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The migrant mob? The production of temporary divisible migrant multiplicities in border-zones (accepted for publication, forthcoming in European Journal of Social Theory, 2016)

The impacts of migration policies, laws and European directives on the bodies and the life projects of those whose mobility or presence in a state are labelled as "irregular" can be assessed by observing the increased migrant deaths in the Mediterranean and the "manhunt" (Chamayou, 2012) taking place on the eastern frontiers of Europe to keep migrants out of the European space. In fact, the notion of "migration management" appears to be a politics of life to the extent that we scrutinize the tangible and deadly effects of border policies on migrants' lives. Recalling Foucault's analysis on biopolitics, it is worth keeping in mind that power over lives acts at the same time on singularities and multiplicities, and that neither the former nor the latter are pre-existing objects that power simply controls, but rather are the outcome of multiple processes of subjection and subjectivation (Foucault, 2009). In this paper I will focus on the level of the government of multiplicities and on how this affects and interacts with the production and government of singularities. The level (of the production and government) of migrant multiplicities has been addressed in migration literature from diverse perspectives, although often by taking for granted the collective units in which migrants are included – such as migrant national communities and migrant groups. In different disciplinary fields there are scholars who have explored the formation and the government of migrant multiplicities, focusing on the politics of life (Fassin, 2011, 2014), illegal migrants (Coutin, 2010; Ngai, 2014) and refugees (Agier, 2011; Malkki, 1995). Moreover, reflections on the production and the government of collectivities can also be extended beyond scholarship on border controls to critical analyses about race and racism (Gilroy, 2013; Keith, 1993), showing the racialized and constructive character of migrant group membership (Sharma, 2013). The peculiarity of this article consists in tackling migrant multiplicities from two specific analytical angles that until now have remained quite unexplored in migration literature. First, I will scrutinize the effective modalities and techniques through which migrants are targeted, classified and partitioned as part of multiplicities in order to be governed, showing that what distinguishes migrant multiplicities in border-zones is their *temporary and divisible character*. That is to say, migrants in border-zones are grouped in order to be managed and controlled, and at the same time they are grouped to be divided. Second, I will in-

vestigate the ambivalent character of migrant multiplicities, showing that, although multiplicities are the outcome of techniques of identification and government, potentially they can also form *incipient collective subjects*. The "migrant mob" is in fact what is feared by states and migration agencies that constantly try to divide and scatter the migrants. The main argument that sustains this paper is that migrant multiplicities in border-zones are distinct from other kinds of collective formations since they are governed *through* and *for* the division of the migrants, sorting them into different channels, producing differentiations and then individualising the "hold" on their lives in order to hamper the formation of collective political subjects.

As I will illustrate further in the article, migrant multiplicities can be the result of a *spatial proximity* – migrants who arrived at the same border crossing point; they can be a *virtual multiplicity* formed through the assemblage of migration data giving rise to generalizable singularities and profiles; or, finally, they can be a *narrated and visualised multiplicity* conveyed through the images and narratives on migration that circulate in the media. The article starts with a section that interrogates the peculiarities of migrant multiplicities and the ways in which migrants in border zones are governed. Then, it proceeds by taking into account different migrant multiplicities, looking at how they are produced and governed. It starts focusing on the practice of grouping and dividing migrants that is performed by national authorities when migrants are disembarked at the harbour after being rescued at sea. Then, it takes into account how migrant multiplicities are produced at distance, through the collection of migrant data and information at the frontiers that are used for generating generalisable singularities. The article moves on by drawing attention to the migrant multiplicities that stem from the images that circulate about migrant arrivals. In the last part, referring to the historical meanings of the term "the mob", the article deals with the ambivalent character of migrant multiplicities, highlighting how these emerge as incipient collective subjects that state authorities try to divide and scatter.

Grouping and dividing in the border-zones:

 Migrant multiplicities are not taken here with the purpose of addressing all kinds of collective formations and grouping mechanisms that are at stake in the government of migration. Rather, I focus here on the ways in which migrants are managed and partitioned as part of multiplicities when they are in European border-zones. The reason why I bring particular at-

