabilities of European border security technologies and practices through examining the lived experiences of those engaged in the performance of Spain’s southern border with Morocco. While these claims (in particular the latter) have been criticised in the past (e.g. Neal 2009; Andersson 2014a, 2014c; Heller and Jones 2014; Rijpma and Vermeulen 2015; Pallister-Wilkins 2015; Bellanova and Duez 2016; Follis 2017), few have taken the everyday performances of border guards as a methodological starting point for their research – interpreting instead the formal performances of border agencies, media articles and internal reports. From these studies similar conclusions

have been reached as to the American context, namely that improved border control technologies result in shifted migration patterns towards more dangerous routes (Andreas 2000; Carpenter 2006; Weber 2012; Boyce 2016). In the European context, however, Frontex maintains that the use of these technologies will save at sea while producing valuable intelligence of smugglers' 'modus operandi' such that more migrants' lives can be saved in the future<sup>70</sup> (EC 2013; Frontex 2012; Frontex 2015).

Some notable exceptions of studies which have focused on the everyday performances of the border, however, include Boyce's (2016) autopsy of the 'virtual fence' called SBInet along the US/Mexico border. Through in-depth research of the quotidian difficulties faced by the border authorities, Boyce highlights how the shifting qualities of certain spaces, objects, and conditions could impede and resist everyday navigation, centralisation and control of this particular border space. Of equal note is Collyer's (2007) article into the fragmented journeys of migrants traveling through Morocco and Ceuta and their engagement with the border through diffuse human and non-human networks which give them the needed motivation to continue on their dangerous journeys. This chapter builds on these works by considering the everyday experiences of border guards working on the SIVE bordering system which, contrary to SBInet, has been deemed a 'success' by the Guardia Civil and elements of the system were subsequently used as the blueprint for Frontex' EUROSUR framework (Guardia Civil 2008; Andersson 2014c). Moreover, since the launch of EUROSUR, Europe's borders are notionally connected together in

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<sup>70</sup> Although even Frontex admit that during the early days of their operations they carried out push-backs. On Joint Operation HERA II, for example "[p]atrol boats, planes and helicopters from Spain, Italy, Portugal, Finland, Mauritania and Senegal operated off the shores of West Africa to stop illegal migration at source" (Frontex ,2010 p31).

‘real-time’, with border guards able to constantly feed information to each other through the EUROSUR interactive interface. Instead of isolating each surveillance system, therefore, an additional aim of this chapter is to investigate the way in the Spanish border guards in Ceuta and Algeciras (already capable of using high tech, ‘real-time’ technologies) made use the EUROSUR framework and its tailored capabilities on a daily basis.<sup>71</sup>

In its attempt to unpack both seemingly omniscient surveillance systems, this chapter draws from on other works similarly critiquing the assumed virtuosity of air surveillance and air warfare conducted notionally through a variety of technological apparatuses yet dependent on a wide range of human and non-human actors (Graham 2010, 2011; Gregory 2011a; Kaplan 2013). I demonstrate how both Frontex and the Guardia Civil attempt to construct a supposedly a-political view from nowhere which denies the subjectivity of those being counted and targeted (Masters 2005). Moreover, the representation of migrants within their publications as numbers and threatening arrows allows technology to be used as a shield to protect us from our own responsibilities (Gray 1997). It is this veneration for the omniscient ‘God’s Eye’ view of the world, which has lead those wielding aerial power to forget that “these visibilities are necessarily conditional [...] because they are not technical but rather techno-*cultural* accomplishments” (Gregory 2011a, p193 emphasis in original).

By contrast, this chapter aims to reposition this view as a view from *somewhere* (Ó Tuathail 1996; Dowler and Sharp 2001; Williams 2011), and aims to stretch its analysis beyond state narratives which simultaneously efface and presuppose the

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<sup>71</sup> Dijkstra *et al* (2017) have also conducted a fascinating study of the performances of border control in the context of the Aegean Sea, where they argued that border guards were using the EUROSUR interactive system to produce knowledge of past events, rather than as a ‘real-time’ product of ‘situational awareness’.



operation of the ‘microphysics’ of power (Law 2002). In going ‘beyond’ the stated practices and policies of border security agencies, this chapter also takes inspiration from feminist geopolitics and cyborg literatures to foreground the embodied experiences of the border guards. Aside from the fact that feminist geopolitics calls for a focus on practice as well as discourse (Gregson and Rose 2000; Nash 2000), it also calls for a re-focusing of the scale of geopolitical enquiry to the body, rather than the nation state (Dowler and Sharp 2001; Secor 2001; Staeheli and Kofman 2004; Hyndman 2004; Fluri 2009). Although usually the focus of feminist geopolitics is on the civilian body with the intention of bringing governments to account (Hyndman 2004; Martin 2004), Williams’ (2011) brilliantly demonstrates how feminist, embodied geopolitics can be used to critique the supposed ‘persistent presence’ of drones within battlespaces. Writing of the aerial, Adey *et al* (2007, p774) similarly assert that we need not view it as “some asocial realm or ‘non-place’, but as a space whose embodied, emotional and practical geographies [need] to be adequately charted.” This chapter, therefore, draws upon the concept of ‘situated knowledges’ as discussed by feminist political geographers in order to re-introduce the importance of the corporeal and lived experiences of place and space in the discussion of power over the borderspace (Haraway 1988; Fluri 2009). In particular, I draw attention to the movements of the observers, rather than solely focusing on the mobility of the observed. Following Gibson (1979, p205 in Dijstelbloem *et al* 2017, p228), seeing does not occur from a fixed point, rather “vision is a whole perceptual system, not a channel of sense [...] One sees the environment not with the eyes but with the eyes-in-the-head-on-the-body-resting-on-the-ground.”

Vision, therefore, is not only situated in the environment in which it is embedded, it is also dependent on the prosthetic devices and ‘professional vision’ techniques that organise the means through which vision is achieved (Follis 2017). In the

context of SIVE and Frontex' surveillance assemblages, therefore, sight is mediated by the technologies employed to perform this surveillance *and* by the interactions between the elements within the surveillance assemblage. By drawing attention to the body and its position within the technical 'solutions' to border management, this chapter also aims to capture the ways in which both the physical landscape, as well as the migrants attempting to get unauthorised access through the borderlands, affects the performance of the border. With reference to Virilio's (1989; 1994) work on the importance of depth to our imaginings of the battlespace and Boyce's (2016) 'post-humanist' use of terrain, this chapter argues that the border guards in their control towers still face a daily struggle against the non-human forces, spaces and conditions present in the landscape itself. For although the Frontex Risk Assessment maps and the images gained from SIVE's radar system highlight why traditional geopolitics is a 'flat' discourse (Weizmann 2002; Graham 2004), the performances of the border guards and experts demonstrates a need to retrace the contours of the borderspace; complete with sea swell, 'dead zones', randomness, shimmering heatwaves and impenetrable cloud cover.

Finally, it is in the 'little details' and the everyday interactions between people and things, writes Thrift (2000a), that we can find 'potent geopolitical forces' (see also Graham 2010). Or, of course, the lack thereof. State-crafted surveillance assemblages can equally be plagued by 'technological rebellion' (2016), as "[o]bjects also refuse the straightforward production of stateness" (Meehan *et al* 2013, p6). Similarly, technologies employed by the state need not remain loyal in their usage (Shaw and Meehan 2013). For example, by viewing the drone assemblage as not just a vector of power but also as a site of its own performance (Thrift 2000a), Williams (2011) notes the imperfect fit between human and technology and points to the deterioration of the 'more-than-human' ideals of the military assemblage which forms the drone. Indeed, by

similarly considering SIVE and EUROSUR to be surveillance assemblages (where human and machine elements have been blended together to form a whole), this chapter aims to critique the various contentions concerning their surveillance capabilities and uses for saving lives. Assemblage theory allows me to consider other actors, those not defined in the ‘formal performances, to be either integral or detrimental to the functioning of these assemblages (Sohn 2015). This chapter, therefore, also demonstrates how the border guards in Ceuta are engaged in a daily struggle for control over both the border, as well as their own surveillance network. Indeed, over certain elements of ‘their’ network the guards have little or no power at all. While formal performances of the border attempt to bring our attention to the ‘successes’ of the border guards and the technologies which they employ, this chapter shifts the focus of enquiry to the roles which the Moroccan border guards and navy, as well as the international maritime rescue services of both Spain and Morocco. In doing so it notes how activist groups can take control of the same technological means as the Guardia Civil and Frontex in an attempt to watch the watchers.

### 4.3 Cyborgs at the Gates

*“The expectation that the picture will deliver the truth, that the higher you go the better the view of that truth, and the more precise the information will be bears directly not just on social policy in an era of heightened national security but on the ways we imagine and act on national identity.” (Kaplan 2007, foreword to ‘Dead Reckoning’)*



*Figure 18 shows the typical dual action camera installed in most SIVE stations. Original caption reads: “The most commonly used model is smaller, integrating both cameras in the same sphere” (Guardia Civil 2008, p82). Published with the permission of the Guardia Civil.*

“Whenever one is lucky enough to provide an important service and gratitude for this is shown in the form of any kind of retribution, this must never be accepted. A Guardia Civil agent is simply performing *his* duty; if anything is to be expected from the person *he* has favoured, all this should be is the memory of gratitude” (Guardia Civil 2008, p9, my emphasis<sup>72</sup>). So reads Article 7 of the Guardia Civil Handbook. These are also the first lines of text in a book published by the Guardia Civil entitled ‘SIVE: Five Years Monitoring the Border’, situated opposite a picture depicting two Guardia Civil agents happily holding two African infants whom they have saved. Written to publicise the successes of the Guardia Civil in pioneering 21<sup>st</sup> century border management techniques, in particular following Spain’s new-found prominent role in policing the EU’s Schengen area, the book documents the early years of SIVE and the reasons for its success. Describing SIVE as an “early detection system giving the possibility of transmitting, in real time, accurate information that is necessary to enable and ensure appropriate decision making” (Guardia Civil 2008, p17), SIVE is painted as a successful technological system capable of combating irregular migration and drug-smuggling as well as saving lives at sea. What follows the quote of the Guardia Civil’s Article 7, however, can only be described as 159 pages of ‘techno-porn’ – all of which demonstrating the Guardia Civil’s speed, power and vigilance achieved through SIVE. Indeed, following the perceived success of SIVE, the installations have been visited by various civil, police and military delegations from across the world. In addition, the reader is repeatedly reminded that the infrastructural base of the EU’s EUROSUR project (the creation of national

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<sup>72</sup> The Spanish to English translation is in the original document.

coordination centres, interoperability between surveillance systems of the various Member States and fluid exchange of information in real time) was modelled on Spain's SIVE model (Guardia Civil 2008; Andersson 2014c).

Upon reading the Guardia Civil's self-promotional book it becomes clear that, while humans may have been integral to establishment of SIVE, the real backbone of the assemblage is formed by the various vision technologies available to the guards. The Guardia Civil guards might be thanked for their 'quiet work' by the various authors, the original studies conducted by the Guardia Civil concluded that 'old' method of coastal surveillance "based on the masse use of persons" was insufficient for protecting the Spanish coast (Guardia Civil, 2008, p.29). Indeed, part of the original aim for the development of the SIVE system was to achieve a reduction in staff personnel and to replace these with new technologies which could identify smuggler boats and *pateras* faster and further away from the Spanish coast (Guardia Civil 2008). As alluded to in the opening vignettes, the resulting SIVE design has only a handful of border guards in Ceuta located in a small room above the border at El Tarajal. From there they must make sense of the information which the system is feeding to them. Similarly in Algeciras, where the SIVE control unit is located in the main Guardia Civil headquarters of the city, there might only be about three guards observing the screens at any given time. Beyond these offices, the SIVE network stretches out to sea as the radar and cameras, as well as the incorporated vessel AIS data, combine to form a supposedly-unblinking surveillance network.

While repeatedly mentioning the life-saving qualities of the SIVE system, however, the successes of SIVE have not been measured in terms of the numbers of lives saved compared to other years. Instead, the success of the system has been, for the most part, judged by their success in pushing the migrant flows away from Spain. Yet the irony is that if it weren't for

these migrants, SIVE would be unlikely to exist – this is also barely acknowledged in the book. In 2002, only the prototype SIVE station in Algeciras existed, designed primarily to tackle the smuggler gangs who were dumping bags of drugs on the Spanish coast. Following the increasing numbers of sub-Saharan migrants attempting to reach Europe via Spain in the early 2000s, however, the Guardia Civil altered the aim of SIVE to include the detection of small migrant *pateras*: “This took us to consider the possibility the European Union could cover part of the expenses generated, since the arrival of immigrants to our coasts was a common European problem and, if not intercepted, they would be able to move freely around the Schengen space” (Guardia Civil 2009, p109). After changing the scope of SIVE, moreover, the Guardia Civil received over €53 million from the EU External Border Fund between 2007 and 2013 in order to expand the SIVE network along almost the entire Spanish coast to help meet its “responsibilities in the control of the external borders [of the EU]” (European Commission 2008, 1) – bringing total investment in the system to over two hundred million euros (Guardia Civil 2008). This change in scope also elicited an alteration of the system’s name; having previously provided vigilance over the ‘straits’ (*estrecho*), it was now going to deliver control over the borderspace (*exterior*).

When paying close attention to the aesthetics of the images included in the promotional book (Law 2002), however, the primary nemeses of this creature of fiction is surprisingly *not* the human drug smugglers operating within the borderspace. Instead, the militarised, disembodied power of the Guardia Civil is regularly pitted against the (feminised) chaotic climatic conditions. Figure 19, for example, located next to an image of a CCTV camera protecting

a SIVE station, shows a SIVE sensor station protecting the Spanish countryside of Estepona below from a threatening bank of encroaching fog. The implication from these images is clear: the techno-scientific power of the Guardia Civil will secure Spain from those who threaten it under cover of fog or darkness. In order to overcome the natural elements, both the thermal and infrared cameras used at the SIVE stations are designed to give guards good visibility during poor conditions in which they would otherwise have almost no control (e.g. at night and misty or rainy conditions). Similarly, the radar technology (Pulse Wave and Continuous Wave) used by the Guardia Civil is both designed to function during difficult weather conditions (e.g. high waves) but also to filter out possible false detections of suspicious objects as a result of ‘sea clutter’ (e.g. waves on the shoreline). According to the Guardia Civil (2008, 81), “[t]his allows the SIVE to dynamically adapt to the specific sea conditions, in a specific area and at a



*Figure 19 shows the SIVE radar tower protecting the landscape from what might lurk in the bank of encroaching fog. Original caption reads: “A bank of fog covering the coast of Estepona (Málaga) straight in front of a sensor station” (Guardia Civil 2008, p111). Published with the permission of the Guardia Civil.*



specific moment in time, leading to very low false alarm rates.” In other words, the local climatic conditions have not just been coped with, they have been overcome.



*Figure 20 shows a spectacled Guardia Civil border guard in a striking pose beneath a SIVE radar control station. Original caption reads: “men and machines complement each other in surveillance tasks” (Guardia Civil, 2008, p.37). Published with the permission of the Guardia Civil.*

Much like Haraway’s (1991, p149) cyborg, therefore, the SIVE assemblage is performed as being a “cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction.” Like other contemporary military-based assemblages such as drones (Gregory, 2011b) and ‘network-centric weapons’ (Graham, 2011), moreover, this particular cyborg demonstrates the human-machine inversion at the core of Haraway’s (1991) cyborg vision. Here we are witness to what Masters (2005, 115) describes as “not so much the insertion of the mechanical into the biological, but alternatively the insertion of the biological into the mechanical.” Indeed, the SIVE system has been designed to replace the

inefficient border guards of the past, yet it still requires the slick insertion of the human element to fulfil certain tasks in order to cover for the flaws in the machine (Gray, 1997). To this end, the artificial elements of SIVE have been designed to be mobile, allowing the cameras and radar to ‘see’ for the border guards (Weber, 1996) – and who are in turn left free to interpret the on-screen images and observe the border from the safety of their desk or observation post. The vision produced through SIVE, therefore, is not ‘eyeless’ (Virilio 1989), as human guards are still required to produce a vision which can be described as ‘more-than-human’ (Williams 2011). Indeed, the bodies of the Guardia Civil border guards can be seen to perform a dualistic role in order to further promote the value of the SIVE surveillance technologies (see Law 2002). Throughout the book, the guards are simultaneously feminised (demonstrated as in need of protection), whilst also hyper-masculinised (Cowen and Siciliano 2011) when combined with the technologies of SIVE (see Figure 20 and Figure 21). Meanwhile other pictures portray both the human and machine elements of the system fighting off the darkness of night and its powers to reduce the human capacity to see or persuade it to sleep. Above the caption “24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the Control Centres never sleep” (Guardia Civil, 2008, 72), for example, sit two Guardia Civil agents in a dark room, the only light sources coming from their SIVE computer screens, which they are shown to be vigilantly watching. It is also made clear, however, that the speed and mobility of the Guardia Civil now comes from their vast array of communications and mobility technologies, ranging from the 24/7 radar to the speedboats used to intercept migrant boats or drug smugglers.



*Figure 21 shows a stationary Guardia Civil officer manipulating SIVE's control systems while observing the screens for suspicious activity. Original caption reads: "One of the stations is controlled manually by a member of the Fiscal Service Patrol. (Guardia Civil, 2008, 106). Published with the permission of the Guardia Civil.*

At no point, therefore, should the Guardia Civil agent be forced to observe the borderspace with the fallible naked eye, as sight is always performed through some form of lens or representation on a computer screen. The technologies of the SIVE assemblage, therefore, withdraw human agency on the one hand whilst bequithing it with the other – thus giving the Guardia Civil control over the borderspace. While in many surveillance/military organisms finding the line between machine, body and object has become nearly impossible (Gray 1997), the technologies which make up the SIVE system have clearly become representative of the Spanish/EU border and, indeed, European identity. The various pictures and descriptions of the technologies within the assemblage demonstrate the omniscience of Western sight and control (Virilio 2002; Graham 2010). These are, not, however, set against images of the speedy drug-smugglers which the system was first devised stop. Bespectacled burly guards in speedboats, vigilant guards using SIVE joysticks, and close up pictures of the omniscient and infallible technologies are, instead, contrasted against feminised pictures of sub-Saharan migrants in need of help from the Guardia Civil. All forms of migrant ingenuity are, therefore, either hidden or ignored, their boats static (broken or apprehended), expressions either sunken or their bodies docile (see Figure 22).



*Figure 22 shows a group of migrants receiving care. Original caption reads: "Rescued migrants in Las Palmas receive first aid" (Guardia Civil 2008, p123). Published with the permission of the Guardia Civil.*

For Frontex, too, weather conditions can be problematic for their optical satellite images, as these are useless during dark or cloudy conditions (Kevin interview). For the Vessel Detection service (described above), however, Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellites are used instead. By illuminating the earth's surface and measuring the reflected signal, these satellites can operate both day and night and even through cloud cover (Bosilica 2016). The incorporation of vessel AIS into the EUROSUR surveillance network is, in fact, yet another example of 'surveillance creep' (Marx 1988), an increasingly common phenomenon in border management and state surveillance mechanisms (see Broeders 2007; de Goede 2008; Graham 2011; Klein and Williams 2012; Andersson 2012; Vukov and Sheller 2013). Vessel AIS, though previously used for fisheries monitoring, was first used for civilian law enforcement following the attacks of 9/11 when governments realised they had very little control over events happening in international waters (Eric interview). Similarly, the use of SAR data in the public domain had previously been confined to the mapping of areas typically engulfed in cloud cover and mapping oil spills (Pavlakis *et al* 2001). The combination of these two techniques means that, in theory, Frontex can monitor large areas of the 'pre-frontier' 24 hours a day. Indeed, the use of complex algorithms (see image X) to detect vessel deviance from 'typical' routes means that much of the surveillance can be automated. By extension this also means that by acting 'normally' and by engaging their vessel AIS trackers (mandatory within the EU), other vessels form part of the surveillance network. Following the discovery of a 'deviant' vessel, however, the human elements within the assemblage must act in order to identify if the vessel is either a migrant boat or engaged in illicit activities. This would be done either through the use of an SAR image or by alerting the relevant Member State (Eric interview).

Unlike SIVE's capabilities of simply resisting local climatic conditions and overcoming the darkness of night, Frontex (in partnership with the European Space Agency's LOBOS project) envisions that clues in the natural environment can be used to both predict and react towards boat embarkations. Like the dreams of the military theorists discussed in Graham (2010), the ultimate aim is to create a 'network-centric system' capable not just of loitering and of observing scenery, but of observing change (see also Crandall 2005). In this case, GIS data can be used to locate particular coastal areas from which boat embarkations might be likely (Eric interview). These might be locations with sandy beaches, surrounded by dense tree cover and good access to roads. Moreover, the quality of the satellite images can be such that Frontex can observe the 'environmental change detection' for particularly high-risk areas or known migration routes (see Figure 23). In the case of the 'Mediterranean border', this means studying the size and change of particular migrant camps says Eric: "if there is a camp which we are monitoring and (to make it simple) we take a picture of it today and we repeat this process every week [...] based on [the] changes in the camp we can predict things [...] You can see the number of tents and, for instance, usually a couple of days before the departure some of these tents disappear from the camps."



*Figure 23 shows an image taken from the 'Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community Report'. The original caption reads: "Satellite imagery showing tracks diverting off the main road while approaching Madama, a settlement at Niger's northeast frontier with Libya" (Frontex 2017a, p12)*



This example is, of course, somewhat simplified. The analyst in Warsaw would first have to calculate the size of the camp, search for possible boats that people might have departed on and also use weather data to estimate the likelihood of one (or a number of) boat departures (Eric interview). SAR imagery can also be used to literally detect environmental change that could signify that a migrant boat has recently departed (Eric interview). Especially in sandy areas, explains Kevin, SAR imagery can be used to determine whether or not certain tracks have been used. Similarly to the example of the camp, this information is combined with weather data, in order to determine whether or not a boat is likely to have departed from a particularly ‘high risk’ area and, if so, where it might be. In this particular hypothetical example, therefore, the local environmental conditions of this place would previously have imposed ‘friction’ (see Scott 2009) against the human actors of the state attempting to locate this embarkation point. Indeed, in Virilio’s (1986) writings of the total war towards which humanity was heading in the 20th century, violence was redirected at the environment, as well towards citizens. As Luke and Ó Tuathail (2000, p367) state, “[t]otal war quickly leads to the ultimate dimensions of technologically feasible ecological warfare, wars against the built and natural environmental ecosystems that support one's enemy.” In contrast, today these spaces are becoming recolonised and ‘incorporated’ (Boyce 2016) into the EU’s border regime through the technologies available through EUROSUR and by partnering with the European Space Agency.

Despite this apparent usefulness of the natural environment surrounding Europe’s borders, however, the projection of the border area by Frontex in their ‘Risk Analysis’ publications is more one of a ‘flat’ space divided only by national borderlines (Weizman 2002; 2007; Graham 2004). Dijstelbloem et al (2017) argue that this form of vision represents an ‘operative vision’ – where the images do not represent an object, rather they are part of an operation. Figure 24 and Figure 25, for example,

are taken from Frontex' (2016a) Risk Analysis under the headlines 'Surveillance' and 'Trend'. In a scientific, a-political style typical of all Frontex images, the maps depict the detections of 'illegal border-crossings' at the EU's external borders through the use of threatening arrows and precise numbers. People on the move become 'faceless aliens', further reduced to "bits in a high-tech map" (Parks 2005, p97). As Walters (2009) argues, moreover, these maps are as interesting for what they choose to depict as for what they choose to leave out (see also Law and Benschop 1997). The absence of topographic detail creates a smooth borderspace through which these arrows traverse, suggesting an empty terrain over which migrants travelled and obscuring the time and ingenuity it would have taken (van Houtum 2012). Similarly, the 'flat' projection of this space suggests a uniform space for border guards to control. This depiction both hides Frontex' tactic to make use of the environment as noted above, but it also creates the impression that the challenges faced by all EU border guards and forces are equal.

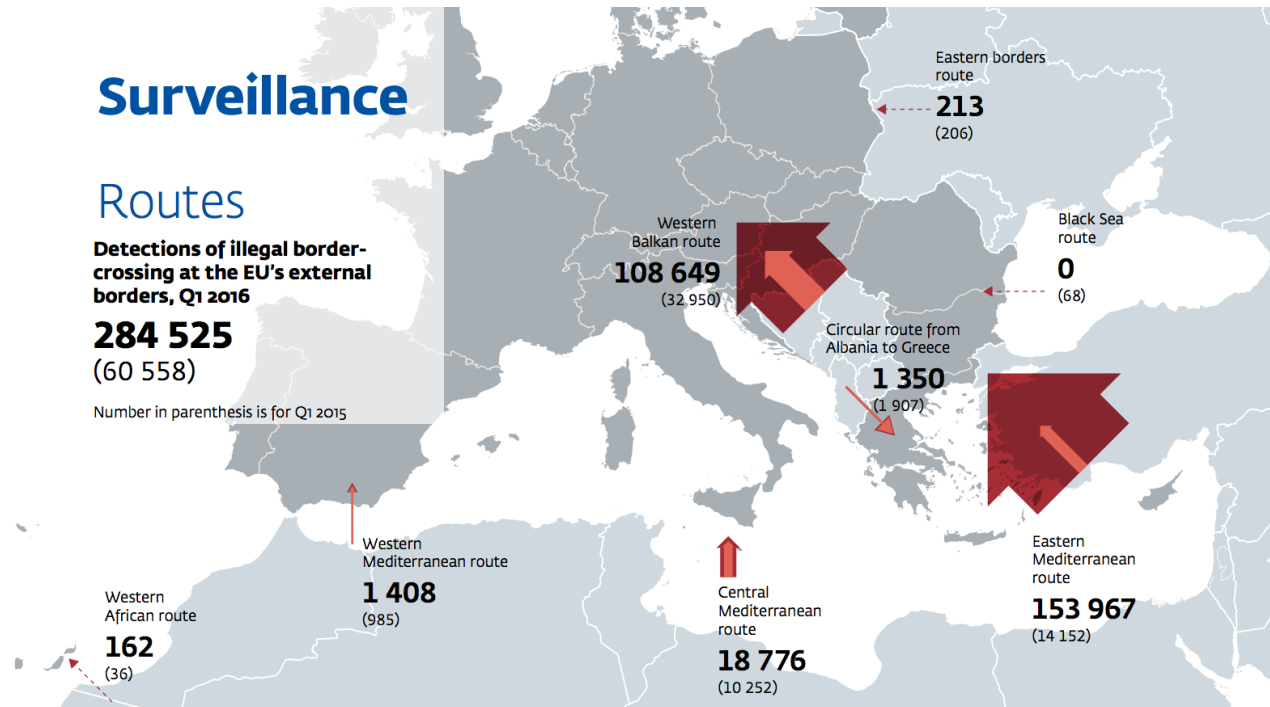
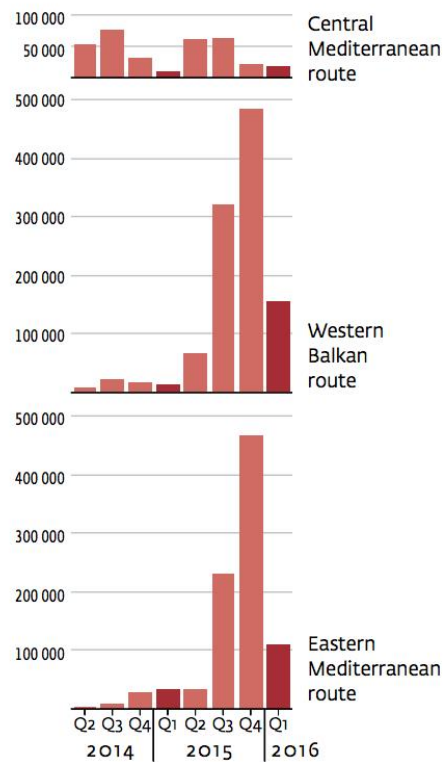


Figure 24 shows a Frontex map of Europe depicting the number 'illegal border-crossing' detections (Frontex 2017b, p8)

## Trend

### Quarterly detections of illegal border-crossing, 2014–2015

Number



## Nationalities

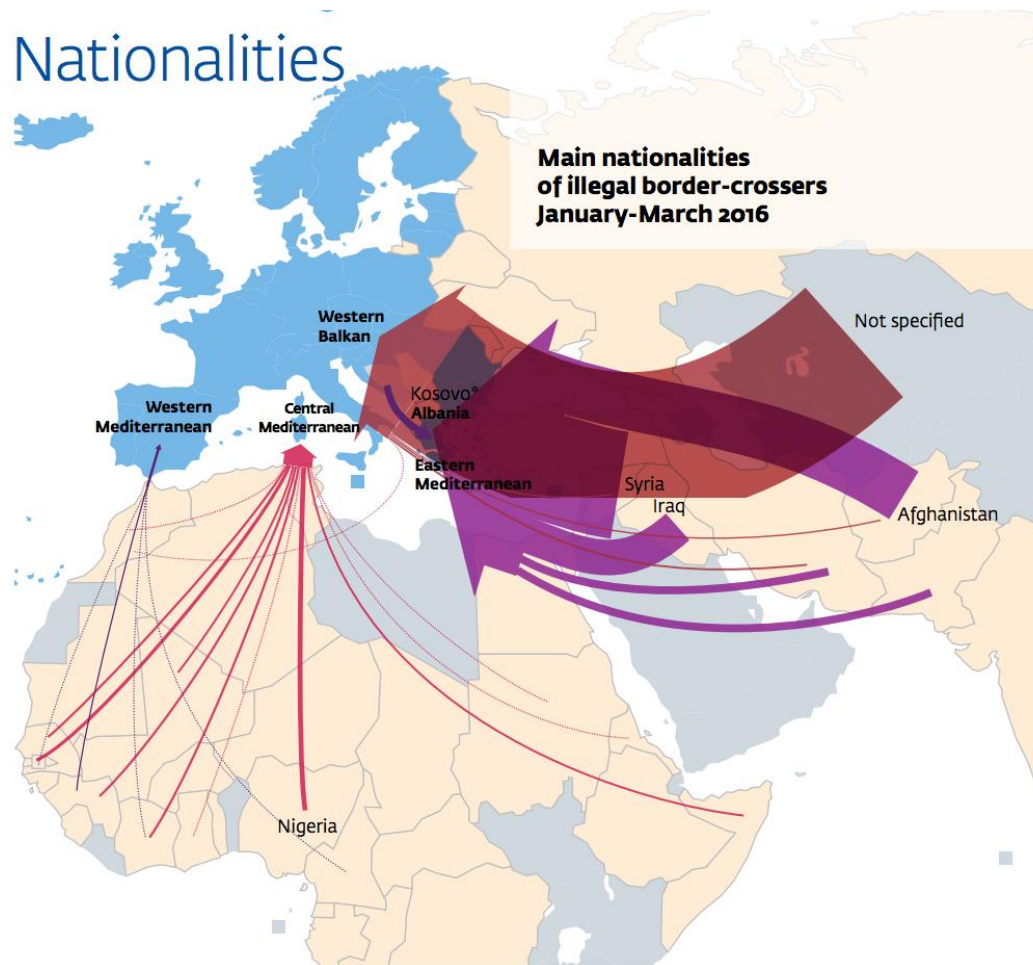


Figure 25 shows a Frontex map depicting the main routes used by migrants in their journeys to Europe (Frontex 2016, p9)

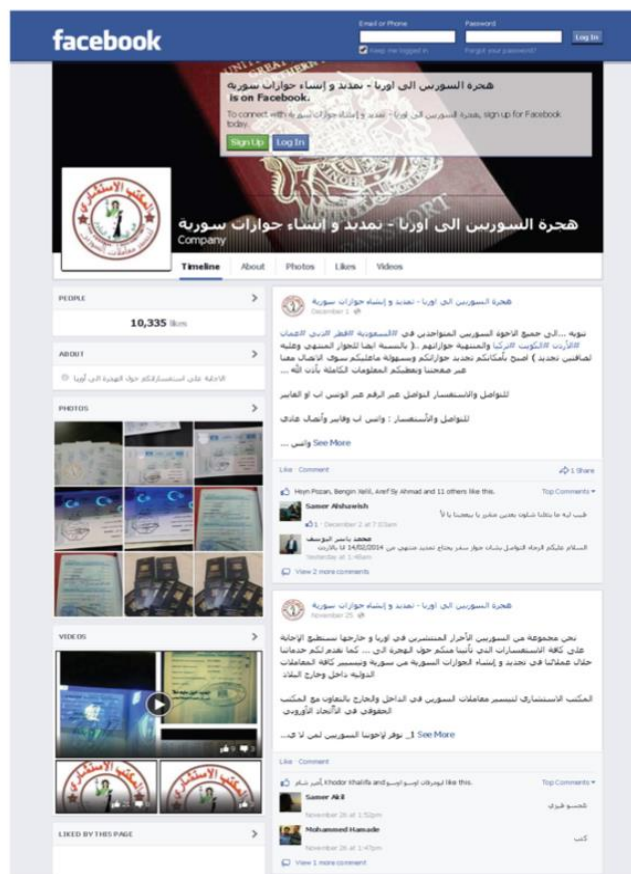
The scientific language (replete with percentages of increases or decreases in migrant arrivals in particular locations) that accompanies both images, moreover, creates the impression of a 'knowable' borderspace. In this case, a borderspace that can be subdivided into particular areas of risk and thus controlled, while the social conditions for migration are left out (Bigo 2002). Figure 25, especially, highlights Frontex' unblinking view from nowhere over the pre-frontier, demonstrating a knowledge of routes taken by migrants before their crossing to Europe, but also strongly implying that all roads lead to Europe. Moreover, people escaping worldwide conflicts and inequality are transformed into either thick arrows piercing the borders of the EU, or statistics completing tables of, for example, the number of 'visa over stayers' (van Houtum 2010; 2012). When migrants are given some form of agency and represented in human form in the Risk Analysis documents, however, this only occurs in the occasional 'media-ready' stories which are intended to shock the reader. Thus, human migrants are transformed into a set of objects waiting to be quantified and controlled, and the effects of potential punishment (or in this case return) made impersonal (Law 2002). Figure 26 is a good example of such information, highlighting under the heading 'Document fraud offers through social media' how easily accessible fraudulent documents are to would-be migrants – thereby also bringing into question the honesty of all Syrian and Palestinian migrants. By providing evidence of this online document fraud business, Frontex demonstrates its success in finding smuggler groups and 'modus operandi' through successfully monitoring open-source platforms. Aside from shocking the reader, therefore, these news snippets also demonstrate the knowledge gained by Frontex of the 'pre-frontier', strengthening the illusion of its disembodied view from nowhere.

## Document fraud offers through social media

A recently identified Facebook page of a company based in Istanbul is dedicated to 'answering all your questions about immigration to Europe.' The title of the page states that it is for 'Syrian emigration to Europe – extensions and creations of Syrian passports.' The logo uses the title of 'Advisory Office.' The 'About' section gives the following description: 'We are a group of Syrian Liberals deployed in Europe and beyond and we are able to answer all inquiries that come to us from you about immigration to Europe even if you do not have the means to get to Europe. We also offer our services to our customers to renew and create a Syrian passport from Syria and facilitate all international transactions'.

The page has been active since 10 August 2013 and it has gained 10 353 likes as of 4 December 2014. The self-reported location is Istanbul, Turkey.

In an example of a recent post, the organisation is offering Schengen one-month tourist visas to travel to Greece or Denmark to Syrians and Palestinians based in the Arab Gulf countries. The organisation also provides a phone number to be used for contact.



Facebook page of the 'Advisory Office'

Figure 26 shows media-ready story offered by Frontex concerning "Document fraud offers through social media" (Frontex 2014b).

Frontex, as well as other security authorities and organisations around the world, have long considered online news as a valuable source of information for the early detection of ‘threats’ and for ‘situation monitoring’ during crises (Piskorski and Atkinson 2011). Indeed, Frontex describes the monitoring of the media and other open-source platforms to be “an indispensable element of staying abreast of the bigger picture”.<sup>73</sup> Information from online sources is considered especially useful for gaining a better understanding of events happening beyond the borders of the EU, especially as information from official channels might be slow or scarce and the information coming from ‘other sources’ might be unavailable or incomplete (Piskorski and Atkinson 2011). “It really depends,” says Lenka, one of the two staff employed by Frontex in charge of Media Monitoring, “it happens that we find information first, but most of the time we are the second source – or the additional source [...] But there are circumstances, for instance when we talk about Turkey. We don’t have any close relationship with Turkey or any contact point, so they can’t inform us every single time an incident happens. So, probably the media is an easier source of this kind of information.”

To sift through the millions of articles produced online every day, the European Commissions’ Joint Research Centre (JRC) constructed the Frontex Media Monitor (FMM), a multi-lingual news aggregation service. The FMM ensures that the human elements within the Media Monitoring network can visually digest the situated news stories occurring at the edges of the EU with ease, the human eyes protected from information overload. Per day, over 100,000 articles from more than 2500 news feeds are retrieved, clustered according to content similarity, geo-located and summarised for the Media Monitoring

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<sup>73</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/intelligence/information-management/>

team (Atkinson and Piskorski 2011), thus giving Frontex a constant view over the happenings within the ‘pre-frontier’. While news stories and NGO publications concerning Frontex and its particular operations are of particular importance to the Media Monitoring team, other areas of interest include, for example, issues concerning the quality of detection and reception centres in countries within the ‘pre-frontier’, as well as changes in asylum laws and human rights violations. “We want to have a good picture not only of our external frontier,” explains Lenka, “but also what is going on within countries, in terms of push/pull factors. And it also gives you a context [...] background information about what’s going on in the countries, what are the trends (in terms of [...] attitudes towards migrants even), this is important information.” This online open-source data will then be combined with other information gained from sources within the EUROSUR network (e.g. satellite information, Member State liaison officers, border guards’ input to the system etc), to form the Common Pre-Frontier Awareness Picture – available to all Member States through the EUROSUR interface (interview Kevin).

As demonstrated by Figure 26 above, however, the information gleaned from open-sources on the web is not solely confined to news websites and blogs. Instead, social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter can provide Frontex and Member States with valuable information concerning specific ‘live’ events or ongoing migration patterns that might not have been picked up by the press (Piskorski *et al* 2013). “Ok, we already will have been provided with some Facebook pages that we can monitor,” explains Lenka, clearly reticent to divulge much information concerning how Frontex monitors Facebook, “and that is kind of the starting point. Through that it is quite easy to find new ones because they close, they open, they always relate to each other.” Just like the cat and mouse game at the border (Broeders and Engbersen 2007), therefore, the same game takes place on the web. Moreover, this ‘game’ also forms part of the commercialisation of security and of border



control (Amoore 2009; Grewcock 2009; Andersson 2014c), the searches needing to be outsourced in order to be conducted in Arabic (Lenka interview). While these searches can sometimes be used to spot particular smuggler groups or tricks, such as in Figure 26, information from Facebook can also be gained from areas of particular ‘operational interest’ to Frontex vis-à-vis specific boat embarkations. “It’s more like that they advertise ‘call me!’” says Lenka, “So... you know that there is something being advertised, and it [boat embarkation] might happen in the (you don’t know) how many days. This information is then forwarded to people who might know more about it.”