tention to border-zones depends both on a methodological point and on a theoretical one. From a methodological standpoint, the sorting processes of categorization, partition and channelling are particularly visible and work more incessantly than in other spaces and consequently border-zones are privileged ethnographic sites for grasping the formation and the government of multiplicities. On a more theoretical level, what distinguishes multiplicities in border-zones from other kinds of migrant collective formations that emerge in other contexts and during different experiences of migration is their temporary divisible character. This is very different, for instance, from subjects who are governed as part of migrant communities in the cities, both for their persistence in time and for the relative homogeneity in terms of migrant composition. The migrant multiplicities I address here should not be confused with "ethnic community formations" or with stable groups with collective identities and forms of "membership" (Soysal, 1994: 84). The volatile character of migrant groups in border-zones makes difficult the emergence of collective identities that are instead at play in many migrant communities. As I will illustrate, in border zones migrant multiplicities are produced on a temporary basis and the goal is not to govern migrants as part of stable collective units but rather, to divide them. In response to this topological selection – border-zones rather than migration contexts at large – it could be objected that many migrants enter Europe by plane, or cross alone without being part of massive arrivals. However, two considerations should be made on this point. Firstly, by "multiplicity" I don't necessarily mean huge groups of people but the fact that the government of singular conducts and the criteria through which individuals are channelled, excluded and classified often depends on how a subject – in a given space and at a certain moment – is governed in relation to others. For instance, after the activation of the "hotspots"[i] in Italy in autumn 2015 and the implementation of the "relocation system" in the EU, migrants' asylum claims are examined on the basis of nationality: Eritreans, Syrians and Iraqis are considered people in "real need of protection" while others are pre-emptively illegalized. Secondly, on the one hand it is certainly important to account for the heterogeneity of migrant journeys and not to narrow the focus to the most visibilized experiences of migration and of migrant arrivals – such as people stranded at the external borders of Europe or migrants crossing the sea on unsafe vessels – but, on the other, it should be likewise highlighted that the ongoing refugee crisis has actualised in a huge increase of migrants coming by boat and war escapees blocked in border zones (Garelli, Sciurba, Tazzioli, 2016).

In fact, the government of migration is today confronted more and more by the issue of managing transnational populations on the move – namely, people escaping their countries because of internal conflicts or wars.

Migrant multiplicities beyond population:

What happens to migrants when, after being rescued at sea by the Navy, they are disembarked at the harbour in Italy? How are they divided and how are they treated as migrant groups in transit points, refugee camps, and border crossing points? The temporary dimension of migrant multiplicities while people are in a refugee camp or when they are blocked at the border crossing point makes difficult to understand on which basis people are grouped and partitioned, and the kind of multiplicity that is produced and targeted. The term "population" is often used to describe the simultaneous presence of many migrants in a certain place – a space of detention or a refugee camp – or finally for grouping under the same label all "irregular" migrants who live in a country (Passel, 2006). However, I suggest that the referent "population" appears inadequate to account for the heterogeneity and the temporary dimension of migrant multiplicities that are formed when migrants are facing national authorities or humanitarian actors in charge of governing and partitioning them. Indeed, if we go back to Foucault's definition of "population", we see that a certain degree of homogeneity – a commonality of naturalized features – among the subjects who form it is required together with a stability of that collective dimension: a population designates "a multiplicity of individuals who fundamentally and essentially only exist biologically bound to the materiality within which they live" (Foucault, 2009: 37; see also Brighenti, 2014). Yet, it could be objected that, as scholars like Ian Hacking and Stephen Legg have shown, populations are not only groups characterized by the same nationality: since the XIX century the production of populations has also been done by starting from statistics about specific phenomena – like pathologies and deviances – that concerned sub-groups of the national population and that had been mapped and calculated in order to govern them and to produce degrees of normality and abnormality (Brighenti, 2014; Hacking, 1982; Hannah, 2001; Legg, 2005). However, as Foucault also remarked, what is relevant for understanding the transformation in the government of individuals and multiplicities is less these two levels taken in themselves than their mutual

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relationship (Foucault, 2009). **T**hus, as Barry Hindess has aptly suggested, the theoretical challenge consists precisely in undoing the unquestioned nexus between populations and states that has been historically crystallised with the emergence of the modern system of nation states. In this regard, he highlighting that "our analysis of the government of the state should itself be located in a more general examination of the government of populations" (Hindess, 2000:119) and, conversely that "the state is not the only agency involved in the government of its population (Hindess, 2000: 132).

Migrants who arrive in border zones are managed as individuals who are part of a multiplicity. This essentially involves two things. Firstly, the way in which migrants are governed and labelled[ii] depends to a large extent on a question of percentages and numbers – for instance, given a certain group of migrants who have arrived in a refugee camp, some of them will be denied international protection international protection, as the asylum system is based precisely on the partition between refugees and people who are rejected. The political context has a great influence on the approach of the police and humanitarian actors, as well as the choice of targeting specific individuals among the migrant mass. A blatant example is given by the arrivals of migrants rescued in the Mediterranean in the frame of the Triton operation and who were disembarked at Italian harbours:[iii] at any time, among the migrants rescued, Frontex officers single out one or more presumed smugglers who will be treated differently from all the others of the group and put in the channel of detention and deportation. Secondly, temporary multiplicities are actually produced in order to partition the migrants, dividing between asylum seekers and "fake" refugees, allocating some to special hosting centres and activating for others fast deportation procedures.

I use here the expression "*temporary divisible multiplicities*" to refer to the ways in which migrants are addressed and treated as part of groups by national authorities, border guards or humanitarian actors when they arrive in crucial border zones. Temporary divisible multiplicities are characterized by their volatile and temporary dimension, as well as by the goal of selecting, channelling and partitioning the migrants. As mentioned above, such temporary divisible character cannot be generalised to any space, and in fact there are contexts, beyond the border-zones, in which migrant multiplicities correspond to more or less stable and homogeneous groups.