Manipulating Twitter to find similar information, however, is somewhat harder. The two publicly available channels used to collect messages from Twitter either limit the number of queries that can be run per hour from an IP address, or capture just a fraction of the tweets posted on the website (Piskorski *et al* 2013). Despite this, the main problem is simply the information overload coming from the website. “[T]here are some private tools that gather information for us from Twitter,” explains Lenka, “the problem is that there is often an overload of information and even the systems cannot go through this.” This means that Twitter can be used to find specific information (either concerning Frontex itself or particular events that are already occurring), finding ‘operational information’, however, is still almost impossible. Unbeknownst to the two employees of the Frontex Media Monitoring team, the EC’s Joint Research Centre (in combination with Frontex) has been trialling a tool to further automate the extraction of relevant data from Twitter for border surveillance (Piskorski *et al* 2013). Broadly speaking the program’s basic functions are, unsurprisingly, similar to the FMM in that its key words are set to specific ‘geo-tagged’ locations (the example given is Nigeria). These results, however, would still require significant human input to sort in order to find relevant statements concerning evidence of fraudulent visa advertisement or entry tactics. The

JRC is, therefore, trialling the possibility of using tweet semantics (including the use of emoticons) to automatically sift out tweets that are neither negative nor positive statements - as early studies have shown that these are less likely to deliver 'strictly relevant' results (Piskorski *et al* 2013).

We are, therefore, left with the eerie image of the border cyborg, the human-machine system capable of seeing sea ports in third countries from space as well as constantly analysing ships for 'deviant' behaviour, soon being capable of also monitoring civilians' speech patterns and digital facial expressions within third countries for the purposes of European security. Although Frontex mostly transfers knowledge of a migrant camp or group of would-be migrants in a third country to the EU Member States, the act of targeting alone could be considered a violent act (Crandall 2005 in Amoore; Weber 2005; Fox 2009). As Chamayou (2015, p114) notes in the context of drones, for example, "vision is a sighting: it serves not to represent objects but act upon them, to target them. The function of the eye is that of a weapon." Despite the perceived truth-value and precision of achieving a 'God's eye view' from a distance (de Certeau 1984; Haraway 1991; Kaplan 2006), moreover, sight and the new perspectives that are attained through vision technologies are both always political (Ó Tuathail 1996; Kaplan 2007). Power in this situation is also unevenly distributed, as the new form of vision brought through the ability to target privileges the watcher while the object becomes contained (Weber 2005; Kaplan 2007, 2013; Cowen and Siciliano 2011; Suchman 2015). In the Frontex publications migrants are geo-spatially located and objectified as piercing arrows on a map. The 'objective', scientific gaze constructs a visible image of the borderspace and those that illicitly occupy it, yet simultaneously writes out the human stories of daring and suffering that have got them there (see Follis 2017).

When this occurs under the auspices of border security, wherein people and circulations are deemed risky to society and therefore filtered out (Walters 2006; Graham 2011), “[t]he targeting of mobile bodies, things, objects or monies is becoming a matter of locating - positioning in the sights, if you like - so that the opportunities of a mobile global economy might be seized, while the capability to take out the target remains” (Amoore 2009, p59). The state no longer relies on the direct supervisory techniques as analysed by Foucault (Deleuze 1992; Graham and Wood 2003). On the terrain of the society of control (Walters 2006), these surveillance technologies locate and monitor the ‘*dividuals*’ whose particular set of potentialities and movements single them out as being ‘undesirable’ for the rest of society (Rose 1999; Marx 2002; Adey 2010). Moreover, it is by aiming for ever-vigilant surveillance, followed by ‘genuine/scientific’ representations, that the modern state and its proxies distribute “the world into possible and impossible views and kinds of knowledge and ways of being” (Kaplan 2013, p83). In the risk society, every migrant unable to afford a visa can be targeted, monitored and controlled.

The rest of us, however, are also complicit in this global surveillance network, either by working and coding for the corporations involved in border management, or by providing the algorithms and data banks with references for what constitutes ‘the norm’ (Amoore 2009; Andrijasevic and Walters 2010). The resulting de-localisation of the border is such that the vessel AIS-carrying boats at sea (including pleasure crafts), for example, form more of a ‘border’ when they are co-opted by the border assemblage than a fence and watchtower might. It can also be easy to forget that the ‘remote control’ technologies and tactics covered so far in this chapter have not been developed as a result of some form of social or technological logic, but as a result of political or economic desires (Graham and Wood 2003; Walters 2006). Talk of

‘surveillance creep’ (Marx 1988), if we stick with the example of vessel AIS, suggests an almost autonomous re-purposing of the machine elements of the cyborg assemblage (Thrift and French 2002). Instead, this targeting beyond the borders of the EU, sometimes before even a journey has been planned (as seen above), is grounded on the political aims of Western governments to engage and intercept undesirable travellers before they can activate their claim to human rights on European soil (Lahav and Guiraudon 2000; Broeders and Engbersen 2007).

This ‘God’s eye view’ of the border therefore, far from being a view from nowhere, is a subjective view from *somewhere* (Ó Tuathail 1996; Dowler and Sharp 2001). Though offering the promise of ‘sight’ across the extended border space, therefore, the vision delivered through both EUROSUR and SIVE is always compromised by the characteristics of the systems’ infrastructures and by the “politically mediated preconceptions of its embedded actors” (Follis 2017, p14). Moreover, I have argued that it is not simply an ocular vision. It is a vision which is performed through an aggregation of various practices, machinery and humans located in a myriad of contexts – and is, therefore, multiplied, practiced and touched (Law 2002; Adey 2010). While the very act of targeting has been argued to be violent, the processes of what happens thereafter are still largely unclear as these are regularly left out of the formal performances of the border. To further refute the primacy of the view from a distance, however, we must now return to the human elements within the border assemblage, as well as to the terrain within which they perform the border on a day-to-day basis. In de Certeau’s (1984) analogy of the voyeur looking down on the city from the top of the World Trade Centre, for example, the city becomes transformed into text before his eyes. Yet, as a result of this abstraction, the “ruses and combinations of powers that have no readable identity proliferate” (de Certeau 1984, p95). The following sections, therefore, seek to show that while the

border is ostensibly painted as a ‘flat space’ within which the various machine elements can function unhindered, the everyday realities for the border guards are much messier. Instead of the seamless interaction between human and machine, the everyday performances are stuttered and as well as uncertain – the cyborgs at the border struggling to hold their shape.

#### 4.4 Fact or Friction?

*“Every such execution, as targeting, is potentially and tendentially lethal, for by taking aim at its object, it isolates that object from its relation to its surroundings, removing everything that might distract its aim from the place it seeks to secure: that is, to occupy and to appropriate.” (Weber 2005, p105)*

A common method in the social sciences for ‘un-boxing’ a socio-technical system is to study the events and circumstances surrounding a failure or disaster that has befallen it (Law 2004). Failures mark the point at which the various heterogeneous elements of the system which have been allied stop working and fail to hold together (Jacobs 2006). Moreover, the significance of the more human elements of the system (perhaps previously overlooked) can become re-evaluated as the “point of failure also exposes unseen labour that is necessary for the assemblage to more or less co- here, but often falls out of economic analyses” (Swanton 2013, p288). As demonstrated by Jacobs (2006) and Swanton (2013), system failures do not have to be caused by the any particular actor in the assemblage rebelling against the rest. Instead, failures can be also be seen as extreme events that are not out of place with the everyday workings of the system (Swanton 2013).

In Ceuta, finding an example of a system failure to study was not as straightforward as I had first anticipated at the start of my fieldwork (for a start, what counts as a disaster to some in this context might be a success to others). Thankfully, the

number of migrant deaths that occur between Morocco and Spain have been considerably lower than around Italy and Greece in recent years.<sup>74</sup> Instances of migrant arrivals in Spain are also much lower than throughout other areas of southern Europe, and Spain has been left largely ignored during the current ‘refugee crisis’. As noted above, part of the ‘success’ being attributed to SIVE has been as a result of the diverted flows of migrants to more dangerous routes to Europe (such as via Libya) (Guardia Civil 2008; Frontex 2016a). As can be read in this chapter’s opening vignettes, however, maintaining control of the border is no simple task for the border guards. Indeed, the principality’s over-crowded detention centre, however, did not attest to one particular failure of the state-of-the-art border assemblage, so much as it demonstrated the guards’ regular lapses of control over the unruly terrain. At the time of my arrival in Ceuta at the start of summer in 2015, a steady trickle of successful border crossing attempts were being reported by the local newspapers. Number of men, women and children, time of arrival, place of interception, nationalities on board – all the basic information included in the small space afforded to each arrival in the newspaper. Another day, another arrival. Yet no mention of SIVE and how it was that four men with paddles had not been detected until less than 300m from the coast. What of the multi-million euro system that was designed to work for 24 hours a day, seven days a week and give the Guardia Civil a ‘more-than-human’ control over the border-space?

The local geography of Morocco and southern Spain offers significant challenges to the migrants attempting to make the crossing either to Ceuta or across the straits. Strong currents and waves mean that boats can drift at sea for days as migrants

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<sup>74</sup> See <http://www.borderdeaths.org/> for an up to date database.

often attempt to paddle to Ceuta or use old engines which are prone to cutting out. The occasionally rough conditions can also easily sink an overcrowded wooden fishing boat or soft-hulled zodiac vessel, while the (sometimes total) cloud-cover can obscure the coastal lights used by the migrants as reference points for Europe (few carry a compass or a map on their journeys). On the land, too, the environment in Ceuta appears to be in the favour of the Guardia Civil – at least compared to its sister principality Melilla which lies roughly 380km to the East. There, large sections of the border fence are located alongside urban areas (both on the Spanish and Moroccan sides) while the nearby Gourgorou mountain offers some shelter to the migrant camps. As a result, the Guardia Civil in Melilla often have very little time to react against migrant ‘attempts’ at the fences, while those who do make it across can quickly disappear in between the buildings (field notes, interview Lucas). By contrast, the border fence in Ceuta are surrounded by rocky terrain on the Moroccan side which is used only by farmers allowing their flocks to graze. Moreover, the Spanish side of the fence has been designated as a ‘no-go zone’, giving the Guardia Civil the sole use of the tarmac road which runs alongside the fence (interview Lucas) – thus significantly reducing the ‘friction of distance’ (Scott 2009) offered by the rugged landscape.<sup>75</sup> The landscape and urban infrastructure of Ceuta, therefore, appeared to give the Guardia Civil a distinct advantage over the migrants.

Despite the claims made by the Guardia Civil (2008), however, that the SIVE technology would be able to overcome the environmental challenges posed by the border-space, it was clear that the terrain remained a significant problem for the border guards and the technology at their fingertips in both Ceuta and (across the straits) in Algeciras. The SIVE station in

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<sup>75</sup> The only exception to this being the border crossing points at El Tarajal (main crossing point with Morocco) and the village of Benzú to the North.

Algeciras, which controls the marine border between Barbate and Soto Grande, uses five separate radar stations – a considerable number for this area. Together, explained Antonio (the on-site Amper technician), their radar signals would overlap and give the border guards reliable information on the speeds and directions of the myriad of vessels located in their search area. Indeed, the radar is an integral part of the SIVE system, offering a constant overview of the marine area, making it theoretically possible for the border guards to spot a suspicious vessel at a distance of roughly 14km from the coast (Antonio interview; Indra 2016). Similarly, as was demonstrated in the opening vignettes, the border guards can sometimes be forced to rely entirely on the functions of the radar if the cameras fail. Following the Antonio’s departure from the SIVE control room in Algeciras, however, the border guards on duty were quick to inform me of the difficulties they had when using the radar to search for and target migrant boats. Indeed, far from being able to remove and isolate the objects within their scopes (Weber 2005), the active terrain provided the guards with constant distractions. “The radar often gives us false readings,” explained Eduardo, the senior border guard in the SIVE control room of Algeciras, “but it can really be from anything. Waves, whales, dolphins, fishing materials, they can all appear as something suspicious on the radar. One day I was monitoring this area here [points towards the area Algeciras’ surveillance area closest to Morocco], and I saw some crazy readings coming from the radar. So I centred my camera to where I thought the readings were coming from and do you know what I saw? It was birds on their seasonal migration journey!” By performing the borderspace as a two-dimensional reality (Elden 2013), therefore, the radar screens were aimed at giving the guards a ‘more-than-human vision’ (Williams 2011) as the borderspace became flatter and more legible. Simultaneously, however, the radar removed the fixed, solid and benign appearances of the objects in its field of vision giving them a threatening appearance through



their indeterminacy (Budd and Adey 2009). In this way, the radar transformed the everyday natural occurrences of this marine environment, which might otherwise be considered beautiful to the naked eye, into ‘suspicious’ events.

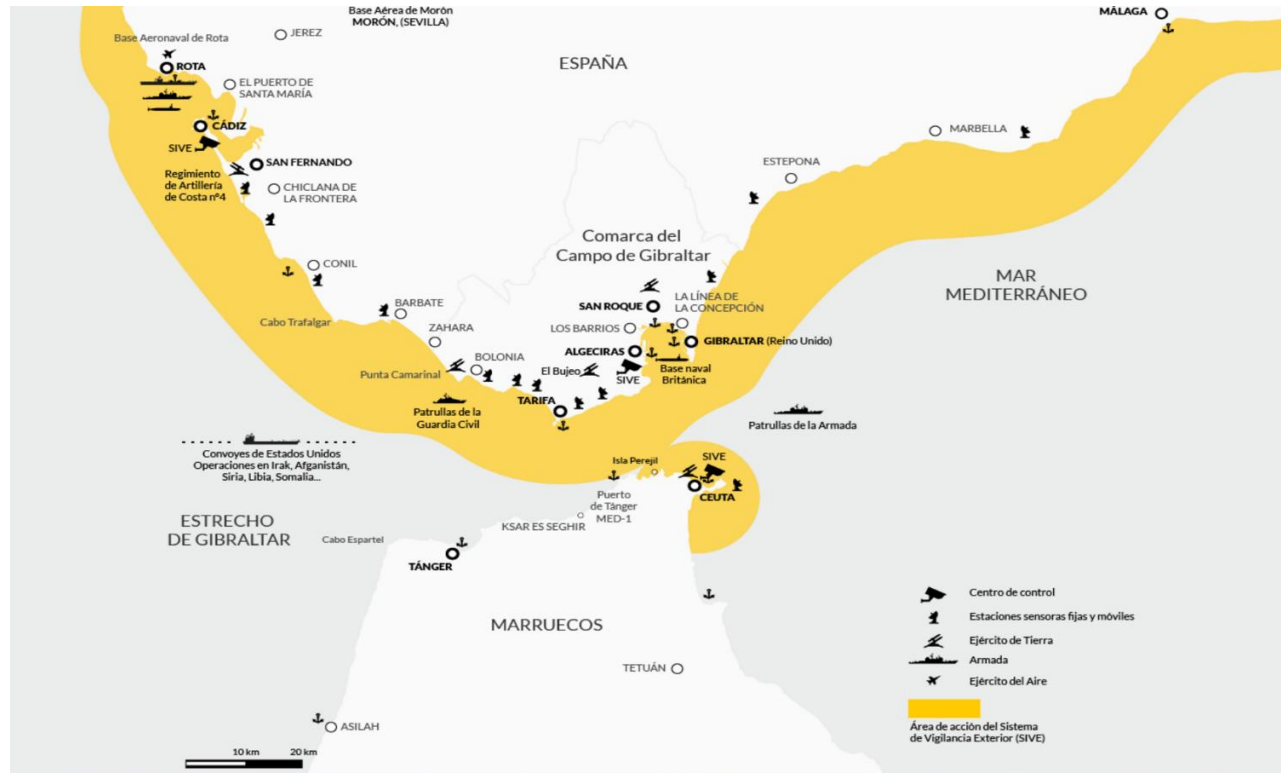


Figure 11 shows the areas of Spanish surveillance along the marine border. The radar stations between Barbate and San Roque are in the control of the border guards in Algeciras (image available at <http://elpais.com/especiales/2015/desafio-estrecho/claves.html>)

Operating the radar in Ceuta, despite the much smaller surveillance area, provided the guards with similar issues. Here, however, they were faced with a much larger problem, namely the radar's blind spots.<sup>76</sup> Surprisingly for a system that had ostensibly been designed specifically for spotting small vessels at sea, significant areas of the screen were effectively 'muted'. It transpired that the radar's blind spots included most of the area closest to the coast. "Within a mile off the coast the radar could give us lots of false readings," explained Juan pointing to a darker area of the screen devoid of yellow 'Tracks', "this area for example has lots of vegetation, rocks and big waves which could trick the system." As a result, a slow boat travelling along the coast (a typical route used by migrants attempting the journey in the small, engine-less 'toy' boats) will be invisible to the 'all-seeing eye' of the radar. These spaces could, of course, be 'un-muted' (the sensitivity of the radar is set to pick up objects moving at a speed of two knots). This would, however, inundate the guards on duty with false Tracks to the extent that the radar images would become illegible.

For the border guard charged with monitoring the border at night from the mobile thermal camera station, the rugged biophysical materialities of the borderspace also posed a significant challenge to his watchfulness (Boyce 2016). On the screen a human will appear as a black, pixelated shape that is still vaguely-humanoid. Surprisingly, Miguel reckoned he could still distinguish the difference between a human and another animal at a distance of about ten kilometres. Under poor climatic conditions, however, the non-human elements of the terrain can escape political capture (Gordillo 2013) and impede the guards' attempts at controlling the borderspace by increasing the 'friction' of the terrain (Scott 2009). Under

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<sup>76</sup> The literal translation from the Spanish being 'dead zones' (zonas muertas).

humid conditions, for example, the pixelated shapes become even less distinct – meaning that the point at which Miguel can distinguish a crouching human from a resting goat can be reduced to just four kilometres. Similarly, if the temperature during the day had been particularly hot, the rocks can emanate enough heat to confuse the on-board laser (used to determine the distance between the vehicle and a suspicious object). Worse, the rocks can occasionally retain so much heat that Miguel claims it can be hard to distinguish between a rock and a man’s head (which is often the only part of the body he can see when a person is crouching down). This ‘friction’ offered by the environment, however, is not limited to the Moroccan shepherds, their animals and the humanoid rocks. During the (still warm) wetter months of the year, for example, the myriad of small streams in the rocky landscape can also become a distraction to the operator of the thermal camera as they seek for small signs of movement.

Using Virilio’s (1994) theories on bunker archaeology and the oblique, Elden (2013) notes how literatures focused on state surveillance have often focused predominantly on the power to look down, from above. Space, however, is volumetric. This forces us to question the extent of state power not solely in distance, but also in terms of its depth (Weizman 2002; Graham 2004; Williams 2013). On the border between Mexico and the USA for example, the inadequacies of the border wall’s structure became summarised in the expression “You show me a 50-foot wall and I’ll show you a 51-foot ladder at the border” (Rael 2011, p415). In the border enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla the fences are regularly scaled by migrants who have adapted their own technologies to scale the massive structures more quickly. While ladders are occasionally used, most use metal hooks tied to blocks of wood. André, a man who said he had spent years living in the forests near Melilla but eventually made it to Ceuta, showed me how he had scaled the fences by attaching nuts and bolts to the sole of his

shoes – thus repurposing them as climbing contraptions. A short video released by the Guardia Civil in Melilla also showed the various *fluid* objects (Law and Mol 2001) that had been reworked and repurposed by those scaling the fences including other shoe contraptions but also small anchors that had been modified and repurposed as grappling hooks.<sup>77</sup>

While these repurposed objects hinder the border guards' attempts at controlling the fences, here too the complex, textured dimensions of the landscape acts as an obstacle to the state's volumetric power (Boyce 2016). Some migrants (such as André, though there were many others) spend months or even years attempting to cross the border. Not only do they learn how to make tools for scaling the fences, but (usually by trial and error) they learn the locations of the thermal cameras' blind spots. "There are some small gulleys and areas with a lot of vegetation, for example," confirms Miguel, "where I know they can hide and I know I won't see them. But eventually they'll have to leave that spot to get to the border, I just have to hope I see their movement on the screen at that point." Some of these more experienced men use their knowledge of the landscape to finance their next border crossing attempt by acting as guides for the new arrivals. Of course, knowing the routes through the landscape is not enough to make it across the border, the various pressure pads in the fences will still alert the border guards to their presence, but it could provide them with the time they need to escape the guards' reaction team. As a result, Lucas informed me, the border fences in Ceuta are much more susceptible to the attempts of small groups, rather than the largescale attacks on the fences that are occasionally shown in the media. "Because of the countryside

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<sup>77</sup> As can be observed from the following online video, this is information that the Guardia Civil are already aware of: <http://observers.france24.com/en/20141022-melilla-migrants-spanish-civil-guard>

around the fences, we have a panoramic view of the area,” he explained, “we’ll easily spot a group of 50 making their way down the mountain [...] but one or two making their way slowly, that’s a different matter...eventually one might make it.”

For Frontex, too, the biophysical realities of the borderspace can severely impact on its capabilities, despite its use of high-tech vision technologies through its collaboration with EMSA and SatCen. Firstly, concerning the vessel anomaly detection service, the system is currently not successfully weather dependent. Like SIVE’s radar, therefore, the algorithms used by the Frontex service can issue considerable numbers of false alarms. “For example,” explains Eric, “during the summer you are likely to pick up a lot of pleasure boats with anomalous trajectories.” Equally problematic, however, is that during adverse weather conditions false alarms are also generated as larger boats drop their anchors near the coastline (Eric interview). A large ship that appears to suddenly stop could, for example, be interpreted by Frontex as a ‘motherboat’ (a boat used by smugglers to transport migrants to international waters and from which they will complete the journey in smaller zodiac vessels) (Kevin interview).

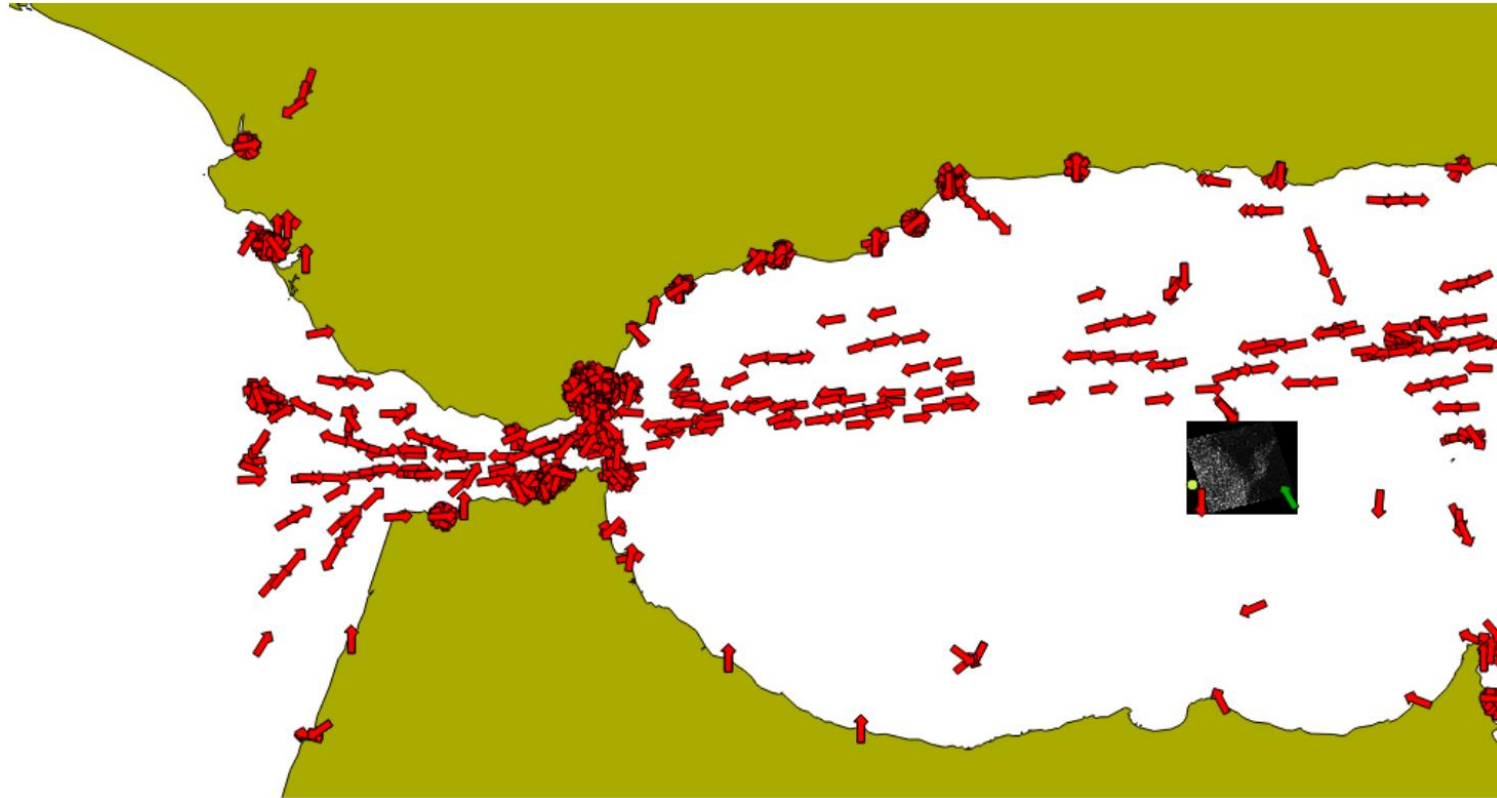
As stated in the opening vignettes, adverse weather conditions can also affect the quality of optic satellite imagery. Satellite Aperture Radar (SAR) images are, therefore, used to search for migrant vessels at sea instead. These images, however, also fall short of performing ‘the God trick’ (Haraway 1991). One of the difficulties faced by the experts in Warsaw, for example, is that both rubber and wood (the materials from which migrant boats are predominantly made) are very poor reflectors – meaning that spotting a small boat can be almost impossible. “There is a myth,” said Kevin however, “that small vessels cannot be detected [...] Satellites can be used to detect boats of above let’s say seven meters [long].” Indeed, an example of a successful detection by SAR imagery includes the search and rescue event on the 14th of September 2014. Rather

fortuitously, a 7-meter rubber boat carrying 38 people was reported missing off the coast of Morocco in roughly the same space as an SAR image had been commissioned for a final SAGRES trial.<sup>78</sup> Instead of searching for a test boat, the researchers sought for and found the missing vessel, enabling Frontex to publish the story under the headline “EUROSUR Tools Play a Key Role in Boat Rescue”.<sup>79</sup> The Frontex report, however, left out certain details (later published in the final project report on SAGRES) that had made the search and rescue event easier. While most of the area captured in the image experienced strong winds (4 m/s) and surface currents, the vessel itself was located in a much calmer area with low wind speeds. The effect of the wind speed and currents can be seen from the surface distortions which can be observed in Figures 27-29. These distortions were initially the cause of some false alarms which had to be filtered out manually. Following this filtration, it was determined that the vessel was not in the distorted area and it was found instead in the darker area of the image by increasing the dynamic range between the reflectivity of the target and the sea – a process which would not have been possible had the vessel been located in the distorted area (GMV 2015). Although the report does not state it outright, there is, therefore, a strong possibility that the boat would not have been spotted had it been located in the distorted area (Silva and Greidanus 2011). Moreover, even after increasing the dynamic range, the rubber boat was still only visible because of the on-board motor which was located high enough out of the water (GMV 2015).

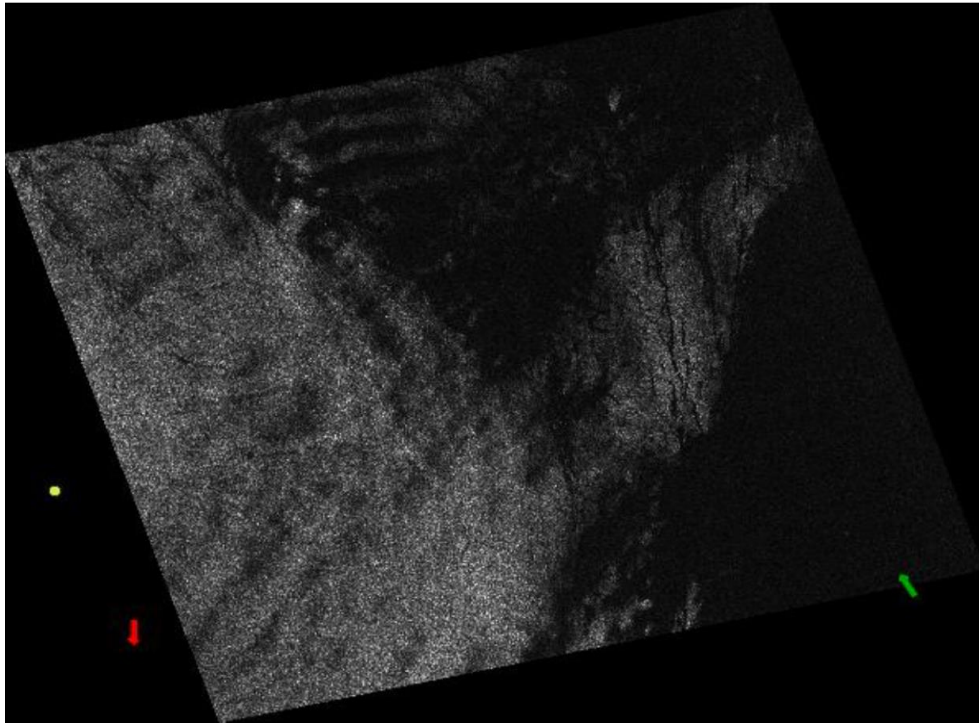
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<sup>78</sup> SAGRES was a project designed to test the various satellite services that would be made to Frontex.

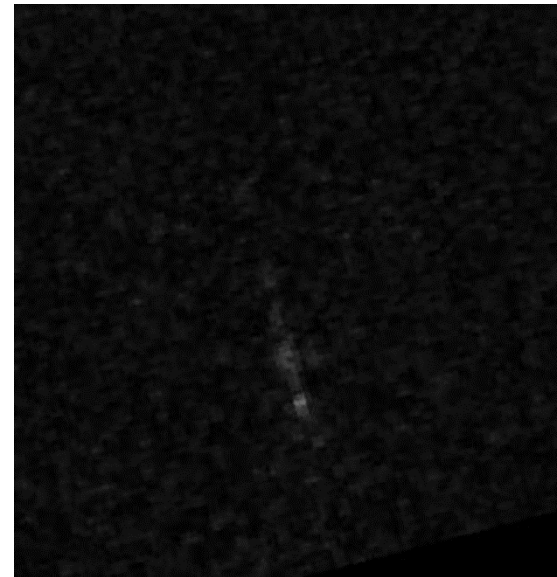
<sup>79</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/feature-stories/EUROSUR-tools-play-key-role-in-boat-rescue-TBwy52>



*Figure 27 shows the location of the SAR image in Spanish waters. The red arrows in this image indicate the AIS trackers of other vessels at sea (GMV 2015).*



*Figure 28 shows a snapshot of the satellite image that was analysed in order to find the migrant boat (shown by the green arrow).*



*Figure 29 shows what was visible of the migrant boat to the analysts (GMV 2015)*



## 4.5 Embodied Vision

*Television operates as “a screen which allows distant vision to be watched [...] It screens, in the sense of selecting or filtering, the vision that is watched. And finally it serves as the screen in the sense of standing between the viewer and the viewed” (Weber 1996, p122-3).*

As has already been made clear, in an effort to enable a ‘more-than-human’ vision, the machine elements within the SIVE offer the border guards various multi-layered images (in ‘real-time’) of the borderspace (Williams 2011). The combination of radar and camera technologies allowing the guards better sight of the border, as well as a protection from the elements, than any watchtower might (Masters 2005). The interactive screens upon which these images of the borderspace are reproduced, themselves, becoming the performative site of the border as the various visualisations of ‘threats’ initiate responses from the border guards (Knorr and Bruegger 2002; Hardie and MacKenzie 2006; Budd and Adey 2009). Yet as both Gregory (2011a) and Williams (2011) have demonstrated concerning drone assemblages, “[w]hilst the requirement for there to be a human operator within the UAV assemblage remains, this desire for more-than-human vision is unmet” (Williams 2011, p386). For despite the complex vision technologies, responsibility still lies with the human eyes to ‘see’ and offer the final interpretation of the object shown on the screens. In discussing the limitations of the drone assemblage, Williams (2011) utilises Virillio’s (1991) ‘picnoleptic moment’ to argue that the continual watching of the drone assemblage is partly outdone by the humans’ inability to watch without blinking. Using the example of the picnoleptic, Virillio (1991) argues that all human perception is effectively ‘patched up’. That, unbeknownst to our consciousness (which knows of no apparent breaks), we are forced to fill in the gaps of our perception, readjusting the contours these patched up sequences,

and consequently forgetting what has been invented (Baldwin 2002; Cook 2003). In other words, while the drones' cameras might be able to offer a constant picture in 'real-time', the organic elements of the assemblage resist the possibility of achieving an unblinking vision due to their extant organic flaws and the imperfect fit between human and technology (Williams, 2011).

In the context of the border assemblage, however, both the human and machine elements suffer from their own forms of picnolepsy. Aside from detecting and projecting all 'unknown' objects as foreign and threatening, the radar only 'sees' objects that travel at a speed higher than two knots for a period of at least eight seconds (Antonio interview). The radar's 'blinks are, therefore, regular and unavoidable. Yet the system still projects a performance of an all-seeing gaze, the 'blinks' invisible to the border guards using the system. In terms of spotting most drug-smuggling activity, however, this poses no significant problem as these are usually transported by speedboat (at a speed of 40 knots). Overloaded migrant boats (either with old engines or none at all), by contrast, regularly travel at a speed between one and three knots and are, therefore, barely perceptible to SIVE's radar. Instead, a boat carrying migrants will most likely occur as an occasional blip on the radar screen (if it appears at all), rather than as a constantly detectable presence. In other words, the objects which are presented on the radar screen are not stable or fully present, instead they are "fleeting, ambiguous, partial, absent-present, ghostly and more-than-single" (Walters 2014, p103). The aforementioned 'blip' would then have to be spotted immediately by the border guard on duty so that it could be investigated further by using the camera. Not only is the radar, therefore, also not immune to its own version of picnolepsy, but the system demands the speedy cooperation between radar – (alert)

guard – and camera if it is to function effectively. Not only do the border guards have to regularly filter out false alarms, therefore, they must also maintain an unbroken vision of the radar screen if they hope to spot a ‘blip’ from a migrant boat.

Achieving this unbroken vision for the border guards, however, is far from guaranteed. Like the drone pilots in Williams’ (2011) paper, the technologies in the SIVE system have not allowed the guards to overcome their natural picnoleptic moments. In some ways, however, the technologies have hindered the guards’ attempts at remaining vigilant. As with many forms of automated bordering, the assumption has been made that technological solutions can replace border guards. Indeed, the Guardia Civil’s (2008) publication made clear that SIVE would mean fewer active border guards. The ‘lived reality’ for the border guards (especially in Algeciras) is that personnel cuts and multi-task management means that their ability to ensure constant vigilance is limited. Moreover, there is still an ‘enduring physicality’ to their work despite the introduction of technologies (Parks 2007, p183). “Our tasks here are not solely dedicated to SIVE,” explained Eduardo after both his colleague and Antonio had left (leaving us alone in the control room). “For example, here I have access to the [Guardia Civil’s] database,” he continued, “if one of my colleagues on patrol stops someone in the street or on the road he might need to know if the person he has stopped is on our system [...] So at that point he will phone me and I will conduct the search for him.” The command centre in Algeciras is also what the Guardia Civil refer to as a ‘centro de mando y control’,<sup>80</sup> meaning that it acts as a central node in the Guardia Civil’s information network. Information from the surrounding area (concerning such things as fires and robberies) gets sent to Eduardo’s computer terminal. There, the guard

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<sup>80</sup> The literal translation being ‘command and control center’.

on duty manually filters it and the important information is sent on to the national coordination centre in Madrid. This constant stream of information that needs to be filtered and passed on, in combination with other daily tasks (such as personal administrative work) and the random additional disturbances that occur throughout the day (telephone calls, nosy PhD students), frequently create significant disturbances for the guards on duty. As a result, it is very possible that, at certain times of the day, nobody watches the supposedly ever-vigilant machines. “There really ought to be four or five [guards] here, but right now it’s just me,” continued Eduardo, “the technicians didn’t think about this when they designed the system. But every day there is more and more work to be done, but they don’t hire more guards.” In other words, it is not so much that the assemblage cannot avoid the picnoleptic moments; rather, it struggles under the weight of the sheer volume of information it is being asked to process given the economic principles of everyday resource management.

When the guards are able to dedicate their attention to the monitoring of the screens, they rely on SIVE’s immensely powerful cameras to overcome the radar’s aforementioned flaws. Indra, the company who designed SIVE, boast that during the day the system’s cameras can detect a small boat at a distance of 20km, while at night this estimate is reduced to a (still-astonishing) 13km. Despite the quality of the images produced by the SIVE cameras, however, the information on the screens still requires a significant amount of experienced guesswork and ‘know how’ to interpret. For the ‘trick’, as it were, with vision technologies is not so much acquiring the power of sight, as it is acquiring the ability to view ‘change’ or deviance from the ‘norm’ (Graham and Wood 2003; Adey 2004; Scranton 2007; Amoore 2009; Graham 2010). Border guards must, therefore, use their knowledge of the borderspace to gauge whether or not what they are seeing in the camera’s sights is out of the ordinary. “Of course, if a guard sees seven guys going out to sea at night in a small boat, he knows they’re not

going fishing” answered Lucas dryly when I asked him what the guards were looking for in their cameras. When speaking to the guards operating the cameras, either in the control rooms or on the dark hillside in Ceuta, it was clear that it often was not as simple as that. While scanning the Moroccan hillside with his thermal camera, Miguel explained that migrants will sometimes purchase small fishing boats and mimic the movements of fisherman casting their nets at night. “I’ve never been fishing and I don’t know how to fish,” he said jovially, “but I know exactly what it looks like from a distance. I know the process, roughly how long it lasts and where it happens... just through operating this joystick!” To demonstrate his point, Miguel pointed the camera out into the dark bay at the small fishing boats in Moroccan waters. Miguel had monitored their movements when they first had first left the harbour in Fnideq, swapping regularly between observing the boats and the land area around the fence. “That one is a little suspicious though,” he said zooming in on the boat furthest out in the bay, “it has no lights on and hasn’t followed the circular route the fishermen usually take when they cast their nets.” To my eyes, however, the pixels on the screen were barely recognisable as a boat, let alone a small fishing vessel with one or more people on board. Eventually Miguel turned the camera away from the boat, claiming that he would keep an eye on its position while conducting another scan of the area near the fence.

An associated difficulty with waiting for something out of the ordinary to happen in a situation such as the one described above is, of course, that while Miguel waited to see what the suspicious vessel might do, his eyes had been forced away from monitoring the land border. In the SIVE assemblage, only the radar can ‘see everywhere’ at once. While the cameras have a wide range when zoomed out and can be rotated at will, in order to spot and identify a migrant boat or group heading to the fence, the cameras often have to be utilised at full zoom. The result is that the guards’ peripheral vision is almost

entirely lost and, without the possibility of making use of their other senses, the areas outside the camera's zoomed vision become large blind spots. This frequently poses few problems as, after all, a broad sweep of a guard's area of responsibility takes little time and the guards frequently zoom out during checks. Occasionally, however, this rhythm of focused watching followed by broad sweeps is broken up by particular events requiring the guards' undivided attention. This is especially the case following the detection of a potential drug-smuggling attempt across the straits. These moments, in fact, are the most stressful for the border guard on duty as they must coordinate an interception with the Guardia Civil's marine unit, as well as arrange for land-based units to intercept to search for other gang members.<sup>81</sup> On other occasions a boat carrying drugs will briefly become visible on the radar as it speeds towards Spanish waters, but will then disappear again as it waits for an opportune moment to make a drop. Throughout this time the guard on duty must use his camera to comb through the area in the hopes of spotting the boat before it makes its move.<sup>82</sup>

For the border guards in the SIVE assemblage, therefore, there are no complex algorithms automatically informing them of deviant behaviour. Instead, the decision to raise the alarm rests entirely with them and their knowledge of the borderspace. Yet most agreed that it can take a guard at least ten years to become both proficient with the technology and to know the borderspace. Not all border guards, moreover, have the same skill-sets as their colleagues. While some guards claim to be able to tell a sub-Saharan migrant from a Moroccan farmer through the thermal camera solely by the type of their clothing,

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<sup>81</sup> As I intimated in the methods section, asking the border guards about their personal emotions while working was difficult. As a result, I cannot say how stressful the overall working conditions are for the SIVE operators.