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The migrants who are part of a certain temporary governable multiplicity will then form new temporary groups and multiplicities. In his book *Ambiguous Multiplicities* Andrea Brighenti contends that the government of multiplicities also entails strategies and "forms of spatial containment" that, building on civic engineering, shape the effective and material manage-ability of collective formations, preventing the eruption of unruly multitudes (Brighenti, 2014: 14). The logic of containment and mechanisms of capture that often actualise in forms of preventative detention[iv] are at stake also in the government of migrant multiplicities: the potential impact of migrants arriving in groups is managed through measures of temporary spatial segregation that make the heterogeneous migrant composition a governable multiplici-ty of bodies to identify. Nevertheless, the spatial containment of migrant multiplicities in the border-zones is not aimed exclusively at controlling individuals. Rather, actions of spatial bordering pave the ground for classifying and dividing migrants, and, further, it is not only a question of sorting migrants out: partitioning mechanisms serve and contribute to produce asymmetrical differentiations and exclusionary boundaries among them.

At the Harbour:

The heterogeneous migrant composition and the "turbulence of migration" (Papastiergiadis, 2013), is what policy makers, states and migration agencies try to govern by constantly craft-ing new taxonomies to capture and discipline practices of migration that do not fit into exist-ing migration profiles. After being rescued at sea, migrants are firstly identified and finger-printed at the harbour upon disembarkation. The first identification procedure aims to estab-lish the biometric *traceability* of the migrants, verifying if someone already has criminal records as irregular migrants in Europe, and marking all the entrances by storing the data in national and European databases, such as Eurodac.[v] At the harbour migrants are also interro-gated by Frontex officers who ask them questions about their journey. However, it is not at this stage that the *biographical records* of migrants are used for assessing individual cases and deciding on their asylum claim: the data collected are anonymized and are used to gener-ate migration profiles that are independent from individual stories, and to produce maps about migrant routes and migrant modus operandi[vi]. Therefore, the "hold" on migrants at this stage is intended less for governing them individually than for archiving migrant stories and geographies in order to produce risk analysis.This does not (only) mean that individualising

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processes come later with respect to the management of multiplicities; rather, mechanisms of individualisation take place in the frame of partitions and exclusions that address the migrants as part of a multiplicity. Migrants in the places of first arrival are subjected to sorting processes with the twofold aim of tracing exclusionary partitions (dividing potential asylum seekers from those who are quickly returned to their countries of origin) and, simultaneously, of preventing collective subjects from emerging around a common claim. This tactic of quickly dividing migrant multiplicities has been particularly visible on the island of Lampedusa, in particular after the opening of the hotspot in September 2015 and the implementation of the procedure of identification and fingerprinting. A group of 250 Eritrean migrants who arrived in November 2015 refused to be fingerprinted, and for this reason they were detained on the island under the threat of not being transferred to the mainland until they had accepted being identified. On the 17th of December and on the 6th of January they translated their refusal into a collective political claim – "no fingerprints, we want to move out of the camp" – making two public protests in Lampedusa.[vii] After those episodes, Italian authorities divided the group of migrants inside the hotspot, taking fingerprints by force and transferred them to Sicily ten by ten in the span of one month.

The government of a migrant multiplicity entails a technique and a politics of counting in order to assess its governability and to trace exclusionary boundaries. The practice of counting works on a twofold temporal dimension: counting is functional to the immediate management of the migrant multiplicity but also to statistical purposes; the data collected are stored and assembled, detaching them from the contingency of that specific migrant multitude. Therefore, it not only serves the goal of numbering subjects but also of sorting them. Taxonomy and classification on the one hand and quantification on the other are in fact, as Alain Desrosieres illustrates in his historical account of the "politics of great numbers", the two main function of counting (Desrosieres, 1993). In order to challenge the image of migration management as an exhaustive practice of control ,it is important to confront the proliferation of statistics on migrant arrivals and the daily counting of migrants in border zones with the *production of uncounted remnants[viii]*. The uncounted remnants correspond to "few" migrants that remain unclassified or out of concern to humanitarian actors and migration agencies. The uncounted could also refer to unmapped presences and movements of migrants. Therefore,

the "uncounted" encapsulates a series of subjects and phenomena that remain under the pertinence and the interest of the governmental counting.

A case that is particularly timely today with the increasing number of asylum applications in Europe, is given by the rejected refugee population in the European space, that is asylum seekers who have been denied international protection. What happens after asylum seekers are produced by the criteria of asylum as irregular migrants on the European territory? In this regard, Nicholas De Genova has aptly pointed out that "in systematic and predictable ways, asylum regimes disproportionately disqualify asylum seekers, and convert them into 'illegal' and deportable 'migrants" (De Genova, 2013: 1081). Over the last two years the asylum system has worked as one of the main mechanisms of illegalization of migrants. Indeed, about 220,000 asylum seekers have been illegalized between 2013 and 2015 as they have been denied international protection.[ix] However, this number says very little about the actual presence in Europe of those people, as well as of their internal displacements within the European space or eventual returns. This means drawing attention to the production of a multiplicity of rejected refugees who become out of concern for governmental agencies: indeed, asylum seekers "disappear" from UNHCR official statistics and reports as soon as their legal status changes with the rejection of their asylum claims. Or better, while the number of rejections is quantified, their movements and their effective condition after illegalization remain fundamentally unmapped. Yet, it is fundamental to highlight the gap between becoming uncounted or unclassified subjects and not being governed: in fact, the life of those who remain out of any count is by no means less governed and affected by migration policies than the life of those who fit into specific migratory profiles and who are finally counted. Rather, there are always subjects who are (governed as being) left out of concern. To put it differently, in order to make migrant multiplicities governable, there are some who remain out as unclassified or uncounted.

The production of generalizable singularities:

The government of migrant multiplicities is not based only on the direct action upon many migrants who arrived simultaneously in a border zone or who are detained/ hosted in a camp and who are thus managed as a group, as a multiplicity. The production of a governable multiplicity can consist also in databases of migrant profiles generated through the assemblage of

data. Actually, the production of what I call generalisable singularities, starting from the collection of personal data, is not peculiar to migration governmentality only. Rather, this practice of data extraction and assemblage in the field of migration should be situated in a much broader context of "data double" (Amoore, 2013; Lyon, 2010) production that concerns all subjects. The functioning and the implications of data production have been analysed in detail by scholars: "this assemblage operates by abstracting human bodies from their territorial settings and separating them into a series of discrete flows" (Haggerty, Ericson, 2000: 606). Starting from a given composite population, different sub-groups – among which are also migrants – are singled out through mechanisms of data extraction and generating profiles of risk (Adey et al. 2012). Yet, the practices of data extraction that I address and that are devised specifically for addressing migrants work in a slightly different manner: what is produced are less distinct categories of risk profiles and sub-groups than a narrated map of migrants' modus operandi that is combined with statistics about the nationality and the status (e.g. asylum seekers, "irregular" migrant, refugee) of the migrants. This activity of "data-extraction" is usually conducted by Frontex or by the national police at border crossing points, or when migrants are apprehended for control inside the European space. Then, the information gathered becomes the material for the production of Frontex risk-analyses and are also stored in the Europol database. The data collection conducted across Europe in October 2014 under the Mos Maiorum operation clearly shows the modalities and the implications of the knowledge extraction on migration. For fifteen days the national police of EU states were in charge of stopping migrants in cities and in crucial sites like rail stations. On that occasion, migrants were asked to provide details both about their nationality and actual status and about their journeys and modus operandi (costs, use of smuggling networks, routes) and their final destination. All the data collected were then anonymized, thus also the information concerning migrants' identity – such as age and nationality – was not connected to any single person but detached from the individuals and reassembled in order to trace a picture of the composition and modus operandi of the migrants. The result of this "biographical interrogatory" to the migrants has been an EU report combining information on *who* the migrants are who cross irregularly the external and the internal borders of Europe with details about *how* and *where* they crossed.[x] . It follows that what is at stake in the production of a virtual migration population is a peculiar relationship between the level of singular identities and conducts – from

which data have been extracted – and the level of multiplicities and big numbers. The production of *generalizable singularities* is the outcome of the combination of anonymised data concerning the "who" of the migrants and data about their *conduct of migration*, that is activities and strategies in which these migrants engage. At a closer glance, it appears that a three-fold process is at stake: *extraction* – of data from individual migrants; *abstraction* – from the materiality of migrant biographies and data; *assemblage* – of different data to craft profiles that actually correspond to generalizable singularities, namely migrant profiles that then are used for labelling and categorizing heterogeneous practices of migration and individual trajectories. Hence, the production of generalizable singularities translates the materiality of individual stories and identities into a virtual multiplicity that has not only a descriptive function but also an anticipatory one that works as a blueprint for partitioning migrants.

Which multiplicity? The migrant mob between routes and crowds.