<sup>82</sup> The only guards I ever saw on duty were men.

others are considered to be better at spotting small movements a long way off and yet others are more proficient at overcoming the difficulties presented by the fog or cloud cover. In other words, the SIVE assemblage does not offer one singular controlling gaze over the borderspace. Instead, the geopolitical gaze of the Guardia Civil's surveillance technologies thus becomes, following Law (2002) and Haraway (1988), a multitude of performed gazes, each different because of the uniqueness of the eyes of each guard in the assemblage and their specific ways of seeing and interpreting information. The ability of the Guardia Civil to control the borderspace is, therefore, challenged by the complexity of the numerous performances being acted out on both 'sides' of the border.

In Warsaw, meanwhile, Frontex' vision machine is also susceptible to numerous drawbacks. First, the SAR images received by the agency and used to locate migrant vessels at sea come from satellites operating on a polar orbit. As a result, Frontex is usually only able to receive two SAR images per day of the areas within their operational interests (Kevin interview). This lack of data coverage for most of the day cannot really even be referred to as a picnoleptic moment given the length of time that passes between moments of sight. Far from being able to monitor the comings and goings, for example, of a suspicious boat in non-EU harbour, the team in Frontex are forced to rely on single snapshots rather than a constant stream of information. This, combined with the fact that it takes a period of roughly four hours to analyse an SAR image, means that the SAR radar images can only be used in areas where they expect suspicious vessels to travel slowly.<sup>83</sup> This would

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<sup>83</sup> This is set out in further detail by Parks (2005, p91, emphasis in original) where she states: "The satellite image is encoded with time coordinates that index the moment of its acquisition, but since most satellite image data is simply archived in huge supercomputers, its *tense is one of latency* [...] The satellite image is not really produced, then, until it is sorted, rendered, and put into circulation, much like the film image does not really come into being until it is processed, projected, and seen.

include areas such as the Libya to Italy/Malta route, for example, but precludes the area between Northern Morocco and Ceuta or Algeciras, and the area between Turkey and Greece (Eric interview). As demonstrated in the section above, however, even then the SAR image might not be very clear (depending on the weather conditions) and searching for small vessels is hard work. As a result, Frontex needs to weigh up the resolution they need from each image, versus the amount of area coverage they get per snapshot. The results of this mean that even boats which can be monitored by their vessel AIS as potentially suspicious cannot necessarily be viewed via SAR imagery, as was the case with the spate of large ‘ghost ships’ which arrived in Italy in late 2014 and early 2015 carrying only migrants after the crew had abandoned them (Kevin interview).<sup>84</sup> Moreover, even if Frontex were able to gain access to a more comprehensive range of SAR imagery (a lot of which is not yet available to civilian law enforcement agencies), Frontex would not currently be able to process this data. “So if we talk about cases such as the Lampedusa case,” said Eric, referring to a deadly shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa that had been widely circulated in the media, “this kind of boat can easily be detected. The thing is we are not scanning the entire Mediterranean Sea. Because basically first of all that’s not possible because of financial things and also from resources things. Because we have at Frontex five people working on this entire process. So we are able to scan right now 1% of Mediterranean Sea [...] If we are serious about these things it has a certain price tag, which is that. So in my opinion one of the main show stoppers is financial resources and human resources.”

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<sup>84</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/11319513/Migrant-ghost-ship-prevented-from-smashing-into-Italy-It-was-a-race-against-time.html>



It's currently impossible to know how many of the migrant boats that are intercepted and rescued in the Mediterranean have been spotted first by Frontex and its vision technologies, this information is not released by the agency.<sup>85</sup> Occasionally, however, the agency will release a press release (such as the one in the previous section) indicating its success in saving human lives at sea. Both Eric and Kevin estimated that at least 60% of all migrant vessels spotted in Frontex' operational areas were still first seen by passing commercial or private vessels, rather than by the border agency. While much of the infrastructure is present in the Frontex Situation Centre Dashboard to deliver real-time information to the border guards of the various EU Member States, the actual 'real-time' information of the borderspace is still patchy. Moreover, while the combination of satellite technology with vessel AIS and GIS data processing signified a potential end to controlling borders through a series of 'pinch points' (Hinchcliffe and Bingham 2007), the day-to-day realities of work in Frontex indicates that an overwhelming automated control of the borderspace is still far beyond reach.

#### 4.6 On Alliances and Breakages

*“Fortification, which was geophysical in the ancient times of the Great Wall of China or the Roman limes, has suddenly become physical and even ‘micro-physical’, no longer located in the space of a border to defend, or in the covering or armor of a casement or tank, but in the time of instantaneous electromagnetic countermeasures (Virilio 1994 p. 203-4).”*

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<sup>85</sup> Although the agency has released an estimate of the total number of people saved at sea thanks to 'Frontex deployed assets': <http://frontex.europa.eu/pressroom/hot-topics/the-role-of-frontex-in-search-and-rescue-EQYKeH>

There is an asylum centre located at El Tarajal (the main border crossing point between Ceuta and Morocco). It is situated in the ‘no-man’s land’ beyond the Moroccan border control station, yet before that of the Guardia Civil. While the asylum centre has been operational for over a decade, it was recently renovated and republicised by the Spanish government following their formalisation of the law concerning *devoluciones en caliente* (allowing the expulsion of migrants from between the two border fences to Morocco).<sup>86</sup> Francisco, a police officer in the *Brigada Provincial de Extranjeria y Fronteras de Ceuta* (the branch responsible for enforcing border control at a local level), acted as my bemused guide on my brief examination of the asylum centre. Inside it, there was a reception area with a water cooler, a coffee table and a selection of IOM refugee information booklets. Located next to the reception area were three small interview rooms, complete with computers and yet more IOM booklets. Yet the asylum centre was completely devoid of human activity. According to Francisco, not a single asylum claim has ever been made at the centre. Moreover, it is unlikely that there ever will be. “It’s a joke,” explained Francisco, “the Moroccan guards will never let someone without papers through without the correct papers, their law forbids it.” Moreover, if someone were to get passed the guards in a car or with false papers, then they would try and pass the Spanish guards too so that they would already be officially in Spain when their asylum claims are processed.<sup>87</sup> The asylum centre at El Tarajal, therefore, is a propaganda tool used by the Spanish government to defend its rule change and claim that asylum seekers need not risk their lives at sea or by climbing the fences. The centre, however,

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<sup>86</sup> See: <http://www.ceutaactualidad.com/articulo/inmigracion/ministro-fernandez-diaz-llega-ceuta-inaugurar-oficina-proteccion-internacional/20150316113710004409.html>

<sup>87</sup> An application for asylum at the asylum centre at El Tarajal must be completed in 12 days, while in Ceuta it can take several months (also allowing the person to potentially transit to the mainland).

also serves as a reminder that the border is not simply Spain's to control and manipulate as it pleases. Responsibility over its performance also lies with the Guardia Civil's Moroccan counterparts, whose actions and tactics will, in turn, greatly impact upon the ways in which Spain can control the border. In other words, the border assemblage is not a 'seamless whole', instead it "take[s] form through the interaction of the capacities of its parts" (Swanton 2013, p287). Indeed, the border assemblage is constantly changing, as new technologies and actors are added to the mix, while others are removed (see De Landa 2006; Sohn 2015). While both SIVE and EUROSUR are portrayed as systems capable of saving lives at sea, this section critiques these claims by examining their use within the context of the everyday tensions that threaten to destabilise the border assemblage (Swanton 2015).

"The border is like a chewing gum," proclaimed Lucas in Ceuta's SIVE station, referring to the constant, unpredictable pressures exerted on the border. I had found it strange that of the two Spanish cities in Morocco, Melilla appeared to be under much more intense pressure than Ceuta. "That's just the way it is at the moment," continued Lucas, "but tomorrow it could all change." While the expression, of course, meant that everything could change from one day to the next, 'tomorrow' also happened to be Ramadan. None of the Guardia Civil officers in the SIVE control room knew how Ramadan was going to affect their work, even though it was a religious festival none of them would be observing. They suspected that it might in fact ease the pressure on the border, as most of the migrants making the border crossing attempts are a Muslim. Similarly there might also be fewer small fishing vessels out in the bay, as people would be eating with their families at night and saving their energy during the day. The opposite, however, could also be true. The Guardia Civil officers were concerned that their Moroccan counterparts might tire during their month of fasting and become less watchful.

“You have to understand,” continued Lucas, “Morocco could do a lot more, but they could also do a lot less... Without their ‘clean up’ operations in the mountains, both the border fence and the bay would be full of migrants.” In other words, SIVE is the border assemblage’s last line of defence, rather than the first. The complex array of these vision technologies are only employed in Ceuta on the people who have already made it passed the tight control of the Moroccan border guards on the area surrounding Ceuta.

The Moroccan patrol boats, however, are also crucial to the functioning of the SIVE system, should a migrant boat manage to evade the attentions of the Moroccan guards on the land before setting off. If a guard in the Ceuta control room spots a migrant boat through either SIVE’s camera or the radar, he immediately notifies the Guardia Civil’s patrol boat, the Salvamento Marítimo (SM) and his Moroccan counterpart (with whom they have a direct link). The Guardia Civil’s patrol boat will accompany the SM’s rescue boat if the migrant vessel is located in Spanish waters, intervening only in an emergency. In Moroccan waters, by contrast, the Moroccan patrol boat or rescue service would be expected to ‘rescue’ the migrant vessel (regardless of its level of distress) and bring the migrants back to Morocco. As a result, the SIVE vision technologies are often used by the Guardia Civil in Ceuta to circumvent the international *non-refoulement* agreement. Occasionally, however, the system fails and the actors in Morocco fail to act. “Sometimes the Moroccan patrol boats are out and cannot intercept,” grumbled Lucas, “or Madrid [the SM headquarters] cannot contact the Moroccan rescue services.” In such cases the Spanish SM is required to enter Moroccan waters and rescue the migrant vessel and return it to a Spanish port. Speed is therefore essential to the proper functioning of the border assemblage.

The extent to which the system functions in “real time” is regularly tested to its limits as guards operating the SIVE technologies must spot and notify the Moroccan patrol of a migrant vessel long before it can reach Spanish waters. The quick responses of the Spanish and Moroccan border guards can be contrasted against previous, high-profile, boat migration events that managed to captivate peoples’ attentions during the time it took for governments to organise a response. Examples of these include the Tampa and the SIEVX in Australian waters in 2001 (Budz 2009), the unnamed boats that arrived in Canada in 1999 (Mountz 2004), and the ‘left-to-die-boat’ which was ignored in the Mediterranean by NATO forces (Pezzani 2011). The speed on which the system in Ceuta is based means that, unlike these high-profile cases, there is increasingly less time for politics to occur between a boat being spotted and a state’s response (Virilio 1994; 2005; Bartram 2004). While the news stories about boat landings in Ceuta are common, they are rarely sensational, and the cases of boats being intercepted by the Moroccan patrols go by unnoticed (these figures are also guarded by the Guardia Civil). Indeed, the importance of speed in the functioning of the SIVE system is such that the enactment of the border has become focused not so much on the defence of a line or space, rather on the time it takes for a near-instantaneous reaction to occur (Virilio 1994). In other words, the SIVE system as whole is designed not so much to ‘pinch’ geographical space (see Serres and Latour, 1995; Hinchcliffe, *et al* 2013) as it is to increase the *speed* with which the border regime can react to events happening within the borderspace. A strong parallel can again be drawn here between SIVE and drone technologies. The exceptional ‘value’ of the drones’ ability to loiter is primarily the possibility they give for the compression of the ‘kill-chain’ – the structure of an attack from target identification to its destruction – such that warfare can be committed almost at the speed of thought (Gregory 2010).

Prior to my visit to the SIVE station in Algeciras I had assumed the guards there would follow a similar protocol to that of their colleagues in Ceuta. Indeed, Antonio, the Amper technician appeared to confirm as much when I asked him why the guards on duty didn't appear to be fully engaged in searching for migrant boats. "It's because it's the wrong time of day," he explained, "if you had come around 6am you would have seen the guards watching the screens, carefully searching for the pateras." This assertion was later, however, contradicted by Eduardo and his colleague, José, who claimed that pateras could reach their surveillance areas at any time of day. "We do try and search for pateras in Moroccan waters with the cameras sometimes," explained José, "but it's incredibly difficult [...] When using the thermal camera, you're searching for this tiny heat source, and sometimes you confuse it with a dead pixel on the display." While ostensibly, therefore, the guards in Algeciras could use the cameras and radar technology to notify the Moroccan guards of inbound migrant vessels, in practice these aren't spotted by the guards in the station until they have reached international waters between Spain and Morocco, at which point neither the Moroccan patrol boats nor their rescue service are likely to react. Aside from tackling drug smugglers whose boats are detectable via the radar, therefore, the SIVE station in Algeciras can (currently) only be used for the detection and rescue of migrant boats beyond Moroccan waters.

Occasionally, however, the system breaks down as a result of the external actors outside the state's direct control. In January 2014, Morocco opened offices for the 'regularisation' of sub-Saharan migrants within its borders after signing a Mobility Partnership Agreement between itself and the EU. The Mobility partnership focused on Morocco's need to further cooperate with the EU "to fight illegal immigration and combat cross-border networks involved in the trafficking and smuggling of

human beings” (EC 2013 p3).<sup>88</sup> The process of regularising sub-Saharan migrants was expected to weaken the pressure on the Spanish border as it was hoped that fewer migrants would have need to make the dangerous journey. In the first four months of 2014, however, the number of successful border crossing attempts between Morocco and Spain shot up to 2,800,<sup>89</sup> 130% more than for the same period the year before (Frontex 2014b). The Frontex Risk Analysis (2014b) avoided mentioning the cause of the increased border crossings, mentioning only that the Spanish Guardia Civil had warned of increasing numbers of migrants in the makeshift camps near the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (p20). Eduardo, however, was much more scathing in his assessment of what had happened in January 2014. “It all depends on the Moroccan King,” he said, “if he’s happy, the Moroccan guards will do their jobs. But if Morocco wants something from the EU, such as more money [from the EU European Neighborhood Policy], then he’ll use the migrants to bargain with. We had 1,200 migrants arrive in just 72 hours last year... That was not increased migrant pressure, it was the Moroccan guards telling them to go!”

Despite the expenses invested in SIVE, therefore, the European border assemblage is to a large part still dependent on the cooperation of the Moroccan army and its work in the hills of Northern Morocco. The actors of the assemblage are, therefore, spread far beyond the borders of the EU. The SIVE systems in Ceuta and Algeciras, therefore, function within the context of the SIVE installation in the Canary Islands as well as the *shift* (as opposed to halt) in migration routes is as much the result of the incorporation of Senegalese and Mauritanian border guards armed with European quad bikes and binoculars

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<sup>88</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/2013/docs/20130607\\_declaration\\_conjointe-maroc\\_eu\\_version\\_3\\_6\\_13\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/2013/docs/20130607_declaration_conjointe-maroc_eu_version_3_6_13_en.pdf)

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/2273960/0/inmigrantes-melilla-ceuta/valla-saltos/ceti-cie/>

as it down to the installation of SIVE (Andersson 2014a; Frowd, 2014). The ‘success’ of SIVE, in other words, is as much down its camouflaging of Moroccan involvement in the border regime as it is through its own implementation.

In fact the assemblage extends to within the boats used by the migrants. Unlike the wooden or inflatable toy boats bought by the smugglers and used by the migrants, the old motors used to propel these vessels can sometimes be used by the Guardia Civil to track the smuggler gangs in Morocco. In order to reduce the danger to themselves, therefore, migrants are warned by the smugglers that the Guardia Civil will prosecute the captain (or the whole crew) of a boat with a motor and that the Spanish will be able to see them through the cameras. It has, therefore, become common practice for migrants to throw their engines overboard after leaving Moroccan waters and to wait until they are spotted by the SIVE system. While it is unknown if this has contributed to any migrant deaths in Ceuta, in 2013 a *patera* off the coast of Lanzarote was rammed at high speed by a Guardia Civil patrol boat after the ‘captain’ of the *patera* had abandoned the engine and rudder for fear of being prosecuted as a smuggler (Ferrer-Gallardo and van Houtum 2014).<sup>90</sup> It is also possible that migrants might soon be convinced to employ the same tactic on journeys to mainland Spain, where they could find themselves trapped in the major shipping lanes or pushed off course due to the strong currents. The broadening of the border assemblage to include the objects that migrants need to reach Europe has, therefore, further endangered the lives of those attempting to make the crossing in ways other than the alteration of migrant routes. In particular it highlights the ways in which systems work in

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<sup>90</sup> [http://canarias-semanal.org/not/7559/la\\_patrullera\\_de\\_la\\_guardia\\_civil\\_arrollo\\_a\\_la\\_patera\\_en\\_lanzarote\\_video/](http://canarias-semanal.org/not/7559/la_patrullera_de_la_guardia_civil_arrollo_a_la_patera_en_lanzarote_video/)



unexpected ways when applied in practice; trajectories and encounters being unpredictable, complex and often counterintuitive (Graham 2010).

A second notable development concerning the case in Lanzarote, however, was the fact that the recordings from the SIVE cameras were obtained by a local news station and used to invalidate the Guardia Civil's initial account of what had happened (Ferrer-Gallardo and van Houtum 2014). Similarly, in an infamous case of 15 deaths occurring in the sea area alongside the border crossing point of El Tarajal, Guardia Civil recordings were demanded by NGOs and the interested media. It was hoped that the Guardia Civil security recordings, either from SIVE cameras, or from the security cameras on the border would provide evidence firstly of where the deaths had occurred (the Guardia Civil claimed they had died in Moroccan waters) and secondly, whether or not the Guardia Civil had fired rubber bullets and smoke canisters at the drowning men. Initially the Guardia Civil denied the existence of security cameras near the area of the migrants' death,<sup>91</sup> however, given the location was the border crossing point at El Tarajal, the Guardia Civil's claims were quickly refuted and eventually security footage of the event was obtained.<sup>92</sup> In particular, the video footage showed the tell-tale signs of splashes in the water near the migrants' heads – indicating that rubber bullets had indeed been shot at them by Spanish guards at a potentially fatal distance of less than 50m and, crucially, *after* they had successfully swum into Spanish waters. While in both cases the Guardia Civil were eventually exonerated by the Spanish courts, these two exceptional events demonstrate

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<sup>91</sup> <http://lasmuertesdeceuta.eldiario.es/contexto.html>

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.elmundo.es/sociedad/2015/10/15/561f9524e2704e6e518b45e2.html>

moments of technological rebellion (Meehan *et al*, 2013) during which the recorded vision of the vision technologies was used to demonstrate the state's complicity in migrant deaths (see Parks 2005).

If the circumstances surrounding the Guardia Civil's loss of control over the actors in the assemblage were in these cases exceptional, however, both they and Frontex face a similar struggle every day to maintain control. Just as the Guardia Civil are not always the sole users of the security recordings, so too can the Salvamento Maritimo be called by the migrants at sea or NGO groups who know of their departure. Examples of NGO groups that are having a strong effect on the border assemblage include 'the Alarm phone' and 'WatchtheMed.net'. The first offers a hotline that migrants can phone at sea to call for an emergency rescue, the volunteers on duty (some of which are outside the EU), then contact the nearest rescue service in the hopes of organising a swift recovery for the boat at sea. Linked to this, 'WatchtheMed.net' is an online mapping platform which functions in an astonishingly similar fashion to the Frontex Situation Dashboard in that it catalogues and monitors up to date information on boat distress calls and positions them within the correct search and rescue zones and operational areas. The group uses the accounts of survivors and witnesses, but also the analysis of ocean currents, winds, mobile phone data, satellite imagery and vessel AIS in order to spatialise events at sea. Through this spatialisation, the complex legal and political geography of the sea is made visible and it becomes possible to monitor in near-real time ongoing events at sea in an attempt to bring governments and their agencies to account should they fail to enact a search and rescue mission in their area. The use and manipulation (through 'mission creep') of vessel AIS and satellite data is, therefore, not a tactic solely limited to border agencies. Pezzani and Heller (2013, p294) call this challenge to the God's Eye view a 'Disobedient Gaze', "which aims not to disclose what the regime of migration management attempts

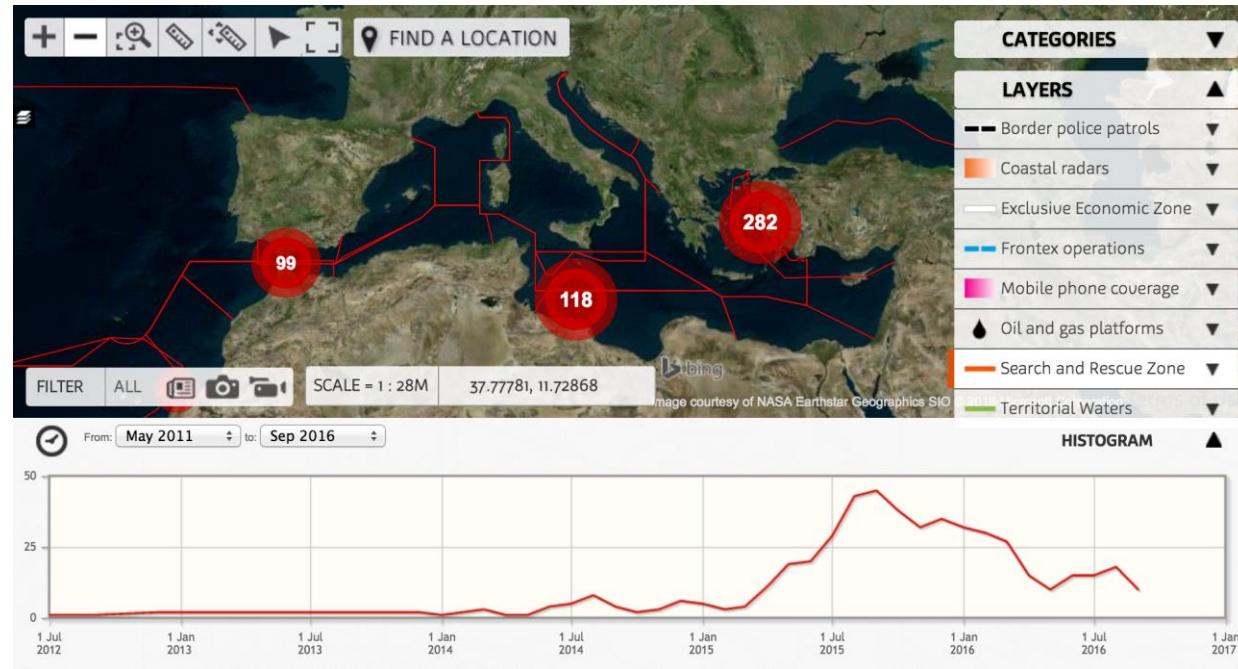
to unveil - clandestine migration; but unveil that which it attempts to hide - the political violence it is founded on and the human rights violations that are its structural outcome.” The effect of this Disobediant Gaze is hard to quantify, although to date, almost all the 596 separate cases<sup>93</sup> reported to the Alarm Phone have been reported as rescued (71 cases of people being either dead or missing). Moreover, during our first discussion of SIVE Lucas asserted that SIVE was close to becoming something of a taxi service for migrants, as the Guardia Civil were powerless to stop them from phoning the Salvamento Maritimo. “Nowadays they just phone for the Salvamento Maritimo as soon as they’ve left the Moroccan coast,” he grumbled, “if they decide to intercept before the Moroccans do, then they’ll bring the boat to Spain and there’s nothing we can do about it.” For the experts in Frontex too, the new ethics of the border assemblage were proving confusing to deal with. “They are not hiding from our assets,” said Eric, “it’s not that we chase them and find them, to stop them or to return them immediately to their departure point [...] You know we are using right now technology more to detect them faster to make sure that they will get to Europe in one piece [...] At the end of the day Frontex and the Member States’ authorities will do it like that. Then the valid question is: “Should we not rent a couple of big jets and, you know, daily flights from Italy to Rome, yes. Risk free flights, you know what I mean? But that’s a policymaker thing.”

The current situation has, therefore, increased the pressure on Frontex/the EU to further increase the speed with which they spot likely migrant departures, ideally intercepting smuggler boats before setting off from the third country. As previously discussed, satellite technology is currently predominantly used by Frontex to prepare the relevant EU Member

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<sup>93</sup> Each case can, however, be comprised of numerous boats. Moreover, where people have been reported as dead or missing, the Alarm Phone has usually been alerted to their deaths after the fact, instead of during the boat’s distress.

State for an immanent event. For Derrick (a Frontex employee working with third countries), however, part of the ‘solution’ to ‘irregular migration’ would have to come from the (further) inclusion of third countries’ border agencies into the border regime. He envisioned how satellite technologies might allow Frontex (via the Member State with a bilateral agreements) to regularly notify the border agencies in these third countries of smuggler boats being prepared for departure in their harbours and for them, in turn, to apprehend the smugglers before the boat sets sail. “But it needs time,” sighed Derrick, “You cannot put any pressure on these countries, it makes no sense.” In the meantime, Derrick and his team have focused their efforts on getting third countries to contribute information to Frontex’ risk analyses, thus further widening Frontex’ situational awareness picture.



*Figure 30 shows a screenshot taken from the watch the med online platform. The red lines on the map indicate the various Search and Rescue zones of the countries with sea borders, the numbers indicate specific incidents where the Alarm phone team were notified of an emergency and the graph shows the number of emergencies over time.*

For all the focus on the power of vision given through new vision technologies, therefore, the overall result has still been a loss of control over the borderspace from the EU's standpoint. The disobedient gaze watching over the actions and capabilities of the EU's own surveillance capabilities has meant that much of Frontex' work has been limited to that of European lifeguards. This section has also demonstrated how, in a setting with a functioning bilateral agreement, the vision technologies do allow for the speedy functioning of constant de facto push back operations. Although the older technology

of SIVE, however, only permits for these operations to occur between Ceuta and Morocco (rather than the mainland), it demonstrates how this cooperation could function on a European-wide scale. This section has also demonstrated, however, that the technologies and actors incorporated by the border assemblage need not always be considered 'loyal' to the rest (Meehan et al 2013). The onus is, therefore, on the disobedient gaze to further search out the entanglements of the EU's surveillance assemblage.

#### 4.7 Conclusions: Keeping up with 'Real Time'

As we move in the direction of a world where borders are both invisible and seemingly everywhere (Balibar 1998), technological systems are increasingly being looked towards as a means of detecting and filtering out the 'bad' circulation of people deemed potentially harmful to the state (Adey 2004; Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero, 2008; Walters, 2006). This chapter examined both Frontex' recently operational EUROSUR surveillance system, as well as Spain's SIVE system, on which much of EUROSUR was based. Drawing inspiration from Haraway's (1991) cyborg soldier, the first section of this chapter critiqued the official performances of their human/machine surveillance creation. Both promoted the systems' capabilities of offering the border agencies a veritable God's Eye view, relying on the technologies' capacities to overcome both the physical elements of the borderspace, as well as reduce the demands of surveillance work on the border guards themselves. While SIVE was designed to give the Spanish border guards a clear view over their sea border, Frontex' EUROSUR surveillance system was designed to give the agency an almost global view of events and trends, whilst providing guards with real-time information on events occurring at the borders of Europe. Through the works of Gregory (2011) and (Kaplan 2013), however, I have also argued that the objectivised 'sight' produced through these technologies is

fragmented and obscures the uneven distribution of power and the techno-cultural production of vision. Moreover, the formal performances of the border by both agencies points to the ‘flattening’ of the physical borderspace and the de-humanisation of migrants and their agency in their attempts at making the dangerous journeys to Europe.

By considering the surveillance systems as assemblages, this chapter has focused on both the human and non-human elements of the system and their everyday performances. In doing so, I was able to ‘unbox’ these surveillance systems and question their capabilities of offering an ‘unblinking gaze’ of the borderspace. By applying assemblage theory, everyday struggles of the material world are emphasised throughout this chapter, rather than obscured. Indeed, taking inspiration from feminist scholars, this chapter has questioned the geopolitical rhetoric of persistent vision by analysing the limitations of the vision capabilities offered by both the SIVE and EUROSUR systems. I demonstrated how neither the human, nor the machine elements of the surveillance systems can escape Virilio’s (1991) picnoleptic moments. Moreover, while both systems claim to have overcome or, in the case of EUROSUR, make use of the borderspace’s terrain, the everyday realities indicate that the physical environment of the borderspace is yet to be overcome by the vision technologies. As a result of these factors, EUROSUR’s surveillance service is both limited to a small section of the border (and still heavily dependent on information coming from liaison officers in third countries), while Spain’s SIVE system struggles to detect migrant boats from the mainland prior to leaving Moroccan waters.

Thirdly, this chapter has questioned the humanitarian function of these surveillance technologies by examining their use on migrant boats on the Mediterranean. This chapter has argued that the extent to which these technologies can be used to prevent irregular migration from occurring (as opposed to saving lives at sea), is dependent on the speed with which the

system can function and the cooperation with the relevant third country beyond the borders of the EU. As a result, the SIVE system in Ceuta is regularly used to by the Guardia Civil to enact de facto push back operations due to both their proximity to the Moroccan coast and their partnership with the coastguard and the Moroccan border patrols. By contrast, the EUROSUR surveillance systems and the work of the border guards in Algeciras are currently focused on detecting migrant boats in distress and ensuring that when they land, ‘proper’ protocols are followed. This is not to say, however, that the system might not change soon. Spain’s bilateral agreement with Morocco, as well as the EU’s newly-signed deal with Turkey suggest an increasing role for third countries in the securitisation of Europe’s borders – thus making Frontex’ surveillance system significantly more potent for preventing boat embarkations.

Fourth, this chapter has demonstrated that while broadening the border assemblage to include new actors and agencies has been key to providing Frontex and the Guardia Civil power over the borderspace, these technologies and actors are not necessarily permanently allied to the assemblage or only ever partially actualised (Shaw 2012). While “the tyranny of real time” might be an apt phrase for the migrants attempting to remain undiscovered from Frontex’ satellite imagery or the Guardia Civil’s cameras, Virilio (1994, p205) was wrong in asserting that only the military and state surveillance forces would have access to absolute speed.<sup>94</sup> The disobedient gaze is able to access many of the same networks and structures of control accessed by that of the EU’s surveillance system. It remains to be seen, however, if it will be able to keep up with the continued expansion of the European borderspace and the speed of its surveillance capabilities. Indeed, drawing on

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<sup>94</sup> As opposed to the “*relative* speeds of mechanized forces and their movements” (Virilio 1994, p204).



Gregory's (2010) analysis of the military's efforts to shorten the 'kill chain', the 'successful' enactment of the border has ultimately been shown to depend less on the defence of a borderline and rather on the ability to minimise the amount of time taken between the targeting of a migrant boat and the organisation of an interception. In this regard, therefore, the battle over speed is no longer fought between the surveillance system and the migrant boats' engines in order to ensure an interception before it crosses into European waters. Rather, the battle is being fought between the border regime's surveillance network and the disobedient gaze, the actors of which can overlap to similarly function in 'real time' and, to a certain extent, restoring the space for politics to occur in the borderspace (Virilio 2005). The term 'Fortress Europe' might soon lose its meaning, as the power of the 'everywhere border' might become such that 'irregular migrants *in potentia*' are targeted in their homes by complex algorithms, rather than by vision technologies at the shores of Europe. Yet the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that while the surveillance assemblage remains dependent on a human in the loop, the cooperation of external actors and remains unable to fully actualise its actors, the vision over the borderspace will also remain incomplete and entangled in the resistant intent of the disobedient gaze.

## Chapter 5 A Landlocked Peninsula



Figure 31 shows a map of Ceuta. Places highlighted are the CETI, El Príncipe, El Tarajal Asylum Centre, the petrol station next to the port and the Plaza de los Reyes. (image taken using Google Earth)

## 5.1 Arrivals

Ceuta. The autonomous Spanish city, situated in northern Morocco opposite the looming figure of Gibraltar, is often seen as an icon of Fortress Europe. The name Ceuta instantly conjures up images of a double metallic fence. A fence adorned with barbed wire designed to protect Europe from the supposed hordes of ‘bogus benefit seekers’ marks the edge of Europe’s punitive border regime. To the Spanish people I spoke to on the mainland, Ceuta (as well as its sister Melilla which is also located in northern Morocco) was considered to be more Moroccan than Spanish. A colonial city trapped in history, yet still nominally considered to be part of Spain. Indeed, in current popular culture, the autonomous city has been the location for a new Spanish crime drama titled *El Príncipe*, named after the Moroccan-populated area of Ceuta which is considered to be a hot-bed of crime, drug-trafficking and a ‘no-go’ area for tourists and even the police after dark. As a result of my limited and narrow knowledge of the city, it was with trepidation that I joined the queue for the ticket checks in Algeciras’ ferry terminal.

*Ceuta. The city whose borders are patrolled by both the Moroccan army and a radar used by the Spanish border guards to see you even at night, was still out of sight. Ikechi, a car mechanic perhaps from Sierra Leone, and his four companions rowed their inflatable boat northwards (in the direction of Algeciras) out into the straits of Gibraltar. As a result of previous failed attempts, the group had decided to evade the Guardia Civil by skirting around the coast of Ceuta and out of the range of the Guardia Civil’s SIVE defence system. This was Ikechi’s fourth attempt at reaching Spain by boat, having previously been intercepted and returned by Moroccan forces on each occasion. He still bore the scars of numerous crossing attempts via Ceuta’s infamous fences. Each time he had been pushed back by both the Moroccan and the Spanish forces and left to make his own way to the nearest hospital in Fnideq (Morocco’s closest border town). Four hours into their journey, the group altered their course and aimed their boat back towards Ceuta.*

The ferry itself was full. Around forty (mostly male) *Guardia Civil* officers in black uniforms and guns at their hips paced, lounged and chatted on the deck of the ferry. These were not ordinary *Guardia Civil*. These were the replacements for the *Guardia Civil's* elite border patrol unit, who had come to start their tour of duty on the border. Their role would be to act as a rapid response unit in order to prevent any attempts on the fences similar to the 2005 'attacks' when hundreds of migrants rushed the fences and had to be repelled by the Spanish and Moroccan gunfire (Soddu 2005). While their size and equipment suggested they were ready to enter a quasi-warzone, their lackadaisical mannerisms suggested otherwise. Posing no visible threat to the peace, I was ignored by the men and their guns and left to stare at the city that was becoming visible on the horizon.

*Less than five hundred meters from the coast, a Spanish Guardia Civil boat finally intercepted Ikechi's group. As they approached, the guards shouted "Calm, calm!" at Ikechi and his group in an effort to stop them from panicking and capsizing their small boat, and proceeded to guide them to the shore. Upon arrival the group was met by members of the Red Cross and, following a health assessment, Ikechi was brought to the local police station to spend the night in custody. The following day he was interviewed in order to ascertain his origins, reasons for coming, and ties to Europe. His finger prints were also taken by the police officers (with no possibility for refusal) in order to be checked and added to Europe's EURODAC<sup>95</sup> finger print database.*

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<sup>95</sup> The EURODAC Regulation established the EU asylum fingerprint database, used to decide which EU Member State is responsible for a person's asylum application.

I was lost. The map I had received from the Tourist Information Centre showed no indication of the existence of the *Centro de Instancia Temporal de Inmigrantes* (CETI), the enclave's 'open' detention centre for undocumented migrants. Google Maps, meanwhile, had directed me away from the town centre and up into the Moroccan quarter of the city, where I eventually found myself in the heart of *El Príncipe*, with the CETI nowhere in sight. The CETI, as it turned out, was quite literally 'Off the Map'<sup>96</sup> (Bonnett 2014b).

*After his interview with the police, Ikechi was taken to the CETI where he was given a CETI card containing his personal identification details. Arrival at the gates of the CETI signifies an undocumented migrant's 'formal arrival' in Ceuta, no longer returnable to the Moroccan side of the border. For Ikechi, admittance to the CETI also signified his integration into Europe's internal 'b/ordering' regime (van Houtum 2010). After being shown his bunk in an overcrowded (twelve bunk) room, Ikechi learned the rules of the camp: no alcohol may be consumed in the CETI, no food and drink may be brought in, he must return to the CETI by 11pm, he must not engage in paid work, and he must not engage in sexual activity within the CETI. Most importantly, however, it was made clear to him that, while he was free to leave the CETI during the day, he was no longer in control of his movements. There would be no time limit to either his stay in the CETI and in Ceuta itself. For the time being, therefore, he would be in a state of limbo, confined to the camp.*

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<sup>96</sup> When I returned in July 2015 the Maps directory had been updated, correctly showing the location of the CETI.

## 5.2 Of Camps and ‘Other’ Spaces

In the vignettes above, both Ikechi and I encountered various elements of the border apparatus employed by the EU and Spanish authorities in their efforts to control peoples’ movements to and from Ceuta. My relatively swift passage through passport control, compared to Ikechi’s many dangerous attempts highlights the global two-tiered system of global mobility (Wilson 2014). In the current context of securitised migration (Bigo 2002) and the need to encourage ‘good circulation’ while filtering out that which has been deemed ‘bad’ (Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008), undocumented migrants and refugees pose a threat to the current b/orderd status quo (van Houtum 2010; Khosravi 2010). Agamben (1998), for example, argues that nation-states have proved wholly incapable of acceptably receiving and managing refugees because they represent a ‘disquieting element’ of the modern political order “by breaking the continuity between man and citizen, nativity and nationality, they put the originary fiction of modern sovereignty in crisis” (Agamben 1995, p77). Indeed, much of the recent scholarship on asylum seekers and refugees has drawn on Agamben’s (1998) work concerning sovereignty, bare life and the state of exception (see Larsen and Piché 2009; Darling 2009; Dikeç 2009; Minca 2005, 2015). Ramadan (2013, p67) notes how studies of refugees and camps appear to be almost automatically tied to Agamben’s theories primarily since “Agamben offers a political philosophy that places the camp and the figure of *homo sacer* (a person banned from society and denied all rights) at the centre of the workings of modern politics”.

The camp represents the space in which the refugee can be included in the political order and sorted, while simultaneously being excluded from politics – a space where the exception becomes the rule (Agamben 1998). Here, the state creates a

space in which there is a different set of rules, while the normal laws are still in effect outside the camp (Jones 2012). Within the space of exception, a person becomes stripped of their rights while remaining subject to the law and without the power to change it (Diken 2004). In the context of European border control, however, ‘camps’ (such as detention centres, holding cells and airport interrogation rooms) are used to isolate and remove detainees from society or even the map (Mountz *et al* 2012; Bonnett 2014a). Through their sorting capabilities at the edges of ‘Fortress Europe’ they constitute a part of what Bigo (2002) refers to as the ‘ban-opticon’, where security efforts are directed towards risk management and the filtering *out* of ‘threats’ to be placed in “insecure zones of habitual jeopardy” (Vaughan-Williams 2015, p53). Through this logic, the camps are deemed necessary for the continued security/safety of the political and social body of the nation-state as they serve to reduce the ‘friction’ of movement otherwise imposed on those deemed to be ‘good circulation’ (Walters 2006; Agier 2010; Mountz *et al* 2012; Walters 2015; Minca 2015).

One of the criticisms laid against Agamben and ‘the camp’, however, is that his conceptualisations frequently have a flattening effect on the spaces he describes and examples he uses, thereby imposing a “totalizing frame onto diverse sites in global politics as if they all constituted an undifferentiated exceptional space” (Vaughan-Williams 2015, p55). For example, in his discussion of the ‘essence of the camp’, Agamben (1998) writes that we might come in to contact with ‘the camp’ whenever a structure is created in which bare life and the juridical rule enter a threshold of indistinction. Agamben (1998, p174, emphasis my own) continues by listing a series of examples:

The stadium in Bari into which the Italian police in 1991 provisionally herded all illegal Albanian immigrants before sending them back to their country [...] or the zones d'attentes in French international airports in which foreigners asking for refugee status are detained will then all equally be camps. In all these cases, an *apparently innocuous space* (for example, the Hotel Arcades in Roissy) actually delimits a space in which the normal order is de facto suspended and in which whether or not atrocities are committed depends not on law but on the civility and ethical sense of the police who temporarily act as sovereign.

Agamben, in other words, does not consider the specificities of the geographical spaces in which the camp can become materialised – depending instead solely on the political force of ‘the ban’. This has prompted the argument that Agamben’s camp is a “one-dimensional abstraction of juridical logic” that “closes off discourse about the specifics of [camps] at precisely the point that a study of political space really ought to contribute” (Comaroff 2007, p387). The second shortcoming often levelled at Agamben’s theory of the camp is that it leaves little to no room for identifying spaces and practices of resistance within its walls (Gregory 2006; Owens 2010; Mountz 2011b). In the context of its applicability to border and migration theory, therefore, migrants’ agency (the guile, energy and solidarity that has got them as far as the camp) is completely removed upon their insertion into this space (see Squire 2011; McNevin 2013; Johnson 2013). There is, therefore, something ‘ethnographically unsatisfying’ about Agamben’s contextually un-specific camp as an end point (O’Neill 2012).



This chapter picks up from where the previous one ended: in Ceuta. While previously the focus was on the border regime's strategies and technologies for enacting various forms of omni-*voyant* vision beyond the territorial boundaries of Europe, however, here I am interested in the spatial geographies encountered by the migrants upon their arrival in the enclave. My aim, therefore, is to go 'beyond Agamben' (Ramadan 2013) when analysing Spain's policy of indefinite detention of undocumented migrants in Ceuta by demonstrating how 'messy' (Law 2004) the bordering practices are within the enclave. To accomplish this aim, I introduce Foucault's concept of *heterotopia* – places of alternate social ordering (Hetherington 1997) – as a means of examining the peculiar spatialities and power relations at work within Ceuta and their effect on the migrants held captive within the enclave. My aim, however, is *not* to present an argument that Ceuta (and similar borderspaces) should be conceived of as a heterotopia *instead of* as Agambenian camps. While doing so might be a means of engaging with Agamben on 'his own terms' (Vaughan-Williams 2015), this would again ignore the geographical and 'messy' complexities of the borderspace which hinder migrants' mobilities. As the latter is my main concern, my intention is instead to hold both theories in productive tension and to use their *contradictions* as sites through which to make analytical cuts.

Foucault's (1986, p25) description of heterotopias of deviation, in particular, is similar to that of Agamben's (1998) camp as these heterotopias are spaces in which "individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed." While the camp (or perhaps Bentham's Panopticon), however, might theoretically render powerless those human subjects trapped within, they become heterotopia once *enacted*. Johnson (2006, p85), for example, asserts that "[t]he prison and asylum are open-ended, ambivalent and contradictory places, enclosures for both punishing and generating

criminals, for both liberating and morally imprisoning the mad. They are ideals full of fantasy, mirroring and at the same time inverting what is outside.” Lefebvre (2003), by contrast, presents the ambiguous spaces of exchange and trade outside the walls of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the ‘place of the other’. These spaces were inhabited by those treated with suspicion (e.g. traders, mercenaries and caravansaries) yet, despite being excluded, their activities were interwoven with the city. The rules and laws of the city stopped at its walls, however, as did the city lord’s protection. While having a key function in relation to the success of the city, therefore, it would also be the first to be sacrificed in the event of an attack.

Heterotopias, therefore, are located at the wild edges of society, such that some form of travel or expulsion from society is needed to reach them. Yet they frequently serve to “reinforce the stability of the society [...] Foucault says clearly that heterotopias can function both to contain the ‘deviant’ (retirement homes) and to provide the illusion of power (brothels). The spatiality in heterotopology is thus certainly dynamic, and nowhere normative” (Saldanha 2008, p2083). Bedoeltje (2012) partly covers these characteristics in his likening of the ‘other spaces’ at the borders of the EU with Foucault’s heterotopias of deviation. For Bedoeltje (2012, p10), these camps are disturbing spaces which unstitch and undermine the EU’s utopic dream of global democracy and shared well-being as, instead of offering solutions, they are “the spatial embodiment of the impossibility of a smooth common European space and are what Slavoj Zizek has termed the ‘inhuman indivisible remainder’ of today’s reality within the EU.” While this analysis of the EU’s heterotopic spaces along its borders does, therefore, highlight aspects of European society which are mirrored and subverted in Ceuta, *how* people are controlled in these spaces and *to what extent* this control is resisted against remains unclear.

In the first section of this chapter, I explore the ways in which migrants are controlled by the Spanish authorities to make them 'deportable' (De Genova 2002) through performing Ceuta as a space of humanitarianism. As Blomley (2003, p122) argues, space is "not only produced through performance, but is simultaneously a means of disciplining the performances that are possible within it". One of the core principles of heterotopias, writes Foucault (1986, 1994) is that they juxtapose many real, incompatible spaces in one site. An example, writes Topinka (2010, p57) is the theatre, "where diverse worlds, norms, and customs converge on the stage, represents a heterotopia of many spaces combined in one." In the following section, I argue that the Spanish authorities have succeeded in creating a space of indefinite detention by juxtaposing various incompatible performances of Ceuta; namely by portraying the enclave as both an essential space to be defended for the success of the Schengen Agreement, as well as being 'reterritorialised' as a 'humanitarian space' (Walters 2011a). By providing healthcare and Spanish lessons within the 'open' detention centre of the enclave, therefore, I demonstrate how the Spanish authorities have been able to legitimise and normalise the policy of restricting undocumented migrants' access to the mainland – even to those who have requested asylum.

Few of the migrants arriving in Ceuta, therefore, know when, or even if, they would ever leave the enclave. Read through Agamben's (1998) theory of the camp, moreover, the borders of the camp would be fixed and the migrants isolated from the rest of society. By contrast, the heterotopia is connected to many other places and does not operate on its own (Foucault 1986; Lazafani 2013). I argue the enclave functioned in relation to other spaces and, while it might have strong boundaries in the form of the infamous border fences, these are not completely sealed. Instead, a regular system of 'opening and closing' (Foucault 1986) was taking place as the enclave remains economically dependent on its Moroccan hinterland for labour

and commerce – though simultaneously reducing Moroccan citizens’ rights as much as possible (Mutlu and Leite 2010). Similarly, the Spanish authorities in the enclave were locked in a struggle not only to ‘fix’ the migrants with their ‘correct’ identities, but also to cooperate with the representatives of relevant embassies and the border authorities of other EU Member States in order to execute forced removals. In other words, the detention practices in the enclave were designed not just to ‘fix’ migrant identities (Mountz *et al* 2012) or to reduce them to a state of bare life (Agamben 1998). Instead, I argue that they served to decelerate and regulate migrant circulation through time, as well as space (Tsianos and Karakayali 2010), in order to function in combination with other sites among Europe’s border complex (Bedoeltje 2012). Ceuta did not, therefore, function as an *independent* space in which migrants could be reduced to something akin to ‘bare life’. Rather, enacting successful removals required the cooperation of various actors beyond the confines of the enclave over which the Spanish authorities had little control.

As a ‘camp’, therefore, Ceuta did not function as a monolithic structure in which ‘the state’ could exert uncontested top-down control. Instead, the enclave could be read as a “diverse, dynamic and at times divided assemblage in constant motion” (Ramadan 2013, p70) – the actors working together or, at times, ‘pulling apart’. Indeed, as Butler (2004, p56) writes, “Petty sovereigns abound, reigning in the midst of bureaucratic army institutions mobilized by aims and tactics of power they do not inaugurate or fully control.” By examining the untidy alliance between the police, the Ministry of the Interior, the staff of the enclave’s detention centre, the courts and the embassies, far-flung detention centres, and even Frontex, this chapter traces the infrastructures of power within the border enclave and draws attention to the ‘cracks’ which were evident within this network (Marx 2003).

Even though heterotopias are considered “sites that are ‘other’ to the norms of conventional space and time” (Foucault 1986, p24), as ‘performed spaces’ they nonetheless still contain physical and social boundaries where resources are available to some and not to others (Pile and Thrift 1995). In other words, they are sites in which resistance is never complete or, alternatively, where control is never complete (Hetherington 1997). Rather, as Sharp *et al* (2000, p29) argue, they are sites where “practices of resistance always become entwined in some manner with practices of domination such as marginalisation, segregation or imposed exile.” Unlike Agamben’s camp, therefore, resistance is possible inside a heterotopia – although neither success nor escape are guaranteed (Johnson 2006). In this chapter, therefore, I draw on Sharp *et al*’s (2000) arguments that domination and resistance are frequently *entangled* and de Certeau’s (1984) theories on the everyday tactics of resistance in order to make sense of the actions employed by the migrants in an effort to leave Ceuta. In particular, I argue that the means through which Ceuta was transformed into a space of indefinite detention (i.e. through its portrayal as a ‘humanitarian space’) and the networked relations that made this possible had a unique effect on the ways in which migrants were disciplined and regulated *themselves*. I demonstrate how migrants in the enclave were disciplined (and regulated themselves) into adopting the identity of the ‘*moruno*’, which further exacerbated the ‘slowness’ of the indefinite detention. Moreover, the ‘slow time’ of Ceuta (Sharma 2012) did not result in the sorting of migrants into the deserving or the non-deserving as the migrants thought it would. Instead, by being entered into the EURODAC database, I

argue that they were being (intentionally)<sup>97</sup> fixed as ‘illegal’ before being transported to the mainland, where their ‘slow time’ would continue (van der Ploeg 1999; Schuster 2011).

### 5.3 ‘Humanitarian’ Detention

Following Spain’s accession to the Schengen Agreement in 1991, the increased geopolitical importance of Spain’s borders as a gateway to Europe lead to the strengthening of both Ceuta and Melilla’s border defences through new securitisation techniques with financial assistance from EU institutions (Ferrer-Gallardo 2006). The Schengen Agreement has long been seen as the reason for the increased securitisation of Europe’s external borders (Andrijasevic 2010) as well as “the starting point for a wide range of instruments for the registration and surveillance of large population groups in the countries concerned” (Broeders 2007 p77). If becoming part of the Schengen Agreement required a tough stance on border control, however, the Agreement also demonstrated a surprising amount of elasticity towards facilitating the cross-border movement of ‘desirable’ non-EU citizens. As the city depends economically on its Moroccan hinterland, an exemption was written in to the Schengen Agreement allowing visa-less (day) access to both Ceuta and Melilla for Moroccan citizens from the neighbouring provinces (Ferrer-Gallardo and Albet-Mas 2013). As a result, each day about 40,000 Moroccan citizens legally cross the border into Ceuta, most of whom work as day labourers for the Spanish citizens of the city (Lehtinen 2010). They are restricted from overnighting within the enclave and strict port security (including passport checks) ensures that

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<sup>97</sup> As the reader will soon discover, deciding *whose* intent this is will be hard to pin down. As Ophir (2007, p30) argues on the subject of torture and the turnstiles introduced on Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, for example, “it was an unintended consequence of the new regime of movement.”

only those with EU citizenship or the correct visa can pass to the mainland. In the context of ‘undocumented migration’ to Europe, after the readjustments of the Schengen Agreement, Ceuta was transformed into an exceptional ‘buffer zone’ (Vives 2011) between Africa and Europe. Unlike mainland Spain, the enclave has no *Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros* (CIE) – detention centres with a maximum time limit of two months (Global Detention Project 2016). Nor does it have a centre wherein migrants can be accommodated for a maximum period of six months while their asylum claims are processed, known as *Centros de Acogida a Refugiados* (CAR). Instead, the creation of the *Centro de Instancia Temporal de Inmigrantes* (CETI), a ‘temporary’ reception centre (with no maximum stay period) for migrants needing humanitarian support, ensures that undocumented migrants who arrived in the enclave can be ‘supported’ for an indefinite period of time (De Sordi 2014). As a result, even though migrants are free to come and go between the hours of 9.00am and 11.00pm<sup>98</sup>, the enclave has been likened to a camp-like space in which the detainees are reduced to something approaching bare life (see Johnson 2013).

On my first visit to the CETI, the first signs of its existence were the shouts which echoed down the hillside from what, Ikechi explained, was a football match being played in CETI’s outdoor football pitch. The CETI, it transpired was located on the outskirts of the city and sandwiched between the rescue centre for cats and dogs and the local stables. As we turned another corner along the hill’s windy road, I saw the green fence atop a cement wall which prevented any view of the CETI

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<sup>98</sup> During the second month of my fieldwork, however, the CETI administration extended the opening hours to 12.00pm due to Islamic festival of Ramadan, so that the CETI inhabitants could attend the prayers and communal dinners organised by the local mosques which would not start until 10pm.

itself. As we turned the final bend, first the communal showers and then the gatehouse became visible. While the showers were a hub of activity, men and women casually walked up to the turnstiles, pressed their cards to the scanners and passed through the gates of the centre. I, on the other hand, presented my letter of permission from the Ministry of the Interior (which had taken weeks and numerous applications to obtain) at the guardhouse. This was one of the only places in Europe, I realised as I spotted Ikechi waiting patiently for me, where achieving access was harder for me than it was for him. I was not envious.

In an office just beyond the guardhouse, complete with leather seats, wooden cabinets and football trophies (won by previous residents of the CETI against local teams), Diego, an administrator at the CETI, clarified that the main purpose of the CETI was to act as the initial reception centre for migrants arriving in Ceuta and to provide them with food, clothing and a health check-up. “We also have a psychologist who attends to them,” Diego added, “and a legal team who can advise and explain to them [the migrants] what their rights and obligations are and, in particular, inform them about the possibility of requesting asylum”. The second role of the CETI, Diego clarified further, is to facilitate the integration of migrants into European society: “We have classrooms for Spanish courses. If their intention is to integrate into Spanish society, to be welcomed from the beginning, then it’s fundamental that they learn the language.”

As another of the CETI administrative staff commented on our tour of the CETI, however, in recent years it had become increasingly difficult to offer lessons to the migrants due to the CETI being overcrowded. “All the classrooms have been converted for bed space,” she explained as we passed a Red Cross worker giving a Spanish lesson to a class of twenty



migrants in the hallway, “we’re operating beyond full capacity”. Diego, too, admitted that overcrowding and CETI demographics were serious issues facing the CETI administration: “We’ve been experiencing mass overcrowding in the centre since 2013, we currently have far more residents than the normal capacity of the centre. The capacity of this centre is estimated at 512, right now we have about 700 [...] In this year 846 immigrants have entered [Ceuta], from January to July. In June [there were] 200, it’s the month with the most. It’s normal, and in July...35 people have entered in the first five days of the month.”

Despite the overcrowding in the centre, to those newly arrived in Ceuta, the CETI provided a welcome respite from the constant threat of the Moroccan National Guard and the inhabitants of local villages. Moreover, the residents would make regular use of the ‘open’ function of the CETI. Comings and goings through the turnstiles at the front entrance were incessant throughout the day, as residents found reasons in the town centre to leave the CETI. Weeks before my arrival, the residents of the CETI had even been permitted to organise an annual event called the ‘The Day of Africa’, an event celebrating the anniversary of the creation of the Organisation of African Unity. In the spirit of integration, football and basketball games were organised against local teams (including a team consisting of CETI guards), African movies were shown, poetry was read and dances were organised. On the surface, at least, integration with the local community was being pursued by the CETI administration and the centre was functioning as a place for the benefit of the arrivals in the enclave. As I will argue in this section, however, the projection of the CETI (and by extension the enclave) as a ‘humanitarian’ space was being used to conceal and normalise the Spanish authorities’ practices of indefinitely detaining undocumented migrants in the enclave until their removals could be ensured.

### 5.3.1 Indefinite Reception

“You don’t expect me to believe that most of them are coming here to claim asylum, do you?” The words of Lucas, the senior *Guardia Civil* officer, and the way it was used as a justification for the border (replete with barbed wire fencing), weighed heavily on my mind while I conducted my fieldwork in Ceuta. He had shared this thought with me in the SIVE control centre as we looked at the barbed wire fences of the enclave through the cameras and in response to my suggestion that migrants should be given easier access to the asylum centre at El Tarajal. The fact of the matter was, however, that very few of the migrants who arrived in the CETI were claiming asylum. Applying for asylum came at a cost, however, namely the prospect of extra time in Ceuta. Even though Spanish law permits unhindered travel throughout Spain for asylum seekers (Tyszler 2015), those who apply for asylum while in the CETI will not be transported to the mainland until they have won their case. “Even those who claim asylum here must solicit for permission to travel to the mainland, it’s a very difficult process but it’s possible” explained Francisco,<sup>99</sup> the police officer in the *Brigada Provincial de Extranjeria y Fronteras de Ceuta*, the branch responsible for enforcing border control at a local level. Moreover, winning an asylum case once in Ceuta (as opposed to at the El Tarajal asylum centre) can take months, if not years. While the required time frame under Spanish law to make a decision on an asylum case is six months, a UNHRC report (2015) stated that asylum claims in the enclaves frequently take between two and five years to complete (with 57% of asylum cases in Melilla dragging on

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<sup>99</sup> Francisco worked in the *Brigada Provincial de Extranjeria y Fronteras de Ceuta*, the branch responsible for enforcing border control at a local level.

for seven or more years).<sup>100</sup> The same UNHRC (2015) report similarly highlighted the resulting drop in asylum claims in Ceuta, down from 505 in 2011 to just 203 in 2012.

This practice of indefinitely detaining asylum seekers was, however, not a straightforward suspension of normal law in an Agambenian sense. Similar to what Gregory's (2006) analysis of Guantánamo Bay and the international (legal) architectures of state power that underpin its existence shows, Ceuta does not exist *outside* the law (Ferrer-Gallardo 2008; Sánchez 2014). The indefinite detention of asylum seekers in Ceuta was accomplished through the enclave's 'reterritorialisation' as a humanitarian space (Walters 2011a), as well as the 'layered legalities' (Steinberg *et al* 2015) created by its position outside of the Schengen zone. "Here we have a very special set of border regulations" explained Francisco when I asked him why asylum seekers could not travel to the mainland. He continued to explain the situation using a religious metaphor:

"Most border regions have special agreements with their neighbours," he continued, "and in the case of Ceuta (similar to Melilla) we have an agreement where our neighbours, the inhabitants of the Province of Tetuán [...] What is the consequence of this? Well, when Spain entered into the Schengen Agreement, we insisted on keeping this exception [...] It's the European legislation that dictates that we maintain control of the port. We are not allowed to let undocumented people cross to the mainland [...] So what happens when a foreigner

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<sup>100</sup> Data for Ceuta specifically was not represented.

[non-European citizen] enters Ceuta, I don't know if you are religious, but let's say they enter a kind of purgatory, they won't go to heaven.”

Francisco's description of mainland Spain being like 'heaven' is very similar to the usual migration discourse which paints Spain (though often including the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla) as the Kingdom of El Dorado (Vives 2011). His metaphor for Ceuta, however, being like purgatory was particularly striking as it highlighted the temporal punishment for undocumented migrants attempting to reach Europe. Indeed, the most striking aspect of previous ethnographic research conducted in Ceuta is not the quality of the living conditions for migrants in the enclave, rather the time that migrants have been forced remain in Ceuta despite gaining access to the EU when crossing the border (e.g. Collyer 2007; Nair 2008 and Andersson 2014a; 2014b). These works mention cases of people being trapped in Ceuta without hope of a legal transfer to the mainland. Johnson (2011), for example, noted that “the 'waiting time' for migrants [in Melilla] not only regularly exceeds three years but also frequently ends not in residence in Spain, but in deportation to the country of origin” (p216). Yet Francisco clearly insisted that this enforced stasis in purgatory was as a result of the EU and the Schengen Agreement's effective trumping of Spanish law.

The Spanish government has also regularly used the Schengen Agreement as an argument to withhold transfers to the mainland for asylum seekers. Indeed, it has repeatedly been challenged over this policy by numerous groups and

organisations including the UNHRC, the *Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado* (CEAR)<sup>101</sup> and the Spanish Ombudsman's Office (UNHRC, personal communication; Tyszler 2015; López-Sala and Godenau 2016). Moreover, decisions by the local court of Ceuta, the Superior Court of Andalusia<sup>102</sup> and the Superior Court of Madrid<sup>103</sup> establishing the right to freedom of movement for asylum seekers beyond the enclave have (at the time of writing) not been implemented by the authorities (UNHRC, personal communication). In the second court case,<sup>104</sup> the *Comisaría General de Extranjería y Fronteras* had argued previously that an asylum seeker (from Mali) should not receive the right to work or travel to the mainland because they “do not meet the criteria for extraordinary circumstances, on humanitarian grounds nor in the public interest” and that, on the contrary, Spain's obligation to adhere to the Agreement set out in the Schengen accord prevent them from authorising his travel to the mainland (p2). The court, however, ruled that this argument was not aligned with Spanish law and found that the ‘subsidiary protection’ afforded to the asylum seeker upon their claim for asylum included the right to travel to throughout Spain – including the mainland (p7). In other words, even though the courts have pronounced the legal *right* of asylum seekers to travel to the mainland, this right is not being *applied* by the authorities in Ceuta unless asylum seekers engage in a legal battle following their asylum claims.

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<sup>101</sup> The Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid (CEAR) is a nongovernmental organization founded in 1979, based on voluntary action, humanitarian principles, independence and pluralism. Their goal is to work with citizens to defend the rights of those seeking asylum.

<sup>102</sup> Sentencia del Tribunal Superior de Andalucía de 20 Marzo 2014, nº recurso: 51/2014 .

<sup>103</sup> Sentencia del Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Madrid, de 11 de Mayo de 2015, PO 1088/2014.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

In addition to fighting numerous court cases, in early 2015 the government was forced to explain to the Parliament why asylum seekers were being detained in Ceuta for an indefinite period of time and why no CARs had been created in the enclaves (El Faro 2015). The government was also asked if it was aware of the fact that the CETIs are “not the most suitable places for [accommodating] asylum seekers” (El Faro 2015). In its response,<sup>105</sup> the government argued that the CETIs in Ceuta and Melilla are well-equipped to act as reception centres for asylum seekers who arrive at either enclave as they receive: “housing, clothing, food, cleanliness & hygiene and security” in the CETI (p96). The official response also highlighted the fact that asylum seekers also receive “specialised services including health programs (with personal health checks), trainings, social activities, sport and cultural events and activities, as well as legal advice and social care.” (p96). Instead of considering new options for hastening the transport of asylum seekers to the mainland, the report concluded by issuing a reminder that the infrastructure and maintenance costs of the CETI would, following a negotiation between the Spanish government and the European Commission, be covered by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and that as a result, the reception conditions and capacities of the CETIs will be improved. In other words, the ‘open’ CETI had become part of the border apparatus; the resources and freedoms allowed therein used to defend this indefinite process of detention. “They are well looked after in the CETI, they sleep, they get medical attention, they have activities, and they get language courses” maintained Francisco, without acknowledging the paradox of giving Spanish language lessons to people he was working to remove from Spain. In other words, the CETI and the numerous aid agencies delivering care and

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<sup>105</sup> Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales, 11 de febrero de 2015, page 96.

‘integration opportunities’ to the migrants in the enclave functioned much like a border apparatus – sustaining ‘bare life’ while other forms of political life were being whittled away (Azoulay and Ophir 2013).

### 5.3.2 ‘Humanitarian Transfers’

Migrants can occasionally be granted permission to travel to the mainland soon after their arrival in the enclave through ‘humanitarian transfers’ (UNHRC 2015, personal communication). A list of particularly vulnerable people would be regularly drawn up and sent to the Ministry of Interior by the CETI administration containing names of the migrants who had arrived with their children, who had been in the CETI for more than six months, possible victims of torture, those in need of medical attention on the mainland, and those who have claimed asylum while in the enclave (Tyszler 2015). Beyond drawing up this list, however, even the administrators of the CETI did not know when or even if someone will be released to the mainland: “We try to explain it to them [the migrants] when they arrive here... we don’t know for how long they will be here either... That it is the Ministry of Interior who will decide.” The Spanish Commission for Refugees (CEAR) and the UNHRC have regularly criticised the seemingly arbitrary application of the humanitarian transfer procedures to the mainland (UNHRC, personal communication; Tyszler 2015).

The Spanish authorities’ practice of indefinitely detaining asylum seekers in Ceuta (whilst fast-tracking those in need of humanitarian aid) demonstrates Europe’s prioritisation of compassionate attention to individual suffering over political resistance to political regimes (Daniel and Knudsen 1995; Fassin 2005, 2011). Indeed, this practice demonstrated how in the current European economic and political climate “it is now the suffering body that society is prepared to recognize [...]

the search for a common humanity resides in the recognition of bare life, that of the physical alterations of the body” (Fassin 2005, p372). Moreover, the practice of allowing quick transport of individuals in need of emergency humanitarian aid further helped create an impression of a compassionate state operating through the CETI while simultaneously blurring the distinctions between those not transported through humanitarian transfer such that they could be detained indefinitely or become deportable.

Focusing on the role of the CETI in the EU’s border complex highlights Lemke’s (2005) argument that Agamben’s (1998) conception of the spaces of exception is both too state-centred and ignores the political transformations of the state since the Nazi era. Indeed, control of the bordering processes in Ceuta could be seen to emanate not from “a given centre of official authority” (Walters 2011a, p152). Instead, power in the enclave was dispersed throughout a network of actors, located both above and below the ‘national level’ (see Allen and Cochrane 2010; Painter 2006). Indeed, this resonates with Foucault’s (1979, p77) arguments concerning the state in which he stresses that the state “has no heart in the sense that it has no interior. The state is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities.” In Ceuta, therefore, the local police, CETI administration, Red Cross, the Ministry of Interior and the courts (local and national) could, to a certain extent, be considered ‘petty sovereigns’ as they worked within the confines of the EU’s Schengen Agreement (Butler 2004). That is not to say, however, that these actors always worked towards the same aims. For example, while the government pursued a goal of indefinite detention in Ceuta, the courts were rejecting decisions made by the Ministry of Interior in order to grant passage to the mainland to asylum seekers in the enclave. Ceuta was, therefore, far from a homogenous space (Lemke 2005; Ramadan 2013). Instead, ‘state’ power in Ceuta was demonstrably multi-faceted and



occasionally conflicted (Jones 2009), yet it remained held together through the humanitarian ‘reterritorialising’ of the enclave. Remaining ‘held together’ and ‘functioning’ are, of course, very different. The following section sets out the significant barriers faced by the Spanish authorities in their attempts at removing those deemed to be ‘bad circulation’ despite their theoretical ability to detain indefinitely in the enclave.

#### 5.4 Connecting Spaces

Detention is considered necessary by states for fixing the bodies and identities of migrants in a particular space and time in order to execute a deportation order (Mountz *et al* 2012). Francisco’s argument for this practice of indefinite detention in Ceuta was no different. The ability to indefinitely detain migrants in the enclave was used by the police to organise forced returns which they might otherwise not have managed under the conditions of the mainland. As Francisco explained:

“Our biggest problem is that we don’t know where all these people come from, all we know is that 99% of them lie about something concerning their journey, and it’s most likely where it is that they come from. We can do our best, mainly through interviews in order to find out where they’re from, but that takes time, you can’t do that in 20 minutes or 24 hours.”

Francisco’s initial assertion that nationalities could not be identified in a space of minutes was, I felt, flippant considering the months people were being forced to stay in Ceuta. Moreover, when pushed on the length of time undocumented migrants could expect to have to stay in the CETI Francisco was exceptionally vague: “The time [they stay in Ceuta] depends

on when we exhaust our possibilities [for removing them].” When asked if this amount of time could be years Francisco somewhat reluctantly responded: “Well, normally no [...] you have people who are here two months and you have others who are here six months. There is no set time [...] Our task is not to [simply] detain them here, it has a motive.” Interestingly, Francisco’s ‘motive’ never stretched beyond the aim of organising forced returns. “No, this isn’t some kind of punishment,” he maintained when asked if the motive extended to sending a message to the migrants still in the forests beyond the border.

Those deemed to be removable would, however, first have to be transferred to the mainland as, according to Spanish law, migrants can only be removed to their ‘country of origin’ from a CIE (UNHRC 2015 personal communication) – thus maintaining the performance of the CETI (and Ceuta) being a ‘humanitarian space’. The length of time that someone could be detained in Ceuta, therefore, depended on whether the police and the Ministry of the Interior deemed it likely that a return could be organised after transportation to the CIE within two months. Ceuta, therefore, represented an exceptional space where every undocumented migrant could potentially be detained for an indefinite period of time, depending on the arbitrary decision of whether or not the police and the Ministry of Interior believed they could forcibly remove them. It transpired, however, that the likelihood of organising a removal depended on factors conditions and actors within the border regime far beyond the borders of the enclave.

If the struggle between undocumented migrants and the state could be considered a ‘cat and mouse’ game before the walls of Fortress Europe (van Houtum 2010), the nature of the game had clearly changed for those trapped in Ceuta. Speed had

been the migrants' best form of defence while in Morocco. Their registration in the CETI (exempting them from immediate return to Morocco) had, however, also rendered them immobile. 'Slowness', therefore, typified the tactics of both sides in the enclave. Sharma (2013, p11) argues that in modern Western societies "[t]ime becomes a resource, commodity, and sequence of events that can be managed and controlled. A technology that saves time, then, is in fact a spatially biased technology". In Ceuta, the flip-side of this argument became observable. By controlling the migrants at a distance from the mainland, it was possible for the Ministry of Interior to stretch the time migrants could be detained in the enclave.

This form of 'remote control' did not, however, mean that the camp-like space of Ceuta operated in a vacuum. Instead, as understood through Foucault's (1986) theory of heterotopia, Ceuta was a space "of stuck between two elsewheres" (Agier 2010, p3), yet one that remained connected to them nonetheless. Despite being able to detain the undocumented migrants in the enclave for an indefinite period of time, the Spanish authorities were dependent on both the representatives of 'friendly' embassies, as well as the happenings in other detention centres across the EU. In the CETI, Diego highlighted this latter point when we discussed what would happen if a group of migrants in Ceuta declared to be from Mali (with whom the Spanish government has a repatriation agreement):

"Normally yes, they are taken to the mainland...where I suppose, these are estimates because I don't know the function or the criteria used by the Ministry of the Interior, but I suppose that for Mali they would have to charter a plane... of course you're not going to charter a plane for ten [deportees]. What capacity does a plane have, about 400? Well once you have 400 you can put them on the plane and remove them."

To the Spanish authorities, therefore, Ceuta did not simply function as a space in which the police had more time to assess the true nationality of each migrant and arrange for visits from embassy representatives. Instead, by prolonging the stay of people with specific (presumed) nationalities in Ceuta, it becomes possible to increase the deportability of undocumented migrants throughout the rest of Spain. Frontex's (2016b) relatively new policy of organising joint returns between EU Member States, moreover, meant that the pool of detainees in Ceuta could potentially make undocumented migrants throughout the rest of the EU more deportable. Regardless of this link between other detention centres, however, the Spanish authorities also depended on the cooperation of embassies on the mainland and their willingness to send representatives to verify migrant nationalities and, thereafter to issue the required travel documents.

At the time of my interviews, a group of men from Cameroon had recently been transported to the CIE on the mainland to be returned to Cameroon. Kamara, a young man from Mali, explained how the rest of the CETI inhabitants had been left in a state of shock as the removal had happened so quickly and almost none had witnessed forced removals from the CETI before: "A week or so after the people from the embassy visited the CETI, the Guardia came with a bus to the CETI early in the morning and entered the rooms where there were Cameroonians and took them out before anyone knew what was happening. It was scary, everybody was worried after that." Far from being a regular occurrence in the enclave, however, it transpired that forced removals to the mainland from the CETI were a rarity. Aside from the issues of attaching a 'correct' nationality to each new arrival, the police also faced the difficulty of regularly persuading representatives of the relevant embassies to come to Ceuta to verify nationality claims and to issue travel documents. Indeed, if the Spanish authorities'

policy was to reduce the movement of the migrants' bodies indefinitely, the embassies similarly refused to hasten proceedings. As Francisco explained in an exasperated tone:

“What takes up the most amount of time is communicating with the embassies to try and organise returns. This has to be done on an individual basis, even for the ones where we know their embassy won't cooperate with us, we still have to try. But you know embassies [makes hand rolling movement] they take their time over these things.”

Following the transfer of the group from Cameroon to the CIE there was a palpable feeling of anxiety in the camp amongst new arrivals who were also from Cameroon. They arrived to find themselves as deportees *in potentia* as they waited to be removed from the CETI overnight. Many spent their days and nights in Ceuta worrying about whether or not the group who had been taken to the CIE had been deported back to Cameroon, and cursing their government for being 'weak'. They also worried about the length of time they might have to wait in Ceuta before a deal was reached between the Cameroonian embassy and the Spanish government. Yet as the days, then weeks and then months dragged on, it became increasingly clear that the representatives from the Cameroonian embassy would not be coming back to the enclave to process the new arrivals. Word eventually trickled back from the Cameroonian group in the CIE that they had not, in fact, been removed from the country. Instead, they had all claimed asylum while in the CIE and were waiting for their applications to be processed. Though I never definitively found out whether or not the group was removed to Cameroon, the incident highlighted yet another barrier for the Spanish authorities to overcome. By delaying their asylum claims until after they

had been transferred from the enclave, the group was potentially able to delay their removal orders at least until their chartered plane had departed.

The short story concerning the Cameroonians who had been transferred to the CIE also highlights how Ceuta did not just operate in connection with other spaces for the Spanish authorities. While satellites and radars had been employed by the Frontex, the Guardia Civil and other border agencies to halt the migrants' journeys before reaching Ceuta, communications technologies were simultaneously playing a part in their struggles against the local police's bordering attempts. As Collyer (2007) has already set out, mobile phones are an invaluable resource for people on the move to stay in contact with family members, to receive and negotiate money transfers, and to organise their travel. In Ceuta, however, mobile applications such as Viber<sup>106</sup> were also being used to provide a warning to those about to attempt the crossing that a nationality would be demanded of them upon arrival and that their chances of reaching the mainland would depend on their answer. Although the Cameroonians above had not been warned in time, it transpired that they were the exception rather than the norm. Kamara, for example, explained that he had been warned by friends he had met in the forest but who had travelled to Ceuta before him that he should pretend to be from Guinea, rather than his native Mali or else he might be sent back due to Mali's extradition agreement with Spain:

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<sup>106</sup> Viber is an application similar to Skype that uses internet connection to call other phone numbers for free.

“I used to spend a long time talking to people who had already made it to Ceuta and the mainland, asking them how it is and what I should do. The people I knew in Ceuta all said I had to pretend I am from Guinea Conakry if I made it, I didn’t understand but I trusted them.”

This ‘tactic’ of communicating the strategies of control to other migrants *before* they arrive can be understood as a ‘*perruque*’. For de Certeau (1984) the idea of the *perruque* “is used to describe how people trapped within a system find ways to subvert that system through a series of tricks, disguises or subtle forms of disobedience (Cupples 2009, p120).” While the examples that de Certeau (1984) mentions of the *perruque* are mostly focused on wasting company time, he is certain that their existence is widespread and occurs in government spaces. De Certeau’s (1984) theories of resistance focus on the tactics of ‘making do’ with the tools, graft and materials that are available at hand, such that while government strategies can impose new spaces of control, “tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces” (de Certeau 1984, p30) and, in contrast to discipline which attempts to fix identities, “tactics work to destabilise and hybridise them” (Cupples 2009, p116). Indeed, as a result of the collaboration and sharing of ‘know-how’ between the new arrivals and the migrants already in the enclave, the police’s tactic of interviewing migrants before allowing them into the CETI in order to ascertain their true country of origin was failing on a regular basis. As Francisco complained:

“We have about 300 people supposedly from Guinea currently in the CETI but I doubt that more than 50 of them are actually from there. Of course these people are very clever. They look at the map before they enter and see that

Guinea is currently a country with big difficulties and it's unlikely that we'll return anyone from there – so of course when they enter the first thing they tell us is that they're from Guinea”.

The combined difficulty of identifying migrants' nationalities and the embassies' refusal to regularly send representatives, organising forced removals had become almost impossible for Ceuta's police. This lack of movement had been causing a blockage of migrants in the enclave for the previous two years. Moreover, of the 846 migrants who had managed to enter Ceuta between January and June (2015), only a fraction had been transported to the CIE on the mainland for removal due to the police's inability to determine their country of origin and a lack of repatriation agreements. “I can tell you how many [undocumented migrants] have gone to a CIE,” said Diego without needing to refer to a file on his computer, “in this year [...] the number of people brought to a CIE by the police does not reach fifteen [...] And they're from certain specific countries, principally Cameroon and Algeria. Last year they took twenty.”

As a result of the consequent of the over-crowding of the CETI and calls from opposition parties and NGOs to reduce it, the Spanish Ministry of the Interior has been forced to alter its planned indefinite detention in the enclave (El País 2014; UNHRC 2015). Previously, undocumented migrants could only reach the mainland with severe health problems, at the time of my fieldwork, around sixty migrants were being transported to reception centres run by NGOs on the mainland per month. “Look, I'll give you another figure,” continued Diego after seeing my surprised expression, “last year, the average stay in the centre was 124 days, that's the average. The ones who left were here for... just over four months. This year... the number will be lowered, but of course I'm giving you the average.”



As a space from which removals could be organised, therefore, Ceuta did not function as a camp closed-off from the rest of Europe's borderscape, rather it was intended to play a role in relation to similar 'other spaces' within the border regime so that forced returns can be more easily enacted. At the time of my visit in summer 2015, however, these external connections were failing from the point of view of the Spanish authorities as instead they were acting as more of a barrier to the removal of migrants from Spain. Moreover, lack of removals and the continued inflow of migrants to the CETI had forced the Ministry of the Interior into organising monthly transportations (called *Laissez-Passer* by the migrants) to the mainland for those it had decided could not be removed in the short term. Most of the migrants that I met in the CETI, therefore, did not experience Ceuta as a space of indefinite detention, seeing it instead as a space of disciplining and waiting. The following section examines how the migrants in the enclave rationalised the structure of their confinement as one aimed at selecting 'deserving' migrants (who could follow European rules) for transportation to the mainland. In response to this, I argue that the migrants adopted the identity of the submissive '*moruno*' in the hopes of assuring their transfer to the mainland.

### 5.5 Becoming *Moruno*

Writing within the context of 'borderless' humanitarian agencies such as *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF), Debrix (1998) argues that reterritorialisation involves making new places but also the making of "new identities along new lines" (p832). Within the supposedly 'borderless' reterritorialised spaces operated on by the MSF individuals must assume a new form of social identity, namely that of the globally recognised 'victim' (Debrix 1998). Similarly, Agier (2002, p333, emphasis original) argues that "*camps create identity*, both ethnic and non-ethnic, even more so than they reproduce, maintain or

reinforce ethnicity.”<sup>107</sup> In the context of waiting, Bourdieu (2000) writes that the process of “[w]aiting implies submission: the interested aiming at something greatly desired durably [...] modifies the behaviour of the person who ‘hangs’ [...] on the awaiting decision” (p228). In Ceuta a similar process was taking place, where new migrants to assume the identity of the ‘*moruno*’. Though the word *moruno* literally means someone of Moorish descent, the term is used by the local Ceutí to refer to the migrants at the border and those residing in the CETI. While it is not often used in an overtly derogatory fashion, the word highlights a difference between ‘normal’ migrants and the migrants who use ‘illegal’ means to enter the city.