Up to now, this article has addressed the effective juridical, political and governmental techniques through which multiplicities are produced and migrants are governed as part of them. However, the level of representation is also part of the range of techniques mobilized for "making up" (Hacking, 1999) a migrant multiplicity from the point of view of its visual capture and of the public perception of it. As Ian Hacking has compellingly demonstrated, subjects are not merely "made up" in a passive way; on the contrary, tactics of strategic appropriation are a constitutive part of processes of subjectivation. The struggles over the asylum illustrate well how migrants sometimes strategically overturn the function of categories. If we consider asylum-seekers who have been denied of the international protection, it is noticeable that in many European migrant transit-points - like in Milan and in Marseille, and in Ventimiglia, at the French-Italian border - these "rejected refugees" claimed to be the real subjects of humanitarianism, as people fleeing wars and living in state of insecurity. They unsettled in this way the exclusionary criteria of the asylum, defining themselves refugees and considering the international protection as what should be granted on basis of the war and insecurity they experienced, not necessarily in the countries of origin but also in the countries were they used to live[xi]. Thus, up against UNHCR that labels as "people not of concern" all asylum-seekers who do not meet the criteria and become rejected refugees, these migrants

engaged in a sort of "politics of the governed" (Chatterjee, 2004) demanding to be protected s war escapees and recrafting the very category of "asylum.

If we consider the images through which "unauthorised" migrants enter the European space., it is noticeable that migrant multiplicities are presented through what William Walters has called the "visual operators" of migration governmentality (Walters, 2014: 8). The images of thousands of migrants blocked in summer 2015 at the external borders of Europe have circulated widely on the web, presenting those people seeking asylum as unruly crowds, formed by women, children and men, clashing with the police. The lengthened presence at the borders of many of the migrants, temporarily stranded in the attempt to cross the borders of Europe has in fact contributed to depict and narrate them as "crowds", "masses" and "mobs".[xii] The captions under the images finalize the illustration of bodily presences as unruly multiplicities, as if a sort of coordinated attack by transnational populations on the European frontiers was underway. The resurgence of the terms "crowd" and "mob" used for naming the massive numbers of people fleeing wars in the attempt to reach Europe to seek asylum reveals a partial shift away from the image of the flow that has largely characterized the narrative of migration management. Indeed, in front of the images of thousands of people stranded at the borders or waiting in many European rail stations, the fluid and abstract visual descriptor of the "flow" appears inadequate. In addition to this, the stubbornness of the migrants in reaching Europe, and the "incorrigibility" (De Genova, 2010) of their practices of movement contributed to depict those people as "migrant crowds": the resolution of women, men and children in crossing borders and moving on could hardly have been encapsulated in the elusive and moving image of the flow. "Mob" and "crowd" are terms used in the media to designate people who, in their daily struggle for movement,[xiii] unsettle the usual image of refugees as victims. It would certainly go beyond the scope of this paper to analyse the politics and the forms of visibility associated with the government of migrant multiplicities; therefore, the "political economy of visibility" (Amaya-Castro, 2015; Tazzioli, Walters, 2016) is constitutive of the way in which these multiplicities are shaped as the object of government. EU states have been confronted by the arrival of displaced populations that could not be managed merely as migrant flows to control and identify: the increased visible presence of migrants in European towns has put EU states into the position of not only controlling the arrivals but also managing those presences in the cities, at informal transit points and in pub-

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lic spaces. The study of migration flows performed by migration agencies such as Frontex actually entails a refocusing from border lines to migrant itineraries for crafting new migrant routes – "the ways in which migration management seeks to channel movements into migration routes" (Casas-Cortes and others, 2015: 900). In other words, the presence of mass migrations in route requires that these are scrutinized in their spatial strategies of mobility. Nevertheless, this spatialization of migration movements that migration agencies undertake in order to contain and channel mobility as a phenomenon of great numbers and multiplicities does resolve the issue of qualifying the composition of these migrant multiplicities.

As far as migrants in distress at sea are concerned, the kind of migrant multiplicity that is conveyed through the images and the videos circulating on the web cannot be detached from the migrant vessel itself that is envisaged as a governable unit. As William Walters poignantly argues, "the overcrowded vessel has become a visual type that migrates across information and media platforms" (Walters, 2014: 7). But more than being an exclusive visual trope, the migrant ship is rather part of *migrant scenes of rescue*: disembarkation, has become the dominant image and moment with which migrants rescued at sea are associated in the media. Moreover, it is important to highlight the kind of visibility that is at stake when migrants are detected on a vessel. Actually, at that stage, the migrant multiplicity is captured by media as an indistinct group of people, and what matters is neither the exact number of migrants on board nor to identify who they are. Instead, what is relevant is to assess the governability of that multiplicity – how to intercept and rescue the migrants – whose physical borders are given in that moment by the migrant vessel itself. This makes the visibility of the migrant group matter on the level of the approximate number of people on board: "when we detect and approach a migrant vessel to rescue" the Coast Guard says "what is important to us is to grasp the size of the group of migrants, that is their indicative number".[xiv]

The motley migrant mob:[xv]