Similar to the construction of MSF’s victim, the migrants in Ceuta felt there was a similar assumption that being a *moruno* meant having few prospects for social advancement and that they were, to a certain extent, to be pitied or looked down upon by the locals. As Gereh, a young man who used to own a shop in Guinea noted as we sat on the wave breakers staring at the twinkling lights of Algeciras: “I need to leave this place. Here I am only ‘moruno’, I can achieve nothing here... They call us ‘*moruno*’ as if they are sick of us, but one day they will call me Mr.” For others, being called *moruno* was a reminder of the fact that they were outsiders: “Hey *moruno* this, or *moruno* that!”, fumed Eric, “it’s just another way for Europeans to show us how we are different.” Despite being ‘free’ to leave the CETI during the day, the migrants were restricted from access to legal while detained on the enclave itself. The ‘openness’ of the CETI did little to reduce the violence of being immobilised (Agier 2010), as those detained in the enclave were deprived of their free mobility until the police and the

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<sup>107</sup> Ophir (2000) also highlights how trauma can lead to the subsequent (voluntary) adoption of the identity of the ‘victim’, such that ‘victimhood’ can extend throughout numerous generations.

Ministry of the Interior had decided that their detention no longer served a purpose. Within the confines of the small enclave, immobility and idleness could be more easily forced upon the migrants than in Europe's larger urban environments on the mainland. Days, therefore, passed slowly for the migrants living in the CETI as they realised they were stuck in the enclave and tried to find ways of killing time. As a result of their forced idleness, the CETI inhabitants could regularly be found throughout the city, sitting silently in the shade or attempting to help locals park their cars and carry shopping in return for spare coins.

As well as being purposefully excluded from society through their inability to work, migrants in Ceuta were subjected to the disciplinary techniques of the Spanish authorities through their enforced stasis. As Bourdieu (2000) writes, "making people wait, without destroying hope [...] is an integral part of the exercise of power – especially in the case of powers which [...] depend significantly on the belief of the 'patient' and which work through aspirations, on and through time, by controlling time and the rate of fulfilment of expectations" (p228). While there were no locked cells or daily head counts used in the CETI to reaffirm the state's control over the migrants' bodies (Mountz *et al* 2012), strict curfew rules as well as warnings of expulsion from the CETI for creating disturbances had the same function. Moreover, while the CETI administration had made it clear they did not have the power decide on who could be transferred to the mainland, the CETI's inhabitants, on the other hand, were certain that breaking the rules of the CETI would result in more time spent in limbo. Near the end of my fieldwork in Ceuta a Guinean man was permitted to travel to the mainland after spending six months in Ceuta. He celebrated with his friends by getting drunk and, when he attempted to return to the CETI, punched a guard at the gate after being refused entry. Following his arrest, the mood in amongst the migrants in the enclave was

tense as they waited to find out what would happen to him. “Well, he’ll probably be stuck here for ever” chuckled Boubacar, clearly unimpressed with his compatriot’s misdemeanour. To the confusion of the CETI residents, the Guinean was released from custody after two nights and readmitted to the CETI the next week. More surprisingly, however, was the fact that he was transferred to the mainland the next month, despite his drunken act.<sup>108</sup> Despite the fact that he was eventually released, most of the people in the CETI rationalised Ceuta and its concomitant rules as a test or, a rite of passage, designed to find the most deserving and the strongest characters: “It’s OK,” answered Mohammed, a young man from Mali, when I asked him about living in the CETI and the rules being applied to him in Ceuta, “We should learn how to behave in the European way if we want to live there [...] They need to see that we can learn and respect the rules.”

As a result of the time it takes to (potentially) receive refugee status in Ceuta and the regular transportations to the mainland due to the overcrowding in the CETI, few of the migrants wanted to risk applying for asylum. Waiting for the *Laissez-Passer* and adopting the identity of the ‘*moruno*’ in the meantime was, in contrast, viewed as a successful strategy. “He is totally blocked!” exclaimed Mohammed when we discussed whether or not his friend, Diallo, had been wise to apply for asylum in Ceuta. “Why would I apply for asylum here? I want to leave here and not stay here any longer than I have to. I will go to Madrid when I get my ‘Laissez-passer’ and try to get my papers. They [Spanish government] give you permission to stay every three months and maybe after a year if you live straight and don’t cause problems they will give you papers... But

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<sup>108</sup> In later conversations with migrants with whom I managed to stay in contact with after leaving Ceuta, most referred to this incident when discussing how in actual fact their actions in Ceuta mattered little towards the CETI administration or the police. However, they only realised this after being transferred from Ceuta.

for Diallo, even he doesn't know when he will leave here. He thinks it will be about nine months, that's what the lawyer in the CETI told him." It is important to note that the migrants in Ceuta mainly informed themselves of EU laws and regulations through the other (migrant) contacts they made in the CETI or through connections (family and friends) already in Europe.<sup>109</sup> Therefore a lot of their assumptions were being made based on false information. For example, Diallo expected to receive regularization papers in Spain after three years, which would only have been the case had he travelled directly to the Spanish mainland, rather than through Ceuta (interview Francisco). The lawyers, who have an office in the CETI, are also barely trusted by the camp's inhabitants.

An important third reason behind the refusal rate of asylum application processes, moreover was the distrust many migrants had towards those working in the CETI, including the lawyers, Red Cross staff and civil servants. This reaction was, given the confusing mix of humanitarian assistance and disciplinary control exerted upon them, hardly surprising. Eric, a young man from Cameroon, was particularly vocal of his distrust of the asylum system and its ties. Referring to the police's knowledge that he was from Cameroon he summarised the migrants' mistrust of asylum when he asked me: "How can I trust you or anything here when even just one word from my tongue can kill me!? We have a saying in Africa: 'our teeth defend us from our tongue'." As a result of this distrust, many refused to meet with the lawyer in the CETI, preferring instead to trust the knowledge of other residents in the CETI and those who had travelled before them.

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<sup>109</sup> Who had often arrived years or decades in advance and, therefore, whose experiences of gaining residence permits or asylum status were significantly out of date.

Self-perpetuating myths, therefore, circulated throughout the camp and, as a result, many of the migrants used social identity of the *'moruno'* in the hopes of being released from Ceuta. In his later works, Foucault (1993) stressed the importance of studying the 'techniques of the self' as well as the 'techniques of domination' and the interaction between these two forms of governmentality. By assuming the identity of the *'moruno'*, however, many migrants began a process of 'self-regulation' (Lemke 2001) to conform to the apparent European ideals of what constituted a 'good' migrant. "Yes I'm aware that's what they think," answered Francisco when I asked if he knew about the migrants' tactic for gaining passage to the mainland, "maybe they got it from the CETI. Because in the CETI they have this disciplinary regime since they are in like a student's residence, you must go to bed at twelve, eat at two, you have to bath... but they can have that idea, I suppose it's not so strange. It's simply that they need to be controlled while we carry out our duties." Francisco's comment resonated with Lippert's (1999) assertion that camp-like spaces are not solely spaces for excluding and reducing individuals to a form of bare life. Instead, disciplinary techniques were often dispensed throughout camps in order to reform camp subjects (O'Neill 2012). In this sense, Ceuta and the disciplining practices of the CETI, functioned like the prisons described by Foucault (1977): "fixing [the detained] in space, classifying them, extracting from them the maximum in time and forces, training their bodies, coding their continuous behavior, maintaining them in perfect visibility, forming around them an apparatus of observation, registration and recording." (p231). In Ceuta, painful though it was to be considered a *'moruno'*, many migrants also saw it as their only way out of the enclave. While Agamben's formulations of the camp ignore the self-regulating ability of those enclosed within its walls (Lemke 2005), it was clear in Ceuta that becoming a *'moruno'* was a two-way process, consciously adopted and repeatedly enacted by new arrivals under the impression that it would benefit them

in the long run. Indeed as Butler (1993, p308) writes, “identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression.”

Becoming a *‘moruno’* in Ceuta, however, required more than following the rules of the CETI and accepting a status of unemployability. “Ceuta is like a prison inside your head as well as a real one” exclaimed Eric as he attempted to explain the mental distress he felt in Ceuta due to the combination of being stuck in a state of physical limbo and the equally paralysing ‘mental limbo’ he was experiencing. One of the striking aspects about Ceuta was the fact that the only street ‘work’ which the migrants engaged in was *Dale Dale*, the practice of ‘guiding’ people as they parked their cars. Even though in Melilla, for example, migrants offering to wash cars are a common sight (Johnson 2011; Andersson 2014b), in Ceuta I could find only one man offering to wash cars for the locals. The disciplinary techniques exerted upon the migrants, as well as their belief that Ceuta was a test, had conditioned them into overestimating the power and intentions of the Spanish authorities. There was a belief in Ceuta that any expression of ingenuity would be clamped down upon by the police in the enclave and that it would affect their chances of reaching the mainland. “Oh no, no. The police wouldn’t have allowed it” explained Gereh when I asked him why he had never taken up my offer of paying for a bucket and soap so he could wash cars. Similar to previous studies of these camp-like spaces (e.g. Lippert 1999; Bauman 2002; Diken 2004; Abourahme and Hilal 2009), detention as a form of state violence was experienced as more than a physical separation from the rest of society in a “*space near to rightlessness*” (Cornelisse, p119). The state of ‘permanent temporariness’ (Tyler and Marciniak 2013; Minca 2015) in which they found their attempts at creativity and ingenuity destroyed.

Despite this seeming lack of ingenuity, however, a system had been organised to make sure that the 'work' was fairly distributed. The small enclave had been divided into specific zones which 'belonged' to the different groups (usually divided along lines of nationality) and each group had a president who would keep a rota. Again, the police played an imaginary role in the distribution of these sites and in the ways in which people could work Dale Dale. There was also a belief amongst the groups that Dale Dale had to be performed while wearing a high-visibility yellow jacket (such as the ones worn by road workers) to make their work 'official' in the eyes of the police. These jackets would also serve as handy prayer mats for the Muslim men who take a few moments off during the day to pray. For me, these jackets highlighted the messiness of this borderspace; the migrants attempting to be 'correct' while at the same time seeking to make sense of their time in being stuck in Ceuta.





*Figure 32 shows a picture of a migrant in Ceuta wearing a high-visibility jacket and working Dale Dale.*

At the same time as migrants were teaching themselves how to be ‘correct’, a form of deskilling was taking place residents of the CETI were being prepared for low-skilled informal work in Europe – following a trend of Western devaluation of most education and skills acquired outside the West (Creese and Wiebe 2009). Staff in the CETI would interview those undocumented migrants who were to be allowed to travel to the mainland to find out where in Spain they would want to

go.<sup>110</sup> When Patrick, who had been a part-time physics and maths teacher from Cameroon and who had managed to secure a job in a call centre which sold wine to French customers while in Morocco, was shocked after his first meeting with one of the counsellors in the CETI. He recounted: “I remember she really hurt me after I told her that I had a degree in physics. She said: ‘Why did you bother leaving if you had an education in Cameroon, there will be nothing for you here. Someone like you should not have come.’ It hurt because it was clear that she felt that blacks in Europe are only good for physical work.” Eric also realised what was expected of him in Europe after he was transported to a farm in northern Spain (despite requesting to go to Almería): “They took me to work on a farm. Why should I work on a farm for €20 per day, eh? Maybe they thought that after Ceuta I would be grateful.” In other words, by removing their ingenuity and disheartening their dreams (whether intentionally or not), the migrants in Ceuta were being trained to accept low-wage labour following their transfer to the mainland.

### 5.5.1 Gender Divides

Becoming a *moruno*, however was not the same process for everyone. Indeed, in order to fully understand the experiences of those detained in the CETI, it is necessary to move beyond the interchangeable male figure of *homo sacer* (Mitchell 2006) or, in this case, the ‘*moruno*’ and to differentiate between peoples’ subjections to state control in the camp-like spaces.

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<sup>110</sup> Between 1996 and 1999, undocumented migrants who arrived in Ceuta were resettled and regularised with the help of NGOs on the mainland, although most were expected to work in the agricultural sector (Barros *et al* 2001). Since the construction of the CETI and the policy of indefinite detention, part of this system still exists. Migrants who cannot be repatriated are sent to an NGO on the mainland who offer them room and board usually for a period six weeks while it is assumed that they arrange their return journey.

Similarly, Masters (2009, p32) argues that the figure of the *homo sacer* is inadequate to the task of theorizing women's experiences in the context of the global war on terror and to the ways in which gender acts as a "significant category of political exclusion." As Lemke (2005, p8) asserts "Agamben does not comprehend 'camp' as an internally differentiated continuum, but only as a 'line' (1998: 122) that separates more or less clearly between bare life and political existence. As a consequence, he cannot analyse how inside 'bare life' hierarchisations and evaluations become possible, how life can be classified and qualified as higher or lower, as descending or ascending." While standard media images concerning undocumented migration in Ceuta usually focus on male migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, a small number of women and children would also regularly make it to Ceuta.

While in Ceuta it became clear to me that power was exerted differently upon those detained in the enclave, but also that unequal power relationships existed between those otherwise deemed to be 'bare life'. Even though the police suspected that most of the twenty-three women in the CETI (at the time of my fieldwork) had come to Spain either not of their own free will, or would be required to work as prostitutes to pay off their debts, they were also housed in the CETI along with the men. "Look," said Diego soon after our interview had started, "this centre was created in the year 2000 [...] the principal was to attend equally to all the migrants who were arriving. But what was the profile of the immigrant at that time? 99% were men. These centres are not adequate for housing women (and especially women with children!) amongst its residents."<sup>111</sup> The 'openness' of the CETI, with its public shower barracks, shared rooms and relative freedom of movement,

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<sup>111</sup> While unaccompanied migrants who are minors are looked after in a separate centre, families are housed in the CETI.

therefore, took on a new meaning for the minority groups within the camp. Despite Diego's attempts to treat all the residents of the CETI equally, the spatial organisation of the camp and its internal politics were such that women remained at a disadvantage to the men with whom they had shared the boats.

“Oh no,” laughed Kamara somewhat awkwardly after I asked him why I never saw women working *Dale Dale* “only men are allowed to work *Dale Dale*. It's too degrading for the women.” To my surprise, Abigail, one of the few women I managed to speak to, answered the same question in a similarly awkward manner: “Me, work *Dale Dale*? Oh no I cannot... it would be too embarrassing!” Lylie, a transgender woman from Cameroon who occupied her own limbo space within her group, also did not work *Dale Dale* with the men. “They were kind enough to give me a slot on the rota,<sup>112</sup> [she continued in a whisper] I think Eric fought for me to get it.” Returning to her normal voice, she continued “No, I don't ever go out and work it [...] I let one of the boys work it every week, whoever needs it most. And then I'm happy if they bring me back a little something.” While the president of each group would supposedly collect money from those working the *Polo's* for both himself and for the women in their group, there was never very much left over for the women. Alternatives to *Dale Dale* were, however, are few and far between for the women in the CETI. The money they received from the president was perhaps enough for clothes, mobile phone credit and short-term essentials. For savings for when they would travel to the mainland, however, the women needed to generate their own extra funds. Occasionally, a woman could braid a man's hair

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<sup>112</sup> Upon arrival in the CETI Lylie had suffered considerable verbal abuse from the Cameroonian men. The Director of the CETI had been forced to intervene and had, according to Eric, publically threatened the group with expulsion from the CETI should they continue their abuse towards her.

in return for a few euros, however the lack of braided men in the CETI suggested this was not a common practice. Others would try to find a boyfriend who would take care of them, which Michel explained while bemoaning the fact that ‘his woman’ had been transferred to the mainland before him through humanitarian transfer.

For most of the women in the CETI, however, their only form of economic gain was through prostitution. “Of course the CETI workers know about it [prostitution],” explained Cheick one evening while working the Malian *Polo* near the ferry terminal, “but they don’t care as long as it happens outside of the CETI. They also have a box of condoms to make sure nobody gets AIDS.” Cheick and I had previously discussed the issue of prostitution in the CETI, having arrived on the subject after Cheick had told me that he was annoyed with one of the women for having stolen his money. “We agreed to have sex” he had said, “so I gave her five euro... but then she never showed up. I don’t know what to do now, I might complain to the staff at the CETI.” The problem was eventually solved amicably, as Cheick recounted on our second meeting at the Polo: “She came into my room a few days later and gave me the money back, she said she was sorry but that she really needed it at the time.” While the events recounted by Cheick did highlight the relative safety of the women selling sex for money in the CETI (everyone knew each other at least by sight), it also demonstrated the complete lack of available alternatives left to the women in the camp. In Andersson’s (2014b, 796) study of the camp in Ceuta in 2010, he quotes the then police chief of the enclave as saying: “If I pick up 100 women in Nigeria to bring them from there and put them in Madrid [for prostitution], I have an estimated cost of, I guess, €6,000 for each one... If you withhold 50 of them in Ceuta and you repatriate another 50, my business will be in ruins! ... because the poor woman who was heading [to the peninsula] can’t pay. I’ve lost €150,000, and you’ve withheld the other women here for two years, that’s two years that I have

immobilized capital, that's another €150,000 lost". In other words, the detention of women in the enclave, especially, was designed to tackle the human trafficking gangs, supposedly to protect women from being forced into prostitution in Europe.<sup>113</sup> Not only was the practice of detention not preventing women from reaching the enclave,<sup>114</sup> but the women, upon arrival, were forgotten in the CETI - asked to refrain from having sex within the confines of the CETI, yet forced into prostitution nonetheless. In the 'cat and mouse' game of irregular migration, in which smugglers and those engaged in borderwork profit, these women were undoubtedly the hardest losers.

## 5.6 Fixing Illegalities

In her analysis of maritime refugee incidents in Australia, Michele Budz (2009) follows Foucault (1986) by considering ships as heterotopia, or as "sites where ambiguity is highlighted, challenged and resolved" (p18). In her analysis of the events unfolding around the *Tampa*, a Norwegian vessel which had rescued Iraqi and Afghani asylum seekers on its journey to Australia, Budz (2009) demonstrates how the Australian government attempted to fix the identities of the migrants on board as 'bogus refugees' or as 'queue jumpers' and the ship's crew as 'smugglers'. In retaliation, the undocumented migrants on board the *Tampa* resisted the state's categories and drew on and contested the Australian government's claim

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<sup>113</sup> For the men, by contrast, an interesting 'insurance policy' was arranged. Only half the sum would be given to the smugglers prior to reaching Spain and either their families at home who were financing their journey or a trustworthy friend would pay the smugglers the rest upon safe arrival.

<sup>114</sup> Many women in the forests of Morocco were paying the *chamans* (sub-Sharan smugglers in Morocco) for their places in the zodiacs with sex. The *chamans* would let them go once they became pregnant with their child, "so they will have a child in Europe" explained Kamara.

to be 'humanitarian'. As a 'counter-site' (Topinka 2010), therefore, vessels such as the *Tampa* function as sites where these ambiguous categories can be resolved or contested.

In Ceuta, too, the migrants in the CETI were being fixed with a second identity while they attempted to portray themselves as *morunos*. Upon arrival in the enclave, a migrant could potentially be an 'asylum seeker', 'refugee' (though granted elsewhere), 'economic migrant', 'adventurer', 'illegal immigrant', or even a 'smuggler/accomplice'. Indeed, one of the main problems facing border agencies and Interior Ministries has been the classification of migrants, both during their journeys and after their arrivals in Europe (Frontex 2010). While to the migrants, the *Laissez-Passer* was their reward for enduring Ceuta, to the Spanish authorities it was the next stage in the b/ordering process. "Of course the Laissez-Passer isn't just a free ticket to the mainland!" asserted Francisco after I had suggested that the Laissez-Passer implied a loss on the behalf of the Spanish authorities, "It's an expulsion order, demanding that they leave Europe". In other words, following their receipt of the expulsion order and transport to the mainland, they would no longer be classified as *potential* asylum seekers or refugees, instead they would be considered 'illegal' if they remained in Spain after the time period of their expulsion order. Similarly, according to the Dublin Regulation, they would be ineligible to apply for asylum in (European) countries outside Spain – their finger prints registered in numerous databanks. Francisco was also keen to point out that their expulsion orders would stay with the migrants and perhaps carried out by the police in the future. "Sometimes they get their passports sent to them by their families once they are on the mainland," he explained, "if they commit a crime or get picked up by the police (for whatever reason) and we find their passport on them, then we can probably send them home."

On one of my many walks to the CETI, I happened upon Gereh who was dressed in a formal shirt, spotless white sneakers and a pair of stylish jeans. “I’ve just come back from the judge,” he announced with a wide grin, “I will be getting my *Laissez-Passer* soon”. Clutched in his hand he held the expulsion order (in Spanish) which he had just signed at the courthouse. Like most of the others in the enclave, Gereh had foregone his meeting with the lawyer to which he had been entitled to upon his arrival. Instead, his first ‘meeting’ with the lawyer had been at the courthouse where, along with ten others from the CETI, the lawyer had been present while the judge presented them with their expulsion papers. Gereh admitted that he hadn’t understood what had been said in the courthouse, nor the papers he had just signed. He only knew that it was what he needed to do in order to leave the enclave and to reach mainland Europe. Despite the expulsion order, he hoped it would be something he could outrun or possibly leave behind him in Spain when he travelled to France.

Through the evidence stored in their fingertips in the EURODAC and the Spanish authorities’ data banks, however, the expulsion order branded migrants such as Gereh as ‘illegal’; a person who had been given the chance to apply for asylum, who but had refused it (van der Ploeg 1999). Despite being ‘free’ to travel through the ‘open’ borders of the Schengen after receiving their ticket for the ferry, the migrants would find that their data-double had already made the journey long before them, on the first night of their arrival in Ceuta in fact. Coutin (2005) writes that “[t]ime takes on a planar (as well as linear) character, making it possible to move not only from past to future but also one present to another [...] As they exist in multiple places, migrants may be unable to be fully present anywhere” (p200). As a result of their entanglement in the Dublin Regulation, the migrants who travelled beyond Spain with their *Laissez-Passer* would soon discover that their detention in Ceuta had precluded their settlement (at least through asylum) in any other EU Member State. For Foucault



(1986, p26) the heterotopia operates when there is a temporal ‘absolute break’ achieved between it and the spaces it is connected to. Museums and libraries, for example, operate as the city’s archive by ‘accumulating time’, whereas the festival is seen as fleeting – operating with its own temporalities. ‘Slices in time’ is how Foucault (1986, 26) refers to them. To a certain extent this chapter has already demonstrated the ways in which Ceuta operated with its own temporalities compared to mainland Spain; the indefinite detention and *slow* pace of life adopted by the migrants when they donned the identity of the *moruno*. Despite moving on from the enclave, however, a ‘slice’ of their time in Ceuta would indefinitely follow the migrants like an unshakable shadow during their journeys throughout Europe; the ‘physically-recorded memory’ of Ceuta acting as a barrier to their resettlement. Following Coutin (2005), therefore, a part of them would forever exist in Ceuta. Similarly, those migrants who remained in Spain in the hope of gaining a residency permit after three years would learn that they could only commence the application process for their residency once their 5-year expulsion orders had expired, making them ineligible for work or state-sponsored support for the foreseeable future (Francisco interview). Seen through Heidegger’s (in Sharma 2013) works on relational world making, where ‘closeness’ is temporally contingent rather than solely calculated by geographical distance, receiving their *Laissez-Passer* left the migrants, perhaps, no closer to their European dream than the day they first arrived in the enclave. Instead, they would soon become accustomed to Europe’s immigration law enforcement tactics, designed to maintain their ‘deportability’ and making them vulnerable to exploitation (De Genova 2002; Tyler and Marciniak 2013) – perhaps the adoption of the *moruno* identity would have prepared them for it.

## 5.7 Conclusions – A ‘ship of fools’

In Foucault’s (1988) book *Madness and Civilization*, he opens with an account of a dark, almost ephemeral figure which would have drifted along the rivers and canals of Medieval Europe. The *Narrenschiff*, or ‘ship of fools’, carried its cargo of ‘lunatics’ and ‘madmen’ between the settlements along these waterways. The boatmen on these vessels would receive their mad cargo from the municipal authorities along their route, with instructions to remove them from the cities (Walters 2015). This act of driving out the mad onto these ‘ships of fools’ was, Foucault (1988) asserts, more than a simple expulsion from society.

“[The ship of fools] made sure that [the lunatic] would go far away; it made him a prisoner of his own departure. But water adds to this the dark mass of its own values; it carries off, but it does more: it purifies [...] He is a prisoner in the midst of what is the freest, the openest of routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads. He is the Passenger par excellence: that is, the prisoner of the passage. In one sense, it simply develops, across a half-real, half-imaginary geography, the madman's liminal position on the horizon of medieval concern – a position symbolized and made real at the same time by the madman's privilege of being confined within the city gates: his exclusion must enclose him; if he cannot and must not have another prison than the threshold itself, he is kept at the point of passage” (Foucault 1988, p11).

Some, therefore, were expected to find pleasure, or even a cure, in their new surroundings and in the isolation of being cast off from the society that had deemed them to be mad. The water through which they travelled, however, held no

promises of retribution, only endless possibilities. Sometimes, however, the mad would allow be allowed to disembark earlier than the sailors had promised the townsfolk, and they would simply return to the town.

In Ceuta's ferry hall the *Laissez-Passer* was about to take place. It was eight o'clock on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 and the first to arrive were three armed *Guardia Civil* officers. Following them, the first groups of (mainly sub-Saharan) migrants appeared, first in a trickle and then in droves. Sixty-three migrants were granted permission to travel to the mainland, yet hundreds had come to the ferry terminal to say their farewells and to wish them good luck. The sixty-three were easy to pick out, they were those dressed in their finest clothes and took centre stage in every group picture and selfie that were being taken throughout the ferry hall. In some ways the ferry hall almost resembled a film première, as those leaving the enclave eventually formed a line leading to the doors of the passport control booths. To those not leaving Ceuta, the *Laissez-Passer* was still an important event as it provided them with proof that there would be an end to their detention on the enclave. "It gives me the strength to keep waiting" said Oumar, who had just said farewell to his friend from Mali. Despite the joy, nobody in the hall really knew what lay ahead. Many had friends, family and dreams waiting for them in mainland Europe, though none had concrete plans or knowledge of how to escape the bind of their expulsion orders.



Figure 33 shows a picture of the migrants passing through the Ceuta ferry terminal - where they had to present their expulsion orders in order to board the ferry.

Like the mad on the 'ship of fools', these migrants were the modern passengers *par excellence*, delivered by the Guardia Civil to the ferry and the NGO 'boatmen' on the mainland in the hopes that they would help carry out their removal from society. Confined not just to the ship, but also within their official status as 'illegal', their voyage would also be one of 'rigorous division and absolute passage'. In particular, the 'ship of fools' analogy highlights the contradictions inherent in the migrants' journeys away from Ceuta and throughout Europe in the weeks, months and years to come. They were 'free' to leave Ceuta, but they would also be bound by their 'voyage'. They would no longer be imprisoned or detained as, like the 'madmen' in medieval times, they would for the most part be kept *'on the threshold itself'* of European society – the chance of being granted residency or asylum status following their expulsion and receipt of invisible brands being slim. As Foucault (1988) also notes, however, the act of driving the mad away was not solely for the purposes of

social utility or security as they were additionally barred access to the church and their expulsions frequently taking on a mocking nature. Indeed, many would discover limited opportunities for (legal and safe) work in Europe and learn that it is not just in Ceuta where undocumented migrants are kept separate from society. At the same time, however, the *Laissez-Passer* offered hope of a new start to be capitalised upon. Like the agents in the border control regime in Ceuta, not all actors on the mainland always work towards the same aims at all times. In the summer of 2015, for example, Germany suspended its application of the Dublin regulation in an effort to convince other EU Member States to do the same so that the responsibility for new arrivals to Europe as part of the ‘refugee crisis’ would be more equally spread out.<sup>115</sup> Many of those I met in Ceuta were, therefore, *were* able to claim asylum in Germany after all, while others made use of their existing networks in Europe or employed other ‘tactics’ to gain access to some rights and benefits to living in Europe – even if these have not (yet) entailed full legal rights to remain and find legal employment.

Like the above discussion of Ceuta and the CETI, the ferry and its myriad of possibilities disrupts the conceptualisation of Ceuta as a ‘camp-like space’. As this chapter has demonstrated, Agamben’s (1998) formulations of the camp and its concomitant ‘bare life’ subject of irreversible oppression can only take us so far in our understanding of the spaces of detention and control at the boundaries of Europe. By drawing on the productive tensions produced through the introduction of Foucault’s (1986) concept of heterotopia, I have argued that Ceuta functions as both a space *temporally* separated from mainland Europe yet one that is simultaneously designed to be interwoven with other actors and spaces in

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<sup>115</sup> See <https://www.ft.com/content/d08dc262-bed1-11e5-9fdb-87b8d15baec2>

the border regime. I have shown how migrants could be held on the enclave indefinitely through the performance of Ceuta as being both a space of ‘humanitarianism’ and as Europe’s last ‘defence’ against irregular migration by both Spanish and EU authorities. Although Ceuta is physically separated from mainland Spain, the intent has been to make the enclave function in combination with other sites among the border complex through the deceleration of and regulation of migrant circulation through both time and space. As a result of the ‘reception’ services in Ceuta, therefore, undocumented migrants can notionally be withheld in the enclave indefinitely, thus increasing the likely success of Joint Return operations not only in Ceuta, but also throughout the rest of the EU (dependent on the ‘success’ of Frontex’s support of this policy). It is paramount, therefore, that we call out spaces like Ceuta for what they are: sites of indefinite *detention* for the purpose of ensuring the *exclusion* of undocumented migrants from European society.

The purposeful reduction of asylum claims in Ceuta through the removal of time constraints on the decision-making process, moreover, has been shown to play an integral part in the functioning of Ceuta as a space of removal. Border guards like Lucas apportion the blame to migrants who opt not to apply for asylum in Ceuta, or fail to inform themselves of their legal options due to their distrust of European (asylum) laws and lawyers. On the basis of the evidence listed in this chapter, however, their actions are entirely rational. The solution to improving migrants’ access to legal rights in Ceuta cannot come through increased investment in measures to give them access to legal representatives (and translators) when the rules are such that applying for asylum in Ceuta practically ensures their continued removal from mainland Europe and what existing connections they might have for the foreseeable future. It comes as no surprise given the migrants’ predicament in Ceuta that they choose not to trust the legal representatives present in the enclave. In combination with the Dublin

Regulation, moreover, the legal peculiarities of Ceuta ensure that those who make the *rational* choice of leaving Ceuta with an expulsion order will likely also be excluded from European society – even if they are not forcibly removed – due to their ‘data double’ present in European databases. Ceuta is not, therefore, a space in which the rule of law has become suspended, yet those who pass through it become *exceptions* as their rights to asylum and social integration are removed through receipt of their expulsion orders. The practices of border control in Ceuta, therefore, highlight not only the extent to which European asylum policies are failing those who make the journey to Europe, but also the ways in which ‘local’ performances of border control are tied up in the border regime as a whole.

Examining the actions and effects of the border regime at the scale of the enclave and at the scale of the body (in this case that of the migrant) also further complicates conceptualisations of control and resistance within the borderlands. Indeed, as Hetherington (1997, p25) argues, “when margins are seen in relation to resistance, this issue of centres and margins needs to be developed around questions of social order. Order and resistance tend to get polarized.” In particular, the analysis of the performances of border control and ‘resistance’ in Ceuta has highlighted the ways in which both practices were ‘messy’ (Law 2004) and ‘entangled’ (Sharp *et al* 2000). By drawing on Foucault’s (1978; 1986) theories of power as a multiplicity of force relations and the concept of heterotopia, I have argued here that the control exerted by the Spanish authorities upon the migrants in Ceuta was, in part, undone by their lack of control over all the actors engaged in the border regime. In particular, I have demonstrated how Ceuta was failing as a space of *removal*, the Spanish authorities being unable to coerce representatives from embassies on the mainland to issue travel documents for those stuck in Ceuta. This failure was also compounded by the migrants’ ability to contact those still in Morocco to forewarn them of the police’s

strategies pre-arrival. Similarly, I have argued that ‘state power’ in the enclave did not exert dominating power from ‘above’, the bordering practices in Ceuta instead often appearing heterogeneous and, at times, even fragile as the ‘petty sovereigns’ interchangeably performed in alignment and in disaccord. The numerous court cases which have been brought against the government and the authorities in Ceuta, for example, highlight the complex legalities of the enclaves and the arbitrariness with which they are applied. Similarly, the inconsistency with which ‘humanitarian transfers’ were being granted, as well as the regular *Laissez-Passer* events while police attempted to ‘fix’ migrants’ identities, especially, demonstrate the ‘messiness’ of the Spanish authorities’ control over the borderspace. The ‘tactics’ employed by the migrants in Ceuta, namely through the performance of being *moruno*, moreover, further demonstrates the entanglement of resistance and domination as the adoption of this identity was both enforced and self-regulated. Indeed, although performing the *moruno* made sense considering the Spanish authorities were attempting to simultaneously speed up processes of removal while performing Ceuta as a ‘humanitarian’ space, the result for most would nonetheless be expulsion from European society upon their arrival on the mainland. Those who pass through Ceuta will always bear the invisible brand of the *moruno* in the fingerprint databases, it remains to be seen to what extent they carry on the performance beyond its shores.





## Chapter 6 The City of Refuge

### 6.1 The Solidarity Group

A Monday morning in September. The cramped space of the Solidarity Group barely has room for another person as I enter for my first day of volunteering and participant observation. The Solidarity Group's office is comprised of two computers, a fax machine, numerous filing cabinets, a sofa, two plastic chairs and a tea making station. The walls are mostly covered with informational posters concerning asylum in the UK, local film screenings, information on peoples' rights when stopped in the street by immigration officials, a contact list of solicitors specialised in asylum and human rights cases, a 'shopping buddy' list for those with Azure cards, and a map of the world with an arrow pointing to the UK which says: 'You are here'. On the wall at the far side of the room is the 'detention board' which lists those people known to the Solidarity Group who have been detained and states which detention centre they are being held in, when they were detained and when/if they have received a removal date. Lastly, what looks like a visitor's book lies open on the windowsill closest to the door. With surprising regularity, a person will enter the Solidarity Group office, sign their name under the day's date and deposit a small bag of belongings and leave again... only to return some time later to scratch their name out. Today everyone returns. No lawyers need to be informed that their client has been detained, no belongings need to be collected and no friends and family need to be walked through the steps of what happens next. The others who arrive at the Solidarity Group sit patiently, occasionally making small-talk with each other while they wait for help from a volunteer.

A nervous-looking Neville, the only experienced volunteer on duty, greets me briefly and apologetically motions toward the queue of anxious people waiting for his help and the detention board: “I’ll try and take you through the full induction process later,” he says, “but for now how about you see if anyone wants some tea? I have to somehow help these people as well as put in a judicial review<sup>116</sup> for a person in detention whose removal directions are today.” While making a quick mental note to find out what a ‘judicial review’ is when I get home, I introduce myself to the waiting people, make the teas and attempt to observe and assist Neville where possible. Those that have come seeking help have a variety of problems ranging from needing clothing vouchers for a local charity shop, information on nearby food banks, letters confirming their state of destitution, applications for Section 4 or Section 95, help understanding a decision letter concerning their case or support – the list of problems and abbreviations goes on. Many have also come to use the Solidarity Group’s phone to contact Asylum Help, the charity which recently won the contract for handling asylum support services from the Home Office from the previous charity which offered face-to-face help and guidance (referred to as a ‘One Stop Service’). While Asylum Help’s helpline is free to reach through most providers, it is not free to those using either Lyca Mobile or Lebara mobile networks, preferred by migrants with family and friends still abroad. The phone is passed slowly around the room as waiting times to reach a human operator range between 40 minutes to over an hour.

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<sup>116</sup> A judicial review is “a type of court proceeding in which a judge reviews the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public body. In other words, judicial reviews are a challenge to the way in which a decision has been made, rather than the rights and wrongs of the conclusion reached.” (see <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/you-and-the-judiciary/judicial-review/>)

As the morning wears on, however, Neville becomes increasingly restless as he realises that he is running out of time if he is going to attempt to file a judicial review for the man in detention. Yet the demands of those in the Solidarity Group office, made more pressing because of their physical presence, continue to take precedence. When a woman curtly mentions that she has never been to the Solidarity Group before, Neville suggests that I can take over and open a new case file for her. The forms include questions concerning the woman's contact details, date of birth, nationality, Home Office reference number, overview of reasons for claiming asylum and history of help received in the UK, as well as a mandate signature giving the Solidarity Group the legal power to communicate with lawyers on her behalf (optional). The woman, Sheila, pulls out a hand-written document which she had previously used to explain her situation to the police. The document details her harrowing story of violence at the hands of her family and husband in the Gambia, as well as by her current partner after having fled to the UK. Not knowing what to do, but understanding that she should not have to speak to a young man about her case, I find her the number of a local group offering support to Muslim women in the community and offer her the use of the Solidarity Group phone. I also phone a legal advice bureau on her behalf who tell me that she might have to travel down to the Home Office in Croydon (London) to lodge her asylum claim but that if she has a lawyer they might be able to claim special circumstances. I look round to find Sheila to ask her if she would like me to phone a lawyer to make an appointment for her and see her sitting in silence with the Solidarity Group phone in her hands. She had hung up when the community group told her to phone Asylum Help as she was even less willing to discuss her problems on the phone than to a young and inexperienced volunteer.

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## 6.2 Reach and Forced (Im)Mobilities

“[T]he figure of the asylum-seeker has become sticky with grotesque qualities; qualities that invoke fear, anger and disgust amongst ‘native’ communities” due to the affective political and media rhetoric used to describe asylum seekers not just in the UK (Tyler 2006, p191; see also Kaye 1998; Lynn and Lea 2003; Zetter 2007), but also throughout Europe (e.g. Pred 2000; Fekete 2005). It is this fear of these ‘bogus’, ‘fraudulent’, and ‘violent’ bodies that has led to a wide array of securitising practices being used to control and discipline asylum seekers such as Sheila in the vignette above. As a result, although asylum seekers in the UK have successfully crossed the border into the city, they are nonetheless regularly confronted with bordering practices while the UK’s Home Office<sup>117</sup> attempts to sort the ‘genuine’ from the ‘bogus’. Asylum seekers, therefore, are entered into a securitised space in which their presence must not upset the established circulation and rhythms of the city, yet within which *their* mobility must be controlled (Walters 2004). Indeed, cities are increasingly becoming the frontier zones of the globalised world, rather than the protected spaces behind imperial borders (Balibar *et al* 2002; Sassen 2013). Despite the increasing visibility of refugees and asylum seekers within British and European cities (in particular in Paris, Thessaloniki and Berlin), it is only recently that scholars involved in the politics and geography of asylum issues in the UK have become interested in the urban as an area of study (Darling 2016a; for some notable exceptions see Spicer 2008; Squire 2009a, 2009b; Darling 2010, 2011a; Schuster 2011; Squire and Darling 2013; Bloch 2014).

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<sup>117</sup> Asylum cases are handled by UK Visas and Immigration, a department which is part of the Home Office.

Previous academic work on mobility and asylum in the UK has focused predominantly on the legal and policy contexts of immigration law enforcement (see Yuval-Davis *et al* 2017), or on the issue of asylum ‘dispersal’ from London (Squire 2009a). The latter concerns the dispersal of asylum seeker accommodation throughout the UK since 1999 on a ‘no choice’ basis under the auspices of reducing the ‘burden’ on housing and services in London and the south east of England (Home Office 1998, paragraph 8.12–8.26; see e.g. Boswell 2001; Zetter *et al* 2005; Zetter 2007). This policy of dispersal, argues Darling (2011a, p267), “acts as a mode of regulation on a population constructed as disorderly and threatening, it assigns positions and utilises mobility itself as a governmental technique.” Similarly, Squire (2009a) views dispersal as a ‘punitive technology’, functioning in an attempt to deter the movements of other migrants to the UK and which reduces the possibilities of community engagement between asylum seekers and local communities and leaves them vulnerable to economic exploitation.

This situation has worsened for asylum seekers since 2012, when, under the auspices of austerity, contracts for the provision of asylum seeker accommodation were removed from the previous consortia of local authorities, social housing associations and private providers and sold to just three private contracts (Darling 2016b, 2016c). Collectively, these contracts are known as COMPASS (Commercial and Operating Managers Procuring Asylum Support) and have drastically changed the face of asylum support in the UK – removing the provision of local government support and good-will towards asylum seekers, as well as further reducing the quality of housing provided (Darling 2016b). The analysis of this chapter occurs in the context of this dispersal policy, yet seeks to go beyond its aforementioned consequences by questioning how the circulation of asylum seekers in the city is further controlled post-dispersal and by investigating the *intensity* of state

power in the everyday lives of people stuck in the ‘limbo’ that is the UK’s asylum system (Ajana 2013; Griffiths 2014). In other words, I seek in this chapter to critically consider the spatialities, temporalities and intensities of power vis-à-vis asylum seekers in the city. Indeed, the geographic complexity of the border, moreover, is demonstrated by the increasing integration of mundane urban sites such as industrial parks, bus stations and informal gathering spaces as small nodes into what Bigo (2000) terms the ‘security continuum’ as they become sites of intense control (Mountz 2011a; see also Varsanyi 2008; Coleman 2007; Szary 2015). It can be almost impossible, therefore, to track enforcement practices within and between detention centres, but also within the mundane spaces that ‘we’ pass through on an everyday basis. As a result, Darling (2016b, p485, emphasis in original) argues for a more engaged scholarship concerning the “politics of refugee resettlement and forced migration *within* the nation state, most notably in cities, reception centres and camps.”

Like the spaces discussed in the previous empirical chapters (i.e. the ‘pre-frontier’ and the bounded enclave), therefore, the urban environment is a similarly-complex space within which government authorities attempt to exert control over migrants’ bodies. Indeed as Hall (2015, p856) notes, “[o]n the city street there are additional interior demarcations, perhaps less spectacular and less perilous, but nonetheless a space in which ingenuity and agility are necessary modes of practice to engage with underlying precarity and prejudice.” In contrast to the bounded spaces such as detention centres, however, “cities have also become a strategic frontier zone for those who lack power, those who are disadvantaged, outsiders, discriminated minorities. The disadvantaged and excluded can gain presence in such cities, presence vis-à-vis power and presence vis-à-vis each other” (Sassen 2013, p67). The urban environment, in other words, includes spaces of intense

(though frequently invisible) control, while also offering the disadvantaged opportunities to find solidarity and resist control.

Much like the extended pre-frontier discussed in chapter 4, moreover, the city offers 'blind spots' from which the disadvantaged can attempt to escape the totalizing gaze of the border apparatus. If we also return to de Certeau's (1984, p94) analogy of the voyeur looking down on the city from the top of the World Trade Centre (previously discussed in chapter 4), the people below are able to escape the voyeur's gaze as they "make use of spaces that cannot be seen [...]" Escaping the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye, the everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is only its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible." De Certeau's (1984) analogy rests, therefore, on an analysis of technocratic power being exerted from *above* upon (freely) *mobile* people below. In this chapter, however, I aim to challenge both aspects of this analogy for the purposes of better understanding the ways in which asylum seekers in the city are controlled and disciplined through both localised and diffused networks of state power. In particular, I focus on the segregating (im)mobilities of asylum seekers in the city as a result of their enforced encounters with a variety of technologies of control, disorienting strategies and violent border personnel.

Despite the considerable attention given towards the actions of government authorities in the context of border controls, Gill (2010, p626) argues that a "still-dominant body of thought tends to essentialize the state and foreground both its institutional forms and coercive powers by asking questions that take the primacy of these attributes for granted." On the subject of border controls and their efficacy, in particular, Gill (2010) takes issue with quantitative studies on the one hand,



which note the statistical effects of policy implementations on the reduction of asylum claims (e.g. Hatton and Williamson 2004; Thielemann 2004) and, on the other, transnationalist scholars who emphasise the global structural factors preventing states from successfully managing their border control policies. Gill's (2010) argument speaks to a wider trend in geography which has sought to shift focus away from an attempt to pinpoint the "whereabouts of power" and the ways in which it is 'exercised', 'held' or 'stored' within the framework of a centralised state. Instead, contemporary debates on the geography of state power emphasise the diverse and everyday ways in which power works (Allen 2004, p30; Hinchcliffe 2000; Allen and Cochrane 2010). Whilst this bears a clear intellectual debt to Foucault's work on biopolitics, numerous scholars have criticised the extent to which the image of power described by Foucault (1979) takes on a "total(ising) cast against which no resistance is possible or all resistance is futile" (Sharp *et al* 2000, p15; see also Gordon 1991; Boyne 2000). Both conceptualisations of power (either deployed from a centre or diffused through society), argues Allen (2004, p30), leave "little to be gained from mobilizing against what is, to all intents and purposes, an inflated sense of the reach of governmental 'authority'."

Allen and Cochrane (2010, p1073, emphasis in original) instead suggest a topological approach to the geography of state power – thus arguing that "what states possess [...] *is reach, not height.*" This topological approach follows Painter's (2006) concept of 'prosaic stateness' in which everyday social life has become suffused by state practices. In particular, Painter's (2006) analysis reveals the geographical *unevenness* of state power as the focus turns from the spatial *extent* of power to its *intensity*. 'Reach', therefore, "can be measured in miles and kilometers, but in practice the 'reach of government' more often than not refers to its pervasive quality; the ability of the state to permeate everyday life [...] or to make itself present

in the regions ‘at-a-distance’” (Allen and Cochrane 2010, p1073). Allen’s (2009) approach, therefore, builds on the networked thinking found in actor-network theory (ANT), where distance can be overcome through the continued enrollment of actors such that a network is formed. In other words, ‘reach’ depends as much on the ‘power to’ hold networks together, as it does on the enrollment of new actors across space (Allen 2009; see also Hinchcliffe 2000). In the current political context of semi-privatised forms of government, especially, this topological approach to power leaves room for the loose and flexible alliances which exist between governments, corporations, NGOs and local institutions. As a result, “[p]ower is not so much exercised over space or transmitted across it, as composed relationally through the interactions of the different actors involved” (Allen 2009, p207). Contrary to Foucauldian approaches to governmentality, moreover, an approach which focuses on the intensity of power at the level of everyday life also acknowledges the importance of the *affective* and highlights “the unsystematic, the indeterminate and the unintended”, as well as the intermittent failures of stateness (Painter 2006, p763; see also Thrift 2000b).

Applied to the context of asylum and immigration control in the UK, therefore, a topological approach to power creates room for questions concerning the (affective) intensity with which asylum seekers’ bodies are controlled on a daily basis; the actors (human and non-human) that become enrolled in the exercise of power; the spatial distributions of power; and the opportunities for resistance in the urban space. In other words, what I seek to achieve in this chapter is an in-depth account of the spatial politics of asylum that takes place within the city and which considers the urban as an extension of the borderspace. The spatial politics of asylum which I conceptualise here draws on Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) writings on ‘smooth’ and ‘striated’ space – in which striated space is ordered by rules, regulations, routines and fixed positionings,

while smooth space is (made) devoid of these fixings. These alternative spaces should not be viewed as oppositional categories, however, as each is constantly being transversed and translated into the other (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; see also Debrix 1998; Walters 2011a). This non-oppositional approach to space and power, writes Cupples (2009, p112), “is more productive in the sense that it does not force us to choose between a centralised or decentralised view of power, but instead invites us to focus on striations and smoothings that co-exist in different and constantly shifting gradations.” This Deleuzian-inspired approach to spatialities of power can be combined with Allen’s (2009) as both eschew over-essentialised conceptualisations of state power, while also allowing for particular spaces to be contested and constantly shifting in gradation (Cupples 2009). In other words, although I will speak of specific sites in this chapter, none will be conceived of as sites solely of domination or resistance; instead I will trace the ways in which control and resistance are entangled and experienced in these spaces (Sharp *et al* 2000).

In the previous empirical chapters I have argued that the aims of the border regime have been to *slow* the movement of undocumented migrants such that their interception or removal can be initiated before they either cross the territorial borderline or succeed in moving beyond a bounded space dedicated to the slowing of bodies. In the city, however, this intent to control the borderspace is worked in to the existing architectures of surveillance (Rose 1999). Drawing on Deleuze (1992), Massumi (2013, p26) argues that society is interspersed with ‘checkpoints’ such that it “becomes an open field composed of thresholds or gateways.” Such thresholds can be both overt (e.g. Tesco automated checkouts, X-ray machines at airports) or lurking in the shadows (e.g. algorithmic CCTV cameras). Bodies become multiple ‘dividuals’ travelling with electronic cards or passwords, which might just as soon permit or constrain passage through the checkpoints. As Deleuze

(1992, p7) stresses, “what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person’s position – licit or illicit – and effects a universal modulation.” The resultant changes to our behaviour, writes Massumi (2013, p31), are not so much disciplinary as they are ‘affectively limiting’:

“The constant security concerns insinuate themselves into our lives at such a basic, habitual level that you’re barely aware how it’s changing the tenor of everyday living. You start ‘instinctively’ to limit your movements and contact with people. It’s affectively limiting.”

The affective power of modern forms of security and control, in other words, limits mobility throughout society, rather than solely at checkpoints and thresholds. Returning again to de Certeau’s (1984) World Trade Centre analogy which I am seeking to complicate, the voyeur’s gaze from above does not ‘simply’ observe. Instead this ‘gaze’, constituted through the holding together of numerous actors, constrains the mobilities of those ‘below’ such that they can no longer freely “make use of spaces that cannot be seen” (de Certeau 1984, p94). In other words, those ‘below’ cannot be said to pass smoothly between hidden sites where the voyeur’s gaze does not reach.

In pursuit of my aim spatialising the politics of asylum in the city, I also draw on the works of those contributing to the ‘new mobilities paradigm’, which eschews a romanticised view of flows, networks and borderless space (Hannam *et al* 2006). In particular, Mountz (2011a) has previously demonstrated how Urry’s (2003) work on global complexity can be useful for understanding the practices and policies used by government authorities to inhibit or contain the mobility of non-privileged migrants. Using the house from Lefebvre’s (1991) *The Production of Space* as an example, Urry (2003, p37)

argues that complex systems “develop through combinations of mobilities and moorings” which can alternatively be understood as ‘waves’ and ‘particles’. In the example, the house can be described as “stable and immovable with stark, cold and rigid outlines” – a set of particles and moorings fixed in time and space (Urry 2003, p48; see also Hannam *et al* 2006; Adey 2006; Massumi 2002). Simultaneously the house acts as a nexus through which visitors, electricity, internet and radio connections flow. As Mountz (2011a, p323) stresses, “mobilities and moorings work together as a spatial dialectic, each operating in tandem with the other.” Throughout this chapter, therefore, I utilise this analytic of mobilities and moorings in an attempt to demonstrate how various techniques and strategies aim to forcibly fix, constrain or speed up asylum seekers’ movements.

The chapter is organised into five sections. In the first, I discuss the immobilising power of the ‘securitised support’ given to asylum seekers through two technologies of control utilised by the Home Office; the ARC card and Azure card. The ARC acts as a replacement ID card and the Azure card as a replacement bankcard; both allow the Home Office to monitor asylum seekers’ spending practices and location. The affective power of the cards, moreover, becomes legible if we consider them to be ‘things’ rather than ‘objects’. For Ingold (2010), while the ‘object’ has an obvious outer surface accessible for inspection and contrastable with its surroundings, the ‘thing’, by contrast, is “a place where several goings on become entwined” (Ingold 2010, p4). As Cupples (2011, p944) has demonstrated previously with energy meters and bills in the homes of low-income households in Nicaragua, these ‘things’ can become “transformed by their interaction with the emotional, embodied, and experiential knowledges of [everyday] struggles, their properties rendered unpredictable.” In Cupples’ (2012) example this unpredictability has allowed activists to draw attention to illegal and unfair charges included in energy

bills by Unión Fenosa. Here, in contrast, I argue that both the ARC and Azure cards engender a constant feeling of separation between asylum seekers and the local community by serving as evidence of their ‘otherness’. The cards also act as physical reminders of the government’s suspicion of asylum seekers and, in the case of Azure cards in particular, ‘failed’ asylum seekers – functioning to *pre-emptively* prevent the ‘wastage’ of public funds. Indeed, the unpredictability of the cards’ functions and how they will be used/accepted by members of the local community have the effect of transforming seemingly mundane spaces of circulation (such as the supermarket and the post office) into spaces of intense control (see also Yuval-Davis *et al* 2017). Moreover, through their capacities to invade and reanimate the border in the intimacies of everyday life, both cards intensify the state’s ‘reach’ into the everyday lives and practices of asylum seekers in the city, while simultaneously acting as instruments of surveillance.

Beyond monitoring the spending habits of asylum seekers in the city, the ARC and Azure cards combine with other forms of support in order to ‘fix’ asylum seekers’ mobility in the city, both physically as well as socially. In sections two and three of this chapter I argue that the violence of the support system, as well as the asylum process as a whole, is (in part) that it acts to dissolve forms of solidarity between those stuck in the process as well as increasing the stigmatisation felt by asylum seekers. Regular movements post-dispersal, accommodation checks, destitution checks, inability to pay for transport and the monitoring of spending practices all serve to isolate asylum seekers from local citizenry as well as other people engaged in the asylum process. Moreover, I argue that this violence has become exacerbated following the decision by the coalition government in 2014 not to renew the grant which provided asylum seekers with on-site ‘one-stop shop’ services (provided by a variety of local charities depending on the region) and to switch these services instead to the

Migrant Help organisation – a charity that provides support from a call centre. Using the aforementioned analogy of ‘waves’ and ‘moorings’ (Urry 2003), I demonstrate how the Solidarity Group consequently became the communications hub through which asylum seekers were able to organise and resist their enforced movements and destitution. Indeed, where possible,<sup>118</sup> this chapter also highlights the possibilities available for both the Solidarity Group and asylum seekers on their own to resist the impositions being made upon them through forms of ‘everyday creativity’ (de Certeau 1984, pxiv). These tactics of resistance should not be overly romanticised, however, as even the members of the Solidarity Group were painfully aware of the fact that their actions, while providing much-needed assistance, risked strengthening the legitimacy of the Home Office’s practices and cuts to asylum support (see Gill *et al* 2014).

The fourth section focuses on the practice of enforced reporting, also known as ‘signing on’, at Home Office reporting centres. While reporting serves to anchor asylum seekers to the city, I also argue that these repeated experiences enforce a mentality of temporality upon asylum seekers, even if their legal cases are potentially months from a decision. Each visit brings with it the threat of detention and removal. Each reporting event also acts as a confirmation of asylum seekers’ second-class status within the city as the experience affects feelings of criminality and dehumanisation. In the final section of this chapter, therefore, I argue that architectures of the reporting centre and violent performances of the border officials are purposefully designed to discipline asylum seekers into providing what I refer to as ‘confessions’. In this section I draw on Salter’s (2007a, p58) reading of the ‘confessionary complex’ (Foucault 1978, 1997) – which refers to the disciplinary

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<sup>118</sup> Certain tactics have been removed for fear of endangering either the Solidarity Group or those whom they help.

mechanism employed at border checkpoints which elicits “unconditional obedience, uninterrupted examination, and exhaustive confession.” I argue that asylum seekers in the city are regularly brought to the Home Office reporting centre to provide four confessions: where they live, their health status, whether or not they work and, finally, their acceptance of ‘voluntary return’. Even in such intensely securitised spaces, however, I argue that there is nonetheless room for localised forms of resistance (Cupples 2009).



### 6.3 Border Cards



*Figure 34 shows Lunar House in Croydon (London), where people must first report to register their asylum claims. Image available at: <http://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/resources/images/4190472/>*

### 6.3.1 The ARC

Entering the asylum process is not straightforward, yet under Section 55 of the *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002* the Home Office may deny any form of housing or income support to asylum seekers who have made their claims for asylum 72 hours or more after arriving in the UK. Many people seeking help from the Solidarity Group were people like Sheila from the vignette above who had arrived in the UK with little or no knowledge of the specifics of asylum and where/how to find it. They had often made it out of London in order stay with a friend or acquaintance only to be told by the volunteers at the Solidarity Group or the employees of Asylum Help that they would need to return to London for a ‘screening interview’ at Lunar House (Croydon) at their own expense.<sup>119</sup> New asylum seekers could be detained following their screening interview under the then Detained Fast Track rules, or allocated housing in another city on a ‘no choice’ basis. Opting to go to Lunar House and commencing their legal journey, therefore, takes a lot of courage – especially for those having recently escaped persecution. In other words, even at the start of their journey through the asylum process, many asylum seekers either already had a mistrust of state bureaucracies, or quickly developed an understandable mistrust of the Home Office when they learned of the consequences of attending their meeting at Lunar House.

Those who did return from Lunar House, however, returned with an Application Registration Card (ARC). Functioning as the Home Office’s biometric solution for the identification of asylum seekers, the ARC card carries a template of the person’s fingerprints, their photograph, name, date of birth, nationality and Home Office reference number. Emblazoned on most

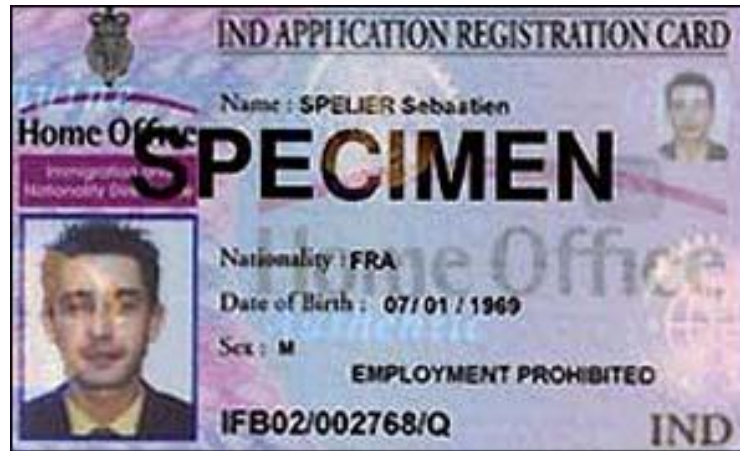
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<sup>119</sup> At the end of my fieldwork in the city, screening interviews were also being conducted in the Home Office branch in Liverpool.

cards also reads the phrase “EMPLOYMENT PROHIBITED”. The card replaces any previous forms of identification used by the asylum seeker (these are confiscated by the Home Office at the screening interview) and allows for their rapid identification when they sign on at the Home Office reporting branch. The ARC was also designed to reduce the possibility of asylum seekers ‘taking advantage’ of the support they are entitled to and was the replacement for the Standard Acknowledgment Letter – a paper document that was more easily counterfeited, forged, or otherwise compromised (Woodward *et al*/2003).<sup>120</sup> In its aims and design, therefore, the ARC inscribes and fixes a ‘non-citizen’ identity with limited rights on the bodies of asylum seekers from the moment of their enlistment in the asylum process (Wilson 2006; van der Ploeg 1999).

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<sup>120</sup> Although I have been unable to find data detailing the extent to which this occurred.



*Figure 35 shows a specimen copy of an ARC card  
(source:  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/2078604.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2078604.stm))*

Aside from restricting their access to the rights afforded to those of full citizenship, the ARC also restricts and slows their passage through the city's various thresholds and checkpoints (Massumi 2013). As is shown from the following interview excerpt with Arash, an Iranian asylum seeker who had been living in the city for five years, being slowed due to the ARC is an intensely embarrassing experience – especially when in the company of 'locals' with no knowledge of the asylum system or that he was seeking asylum. For Arash, the ARC not only symbolised his 'other' status as an asylum seeker, but also his lack of 'progression' in life which becomes visible through the act of presenting the ARC in public:

“It's really hard that for nearly 5 years, you don't have any identity, when I want to go outside or when I want to use any public service, some of them ask identity, your ID card.

I show them the Home Office card, but the majority of them say: “What’s that? It’s rubbish. Where did you get that?” They don’t accept it, or know it. So it feels embarrassing [when] you are in a group, your classmates, your friends are going out and they say: “ID” and it’s embarrassing that you don’t have anything. You feel down, you are thinking that you are nothing.”

Like many others who came to the Solidarity Group, Arash had made the decision to only tell certain groups of people that he was seeking asylum in the UK. Although he got on well with the students at his college, he was not prepared to risk ‘losing them’ if they were to find out about his asylum case. Most had experienced some form of stigmatisation after their ‘other identity’ (or that of a friend) had been discovered. Indeed the longer someone’s case drags on for, the more likely they are to create a network of friends and contacts outside the asylum community – and to live two separate lives simultaneously. Clinton, who had arrived in the UK from Sudan in his early twenties over a decade ago, appeared to have become very settled in the city. He had even selected a free room in a friend’s recording studio-cum-gig space in the inner city as the site for our interview and, upon our arrival, had jovially introduced me to his friend and the studio’s employees. Yet to my surprise he announced halfway through our interview that he kept his status a close secret from almost his entire network.

The desire/need to keep their ‘asylum identity’ a secret from their friends means that their ability to circulate and socialise in the city is severely impaired (though clearly not impossible). The ARC plays an important part in this imposition as the

need for its use can occur at unexpected times and in unexpected places. Plans for a night out need to be known in advance or exit strategies prepared and simple things like library cards need to be applied for without the help of locals. Moreover, as Clinton's case demonstrates, it's not really 'him' who is circulating and making connections, instead it is only a projection of himself that makes these connections. In other words, while the disaggregation of the border through technological 'dividuation' might allow those being monitored to live outside of bounded enclosures (Walters 2006; Nicol 2011), it also results in a form of self-imposed schizophrenia – the 'asylum seeker' locked away as much as possible. A large number of my interview respondents and visitors to the Solidarity Group also described the ARC card as a direct imposition to accessing the services they were entitled to in the city. Even Ally, whom I had first met at a detainee support meeting (where he was instructing new volunteers on the effects of being detained and how their support could be crucial), spoke of how he finds it hard to force himself out of his flat:

You know, till this day I miss detention [...] Sometimes I'm thinking that I'm better off in there than [out] here [...] There I can go to the shops and people don't judge me, I can walk around and people don't judge me. I had a job.<sup>121</sup> There's a lot of things that I can't do now. I could go to the gym there, here I can't. I'd have to pay for it, with what? I had access to medical care there every day. Here I don't... Well, I can.

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<sup>121</sup> Detainees are frequently hired by the detention centre to work as cleaners or guides for new detainees – for which they are paid £1 per hour.

But right now, as much as I want to talk to somebody, but I also don't want to talk to somebody. Because I'm thinking: 'How are they gonna see me and judge me?' and are they thinking: 'Oh, yeah. He's an asylum seeker...' you know, so that puts me off. It's off-putting to even go and see the doctor. You know, because I can't even go to the doctor like everyone else in this country. I have to go to the doctor with a card that says 'Home Office' on it.

For Ally and others like him, therefore, the 'sticky qualities' that asylum seekers have become associated with (Tyler 2006) become attached and applied to him specifically through the ARC. The ARC, therefore, allows others to know and read asylum seekers for what they are an, as Ally says, judge them.

Aside from excluding asylum seekers from the city, the ARC also functions as a '(re)-attaching agent' that connects asylum seekers to the order and flows of the city (Ajana 2013). It is only through the ARC that asylum seekers can access the support to which they are entitled. The smart ID card must be brought when visiting the doctor and cash from Section 95 support can be retained from the post office only with the ARC. As a result, the loss of the ARC (or should it be stolen or fail to function) can be a traumatic experience as the person can become cut off completely from their support. Moreover, loss of the ARC should be immediately reported to the police and a police report presented at their next Home Office reporting date. I observed both the stress and problems that this could cause on numerous occasions while volunteering at the Solidarity Group and, moreover, noted how the pressures that result from the loss of the ARC are compounded by asylum

seekers' pre-existing precariousness, lack of access to support, the suspicion with which they are treated and, moreover, the not-infrequent mistakes made by Home Office staff (see Rotter 2010; Hasselberg 2016).

On one particular occasion, a young mother called Sarah phoned the Solidarity Group to help her resolve an issue with her ARC. She was worried because she had lost her ARC a few weeks previously when her handbag was stolen. While Sarah had phoned Asylum Help a number of weeks ago, she had repeatedly got cut off – although she eventually believed to have resolved the situation through Asylum Help and was receiving emergency funds at the post office. She had not, however, received a replacement card and felt in urgent need of one as her children had run out of their prescription medication and she was worried she might be turned away at the doctors' surgery. I offered to phone the Asylum Help hotline on her behalf and, after a 40-minute wait, an awkward game of Chinese whispers ensued between myself, the Asylum Help operative and the Home Office employee the operative then phoned to report the stolen card. A period of intense confusion ensued as the three of us attempted to find out what might have happened. Finally, the Home Office employee concluded that, as the Home Office documentation did not show the card as being missing or stolen, Sarah would have to phone again – after going to the police to make a statement. After the Home Office employee had left the conversation, I asked the Asylum Help operative if he could write a letter confirming Sarah's identity to the doctor in the meantime as it could still be weeks before she received another ARC. He refused and a second argument ensued during which I asked to speak to a manager. He too informed me that that they would not be writing a letter for Sarah as “that is not what we are for” and as most of the information Asylum Help has on record is information given to them over the



phone by asylum seekers and they have no way of verifying it... but that she should use her NASS support code at the doctor's as "almost no doctor will turn away children anyway."

Sarah's example demonstrates not only the felt impossibility of living without the ARC, but also the consequences of not having access to a local support service that knows her by sight and to whom can easily have access. It highlights the suspicion that asylum seekers are met with from not only the Home Office, but also the services that are supposedly in place to support them. Aside from providing access to funds and services, however, the ARC is also capable of monitoring asylum seekers' collection of financial support from the post office – issuing an alert should a person not collect their funds regularly. In other words, the ARC also functions as a control device capable of producing "knowledge that allows selection of thresholds that define acceptable risks and on forms of inclusion and exclusion based on that knowledge" (Ericson and Haggerty 1997, p41). Those that do not collect their funds from the post office, for example, are flagged as acting suspiciously – in which case they will likely be questioned on their activities at their next reporting date or their support could be cut on the grounds that they are not destitute.

Aside from monitoring the financial withdrawal practices of asylum seekers, however, the ARC also functions as a tethering device should the Home Office require the holder to return to the reporting centre before their reporting date. On one occasion, for example, two sisters came to the Solidarity Group in March, for example, confused because their ARCs had stopped functioning at the post office. After returning from the Home Office branch they informed us that their cards had

been intentionally blocked in order for their biometric data to be updated. Similarly, as Diane explains below, the ARC ensures immobility by mooring asylum seekers to specific locations in the city where their housing has been allocated.

“I have the ARC card. So when I’m going there to get the allowance, you are only allowed to use certain post offices. So I have to go to that post office in Beckton.<sup>122</sup> So they won’t allow me to go to the post office in the city centre [...] So they won’t allow me to go to say Millston or Stoneshead. So they won’t allow you to go anywhere except the post offices they have referred you to. So they are monitoring you. If weekly you are getting your money. They are monitoring you if weekly you are in that place.”

As a result, travel to other cities becomes almost impossible for those receiving support through the ARC, as they would need to return to their assigned post offices within a week. As the funds they receive are just £36.95 per week, few can justify such travel when they know they will have to return in a number of days. While many of my respondents used alternative forms of ID wherever possible (such as college or library cards), escaping their ‘non-citizen’ identity was impossible when funds needed to be accessed from the post office. It is at this point every week that many are forcibly reminded of their excluded status within the city, both through the being forced there, but also due to the potential attitude of the post office employees. Trini, who had initially arrived in the UK on a student visa but later found that she could not

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<sup>122</sup> Place names have been changed in interview excerpts.

return, had felt this change in status almost instantaneously upon one of her first attempts at receiving money at the post office.

“I think when you are a student, they see you like someone that comes and gives money to the country [...] so people treat you in such a nice way because you are [bringing] money into the country. When you are an asylum seeker, they have this idea that you are just taking money from them and that you are not bringing any benefits to the community. When I was living in Bournemouth, I went once to take my money from the post office and it’s the first time that I felt so bad, so insecure about my immigration situation, because the lady from the counter was so rude. Like, it was something that I had never felt before, when I was a student, no one ever treated me that badly. But that day it was like, it was maybe just the way she was talking to me and the body language, totally rejecting what I was saying and what I wanted to do. She was just like a big ‘NO’.”

Regardless of whether or not the ARC can be kept hidden from friends and acquaintances, Trini’s account highlights the inescapability of her ‘non-citizen’ status due to her dependence on the card in order to access her funds. Moreover, until she was eventually moved, she was forced to regularly encounter the woman at the post office. Considered as an ‘object’, therefore, the ARC is designed to moor asylum seekers’ bodies and act as a surveillance device. Considered as a ‘thing’ in which the ARC is inserted into the everyday struggles of asylum seekers and public discourses concerning them (Ingold

2010; Cupples 2011), however, the ARC works to connect its user to the ‘sticky’ qualities associated with asylum seekers (2006). Yet with the ARC these awkward encounters are limited to once a week, yet in the following section I focus on the Azure card, which creates such events with every purchase made.

### 6.3.2 The Azure Card



*Figure 36 shows the Azure card being compared to a £5 note.  
Image available at: [http://lordrogerroberts.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Herlinde-1\\_1984660i.jpg](http://lordrogerroberts.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Herlinde-1_1984660i.jpg)*

Unlike the ARC, the Azure card is harder to keep secret on a daily basis as it is used as a substitute for cash, rather than a means of withdrawing it on a weekly basis. While the ARC is issued to all asylum seekers in the UK, the Azure card is used only by people receiving ‘Section 4 support’. This form of support is made available to those whose asylum cases have

been turned down (officially referred to as ‘failed asylum seekers’) if they can demonstrate that they are either: (1) taking all available steps to leave the UK, (2) cannot leave the UK due to a physical or medical impediment or, (3) if the Home Secretary agrees that there is no viable route of return available. Lastly, Section 4 support can also be available to asylum seekers appealing their negative decision, who have filed for a judicial review, or if leaving them destitute would be a breach of a person’s Convention rights according to the *Human Rights Act 1998* (Gower 2015). In other words, the final criteria allows people who appeal an asylum decision or who file a new (‘fresh’) asylum claim to apply for support under Section 4 of the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999* – yet when one reads the rulings regarding Section 4 support, this use of Section 4 support appear almost as an afterthought. Moreover, categorising beneficiaries of Section 4 support as ‘failed asylum seekers’ falsely gives the impression that their cases have reached a negative conclusion, when in practice these are still on-going.

The Azure card functions as a prepaid card upon which £35.39 is issued per week and per person and is administered by private contractor Sodexo Limited on behalf of the Home Office. The cards can only be used in major supermarkets that have signed up to the scheme and will allow the user to only purchase food and ‘essential toiletries’ (Gower 2015). Like the ARC, the Azure card replaces the previous paper-based system, which was a voucher-based scheme administered through various housing providers. In 2009, the voucher scheme was abolished in favour of the Azure card system as the voucher system was deemed “open to abuse and fraud and there was evidence that vouchers were often traded for cash at reduced levels. The vouchers also presented poor value for money to the user with restricted retail outlets” (Green 2010 in British Red Cross 2014, p14). In line with the privatisation of asylum support in the context of austerity (Darling 2016b),

the Azure card scheme was designed to be self-financing as costs were to be recouped in fees generated “by the contracts negotiated with participating retailers and UKBA efficiency savings” (Santo 2014, p4). For its first year, for example, the running cost for the scheme was estimated to be £353,000, yet the running costs were recouped due to “fees generated by the commercial contracts Sodexo [...] negotiated with the various retailers, together with efficiency savings from UK Border Agency” (Green 2010 – House of Commons debate).<sup>123</sup> Until February 2015, moreover, funds were also recouped from *card users* who had not used their full amount as no more than £5 could be carried over per week (Red Cross 2015).

Like the ARC, therefore, the Azure card system is in place in part due to the suspicion the British government has of those who need it – in this case, ‘failed asylum seekers’. The Azure card was also designed to act as an ‘unequivocal spokesperson’ (Hinchcliffe 1996; Cupples 2011), acting as the instantaneous arbiter of what constitutes a ‘non-essential purchase’ while also informing the Home Office of potential fraudulent use and capable of tracking spending patterns and locations (Refugee Council 2010). In its everyday usage, however, the Azure card also acts as an ‘abjection machine’ (Swanton 2007); serving both to sort and highlight the presence of the ‘failed asylum seeker’ to the surrounding citizenry, as well as performing a suspicious gaze upon them and their activities. This degradation is strongly felt by those forced to depend on the card, transforming the mundane shopping experience and the space of the supermarket into one of intense control and distrust. Like the ARC, the Azure card functions to attach and tether the ‘sticky’ or spoiled identities to specific bodies through the practices of everyday life such as shopping. Even those like Clinton, who had started a family with ‘locals’, keenly feel a

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<sup>123</sup> see <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100913/text/100913w0007.htm>

strong sense of embarrassment as their passage is slowed or halted through mundane checkpoints when using the card (Massumi 2013):

“People just look at you and wonder, ‘What’s wrong with you?’ I remember when I was on the Section 4 they gave me the Azure card. I remember how embarrassing it was. Some shops would just say ‘no’ because of fraud. They do not accept this card here. But I’ve been told I can shop at Tesco! “Oh I need to call my manager” or “oh I need to check.” Then before you know it, you’re standing there holding up the queue. They are asking you “What card is this? What is this anyway?” And some managers told us, “No, we can’t use it this time.” And it’s not embarrassing just for me, it’s also embarrassing for my partner and my step-daughter. They go through this every day now too. Even my step-daughter is starting to understand this now too. Everywhere you go you have to explain yourself.”

Other recipients of Section 4 support with whom I spoke at the Solidarity Group described similar difficulties when attempting to use the Azure card, either in particular shops or certain items. In some cases people explained they would return to shop at particular supermarkets where they knew the staff understood the Azure card, even if their accommodation had been moved away from the area and required a longer walk. Even then, however, using the Azure card for even the simplest items can be an unwanted struggle that will leave the user feeling discriminated against. As Trini, for example, explained:

“I will go and they will say, ‘You have this card, oh we know what that means.’ I know what stuff I can buy with this card and I have been denied the right to buy those things, by staff in shops that say you are not allowed to buy this, and I am like: “I just bought it yesterday!” “Yes but we got this new policy and you cannot buy it.” I know that what you are saying it's not true.”

In the excerpt above Trini was referring to her having been refused the right to buy a top up for her phone in her usual supermarket – a top up which she did have the right to buy and needed to contact her lawyer and stay in touch with friends that she had become separated from following her dispersal to the city. Similarly, the House of Commons inquiry into the asylum system noted that “although according to Home Office guidance the only restricted items are fuel and gift cards, witnesses to the inquiry reported that supermarket staff had refused to allow cardholders to purchase socks, toiletries, orange juice, children’s clothing and a lavatory brush” (HCHAC 2013, p35). Beyond ensuring frequent stigmatisation, the Azure card also combines with the government’s dispersal policy to dissolve ties of solidarity between asylum seekers in the city by limiting access to public transportation. Indeed, following the COMPASS contracts, especially, asylum accommodation even within the city has become increasingly dispersed and people are regularly moved with little warning or possibility of refusal. Of my interviewees, only one had found a way of buying bus tickets with their Azure card (by using a PayPoint in the city centre), although the limited funds on the card means that even if purchasing tickets with the Azure card were possible, travel between accommodations using public transport for many asylum seekers is almost impossible.



The UK government has faced repeated recommendations to do away with the two-tier support system. In particular, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2013) argued that between £2 million to £4 million could be saved and initial asylum case decision-making time reduced if section 4 support were to be abolished and brought under section 95 instead – thus allowing staff resources to be re-allocated to handling asylum applications. Instead, the UK government has consistently defended the denial of supporting ‘failed asylum seekers’ through Section 95 support on the grounds that a cash-based system would likely fail to encourage those receiving it from leaving the UK. This is clearly stated in the Home Office (2015, p5, emphasis my own) document entitled ‘Reforming support for failed asylum seekers and *other illegal migrants*’:

“The problem with section 4(2) is that it provides an avenue for support simply on the basis that the person is in the UK and has previously made a failed asylum claim. It means that support is provided to failed asylum seekers who should have left the UK when their claim failed, but who did not do so and remained here unlawfully. It is essential that our support arrangements reinforce our immigration controls rather than providing incentives to circumvent them.”

Cashless support is also justified on the basis that Section 4 support meets essential needs and is designed to be granted on a temporary basis only while ‘failed asylum seekers’ organise their return journeys (HCAC 2013).<sup>124</sup> Asylum seekers who

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<sup>124</sup> See also [HC Deb 16 September 2010 c1213W](#), [HC Deb 11 December 2013 c222-3W](#)

have had their initial claims refused, however, will regularly apply for Section 4 given that they become eligible once they lodge a new asylum claim or appeal. According to Gower's (2015) briefing paper on the subject, 4,941 'refused asylum seekers' and their dependants were in receipt of Section 4 support by the end of March 2015.<sup>125</sup> A Parliamentary Question, answered in June 2015,<sup>126</sup> stated that 3,330 recipients of Section 4 support had been dependent on it for between one and five years (and 295 for between five and ten years).<sup>127</sup> The reason for this number is, in part, due to the high refusal rate of initial asylum claims in the UK. Indeed, as Lester (2000, p19) states, "the appeal is becoming part of the determination process" (see also Cwerner 2004; Gill 2009; Asylum Aid 2011). In 2014, for example, 62% of asylum cases (out of 15,653 initial decisions) were refused at the initial stage (although this was down from 88% in 2004 and almost 70% in 2007).<sup>128</sup> Of these, available government statistics (using 2012 to 2014 data) show that appeals are lodged in 70% of all asylum claims and that of these 31% are eventually accepted. In other words, not only is there a high chance that someone claiming asylum will be forced to apply for Section 4 support at some point in the process, 'failed asylum seekers' have a good chance of nonetheless receiving some form of Leave to Remain (LTR). Despite this, asylum seekers whose claims continue

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<sup>125</sup> The Home Office has calculated that roughly 15,000 'failed asylum seekers' were being granted some form of support in March 2015 (Home Office 2016).

<sup>126</sup> <http://www.parliament.uk/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/lords/2015-05-27/HL64>

<sup>127</sup> Data on how many were recipients of Section 4 support as a result of fresh claims or appeals was not included.

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2016/asylum#data-tables>. In comparison, the overall average refusal rate at 'first instance' across the EU28 in 2015 was 48% (Hawkins 2016).

past initial refusal are derided as ‘failed’ or ‘refused’ – and subjected to the Azure card despite the likelihood of being dependant on it for over a year.

Far from a temporary measure that serves to support those who will be leaving the country while they make their personal arrangements, therefore, the Azure card instead serves as a device designed to coerce ‘failed asylum seekers’ to leave the UK by worsening the conditions through which they receive support (see Hasselberg 2016). As a result, the Azure card forms an integral part of the two-pronged temporal approach used by the Home Office in its attempts to remove asylum seekers from the country; while the government’s primary strategy has been to speed up the asylum process through new legislation and administrative procedures (Cwerner 2004), its secondary strategy can be described as one that creates a state of permanent discomfort and crisis – or living in permanent temporariness. While both the ARC and the Azure card play a role in the establishment of this environment of discomfort, the latter especially serves to intensify the Home Office’s ‘reach’ into the everyday lives of asylum seekers as it controls where and what they can purchase on a daily basis, while also ‘othering’ its users ostensibly without intention. As will be discussed in the following section, however, receiving support through Section 4 is neither guaranteed and nor is it straightforward to maintain. Instead, asylum seekers whose cases are rejected are frequently plunged into a vicious cycle of destitution – thus further intensifying the role that the Home Office plays in their everyday lives.