The practice of dividing the migrants and of keeping the multiplicity only on a temporary basis does not depend only on the exclusionary goal of migration and asylum policies – which differentiate between migrants deserving of protection, "irregular" migrants etc. – nor on the governability of a multiplicity of migrants. For state authorities and migration agencies the temporary and divisible character of migrant multiplicities is also a way of preventing the

formation of a collective political subject. Actually, the "fear of the mob" and the governmental techniques for ruling and dividing mobile flows and temporary collective formations go well beyond the government of migrant multiplicities. A huge literature has in fact analysed the dynamics and the techniques that sustain the government of unruly collective formations, such as crowds, especially when these are related to riots events and social protests (Della Porta, Reiter, 1998). Tactics of crowd control, from repression and tolerated transgression during public demonstrations to preventive strategies to hamper the formation of collective subjects in the streets, are mobilised to manage and disperse mobile flows and social protests (Bagguley, Hussain, 2012; De Biasi, 1998). It certainly goes beyond the scope of this article to take into account how mobile flows and crowds at large are policed and divided, as well as to compare in detail the government of migrant multiplicities and the government of more general crowds. Yet, I briefly sketch here some points in order not to conflate the object of this analysis (migrant multiplicities as potential mobs) with crowds and riots. The "turmoil" generated by migrant multiplicities is not of the same order as that produced by crowds and riots: migrant mobs are not "minority groups" who are part of the space of citizenship and who, from within such a space, lay political claims (Bagguley, Hussain, 2012). Rather, by focusing on migrant mobs in border-zones I bring attention to subjects who are not there for protesting, nor for assembling: their presence in a mass is in itself considered a source of trouble and becomes an object of control. Migrant multiplicities as potential mobs are taken here by highlighting how they are divided and scattered, more than how they are policed as a group.

A focus on migrant transit points across Europe allows us to grasp the tactic that national authorities usually put in place for managing migrant multiplicities: migrants are grouped in border zones and governed as a spatially located "X" – for instance, the migrants stranded in Calais; and then they are partitioned or scattered as soon as they appear to have a collective strategy or to be building a common political identity that emerges from the very fact of sharing space and the same condition of "illegality".

Paris, July 2015, Lycée Jean-Quarré, XIX arrondissement: after being evicted from La Chapelle square, the heterogeneous group of migrants[xvi] who were part of the movement "La Chapelle en lutte" occupied a disused college in Paris to which about 700 migrants moved.[xvii]

In the first stage migrants were allowed to stay in a big group – and governed as the "squat at Lycée Jean-Quarré" –, since this facilitated the governability of a considerable number of individuals. Yet, when the migrant multiplicity started to appear as a more coherent collective formation laying common political claims[xviii], the goal of the municipality was to divide them. When the squat was evicted in October 2015, the strategy of the municipality consisted in thwarting the migrants' ability to find another common space, and distributed them instead to small centres in the French countryside in order to avoid any possible collective formation or stable group. The exclusionary channels of the asylum are spatially materialized through the scattering of migrants across places.[xix] A similar tactic of *grouping and scattering* migrants is also periodically used by French authorities in Calais. The informal migrant transit camp in Calais is in fact indirectly managed by the French police through a twofold mechanism of spatial *stranding and draining*: migrants are constantly blocked and violently hampered from crossing the Channel, and many of them never succeed in reaching the UK. Nevertheless, anytime that the number of people at the camp becomes huge and can be source of disorder, the police on the sly let a few of the stranded people go; sometimes, alternatively, migrants are transferred by force to detention centres in France.

The difficulty that many migrant groups encounter in finding a common political and legal solution for everybody reflects the way in which migration policies and administrative procedures made on a case-by-case basis contribute to undermine the very possibility for a collective subject to emerge. "Mob" and "crowd" are the disqualifying terms through which heterogeneous migrant multiplicities are designated, denying in this way from the very beginning the "politicality of migration movements" (Mezzadra, 2016). I suggest that the "fear" of the migrant mob reflects the impasse in fitting migrant conducts into categories and the irreducibility of migrant subjectivities to a clearly shaped profile and thus, to a single reason for migrating. Migrant groups are presented as unruly mobs in order to downplay the political dimension of their struggles for movement and to thwart the possibility of a multiplicity becoming a collective political subject.

I dwell here on the ambivalent character of the mob, as a multiplicity that is disqualified as amorphous and non-political and that, at the same time, is feared for its troubling potentialities. If on the one hand migrants arriving in groups become objects of government – insofar