#### 6.4 Destitution Catch-22

Following the refusal of their asylum case, asylum seekers are issued a letter from the Home Office in English stating that their access to support through Section 95 is to be discontinued. As many asylum seekers cannot read English (especially the formal English used by the Home Office) this letter often goes unread (ASAP 2007, 2015). These letters would frequently be brought to the Solidarity Group for the volunteers to read, translate and inform people that they were about to be made homeless. While time in general passes slowly throughout the asylum process (Griffiths 2014), it significantly speeds up at crucial junctures such as the refusal of an asylum case and with it the refusal of support. Following the notification of their impending destitution, a 'failed asylum seeker' is given a 21-day grace period during which they can apply for Section 4 support. This would frequently also result in scrambles for action in the Solidarity Group if destitution letters needed to be written. Similarly this could require urgently communicating with a person's lawyer, during which I would quickly realise the often-poor communication between client and legal representative and/or the client's understanding of what is actually happening to them.

During my fieldwork period, therefore, the Solidarity Group was acting as a reluctant base from which Section 95 and Section 4 applications could be made following the transfer of the Home Office contract to Migrant Help from the previous 'One Stop Service'. Frustrated volunteers would complain at the fact the Solidarity Group was being forced to take up the slack following the recent changes and provide a service they had never previously intended to give. Indeed, some volunteers reacted with dismay at the fact that the Solidarity Group, which had previously been known to stage protests

bordering on the 'radical', was being suggested by Home Office employees as the first port of call for recently arrived asylum seekers in need of destitution support. To speed up applications, the Solidarity Group had started to fill in the forms on behalf of those coming to the centre, rather than allowing a build-up of people waiting to use the two available phones. In other words, the tactics of the Solidarity Group had been forcibly changed, becoming entangled within the strategies of the Home Office and the existing asylum system – thereby risking to implicitly support the strategies of the Home Office by engaging with the process instead of protesting it outright (Gill *et al* 2014). This is a paradox that many activist groups (not just in the context of immigration) must navigate as charities and activist groups can regularly find themselves entangled within the forces of neoliberalism – even extending the punitive self-perpetuating cycles of charity as welfare is reduced (Cloke *et al* 2016). Moreover, as Tyler and Marcinak (2013, p146) have demonstrated in the concerning immigration and protests concerning citizenship rights, “in order to effect material changes, protestors are compelled to make their demands in the idiom of the regime of citizenship they are contesting.” Despite agreeing to put in applications and writing character statements for all of those coming to the Solidarity Group for help, therefore, their actions both challenged and reinscribed existing political identities (of deserving and un-deserving asylum seekers) while simultaneously reinforcing the Home Office's authority.

Following the initial 'destitution test', however, applicants for section 4 support can have their presence on other databases and security systems checked without their knowledge or authorisation. For example, Home Office caseworkers can

conduct credit rating checks using the ‘Experian tool’<sup>129</sup> on applicants listing a UK address on their Section 4 application form. Following a suspicious result, a secondary check can be carried out “which often involve[s] requesting further information from financial institutions using coercive powers” (Vine 2014, p15). John Vine (2014), the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders, similarly found other ‘positive examples’ of caseworkers using the Central Reference System (CRS) to verify destitution claims in Section 4 applications. As the CRS contains data for all visa applications made post-1998, Home Office caseworkers are able to use the system to view an applicant’s personal past financial and personal circumstances which they might have withheld in their Section 4 application. While these ‘failed’ asylum seekers are, therefore, immobilised within the city, the fluid passage of their virtual ‘data doubles’ is encouraged (Haggerty and Ericson 2000; Bigo 2011; Vukov and Sheller 2013). Moreover, it is this ‘enrolment’ in various databases and electronic infrastructures which support citizens’ mobility and consumption within the city (Epstein 2007), therefore, that also allows the Home Office to make a judgment on a person’s state of destitution from a distance.

The Solidarity Group also plays an active role in assisting those whose Section 4 has been revoked on suspicion of fraud – should the Home Office believe them to not be destitute. I first met Arash, for example, the week after his Section 4 support had been cut following the Home Office’s discovery that he had an (undeclared) bank account. He was entitled to the bank account and even had a National Insurance Number as his original asylum application had taken more than 12 months to

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<sup>129</sup> Experian is a credit reference agency that provides organisations with the ability to undertake data-matching against financial records.

receive a response from the Home Office. However, the employee at the ‘One Stop Shop’ that had originally helped Arash fill out his Section 4 application form had either accidentally not included information concerning the account, assumed he had none of the above, or had simply not included the information as it is not specifically requested as part of the ASF1 Section 4 support application form (an issue similarly noted in ASAP 2015).<sup>130</sup> While Schwartz (1975) writes that the ‘punitive’ aspect of waiting comes from the uncertainty of the amount of time that one has to endure in stasis, Arash, however, considered the perceived injustice of his waiting and subsequent “harassment” to be the main causes of his mental anguish. Indeed, at the time of meeting Arash, he had already been in the UK for almost five years – having spent six months in prison for attempting to arrive in the UK with false documentation,<sup>131</sup> then waiting two years for an initial decision and waiting another two years for a response following his submission of ‘fresh’ evidence.

“Can you imagine how terrible is this situation? [...] Actually, I am not angry they [the Home Office] find it [the bank account]. My anger is that when I asked what happened to

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<sup>130</sup> Arash’ English at the time was also very poor and there had been no translator present when he went to the ‘One Stop Shop’.

<sup>131</sup> Despite article 31 of the Geneva convention stating that “refugees shall not be penalized solely by reason of unlawful entry” and despite legal scholars’ frequent condemnations, the UK regularly pursues a policy of pressing criminal charges against refugees and asylum seekers found to have used false papers to pass through or enter its territory (see Feller *et al* 2003; Hathaway 2005). People in Arash’ situation, therefore, frequently find themselves fighting a criminal battle before their asylum claims have even commenced. Indeed, between 2009 and 2011, almost 500 asylum seekers were convicted of false documents offences (<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/aug/24/syrian-refugee-jailed-uk>)

my case, they said they don't have time to look at my case [...] but they had time to find something to harass me.”

For a number of weeks Arash would regularly return to the Solidarity Group seeking advice or help with his Section 4 support. While the issue of the bank account was initially cleared up with the Home Office through a letter explaining that the original application had been mistakenly filled out, Arash's situation worsened drastically after the Home Office demanded his bank statements and spotted some irregularities. As a favour to his Iranian friends who were also in the asylum system yet without bank accounts, Arash had been allowing them to use his account to make small (but numerous) online purchases. In his four years in the UK he had also become friends with a local Turkish businessman who was paying for his gym membership and mobile phone bills (amounting to £80 per month). As a result, Arash was put in a difficult situation because neither the Turkish businessman nor his Iranian friends wanted to provide written letters confirming Arash's version of events. The businessman refused as he feared punishment from the government for supporting an asylum seeker and the Iranian friends in case their support was revoked if the Home Office were to decide that they were not destitute if they could afford online purchases. To add to the already messy situation, Arash had been staying in a hostel room with his brother when previously receiving support and had continued to stay there following its suspension. This left him in a Catch-22 situation when attempting to prove his destitution, as the Home Office wanted to know where he had been living after his support had ended. On the one hand he dared not explain that he had remained with his brother, for fear of his brother's support also becoming discontinued as recipients of both Section 95 and Section 4 support are not permitted to house 'guests'. Equally, Arash could not rely on help from another asylum seeker for either a letter or a place



to stay for the same reason. Nor could he easily claim to have been staying with a 'local' friend, as this would require yet another letter of explanation/proof, but perhaps also imply that he had sufficient support in the community to not be considered destitute – although this was the explanation he eventually opted for.

During this process, Arash felt as every part of his life in the UK was becoming increasingly scrutinised by the suspicious Home Office. On his third return to the Solidarity Group, for example, Arash brought with him a response from the Home Office to a letter I had drafted on behalf of the Turkish businessman explaining that he had been impressed with Arash's commitment to his free studies at a local college and had, as a result, decided to support him by paying for his phone bills and gym membership. The Home Office response was to question Arash on which college he was attending, which course he was attending and how he was paying for his studies if he was destitute. Worried that it would impact on his Section 4 application, Arash considered dropping out of his studies completely – though he was eventually convinced to remain in education – resulting in another letter written to the Home Office to explain that his studies were free. Eventually, however, his Section 4 application was turned down on the basis that Arash was receiving enough support from members of the community and was, therefore, not destitute.

Though Arash's situation was highly specific given his set of personal circumstances, it nevertheless serves to highlight the issues in which many facing Section 4 decisions were embroiled. As few asylum seekers in the city feel confident in revealing their 'asylum identities' to locals they are frequently forced to rely on secretive support from others within the asylum system. Yet maintaining this solidarity is hard when it throws up questions regarding their existing support or even

their general trustworthiness, which can be brought up as evidence in their asylum case. Indeed, as can be seen in the Home Office responses to asylum claims or requests for Section 4 support, the perceived credibility of the applicant is paramount given the lack of physical evidence that people are able to bring with them to the UK (ASAP 2014). This, in combination with the regular checks in support accommodation by the sub-contracted housing providers (discussed in more detail below), effects a disciplinary strategy on the part of the Home Office to reduce efforts of solidarity between asylum seekers with support and those without.

Arash's story also highlights how the suspicious gaze to which he and others like him become subjected frequently results in the adoption of criminalised coping strategies – or the cutting off of social ties for fear that these might somehow also lead to their incrimination. People in Arash's position are quickly caught in a bind as the longer they spend without support, the harder it becomes to prove destitution and/or to find temporary hosts willing to write to the Home Office confirming that they are offering temporary residence. Indeed, the longer they remain in the country without official support, the harder it becomes to prove their continued (destitute) survival in the city without resorting to illegal work. Those I met who had spent years without support spoke not just of feeling 'coerced to leave' (Hasselberg 2016), but of being tricked into resorting to illegal work (or other criminal activities) for which they could be detained or removed. In terms of mobility, the Home Office's letters relating to section 4 also served to 'fix' the asylum seekers in place despite their destitution and dependence on others (see Darling 2014). Combined with the suspicion which they must endure, therefore, the Catch-22 process of applying for section 4 support succeeds not just in the mooring 'failed asylum seekers' to a specific place, but also maintaining them in a state of destitution.

Counter to this, however, the Solidarity Group acted as a hub in the community from which these letters could be received, drafted and sent – working to undo the tethering of those facing destitution. Moreover, the Solidarity Group had started to build a ‘destitution network’ by reaching out to a nearby night shelter and volunteer hosts in order to find temporary beds and hosts willing to procure letters confirming their guests’ temporary residence. Returning to Urry’s (2003) mobilities dialectic, therefore, the Solidarity Group provided a mooring for the asylum seekers to access advice and letters and as a physical base from which they could attempt to find help in the city. Moreover, the *mobility* of the volunteers of the Solidarity Group through their ability to make connections with nearby hosts or local initiatives proved to be key in finding temporary accommodation for destitute asylum seekers. Yet just as in Arash’s case, the volunteers had to negotiate the extent of the support they could provide as the Home Office might find them to no longer be ‘destitute’ due to the amount of local support they receive. Similarly, in attempting to run a small destitution network, the Solidarity Group again found themselves playing an active part in the strategies of the state, rather than in outright opposition to them.

## 6.5 Homeliness & Double Dispersal

Much has already been made of the effects of dispersal on asylum seekers in both academia and by NGOs critical of the policy (e.g. Robinson *et al* 2003; Wren 2007; Zetter 2007; Rosenberg 2010; Rotter 2010; Darling 2011a; ASAP 2017). In particular, Bloch and Schuster 2005, p493) argue that the dispersal policy “takes away asylum seekers’ freedom to choose where they settle in Britain and so doing it removes them from kinship and other social networks as well as community organizations that are known to be crucial in the early stages of settlement” (Bloch and Schuster 2005, p493). Here I argue

that asylum seekers' scope for 'solidaristic political engagement' (Squire 2009a) is further undermined following their initial dispersal due to the frequency with which they are moved between accommodations. For example, asylum seekers can also be moved from their support accommodation by the housing providers once leases come to an end or if the accommodations are later found to fail health and safety standards (British Red Cross 2014; see NAO 2014 for examples of failing standards). Yet those living in the accommodation are given no choice as to when the move will happen or where they will be moved to. According to Arthur, who had been moved five times within the city since his two years in detention, he was given less than a week to prepare for each of his moves and no official means to alter the date or challenge the move itself. Following each move Arthur was forced to start afresh and, as a result, he soon stopped attempting to create relationships with his neighbours. Indeed, of all of his neighbours he has only ever maintained contact with one, a single father whose child he used to babysit. In other words, multiple housing relocations within the city add to the creation of boundaries between asylum seekers and local citizens who might become concerned or involved in their lives and cases.

Another associated problem with being moved is the loss of contact with other asylum seekers in the area who understand the hardships of the system. For those on Section 4 support, especially, having these contacts is important if they need access to cash to buy items prohibited by the Azure card. Following the expiration on the lease of an apartment building in which many of the asylum seekers were being housed, for example, the Solidarity Group was attempting to resurrect the Azure card 'shopping buddy' scheme – matching volunteers or recipients of Section 95 support with a nearby person on Section 4 support. The scheme would allow those on Section 4 to reciprocate the help they receive through buying their buddy's essential shopping goods. The regular movements within the city, including the large-scale leases coming to an

end, however, put pressure on the 'shopping buddy' system such that by the time I left it was barely running. Regularised movements can also put pressure on individuals who know that the nearby person on Section 4 support has nobody else nearby to turn to. Diane, for example, was attempting to support a friend of hers whom she would meet every week at college:

I'm trying to help her out. At the same time, I don't buy food all the time because there are some times when I really don't have the passion to eat. So like I told her that I can't do it every week [...] She lives outside [the city centre] [...] And so I feel for her, to be honest. I feel for her and the sister cos they have to always go to Tesco or Asda all the time, and they don't sell African food. And transport if they want to go somewhere, they have to pay double (because they have to change bus). So, I feel for them. You know, I think, sometimes it's a matter of sometimes telling yourself that you have money: Azure card makes you feel like buying, buying, buying. You have to finish up your money for that week, you can't take it to the next week. So the last week I had to. I was buying food for £12 and then I paid an extra £10 food with her because they had money in the Azure card and they didn't know what to do with it. So I found myself saying, "OK let me just use it and I'll give you £10 whenever I'm ready." You know, even if it's something not in my budget.

For those being released from detention, especially, repeated dispersals could also be a painful experience. As has already been noted by Gill (2009), McGregor (2011) and Griffiths (2014), detainees are often moved between detention centres –

especially if they are considered to be trouble-makers (interviews Arthur, Ally). Upon release, however, there is no guarantee that former detainees will be granted Section 4 accommodation close to where they had been living previously, or even near where they had been detained. As a result, any ties they might have had with people or organisations attempting to help them can be quickly severed. Trini, for example, claimed asylum while she was living in Huddersfield and was subsequently housed in Middlesbrough where she shared a small run-down place with five other women. Despite initially hating her new life in Middlesbrough (Trini said she vividly remembered crying the entirety of her first days there), she attempted to establish herself in her new life. Indeed, she found an asylum lawyer with the help of the group in the Methodist church and even started to date a person she had met there. A number of weeks later, however, Trini was detained at the local police station and taken to Dungavel IRC (Scotland). Trini spent five weeks in Dungavel and was then transferred back to England, Colnbrook IRC (outside Heathrow airport), when she received her removal papers. She was released, however, as her lawyer won her judicial review on the day of her flight by proving that incorrectly applied the law and that she should be permitted an appeal from within the UK. Following this ordeal, however, Trini was given accommodation in another city which she had never visited before – leaving her without support, still reeling from being detained, frequently moved and her near-removal experience. As Trini explained, her reaction was to feel isolated; which she also considered to be the next stage in the Home Office’s attempts to remove her from the country:

At the beginning when I was just released it was really hard to just to be with other people.  
I remember I just wanted to be alone to understand what's going on and also trying to forget  
the things that I went through when I was in detention and just not being able at all to

socialise [...] So you are not just put[ting] me through hell when I was in detention, you are sending me to hell again, in a different way. You are just keeping [on] isolating me.

Each dispersal, therefore, brings with it a host of new problems for people who are already kept in a vulnerable situation and have often experienced horrific scenes before arriving in the UK. Through these ‘double dispersals’, moreover, it is also made clear to those receiving support that their rooms are only an accommodation for the short term, rather than their long-term ‘home’. As Zetter *et al* (2005) argue, the dispersal policy as a whole is founded on the notion of the temporary, rather than permanent stay, of asylum seekers – thereby further creating a strategy of deterrence. Indeed, the flats and rooms of those asylum seekers who welcomed me into their homes were frequently sparsely decorated and devoid of what I would consider ‘ordinary clutter’. For the most part peoples’ flats and rooms highlighted the transience of life in the asylum system, or perhaps the hope that the wait in limbo would soon be over. Many of my respondents and visitors to the Solidarity Group would speak of their lives being ‘on hold’ or of ‘not being able to progress’ while their asylum cases were being considered – their ‘homes’ acting as both a cause of this temporariness, but also a canvas on which it could be performed.<sup>132</sup> Some few even refuse to live in the accommodation offered due to the checks and rules associated with living

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<sup>132</sup> Despite this lack of attachment to a physical place of abode, however, I was often struck by peoples’ fondness for the city itself and their strong desire to remain there. Though not the main focus of this chapter, I feel there is an opportunity to here to further discussions of ‘home’ and disrupt some of the taken for granted notions of what it might mean to be ‘home’ and to ‘belong’ in the city – or whether ‘home’ can be somewhere you feel unsafe in (see Yuval-Davis *et al* 2017).

in a space which offers no security. Clinton, for example, had been receiving Section 4 support for a period of six months the previous year but had refused to live in the flat:

I was living with a friend [instead] [...] I don't want to live there, they've got keys to the flat. It's my private life, they come and visit you once every week to see if you're there. You're not supposed to leave, you're not supposed to have friends over night. That's part of the arrangement. No one is allowed to stay there except you and your house mate. So you don't even have a life to lead.

One exception to those flats I did see to those flats I did see, however, was Diane's flat (of which I saw only the living room), which contained a bookshelf lined with books, a few decorations on the wall, a television, a small collection of DVDs and a laptop. Enrolled in a local religious college, a regular volunteer for the Solidarity Group and other local movements, Diane was determined to make the most of her current situation. Yet Diane had still been forced to fight for even these few possessions; not for ownership of them (most were given to her through her church network), rather for her *right* to own them. Far from acting as a 'safe haven' away from the problems of the outside world and the Home Office, asylum seekers are subjected to regular home inspections by the housing provider (or the subcontracted company), where their accommodation is checked for signs of wealth beyond their means or evidence of another person being hosted. As Diane explained:

You have no option but to be here. On your own. They don't want anyone in the house, in the flat [...] [They] will come to check what you have in the house [...] They will look at



your things and say, 'OK, you can have this.' But if you've only been here a while then they will say, 'You can't have this.' They will look at you like, 'what else do you have?' If you have books, they will check. If you have a watch, they will check [...] If they come in and they find a flat screen: 'Where did you get it from?'

These home inspections, therefore, produce further discomfort and 'unhomeliness' as the objects and materialities of asylum seekers' lives also become scrutinised and subjected to the suspicious gaze; the reach of the state further encroaching upon the prosaic lives of asylum seekers and creeping into even the privacy of their 'homes'. Indeed, the inspections further serve to make asylum seekers feel criminalised, as their possessions and living habits are brought into question alongside their legal status. Worse, these home inspections are often carried out by employees of subcontracted housing providers with little-to-no respect for the trauma that many asylum seekers have previously experienced. On numerous occasions while volunteering for the Solidarity Group, for example, I would contact the subcontracted housing provider on behalf of female asylum seekers who had previously been subject to sexual violence in order to register complaints to the management about the fact that the inspections were being carried out by male members of staff with their own keys to the women's rooms. Despite this suspicion experienced even in their homes, however, most of my respondents had at some point in their asylum journey spent months in a kind of self-imposed isolation in their support-provided accommodation. To further understand the reasons for this affectively limited behaviour, I turn in the following section to the process of 'signing on' at the local Home Office reporting centre or police station.

## 6.6 On Swords and Anchors

### **If you've missed your appointment**

You must contact your caseworker within 7 days of your missed appointment.

If you can't contact your caseworker, use the contact number that's on your immigration paperwork.



**You may face penalties if you don't attend your appointment. Your asylum support (money and housing) could be withdrawn. You could receive an unlimited fine, a criminal record or a 6 month prison sentence.**

*Figure 37 is a snapshot taken from the Home Office website from the page concerning Home Office reporting centres and procedures. Aside from the addresses of the 14 reporting centres in the UK, the above message stands out as key to anyone on the website.*

Upon arrival in the city asylum seekers are given a personalised reporting date and time. The regularity with which one can be expected to report to the Home Office can often appear arbitrary, though it is nonetheless roughly dependant on the progression of their asylum case as well as the perceived risk of a person 'going underground'. Recent arrivals in the city are, therefore, often given weekly reporting dates, while those whose cases have ground to a halt are sometimes not required to sign in for up to six months. By contrast, those who have recently been released from detention can often be ordered to sign in every day, clearly considered to be the most likely to abscond and to require more frequent surveillance. Failure to

report will be met with the threat of detention, potential loss of Section 95 or Section 4 support, as well as creating a permanent blot on one's Home Office case files. Like travelling to Lunar House to initiate an asylum claim, however, signing on at the reporting centre also brings with it the risk of detention. Indeed, reporting is not only used as a means of mooring asylum seekers bodies to a particular city, it is also used as a means of effectuating the detention process without resorting to a potentially media-worthy immigration raid.<sup>133</sup> Asylum seekers, therefore, report to the centre knowing that each signing on occasion could be their last – that they could be detained and held in the bowels of the centre to be transported to an Immigration Removal Centre late at night and issued with removal papers and a one-way flight ticket.

From the outside, however, the reporting centre is wholly unassuming. I had actually frequently cycled passed the building without noticing its signage and recognising its relevance and place in the 'detention archipelago' (Agier 2010). Yet to describe the reporting centre as something akin to a 'non-place' (Augé 1995) would be to overlook the 'spatial politics of affect' that have been designed in to the architecture of the centre in order to elicit particular forms of behaviour and responses from those who must travel through it on a regular basis (see Thrift 2004). From the very moment of their entry, those who have been called to sign are subjected to intense surveillance; forced to pass through a metal detector, remove their belts and sometimes their shoes, and to have their bags searched. Moreover, only phones without a camera are allowed to be used inside the reporting centre, the chairs are bolted to the floor and communication with Home Office (non-security)

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<sup>133</sup> The Glasgow 'dawn raids' in 2005, for example, sparked such media outcry and protest (see BBC 2005) that the raids were largely halted until 2015 (see The Herald Scotland 2015).

staff is only possible through glass windows.<sup>134</sup> As a result, those signing on are made to feel like criminals on each reporting occasion. As Peter explains:

They make you pass through the screen and, that's for criminals! I'm not a criminal. Every time I go there, I keep saying that to myself [...] Being in this country doesn't make someone a criminal [...] It's something that you don't get used to. But you keep going with it because it's their procedure [...] When I have to go through the checks and they remove my belt, then I'm a bit scared because you don't know what's going to happen [...] You only know you are safe when you get out of there, otherwise it's a scary environment. They make it look more intimidating. That this could be the last time you're coming out of this building, or the last time that you see this street.

As Peter's comments highlight, the regular encounters with the security procedures at the reporting centre have an effect on his sense of self – forcing him into feeling like a criminal, untrustworthy, or as a threat to society due to his status as someone seeking asylum. Prior even to being questioned by the Home Office staff to whom he must report, therefore, he is removed from the ordinary citizenry outside the reporting centres' walls and unwillingly subjected to security controls. Similarly, Hasselberg (2016) notes how the combined effect of detention and subsequent reporting procedures for foreign national criminals has the effect of making them feel untrustworthy, infantilised and dehumanised. If these forcings upon

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<sup>134</sup> The descriptions of the reporting centre have had to be recreated from interviews as access to this space is restricted.

asylum seekers' sense of self-worth are commenced at the moment of entry to the reporting centre due to the security checks, they are also reinforced through their frequent confrontations with Home Office staff. As the following interview excerpts will highlight, the reporting centre is not a space in which asylum seekers' relationships with the Home Office can be discussed and case negotiated, instead it is a space in which they are regularly subjected to verbal abuse and suspicion. As Trini recounted, for example, this treatment starts with the security guards at the entrance to the reporting centre.

[W]hen you get in there's only security staff, and only one or two that obviously know that I go there every week. They are able to ask, 'How are you today?' Even to notice that you are not having a good day. Maybe they are so used to deal with people that they just can read others' faces [sic]. So that's one part. [But] some of them, are being oppressive, by asking things that they really shouldn't. Like, 'What are you doing here? Why don't you go back?'"

Following the security checks, signees will sit for hours in the reception area, waiting to be called up to the glass-fronted booths that serve to further emphasise the difference between them and the trustworthy citizenry. Respondents recounted that, while waiting, they would often pray that their numbers would not match up with immigration officers that they knew to be rude or abusive. Trini, for example, regularly feared encountering one particular (female) immigration officer on her reporting days, or indeed, even hearing her berate other people signing on before it was her turn.

[She says] really nasty stuff to people, like, ‘The only reason you have to not come signing is dying in the hospital.’ I mean, how can you say something like that? Just forget that you are working for the government or a public institution, it's a human being. How can you say that to another human being? And then you are there and you are already stressed because you can be detained at any time and then you listen to all these things and it adds more stress on top of the stress that you have already. You just want to run away.

To Trini and the other visitors of the Solidarity Group, therefore, this regular experience would be a dehumanising one. The ways in which they are spoken to in the reporting centre serves to reinforce the message that, until they gain their Leave to Remain documents, signees are considered to be in the UK without permission (‘illegally’) and can as a result be treated with suspicion and disdain by Home Office staff. In other words, even when disregarding the fact that they can be detained at the reporting centre, the act of signing on is one that is dreaded throughout the week. The threat of detention, however, *is* real and plays on peoples’ minds as they go to sign on. Even those who would did not regularly ask for support from the Solidarity Group would regularly drop-off their valuables (mostly mobile phones and wallets) prior to going on to reporting. In these instances they were temporarily cutting themselves off from society, with only a signature on a sign-in sheet in the Solidarity Group’s window acting as their anchor.

The fear of being detained has its own rhythms as it would be tied to the progression of their asylum case. For example, if an asylum seeker was able to avoid detained fast-track, then they could be fairly certain of avoiding detention at least for

the first three months while their case was being examined. Following this, however, detention can occur at any time – though most likely immediately following the rejection of the asylum claim. Occasionally, however, the Solidarity Group received word of similar cases to Trini’s, where people were detained at the reporting centre before they had received word that their asylum cases had been refused. For those whose asylum claims have been refused but who have not been immediately detained, by contrast, the possibility of detention hangs over them like the sword of Damocles. In such cases, refused asylum seekers’ lives would become wholly enveloped in wondering when the sword might fall. Thus, asylum seekers would regularly seek to read into possible implications of any changes regarding their reporting dates or the questions they were being asked. As Arthur explained (below), longer dates were therefore generally seen as a good sign, while more regular reporting dates were instead seen as a sign that the sword was edging ever closer.

Because the more you go to sign at the Home Office, the more stress you have, the more you think they are gonna detain you. That’s something they have in the head. [When reporting dates change:] “Oh maybe they want to detain me. Why are they asking me to come sign every day? Maybe they want to detain me. Maybe my travel documents, they are nearly there. Why don’t they give me six months, or three months? Oh my God, they’re gonna kill me, they’re gonna deport me!”

The regular reporting dates also highlight the extent to which asylum seekers are not in command of their own time and mobility in the city – forced to attend their reporting dates no matter their time or frequency for fear of being labelled as having gone ‘underground’. Although the Home Office provides a precise date and time for each asylum seeker to follow,

the long queues in the Home Office can mean that reporting can take between thirty minutes and a number of hours depending on the number of people called in that day, the number of Home Office employees on duty and whether or not more information is required than usual. Those forced to 'sign on' were clearly frustrated not just by the loss of time, but also by the demonstration of power asymmetry displayed by the Home Office in the reporting centres (Schwartz 1975; Bourdieu 2000). Receiving compensation for using public transport to access the reporting centre, moreover, is rare (although some visitors to the Solidarity Group had received bus passes if they had mobility issues). The rest, however, are expected to walk to the reporting centre or use their already-limited funds to use public transport. As a result, reporting can frequently become a full-day event depending on the circumstances. This can be a considerable inconvenience for those who have managed to enrol themselves in free full-time education or volunteering in an effort to escape the feelings of stagnation they experience during the asylum process. In Arash's case, for example, following his first three weeks post-release from detention, he had been forced to report at the Home Office every Monday for the next four years – missing a day of college each week in the process. Arash also spoke of feeling harassed due to his bail conditions and the Home Office's use of them as an excuse to maintain the frequency of his reporting duties, as well as his powerlessness to refuse the Home Office's demands:

There are several times, actually hundreds of times, we have asked to change it. Because it's normal that for certain people they change the day of the report. Whenever, we ask to change it, they say 'no, because you are outside the bail. You can't change it.' But it's not true, because they can change it, but they don't want to...



I think it's like harassment. They just want to put us in a difficult situation, to make us give up and decide to go back.

The regular reporting dates also mean that travel between cities is almost impossible due to peoples' limited budgets and their need to return to the city before their next reporting date. Peter, for example, who had extended family in London, had barely left the city to see his family during his two years in the UK despite his distress at his new surroundings and his release from detained fast-track. The reporting centre, in combination with the ARC and Azure cards, therefore, acts as another unwanted anchor for the asylum seeker with desires to occasionally leave the city – thereby reducing the amount of 'bad circulation' permitted throughout the country as asylum seekers become tethered in place. The reporting centre, however, has a function beyond that of a simple mooring device; its materialities also play a role in constraining the actions and mobilities of asylum seekers in the city by 'affectively limiting' their freedoms forcing them into submission even when not inside the walls of the reporting centre. In the following section I discuss how this is achieved through exacting confessions from those 'signing on'.

## 6.7 Confessions

Marx (2005, p20) argues that “[m]any forms of surveillance as border crossing tools and border enhancement tools rely on extending or constricting the senses [...] Border barriers and breakers often aim at limiting or strengthening sense data.” In the setting of the airport, for example, Adey (2004; 2008) demonstrates how 'modernistic forms of design' have been used to communicate power in order to make people feel safe and that all is under control. Indeed, part of the process previously

described by Clinton might sound somewhat familiar to the frequent flyer. Like the passenger at the airport, the body at the reporting centre is transformed and broken down into a series of ‘processing categories’ – asylum seeker, (immanent) deportee and threat – for the purpose of sorting the unruly population (see Fuller and Harley 2004; Diken and Laustsen 2006). In its attempts to sift good circulation from bad, however, airport security can be as reliant on affective strategies designed to agitate guilty responses as it is on technologies designed to deconstruct clothed bodies (Adey 2009). Salter (2007a) drawing on Foucault (1997), for example, argues that airport securities are in-part dependent on the ‘confessionary complex’ to engender docility and anxiety in travellers – through which confessions can then be elicited. In other words, even if (as the bona fide traveller) we know that our travel is legitimate, we worry when questioned by an immigration official and fear that we might end up being removed from the queue. Like Salter’s (2007a) analysis of the airport, therefore, I argue here that the architecture and materialities of the reporting centre are similarly aimed at engendering an ‘anxiety of confession’ to create compliant, submissive subjects that can be disciplined into inactivity both within and outside the boundaries of the reporting centre.

From most, however, only a simple admission is required at each reporting event: a confirmation of address – or (for those receiving housing support) confirmation that they are indeed sleeping at the provided address. Indeed, the Home Office has very little evidence beyond forgeable letters proving where an asylum seeker without permanent address resides, therefore relying heavily on the anxiety created by the reporting centre for a truthful answer. The address is, of course, partly proven by the fact that the asylum seeker has come to the reporting centre and has not left the city. Similarly, changes in reporting dates issued by post, rather than in person, also serve as some evidence of their residence at the stated address.

A confessed address, however, is also needed should an asylum seeker fail to report in the future, especially following the rejection of their asylum case and should their removal be deemed to be straightforward by the Home Office.

The second confession which is often sought from asylum seekers by the immigration staff concerns their health status. Returning from the reporting centre, many asylum seekers at the Solidarity Group would regularly report being quizzed by officials for updates on their medical conditions and for their doctor's contact details. The reason for this 'concern', the Solidarity Group reasoned, is to ensure that the Home Office remains aware of any medical conditions that would prohibit a person's immediate detention or removal – especially as a lengthy procedure to enact a removal (through obtaining travel documents and buying plane tickets) only for the process to be halted by a judge on medical grounds would be intensely expensive and time consuming. The third confession sought at the reporting centre concerns asylum seekers' daily practices, specifically concerning whether or not they are working illegally. Indeed, an asylum seeker's destitution is not just verified through monthly inspections in their accommodation. Instead asylum seekers, especially those who have had their claims rejected and are not receiving support, can expect to be questioned on their appearance or how they are able to sustain themselves. This repeated form of questioning and confession-seeking might not stop a destitute support-less asylum seeker from working, yet it does serve to create the impression of being watched and controlled. Moreover the repeated questioning can also have the effect of disciplining people into inaction. Peter, for example, in 2011 (when 'failed asylum seekers' were still being prevented from volunteering) was stopped from volunteering for the Red Cross and later admitted to being a volunteer at another local charity when he went to sign on at his local reporting centre:

When I went to sign at the Home Office they said, “What are you doing to make money?” And I said that I go to church and that I sometimes get some money or clothes from there and the community. She said, “What about volunteering?” And I said, “Yeah I do volunteer, at [charity name removed].” And then she took the address and she checked them and she phoned them and asked them- And I asked [her], “Is that illegal?” And she said, “Yes it’s illegal” [and that] I should stop it because if I don’t stop it, that would be illegal and that would be like charges against me. I just stopped. I just couldn’t go there anymore.

*The fourth confession that can be solicited from asylum seekers at the reporting centre is the admission of guilt and the desire to return ‘home’ through the acceptance of ‘voluntary return’. Even before asylum seekers are encouraged by an immigration to accept this form of return following the rejection of their asylum case, they are regularly made aware of this option simply by sitting in the waiting room of the reporting centre itself. Indeed, the Home Office has previously come under significant pressure from various civil society members for emblazoning reporting centres in Glasgow and London with posters on the walls and ceilings reading “Is life hard? Going home is simple” in an effort to encourage those signing on to “as about going home” (see*

Figure 38).<sup>135</sup> My interview respondents and visitors returning to the Solidarity Group reported similar tactics still being used inside the reporting centre, though no longer as bold as the aforementioned posters. Instead, asylum seekers at the reporting centre are surrounded by informational leaflets encouraging them to apply for ‘voluntary return’ or Assisted

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<sup>135</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/aug/30/going-home-immigration-posters-shameful>

Voluntary Return<sup>136</sup> – some utilising the enticing tactic of suggesting they ask the immigration officers for advice if they are “struggling with finances”. The repeated reporting requirements that simultaneously act as a means of anchoring asylum seekers and as a threat of detention and removal, therefore, work with the securitising support strategies in order to make asylum seekers’ everyday lives unbearable such that they are ‘coerced to leave’ regardless of whether or not their legal cases are still ongoing (Hasselberg 2016).

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<sup>136</sup> Incentives are offered to migrants to accept return through ‘Assisted Voluntary Return’ (AVR) programs, where returnees can be eligible for a cash payment (£2,000) and some ‘re-integration support’ upon arrival (Refugee Action 2015). In the UK, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was responsible for AVR until 2011 (see Webber 2011; Collyer 2012), whereupon it was administered by Refugee Action under its ‘Choices’ service. Subsequently in 2015 it was announced that the Home Office would deliver AVR by directly. Importantly this means that asylum seekers and those who have been refused asylum would no longer be able to receive impartial, pre-decision advice on AVR (Refugee Action 2015).



*Figure 38 shows an image taken from inside a Home Office reporting centre which was widely published in the media. Image available at: <http://ukasian.com/activists-slam-new-home-office-go-home-poster-campaign.html>*

In this respect, the forced reporting and securitised support are similar to the ‘Go Home’ vans and highly visible enforcement raids documented in detail by Jones *et al* (2017, p162) in that they function alongside “the drift of immigration enforcement, of an obsession with borders and of hatred, into the ongoing concerns of ordinary life.” The Home Office’s need to coerce asylum seekers into adopting either voluntary return or Assisted Voluntary Return comes down to similar

issues to those facing the Spanish Interior Ministry in the previous chapter: organising travel documents with foreign embassies for people who do not wish to return can be a long and drawn-out process and occasionally embassies will sometimes even look to assist their nationals by refusing to issue travel documents. Alternatively, asylum seekers in detention can sometimes resist meetings with embassy representatives and, as is becoming increasingly-documented, cause enough havoc on airplanes to convince the captains to not allow them to remain on the flight (see Walters 2015). As a result, coercing asylum seekers to leave forms a major part of the Home Office's strategy of control and, as Home Office statistics show, is proving relatively successful. In 2015, for example, almost 38% of asylum seekers' removals from the UK were 'voluntary'.<sup>137</sup>

On two separate occasions while volunteering at the Solidarity Group, however, I was made aware of immigration officials at the reporting centre attempting to force 'failed asylum seekers' to sign 'voluntary return' forms (although occurrences of this taking place were also discussed during interviews). On the first occasion, Cecilia, a woman from sub-Saharan Africa and known to the Solidarity Group, came back from the reporting centre clearly incensed, saying that she had been threatened with detention if she did not sign voluntary return forms. Moreover, upon her refusal to sign the 'voluntary return' documents, her reporting dates were increased to once a month, seemingly as punishment. On the second occasion,

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<sup>137</sup> There were 864 cases of AVR compared to 1,171 'voluntary returns' and 3,398 returns were classed as 'enforced removals' (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-july-to-september-2016>). It is also important to note that these figures concern returns relating only to people who had claimed asylum in the UK, as the numbers are much higher when 'non-asylum cases' are included).

Grace (also seeking asylum from a country in sub-Saharan Africa and who still had the right to appeal her negative asylum decision) returned to the Solidarity Group looking exhausted and fearful after she had first been forced to wait for three hours in the reception area and had then been similarly subjected to pressure from an immigration official. In an interview organised a few days after the event, though still fearful, Grace was able to explain in detail what had happened at the reporting centre. It transpired that Grace had received a letter from the Home Office on the Saturday telling her that she had an appointment at reporting centre and that she should bring all her documents with her. Following a three-hour wait, Grace had been escorted into a separate room where she was asked a series of questions. The following excerpt highlights both the ways in which the immigration officials had pressured her, but also how fearful she was of her own performance vis-à-vis the Home Office.

Grace: They asked me about some details about my life back home. About my family and my address. I gave them the one that I knew when I was there [...] And they gave me the paper to sign and I signed it. And they gave me another letter to sign, a new one, and I said, “What letter is this? What is it saying?” They said it was travel documents. I said, “No, I’m not comfortable to sign the travel documents. I need to speak to my lawyer.” They said, “No you are not complying to the rules. If you don’t sign it, we are going to change your signings from four weeks to once a week.” I said, “I am complying to the rules, but I am not comfortable to sign this.”

DF: So then what happened?