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as they are managed as temporary divisible multiplicities – on the other the level of the multiplicity corresponds also to what cannot be fully captured by the selective and exclusionary criteria of migration management. As a huge stream of literature has explained, the mob as a dangerous unruly multiplicity has a long history: the term "the mob" has its etymological root in the latin expression *mobile vulgus*[xx], designating the "unstable common people" (Hayes, 1992: 6. see also Shoemaker, 2007; Thompson, 1963) and has been used in the English vocabulary since the XVII century to name tumultuous popular multiplicities. Subsequently, since the end of the XVIII century, "the mob" came to designate an unruly minority formed by vagabonds, beggars, lazy people and criminals that were not part of the working class or of the people – therefore, it encapsulated all those subjects who, as described by Michel Foucault, were considered guilty of "debauchery", refusing to be "fixed to the system of production" and to a territory (Foucault, 2013: 173). In this regard, Foucault's Lectures at Collège de France of 1972-193, *The Punitive Society*, can be seen as a pioneer text of an important critical literature that traces a genealogy of the ways in which unruly conducts consisting in acts of vagabondage and vagrancy had been regulated and disciplined over time (Anderson, 2013; Moulier-Boutang, 2002; Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos, 2008). To sum up, "the mob" refers at the same time to the people who form it and to the troubling activities in which they engage (Shoemaker, 2007). This point is also related to the choice of using the term "the mob" instead of "crowd" for designating migrant multiplicities – both as they are produced and governed by states, and as multiplicities of migrants that are feared insofar as they trouble the exclusionary order of citizenship (Nail, 2015). As Peter Hayes underlines, the "crowd" has been historically associated with a majority subject (the mass) that, moreover, is characterized by an external drive that leads it and influences the behaviour of the people who are part of the crowd, not as individuals but as a mass (Hayes, 1992). Here I use the term "the mob" in a very specific way, that does not fully overlap with "deviant" conducts that refuse any territorial bondage – like the vagabonds – and that designate migrant multiplicities in border-zones – and more precisely, how they are governed as multiplicities.

Claudia Aradau and Jeff Huysmans advocate "for recovering the 'mob' as a category of democracy rather than as its outside" hinging on the extra-legal character of the mob, on its irreducibility to the demos (Aradau, Huysmans, 2010: 11). "While the people as the demos was perceived as the orderly force that democracies needed to foster and to sustain, the mob

was the antinomy of the demos, the excess and unrest that could only be perceived as threatening for democratic forces" (Aradau, Huysmans, 2010: 12). It is precisely this opposition between the people and the mob, they contend, that needs to be challenged, looking at the mob as the constitutive internal excess of the people. And it is along these lines, I suggest, that the migrant mob should be addressed as part of a critical project that aims to grasp what unsettles and cannot be contained into the partitioning criteria of migration politics. However, the migrant mob is not simply the unruly minority, it is formed by the temporary coexistence of subjects who are outside of the space of citizenship. Secondly, by speaking about "migrant mobs" we should be careful in not overstating what can be called *the political size of numbers* – that is the fact that a given number of migrants is actually perceived and presented as massive in its impact on the society. For this reason it is important to keep the meaning of a minority that troubles the established order of citizenship, irrespective of numbers. Indeed, in the field of migration it is not only a question of contested "big" numbers but also of the production of remnants – that is, of a "few" people that after any sorting or classifying operation remain out of categories, as uncountable bodies in excess. The term "migrant mob" can be mobilized also to refer to scanty multiplicities, thus a mob that is numerically in default – a *dearth mob* – and that troubles the *epistemological power* of classifying subjects and tracing exclusionary partitions.

In this final section I will draw attention to two forms of migrant mobs that, from the point of view of numbers, appear at opposite extremes – a scanty multiplicity and a migrant mob huge in number. These two vignettes taken together illustrate well the co-existence of migrant mobs that become visible because of their numeric "size", and of scanty multiplicities that are the outcome of the exclusionary procedures of asylum and of migration laws. The first concerns war escapees from the Libyan conflict who went to Tunisia in 2011 and who were migrant workers in Libya. Some among those who had been denied international protection by UNHCR Tunisia, decided to remain at Choucha refugee camp, and continued to do so after the official closure of the camp in June 2013. They continued to stay there because they didn't have another space to stay in; but the existence of "Choucha beyond the camp" (Garelli, Tazzioli, 2016) was also a sort of struggle carried on by the rejected refugees who demanded to be resettled in Europe as the escapees of the Libyan war. Beyond their discursive political claim, in which they stressed that they were refugees – despite not being so accord-

ing to UNHCR – by staying there they effectively opposed their own "disappearance". Those who were still at the camp, according to UNHCR, were by now only "a few nomads living in the desert"[xxi] and who have been erased from official statistics about refugees and migrants in Tunisia. What I would like to suggest is that the political relevance of the "irrelevant few people" relies on the political and statistical invisibility of those migrants produced by migration agencies: instead of governing the migrant multiplicities, in that context the very dimension of the group was considered inexistent by state and non-state actors. The *scanty multiplicity* formed by the rejected refugees at Choucha camp appeared to humanitarian actors and to Tunisian authorities as a troubling dearth mob, despite the scarcity in number, due to the common claims they laid beyond any dividing and individualising criteria. In some way they built on their very exclusion from the asylum, reversing it as a common ground of struggle, based on the shared condition of being "rejected". Through their spatial persistence at Choucha camp they stressed the lack of a space to stay and the unsafe place in which they were living: in this way, the group of rejected refugees presented themselves as the subjects who, have been affected by the politics of asylum despite being rejected by it.