Grace: They said, “Go away. But at your next signing we are going to see if you are OK to sign it by that time.”

DF: So have you spoken to your lawyer since then?

Grace: Yes... he said it was “OK[...] [That] it’s only when you don’t respond in a nice way. You weren’t cheeky to them, so it will have nothing to do with your case.”

What occurs inside the Home Office reporting centre, therefore, amounts to more than a ritualised form of surveillance aimed at ensuring the movement of asylum seekers in the city regularly passes through a predetermined ‘pinch-point’ (Salter 2008b) where their permission to re-circulate throughout the city can be verified. Instead, the reporting centre functions as a space through which confessions can be elicited from people who are kept in a state of fear at the possibility of being detained and made extraordinarily vulnerable as a result of their isolation in the reporting centre. Worse, those who refuse to confess are threatened with increased signing dates, detention and fear their asylum case will be affected by their resistance or refusal to offer the correct confession. Grace’s account above highlights not only the ways in which asylum seekers can be blackmailed into accepting voluntary return at the reporting centre, but also the trepidation which accompanies non-compliance to performing the role of submissive asylum seeker. Indeed, even in a setting in which she was regularly made to feel dehumanised and criminalised, Grace felt the need/fear to respond respectfully lest it affect her asylum case. Despite the pressure exerted upon her to sign a voluntary return form, however, she was nonetheless able

to resist these efforts and the pressures of the reporting centre by utilising her knowledge that until her asylum case was officially rejected she could not be legally forced into returning.

The overall result of these regularised events on top of the securitised support discussed in the previous sections, therefore, is not only that asylum seekers' movements become curtailed, but also that their desire, confidence and opportunities to do anything other than wake up, worry and report are reduced. For example, although Peter (now) volunteers and Arash studies at a nearby college, both spent over a year and a half following their release from detention in a state of self-enforced solitary confinement, their only contact with the outside world being with the immigration officers at the reporting centre. Indeed, although the Solidarity Group would regularly attempt to direct those seeking help towards the free English classes provided by partner organisations, or make appointments with asylum seekers for a meeting the next day in the office of the Solidarity Group, these meetings would often be missed, the person in question locking themselves away from the world outside of their bedroom. Under the combined weight and pressures of living a life in the city in which they are prevented from working, embarrassed to go shopping or receive support, inspected in their 'homes', unable to plan for the future, frequently moved or removed from the accommodation and support, accused on a regular basis by the Home Office of being in the country illegally and that their claims are unfounded, and living with the constant threat of detention, therefore, it is little wonder that many asylum seekers remain cowed into a form of solitary confinement while they wait in their city for their asylum cases to progress. Even those who have made a real effort to enjoy life as much as they can and create relationships with local citizens and other asylum seekers would frequently mention the ways in which their lives are 'stuck'.

“You watch the world go by. It’s like being in a coma. That’s what it is. You know what’s happening! But you can’t lift your hand. If someone wants to hit you, he can [...] That’s why I said the other day, ‘It’s a world full of zombies, you’re there but you’re not really there.’

Yet, as I have attempted to highlight in this chapter and section, the strategies for cowing asylum seekers into submission are neither complete nor insurmountable. Despite recounting often-harrowing stories of events that had befallen them, each of those asylum seekers I spoke to had similar recollections of small ways in which they had managed to escape, ‘get one over the system’ or were finding ways to make their situation work as best they could. Ultimately, by enduring the continuous forms of coercion imposed upon them by the Home Office, they could all be said to be exercising a form of resistance (see Hasselberg 2016).

## 6.8 Conclusions: The Materialities and Speeds of ‘Limbo’

Despite the maps produced by agencies such as Frontex and the IOM that suggest that ‘arrival’ in Europe signifies the endpoint to an asylum seeker’s journey, the work in this chapter combines with those of others to prove that this is not the case (e.g. Schapendonk 2011). Indeed, ‘limbo’ is word frequently associated with asylum seekers’ *staccato* lives and journeys within Europe while they wait for a conclusion to their asylum cases (e.g. Mountz *et al* 2002; Khosravi 2010; Conlon 2011; Minca 2015; Hasselberg 2016). While I do not wish to argue that many asylum seekers are not abandoned in a state of legal limbo, this chapter’s aim has been to flesh out the situated, urban, everyday realities of life and mobility in

the city. For me, 'limbo' conjures images of a placeless environment devoid of 'things' and interactions – a space without geography. Yet while their legal cases might be left in a swirling void created by the vagaries of the UK asylum system, asylum seekers' lives are targeted and restricted on a daily basis through the strategies employed by the Home Office. The focus of this chapter, therefore, has been to follow the 'reach' of the state as it creeps into the daily lives of asylum seekers in the city and I have sought to ascertain what actors form the network that affords the state the opportunity to control the mobilities of asylum seekers in the city and restrict their agency.

This chapter has argued that the securitised support which asylum seekers receive regularly impedes or constrains their passing at 'checkpoints' that most citizens ignore or consider to be mundane (see Massumi 2013). I have argued that the ARC and Azure cards, while also functioning to monitor and control the spending of asylum seekers, transform everyday spaces such as the post office and the supermarket into sites of intense control. In doing so, both cards function as reminders for asylum seekers that they are treated as the suspicious 'Other' within the boundaries of the city while their legal legitimacy is determined, creating a border between them and the local community which they are forced to carry with them. Beyond this, both cards combine with other constraints imposed on asylum seekers to 'fix' them to their assigned location within the city, while also 'fixing' the sticky qualities related to the figure of the asylum seeker to their bodies specifically. I have argued that, combined with the practice of regular forced accommodation changes, asylum seekers in the city regularly become isolated from both local citizens and other asylum seekers. Moreover, while the Home Office may not have purposefully designed the Azure card to effectuate the abovementioned feelings of embarrassment on the part of its users, the Section 4 support scheme and the rejection of cash-based support payments *has* been put in place specifically

to coerce people to leave. As a result, the government has consistently refused to alter the means through which asylum seekers access support through Section 4, despite its associated problems having been presented by civil society agents such as the Red Cross on numerous occasions.

I have also argued that the support asylum seekers receive while being prevented from working is designed to keep them in a state of perpetual near-destitution. This is achieved through the Home Office's high refusal rate of 'first instance' asylum cases, thus removing asylum seekers' eligibility for Section 95 support. I have argued the ensuing 'Catch-22' situation in which refused asylum seekers find themselves, where they must simultaneously demonstrate how they are able to survive in the city without compromising their claim of being destitute. The strict rules of the asylum system, moreover, as well as the need to remain 'credible' severely inhibit the possibility of solidarity between asylum seekers and, as a result, accepting voluntary return is seen by many as the only way of escaping destitution. While this is an issue that the Solidarity Group were attempting to target through the creation of a destitution network of people willing to briefly house destitute asylum seekers and willing to write letters to the Home Office, in particular following the switch to asylum support to the Asylum Help call-line, their actions also weakened their previously-held position as an actor isolated from the functioning of the asylum system. In other words, while the Solidarity Group's actions had the effect of disrupting the disciplining effects of the support process, it had little visible effect on the Home Office's overall strategy (see Gill *et al* 2014).

The final section of the chapter focused on the purposes and effects of regularly ‘signing on’ at Home Office reporting centres. Aside from being a regular burden on asylum seekers, I argue that regular reporting serves to further anchor asylum seekers to the city – done intentionally to reduce the chances of them ‘going underground’. For many, however, the knowledge that they will be forced to report and risk being detained hangs over them throughout the week as a reminder that their position in the city is precarious and that their removal, if effectuated, could be immanent. In other words, it is not just the inability to work while their asylum cases are being heard that prevents asylum seekers from feeling able to ‘progress’ in their lives while they wait. Indeed, the regularity of the reporting events is combined with the materialities and processes of the reporting centre itself such that aside from feeling precarious, emotions of criminalisation and dehumanisation are effectuated amongst asylum seekers. Moreover, the confessions that are sought from asylum seekers in the reporting centre are also aimed at disciplining them into a state of ‘deportability’ (de Genova 2002) both through the removal of their social ties and by further coercing signees to leave.

Although the border can appear almost anywhere in the city, therefore, it also does not become materialised *everywhere* and nor is it performed *all* the time. Instead, when analysed at the scale of the everyday, the reach of the state into the lives of asylum seekers is patchy and uneven. Certain mundane sites in the city have been shown to be where the border is most readily materialised; these include the Home Office reporting centres, supermarket checkouts, databases, post offices, Home Office removal vans, asylum seekers’ homes and places where a form of ID is required to enter. Similarly, it is important to note that there are sites within the city wherein asylum seekers can gain respite from the pervasiveness of the state, such as the offices of the Solidarity Group and the destitution network which they attempted to set up. Of greater importance,

however, is the recognition that none of these sites are entirely sites of domination or of resistance. This is perhaps easier to grasp in sites such as the supermarket checkout, where peoples' primary worry is whether or not their Azure cards will cause embarrassment through halting their progress through the checkpoint. There are fairly simple fixes to this form of problem, however, starting with staff in supermarkets receiving proper training and knowing what to do when they encounter Azure cards. Secondly, although the Solidarity Group's shopping buddy scheme is laudable, I have shown that it puts too much pressure on asylum seekers receiving cash support to sustain, especially when they are being repeatedly moved in the city between accommodations. If the government is to continue with the restrictive Section 4 system, therefore, it is up to consumers and shop assistants to create an environment in which potential embarrassment and difficulties can be minimised.

Of equal note is that even spaces such as the Home Office reporting centres, some small (but significant) acts of resistance are nonetheless possible. Yet physical spaces where asylum seekers can access support, even the minimal support offered by the Solidarity Group to look after their belongings or children while they go to report, are needed to increase these opportunities. Long-distance support, a solution to a 'problem' of the Home Office's own making following the dispersal to places outside the areas of 'One Stop Services', limits these possibilities and further reduces the likelihood of asylum seekers from creating spaces in which they can find solidaristic support. Even seeing and hearing other people struggle with similar problems while waiting for a volunteer or drinking a tea was beneficial to those visiting the Solidarity Group. How can a call-centre in another city, with operatives who refuse even to send a letter to a doctor on behalf of an asylum seekers, create the necessary moorings of support that asylum seekers need when faced by the prosaic state and its reach

into the intimacies of their daily lives? In other words, the materialities and architectures of everyday spaces are as important to the functioning of the border as they are to the provision of support and organisation of resistance. It is vital that in recognising the role of mundane spaces in the performance of the border, we also recognise the strategies of the state which seek to remove the provision of support from those areas which we consider mundane.





## Chapter 7 Conclusions: Perforating Technological Dreamworlds



*Figure 39 shows a warning on the street in Niger that the smuggling of migrants is punishable by a fine of up to £4,100.*

The central question of this thesis has been simple: ‘How is a border (achieved)?’ Yet this simple question has taken me on a journey to three separate fieldwork sites; has required a re-orientation to how we approach the study of borders; and the answers that have surfaced have refused to hold together in a single narrative. In the literature review I offered a further explanation of what I mean by asking ‘How is a Border?’ Specifically, I argued that the border is in a constant state of becoming – as actors are regularly added to and removed from the border assemblage – such that the border is never one stable entity across the numerous borderspaces upon which it acts. Indeed, I have wrestled with one idea in particular: the notion that border is multiple – more than one, but less than many – and what this multiplicity means for those who wish to study borders and, moreover, for those who attempt pass unseen through the fractured borderspaces of the EU. The arguments presented in this thesis are extremely timely, I would argue, not only because of the enduring ‘refugee crisis’ concerning the civil war in Syria (and, at the time of writing, the persecution of the Rohingya people in Myanmar), but also because of the enduring technocratic dreams of creating omniscient borders through the integration of bordering strategies and technological systems into what might become an international security complex (see Andersson 2014c).

Driving the creation of this international security complex is the increasing cooperation between nation-states, private corporations, inter-governmental organisations and agencies (such as the IOM and Frontex) and NGOs bidding for government contracts. Indeed, I have shown how Frontex, in particular, is pushing for this integration of borders both within and outwith the EU through, for example, developing the concept of integrated border management, the sharing of real-time information through Eurosur and by enhancing cooperation with ‘third countries’ (see Figure 39). A common theme concerning these collaborations is the development of strategies and technologies that are both footloose and can be

integrated with existing security infrastructures in order to sort bodies while they are on the move without their awareness. In particular, new and existing databases are being added to the functioning of the border, with the aim of increasing the speed of migrants' data doubles while slowing their physical bodies down. In this thesis I have discussed the importance of the EU's EURODAC database, specifically, as well as the Experian checks on asylum seekers applying for Section 4 support in the UK. While the thesis has been predominantly structured around the three sites in which I conducted my fieldwork (i.e. Warsaw, the straits of Gibraltar and the city in the UK), in the pages that remain I will recap my arguments under the three themes I set out in the introduction in order to help tease out the connections between each chapter and the conceptual contributions of the thesis.

## 7.1 Theorising Contemporary Border Surveillance

The diffusion of the border beyond and between national lines has necessitated a reconceptualising of borders to take account of the fluidity of what had previously predominantly been thought of as static entities tied down to the extremities of territory. Put more simply, the border can no longer be found solely at the border post. This has prompted some to suggest that the border might now be 'everywhere' (Balibar 2002). While the border can now undoubtedly be found almost *anywhere*, in this thesis I have attempted to seek out and find where and when the border is achieved. In other words, I have argued that while the border can be performed anywhere, it cannot be performed everywhere simultaneously and with the same intensity for those who encounter it. As a result, this thesis has built on Parker and Vaughan-Williams (2012, 729) call for critical border studies to "shift from the concept of the border to the notion of bordering practice; and the

adoption of the lens of performance through which bordering practices are produced and reproduced.” Indeed their call for a focus on practice has, alongside the question of ‘where is the border?’ raised the question of ‘who borders?’ (Johnson *et al* 2011). The performance of the border, as this thesis has argued, has been delegated to an ever-growing list of local, transnational and private actors outside the state apparatus; these include airline staff, private security firms, software developers, risk consultants, engineers, designers and systems experts (see Bigo 2002; Walters 2006; Vukov and Sheller 2013). I have shown that border studies, therefore, needs to further understand the (power) dynamics between these various actors in the performance of the border, as well as question how *place* and *migrant agency* affect the politics of the border.

I demonstrated the value of this line of thinking in chapter 5, especially. With the help of Foucault’s (1986) work on *heterotopia*, I examined the everyday politics of Ceuta in order to critique Agamben’s static (and state-centric) theories of ‘the camp.’ In particular, I used this approach to reveal how this camp-like space is interconnected and sits within the wider practices of European border control. As a result, this space is neither ‘exceptional’ and nor does the Spanish government or the Guardia Civil have full control over its functioning. Nonetheless the value of this space for the Spanish government is that it can function as a temporary holding space while Joint Returns are organised elsewhere. The interconnectedness of Ceuta, moreover, means that there is a variability in the ways in which this camp-like space can function. In an Agambenian sense one might therefore say that the camp is *time dependent*. Indeed when I was in Ceuta, for example, the camp was not functioning as the Spanish government and the police intended it to; new migrants were continuously arriving, courts were issuing travel documents for those claiming asylum against the wishes of the Ministry of the Interior, embassy representatives were refusing to issue travel documents for those not claiming asylum and there

was no sign of Joint Returns being organised between Spain and other Member States. As a result, Ceuta was functioning more as a temporary rest stop for the migrants making their way to Europe. Focusing on the actions of the migrants in this space, moreover, highlighted the local logics of this camp-like space and how this was affecting its performance. In other words, the organisation of camp-spaces is not entirely pre-determined by the ‘elites’ who might think they run it. Instead, the migrants in the CETI had developed their own traditions in Ceuta, as well as their own explanations for and reactions to the strategies of the Spanish government. As a result, being forced to wait in Ceuta became a test of resolve... and one which (at the time of writing) they were winning. Thinking more broadly, therefore, this line of questioning therefore forces border studies to question the actual capabilities of near-global surveillance and migration control mechanisms and to consider the ways in which their application might be ‘glitchy’, temporal, or function in ways wholly different from the intentions of their designers and the governments that insist on their use.

## 7.2 Tracing, Tracking and Targeting

The expansion of the border beyond territorial lines has not only resulted in a shift in terms of where the border can be applied, but also a shift in how governments conceptualise migration and the border as a whole. Migration has (like so many other problems of the modern world) become thought of as a problem which can for the most part be solved through technology. It is quite telling that in Frontex’s (2011) ‘Futures of Borders’ document, for example, the organisation’s preferred ‘Borders EUrotpia’ scenario involves the development and application of border technologies capable of ‘automated decision making’ – thus reducing the burden on human border guards but also allowing border control to

become entirely ‘person-centric’, rather than ‘nation-centric’ (Frontex 2011, 78). In this thesis I have argued that in defining migration as a problem to be solved by technology, therefore, it is *people* that are increasingly being traced, tracked and targeted by the ever-growing surveillance & security industry. Indeed it is through their collaboration with the surveillance & security industry that border agencies such as the Guardia Civil and Frontex have been given a (new) lease of life. Where the Guardia Civil, for example, was previously seen as a reactionary institution that was too slow to keep up with the pressures of the modern world, the deployment of SIVE has put them at the forefront of modern border surveillance. Key to this has been their performance of their surveillance capabilities as being near-total and in ‘real time’. As a result, the Guardia Civil are in the business of performing their vision as being almost God-like. I have shown how Frontex have also developed similar surveillance capabilities with the intent of creating omni-voyant vision over the borderspace. Yet while SIVE was designed to look only as far as the coastline of Morocco, Eurosur and Frontex’s Risk Analyses have pushed the borderspace far beyond the southern shores of the Mediterranean. While this may have increased their knowledge of these spaces, however, this God-like vision has now also shed further light on the ‘problem’, rather than resulting in increased control over the EU’s outer borders. As things currently stand, however, the response from the agency has been to further expand their surveillance capabilities by demonstrating the successes of its view from above. The thesis has shown, therefore, how the regular performance of the God-trick by border agencies such as Frontex and the Guardia Civil serves not only to sustain themselves and the countless companies profiteering from this ‘illegality industry’ (Andersson 2014c), but it also serves to paper over the cracks in its surveillant power. Indeed one of the main arguments that I have developed over the course of the thesis as a whole is that while the state’s vision technologies might be able to trace and track migrants,

targeting them to effectuate either a removal or to refute their entry still remains an elusive technological dream... Though it is nonetheless a dream which sells.

### 7.3 Non-Human Agency

In the literature review I developed the argument that by re-orientating ourselves to the border as being enacted by the performances of numerous human and non-human actors the ‘messiness’ of the border could be productively foregrounded (Law 2002, 2004). In chapter 4, especially, I put this argument to work in the context of Frontex’s Eurosur and Spain’s SIVE border surveillance systems. Drawing on the works of feminist scholars (e.g. Haraway 1991; Butler 1990) and feminist geopolitics (Dowler and Sharp 2001; Secor 2001; Staeheli and Kofman 2004; Hyndman 2004; Fluri 2009), in particular, I drew attention to the everyday interactions between border guards and technologies as they seek to monitor the borderspaces for signs of migrant ‘threats’. Following Williams (2011; see also Whatmore 2002), I assessed the extent to which the border control assemblages succeed in effectuating ‘more-than-human’ surveillance networks by creating a perfect ‘fit’ between their human and non-human actors.

I argued that, not only did the systems fail to create this perfect ‘fit’, but that the non-human elements of the borderspaces (e.g. sea swell, heat, wind, waves, rocks, sheep, whales and birds) also regularly trick border guards into seeing what is threats that are not there. As a result, the dreams of *omni-voyant* sight through these security assemblages remains unmet. As the comparison between the SIVE stations in Ceuta and Algeciras highlighted, moreover, the aspirations of broadening this technocratic surveillance vision beyond specific ‘pinch points’ (see Hinchcliffe *et al* 2013) is also still a step too far.



Despite these failures, however, the intent of broadening the border's reach into the 'pre-frontier' borderspace has been felt by those attempting to evade its gaze. Accounts of beatings at the hands of Moroccan forces were common amongst those I met in Ceuta and, as I set out in chapter 4, knowledge of SIVE's cameras and the Guardia Civil's strategies for capturing 'smugglers' has resulted in the dangerous practice of throwing motors overboard and waiting for rescue.

Just as borders "do not have the same meaning for everyone" (Balibar 2001 in Sohn 2015, p184), neither do the objects and things which enact or resist the border carry the same meanings. In chapter 5 I was especially confronted with this multiplicity of the border and the objects within the borderspace. No object highlighted this multiplicity more than the expulsion order issued to the migrants who pass through the enclave's boundaries as, to the Spanish police and judiciary it acted as the means of ensuring their future expulsion from Spain and their restriction from applying for asylum outside of Spain. For the migrants in the enclave, by contrast, the expulsion orders were their ticket to mainland Spain and chance to partake in the *Laissez-Passer* as actors, rather than spectators. Importantly an expulsion order was not therefore solely interpreted differently by these two sets of actors, rather, such an order was multiple – simultaneously effectuating multiple realities.

In chapter 6 I consider the affective power of two border control technologies specifically, that asylum seekers in the city are tied to, namely; the ARC and Azure cards. My reason for focusing on these cards is that they serve to demonstrate the extent to which the penetrates into the everyday lives of asylum seekers in the city, but also as they allowed me to trace the border into the more mundane spaces of the supermarket and post office which, might otherwise be considered as

neutral spaces. Indeed, this work ties in to that of Mountz (2011a), O'Neill (2012) and Paglen and Thompson (2006), for example, who argue that the border is becoming increasingly diffused into hidden spaces both within cities and across the globe. By conceptualising these cards as 'things' with rough edges (see Ingold 2010), I highlight how these cards bring the border into much more cosmopolitan spaces and 'tie in' often-unsuspecting citizens into becoming de facto border guards. As I demonstrated in the chapter, however, it also gives racists in these spaces the opportunity to target asylum seekers as the cards serve to attach the 'sticky' qualities of asylum (Tyler 2006) to the users of the cards. As a result, I argue that the cards form part of a wider bordering strategy to not just 'fix' asylum seekers in place, but also to reduce their capacities for fostering support with each other and with local citizens. Finally, I also discussed how the architecture of the reporting centre contributed to the creation of a space of unease within which asylum seekers can be interrogated and forced into accepting voluntary return. Specifically, I argue that the objects in these spaces serve to demonstrate to asylum seekers their exclusion from the body politic, their illegality and serve to instil feelings of being dehumanised.

#### 7.4 Assemblage and its Role in Border Studies

There has been a propensity in border studies to utilise assemblage theory predominantly as a means of conceptualising the pervasiveness of the modern border and the ways in which it makes connections across topological space. Graham (2011, 132), for example, writes that there will be a point at which borders will no longer be geophysical lines and filters and states, becoming instead "increasingly interoperable assemblages of control technologies strung out across the world's infrastructures, circulations, cities, and bodies". Other examples of similarly

'big things' (Jacobs 2006) related to the border that are viewed through the lens of assemblage theory in border studies include the global 'circulation assemblage' (Salter 2013), Andersson's (2016) 'illegality industry' as assemblage, Europe's 'border-work' of fluid mechanisms and actors (Bialasiewicz 2012) and Haggerty and Ericson's (2000) 'surveillant assemblage'. In each of these cases assemblage adds something valuable to the analysis beyond simply demonstrating the scale and interconnectedness of the network. For Salter (2013) and Bialasiewicz (2012), for example, thinking of the global mobility regime and Europe's border regime as assemblages allows for accounts of the disaggregation of the respective systems – neither assemblage can be considered governed by a single overriding logic or dominated by one particular group.

As I have demonstrated in this thesis, however, there is also much value to be gained from applying assemblage theory to unbox the 'smaller' socio-technical surveillance systems that make up the border. An assemblage is, after all, any ad-hoc grouping of any diverse elements that have a co-functioning together (Bennett 2010). Aside from acknowledging the agency of non-human actors, assemblage theory has allowed me to focus on the *relations* between the actors that make up systems such as the Guardia Civil's SIVE and Frontex's Eurosur, rather than focusing solely on their properties. As a result, I have not considered the performance of the border through these systems to be inevitable. Instead I have argued that the (in)security produced through these systems can instead be better thought of as an achievement of 'everyday geopolitics' as the Guardia Civil and Frontex must continuously seek to maintain control of their own surveillance networks. Another conceptual consequence of the application of assemblage theory to unboxing SIVE and Eurosur is that it requires from border studies to take account of the dynamism of the actors

which comprise security systems. In my analysis in chapter 4, for example, the contours of SIVE and Eurosur are considered blurred rather than static as I observed new (non-state) actors becoming drawn in and lashed together. In other words, the decision of which actors to include in a security assemblage is not one which necessarily rests with the state or the 'elites' who attempt to implement the border. Assemblage theory, therefore, afforded me the opportunity of seeking out the functions of the Salvamento Marítimo and the Moroccan forces in the performance of SIVE, rather than relying solely on the descriptions and histories offered by the Guardia Civil.

### 7.5 Temporalities of Bordering and the Politics of Speed

In chapter 4 I sought to trace the extent to which the border had become *omni-voyant* and footloose through the addition of new technologies to the border assemblage. By drawing on the works of Virilio (1989, 1994), however, I found the border to be less in a borderline needing to be defended but, instead, in the *time* it takes to target and intercept a supposed threat. As a result, it can be argued that new strategies of border control will be aimed less at pushing the boundaries of the 'pre-frontier', rather they will instead be focused on increasing the amount of time during which a threat can be targeted and intercepted. In chapter 5 I demonstrated how this strategy extends to the slowing down of migrant bodies, even once they have reached the territorial boundaries of the EU. By performing the enclave as a space of 'humanitarianism', therefore, I set out how it is that the Spanish government has been able to create a space in which the detention time for irregular migrants can be (theoretically) extended indefinitely. Furthermore, I argue that the use of time as a strategy to delay migrants in order to increase their deportability (De Genova 2002) has resulted in an awkward and 'leaky' alliance between

the various state and non-state actors working to enforce the boundaries of the enclave. Finally, in chapter 6, I argue that the strategies of the UK Home Office in the UK are designed to slow asylum seekers' lives. This is accomplished both through asylum cases that drag on for years but also through the imposition of regular reporting dates which can take hours, home inspections, curfews and the general threat of detention, the Home Office makes it clear to asylum seekers that their lives are no longer theirs to manage – their time in the UK uncertain and devoid of progression. The politics of the border, in other words, has become a politics of speed; the challenge for those attempting to resist the border will rest on their ability to move and act faster than the actors enrolled into performing the border. We are already seeing this develop in the context of the maritime border – where groups such as Alarm Phone are able to co-opt the surveillance assemblages into enacting rescue operations – yet little is yet being done in urban settings to resist the controlling strategies of the UK Home Office. This might soon change, however, in a new age where every person carries a mobile phone capable of recording immigration raids or stop-and-searches – all while uploading them in real time. Indeed online platforms such as Facebook or Twitter already offer a space from which to organise swift (though often short-lived) protests against companies that support the Home Office's hostile environment<sup>138</sup> and to publicise the potential effects of this surveillance 'from below'.

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<sup>138</sup> Byron burgers became the target of a large-scale boycott in 2016, for example, after it facilitated a Home Office round up of its staff that were working for the company illegally by organising a 'training event' ([https://www.buzzfeed.com/ikrd/people-are-boycotting-byron-amid-claims-it-helped-the-govern?utm\\_term=.siL7D58ZV#.tqP4zBQ1y](https://www.buzzfeed.com/ikrd/people-are-boycotting-byron-amid-claims-it-helped-the-govern?utm_term=.siL7D58ZV#.tqP4zBQ1y))

## 7.6 Producing Migrant (im)Mobility

While the term ‘migrant’ implies (above all other qualities) the propensity to move, *migrating* often involves long periods of stillness – only occasionally punctured by the occasional staccato moments during which speed is accessed, distance is overcome, or legal barriers are hurdled (van Houtum 2012; Collyer 2007, 2010; Griffiths 2014). This slowness during travel is most keenly experienced by today’s ‘abject cosmopolitans’ (Nyers 2003), excluded from the fast-lanes used by the global ‘kinetic elite’ (Graham 2002). Research with migrant communities in various European settings, moreover, have shown that the *migrating* person rarely comes to a halt after reaching a ‘safe country’ – whether of their own volition or not (see Coutin 2005). Border studies, therefore, understands well that mobility (as opposed to motion) is both an “irreducibly embodied experience” (Creswell 2006, 4), as well as a resource that is thoroughly “implicated in the production of power and relations of dominion” (Creswell 2010, 20). As a result there has been a small, though growing, body of work linking border and forced migration studies and mobilities literatures (see Gill *et al* 2011).

In chapter 6, especially, I have sought to further this developing collaboration between the disciplines by focusing on the ways in which migrant mobilities are alternately halted and coerced in the urban environment. I have argued that the imposition of identity cards that also function as asylum seekers’ access to weekly support functions to ‘affectively limit’ (Massumi 2013) their circulation throughout the city. I have demonstrated how these cards serve to enact the border for those who use them in public spaces which might otherwise be considered as a-political or otherwise benign. As a result, many of those asylum seekers that I encountered in the city would return only to the spaces in which they knew that

enacting the border would be unlikely to provoke a response from members of the public. In this way, therefore, their mobility in the city is severely restricted without the need for physical shackles or panoptic monitoring techniques. While the Azure card might be able to monitor the spending patterns and locations of its users, overall the surveillant gaze of the UK Home Office is not so all-encompassing or omnipotent. Instead it relies on the fears that it engenders through regular harassment at reporting events and the constant Othering of asylum seekers through their identity cards. The ‘reach’ into the everyday lives of asylum seekers is, therefore, one that seeks to affect their emotions and limit their ability to create a life for themselves. Chapter 6 also focused on the potential of conceptualising reporting centres as mooring devices. In this case, reporting produces migrant immobility by coercing their movements into making repeated journeys to the reporting centre. Not only does reporting contribute to the overall hostile environment being created by the UK government, it achieves the limiting of migrants’ mobility by taking up their time, removing them from everyday city life, depleting their personal resources (energies and/or funds) and by reinforcing their Otherness vis-à-vis the city’s inhabitants.

## 7.7 Migrant Agency & Resistance

Throughout this thesis I have sought to include instances where migrants or activist groups have succeeded in resisting the border and its pervasive creep into their everyday lives. While I started out with the intention of discussing how the migrants in Ceuta, succeeded in overturning the camp-like space of the enclave (Agamben 1998), for example, I realised that arguments along these lines did not quite ‘fit’ the messy realities of the borderspaces I visited. The forms and ‘tactics’ of resistance I encountered instead were ‘entangled’ (Sharp *et al* 2000) in the strategies of the border. In chapter 4, therefore,

I set out how some migrants pay their way to Europe by working for smuggler gangs along the way – effectively becoming the criminals that the EU previously accuses them of being through their mobility. Similarly, the tactic of jettisoning the motors overboard does not serve those who do it, rather it helps the smuggler gangs who buy engines with histories that can be traced. In chapter 5, meanwhile, I encountered migrants engaged in performing themselves as *moruno* in order both to make sense of the messy situation they found themselves in and in order to hasten their potential journey to mainland Europe. For me, the *moruno* identity, performed through the high-vis jackets on the street and by parking cars, embodies this entanglement as it served to simultaneously frustrate the Spanish police who were seeking to remove them, yet it also ensured their illegality once they reached mainland Spain.

Finally, in chapter 6, I drew on my own experiences of having been a volunteer at the Solidarity Group in order to understand not only the lived realities for asylum in the city but also to shed more light on the possible avenues for resisting the border that are open to both asylum seekers and activist groups. As a result of the recent changes in asylum seekers' access to support, much of my work concerns how the Solidarity Group and its visitors negotiated asylum seekers' access to Section 95 and Section 4 support or cope with the conditions that are imposed on them upon receiving this support. I highlight the extent to which the regular dispersals between accommodations in the city reduce the extent to which asylum seekers can help each other if some are in need of cash when on Section 4 support. Moreover, the cashless support of Section 4 puts pressure on those who receiving Section 95 support, as the former need to use their funds by the end of the month. Moreover, following the transfer of government support contracts to the Asylum Help (call-centre), the Solidarity Group became the first port of call for many asylum seekers in search of support. While this greatly expanded the group's



network, it also resulted in the group struggling against becoming part of the Home Office's strategy of coercing people into leaving the country. While the Solidarity Group used its network to find beds for recently-destitute men, women and children, it did so in the knowledge that by offering too much support in some cases, people might lose future access to government support. Finally, by filling in Section 95 and Section 4 support application forms, gathering evidence of destitution and accepting Home Office letters, moreover, the Solidarity Group knew it was running the risk of legitimising the strategies of the Home Office.

## 7.8 Scope and Future Research

As is the nature of this kind of project, there are still many stories and avenues of enquiry that I would have liked to explore in more detail. There are also certain arguments for which I could not find space to discuss in enough detail or I felt needed more empirical attention and have had to be cut. It is my hope that these ideas and arguments will be published in some form in the future. In particular, suspension of Detained Fast Track was a welcome change to the enactment of the border in the UK. Its suspension increases the likelihood that asylum seekers in the UK will receive sufficient access to legal representation when making their initial claims. In my interviews with asylum seekers in the city, however, I was shocked to discover how many of them had been unlawfully detained as a result of being put on Detained Fast Track despite having been victims of torture in the past. Indeed, this is an issue that Medical Justice amongst other voluntary bodies had regularly decried. A common theme that developed amongst my interview respondents, however, was the role that *speed* and *disorientation* played in their unlawful detention. Firstly, the decision to put an asylum seeker on Detained Fast Track was

made upon their first contact with the Home Office (usually at Lunar House) following their screening interview yet prior to their substantive interview and, above all, prior to the claimant having spoken to a lawyer. As a result, few had disclosed the fact that they had previously been tortured as for most this was (understandably) not an issue they were prepared to discuss upon first encountering immigration officials. Secondly, once on Detained Fast Track, detainees were held in a separate holding cell in the bowels of Lunar House until nightfall, upon which they were transported in the back of a blacked-out immigration van to one of the UK's detention centres. Although the detention centre's medical staff is meant to carry out a full medical check upon their arrival (during which they check for signs of torture and ask for a full medical history), the hours spent panicking, transportation under cover of darkness, the shock of being detained, and exhaustion (possibly also on the part of detention centre staff), meant that many remained in detention until after their substantive interviews were completed – possibly hampering the chances of their asylum cases succeeding.

The arguments I have presented in this thesis speak to a need to draw our attention to new spaces and to find new ways of being political in order to intervene in the processes that curtail migrants' movements and lives. Although in chapter 6 I argue that the strategies used by the Home Office to slow and immobilise asylum seekers' movements in the city are also designed to decrease the potential for actions of solidarity to take place, I would like in future research to take this argument further with a discussion of how the asylum system as a whole inhibits cooperation between asylum seekers and between asylum seekers and those who have succeeded in receiving their Leave to Remain (LTR) documents. While the existence of the Solidarity Group and many of its offshoot projects seemingly stands in the face of this argument, indeed many of the volunteers offering solidarity were asylum seekers, there were nonetheless occasions in which the tension underneath the

surface was clear to see when, for example, people asked that certain people not view their cases because they were from the same country or nearby region. Indeed, I started to realise how hard it must be for asylum seekers to forge friendships with other claimants from the country. Interview respondents frequently explained how, as a result of everyone's asylum cases being heard and fought separately, many become jealous or resentful of those whose asylum claims are seen to progress faster than others. Some spoke of being worried that their friends might also attempt to endear themselves to the Home Office by divulging 'new' information about others' cases at reporting centres – or accuse them of working illegally. An equally grave problem of which many spoke of was how those who gain their LTR will frequently leave the life of being an asylum seeker behind them completely as they are both confronted with new challenges and want to forget their time stuck in 'limbo'. However, many of those I spoke to also accused those with LTR of considering themselves to be better than those still stuck in the asylum system. One person I spoke to was even called a "bogus asylum seeker" by someone he used to call a friend – some terms really do 'stick'. In short, therefore, the relationships between asylum seekers are undoubtedly complex and I believe these should be examined in more detail in order to for organisations such as the Solidarity Group to break down the barriers that inhibit real solidarity amongst the asylum community as a whole.

Another area of future research concerning asylum in the UK, especially, would be to investigate the ways in which employees of Asylum Help, the charity offering long-distance support, view their work in relation to the asylum system in the UK. For example, Bosworth's (2011) work in detention centres has shed much light on the interactions between detention centre staff and detainees and continues to examine staff culture and experiences. I am not suggesting that the employees of Asylum Help are akin to detention centre staff. As I have shown in chapter 6, however, by winning the

contracts off the previous One Stop Services, the charity altered the ways in which support is offered to asylum seekers and, to a certain extent, the charity's employees perform a role in the Home Office's strategy. For example, on one of the many phone calls I made to the charity on behalf of Arash's Section 4 application, I was told by a friendly voice on the other end of the line that it was 'a good thing' that Section 4 applications were rigorously checked as, "you should see some of the bank accounts we see." In other words, how would Asylum Help employees define their role? What do they see as the drawbacks or bonuses of offering support at a distance?

There were also instances during the fieldwork stage where I hit a dead end and was refused permission to further follow the actions of border actors. I would have very much liked to observe how interceptions are effectuated and negotiated between the border guards operating SIVE technologies in Ceuta and their Moroccan counterparts. Similarly, it would be fascinating to spend more time observing Frontex employees as they interpret data from the 'pre-frontier' and disseminate the information to the relevant Member State and how they utilise Eurosur on a daily basis. A potential future avenue for research inspired by Parks (2005), however, would be to follow one particular satellite image through the places in which it gets captured, downloaded, tidied (e.g. doppler effects removed and 'noise' reduction), analysed, sent to the relevant Member State, re-interpreted, disseminated to border guards, used at conferences and included in Risk Analysis reports and other Frontex publications. Here the research would focus on the ways in which the information and claims to knowledge made through the image potentially change and transform as it travels between the various sites and becomes handled and interpreted and translated by various people and things. Similarly, although I spoke at length with a Frontex employee about the challenges of working with 'third countries' in the pursuit of Integrated Border Management, much of

this work was left out of the thesis as I felt it lacked the voices of those with whom Frontex regularly meet. While the ideal for future research would be to follow these meetings, a more likely avenue of enquiry would be to interview those with whom Frontex employees regularly liaise in in third countries.

Chapter 5, meanwhile, ended with the boarding of the ferry from Ceuta to mainland Spain – which I likened to Foucault’s (1977) ship of fools. While this was an end-point of sorts, it was also clear that their journeys would continue throughout Europe despite their expulsion orders. It was unfortunate that I did not have the time (or funds) to follow those whom I met in Ceuta further and, as I set out in the methods chapter, I felt uncomfortable trying to pry into their lives from afar. What happens next to those who do cross from Ceuta (or other similar bounded spaces of interception and slowing) is of huge importance to understanding how migrants ‘carry’ the border as they pass through these spaces and attempt to put the past behind them. I have managed to maintain some contact with a number of those whom I met while living in the enclave, however, and I have hopes of meeting them again in future – perhaps also to discuss what they experienced after leaving Ceuta, how they look back on their time spent there and, of course, whether or not they still perform the figure of the *‘moruno’*. In other words, just as being detained clearly had long-lasting physical and mental repercussions on people I met in the city, it is important to question in what ways migrants’ lives are permanently affected by passing through borderspaces such as the enclave of Ceuta. In what ways does it impact how they later claimed asylum, accessed (legal) support, developed contacts with other migrants and sought work? How does the amount of time spent detained in such places further affect peoples’ abilities to cope with and resist the strategies of the border? Finally, how can activists and civil society groups target and expose the bordering strategies that seek to detain migrants in such ‘humanitarian spaces’?

The border is multiple, but so are the avenues for future research and opportunities for resisting it.



*Figure 40 shows the touchscreen at Edinburgh airport following the passport and immigration controls.*



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