The second vignette concerns a migrant mob which is huge in number and is feared because it appears as an ungovernable motley multiplicity. This is the march to Europe made by thousands of refugees from the city of Budapest to the Austrian border in September 2015. Thousands of people coming from different countries[xxii] arrived simultaneously in the span of a few weeks in Hungary in order to seek asylum in Europe. Due to the family contacts that most of them had in countries like Germany and Sweden, and given the low rate of successful asylum claims in Hungary, once in Budapest their common goal was to reach Austria, in order to then move to other European countries. However, Hungarian authorities blocked the trains to Vienna with the aim of hampering the refugees from crossing the Austrian border. Thus, after days of waiting, on the 4th of September the refugees decided to move all together on foot, marching on the main motorway heading to Austria. The mass of people stranded at the rail station in Budapest suddenly became a motley migrant mob that neither Hungarian nor Austrian authorities could stop at that point. Faced with the sabotaging of their movements due to the national authorities blocking the trains, the refugees enacted a self-resettlement strategy, moving on their own to the Austrian border. Instead of laying claims they opened up a *route to refuge* by marching to the places in which they wanted to settle.

Conclusion:

The increasing number of migrant arrivals in Europe characterized by people in groups escaping wars to seek asylum highlights multiplicity as a crucial dimension at stake in the government of migration. In this article I have shown that far from being an object of government that is already there, migrant multiplicities are the outcome of processes of grouping and partition acted by migration agencies and states to make migrants manageable. Moreover, these produced multiplicities are not stable collectivities: on the contrary, they are formed in order to then divide and select the migrants through an individualising power. I have contended that the production of *temporary divisible migrant multiplicities* allows the manageability of groups of migrants, preventing the emergence of a collective political subject, something that actually, as Gilles Deleuze argued in relation to the people, is not already there and has to be invented, it is always "to come" (Deleuze, 2000: 218). Retracing the ambivalences of the term "the mob", I have shown that migrant multiplicities appear as an object of government and, at the same time, as a potentially troubling collective subject. "The mob" encapsulates this ambivalent and fleeting subject that is the product of governmental techniques and that at the same time corresponds to a troubling multiplicity that exceeds and undermines the partitioning power of classification and mechanisms of dividing through individualisation. Keeping the heterogeneity of migrant mobs and highlighting the political dimension of migrant struggles for movement, it is possible to grasp multiplicity as the outcome of governmental practices and, at the same time, as an incipient subject often in excess to mechanisms of control.

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i http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/back-ground-information/docs/2_hotspots_en.pdf

ii For instance, considered as economic migrants or as asylum seekers, as well as the chance of "success" of their asylum claim.

iii Triton is the EU operation coordinated by Frontex for controlling borders and rescuing migrants, which replaced the Italian military-humanitarian operation Mare Nostrum. It became effectively operative in January 2015. Triton has a radically different operational mission than Mare Nostrum, as its primary mission has been that of border control. (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-566_en.htm).

iv As for instance when migrants are disembarked at the harbour, they are taken to temporary hosting centres where are often detained with no possibility to go out before leaving the fingerprints.

v The Eurodac database was created in 2003 to fight against so called "asylum shopping" – meaning when a person demands asylum in different European countries. In fact, Eurodac is used to determine which Member State is to be responsible pursuant to the Dublin Convention for examining an application for asylum lodged in a Member State.

vi This information is the result of the interview I conducted with Frontex officers at Frontex's headquarters in Catania (Italy) the 3rd of December 2015.

vii The 250 migrants set a protest in front of the main Church in Lampedusa and then marched with banners in the streets chanting "no fingerprints, we want to move":http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-lampedusa-fingerprint-idUSKBN0U02H720151217

viii By bringing attention to the uncounted remnants I have no in mind here Jacques Rancière's definition of the political as what revolves around the "part of no part". Rather, I refer here to the fact that some migrants who are part of a multiplicity are not always classified and counted by states and international agencies. Indeed, the government of a migrant group always entails that some of those migrants at some point are no longer counted by humanitarian actors such as UNHCR because for instance their asylum claims are rejected, and therefore they stopped to be counted as part of the refugee population.

ix http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics

x Final report on Joint Operation "MOS MAIORUM"/ 5474/15 LIMITE FRONT 22 (22 January 2015).

xiIndeed, art.51 of the Geneva Convention establishes that is in relation to the country of origin, and not to the country of residence, that the asylum seeker's claim should be assessed. This means that despite many of the migrants who arrived in Europe from 2011 to 2015 escaped the war in Libya as were been living in Libya to work for years, their asylum claim was judged independently on that condition. Against the country of origin restriction, rejected refugees stress the common experience of the war and of the flight from Libya. "We have all fled the Libyan war and thus we are all refugees, no distinction should be made among us" (interview with Sudanese migrants in Marseille, September 2015).

xii http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/migrants-mob-train-re-opened-budapest-train-station-2140952949 ; http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/599033/migrant-camp-Grande-Syn-the-Calais-France-Dunkirk-police-Britain-smugglers

xiii Striving to enter the European space despite visa restrictions and the walls recently built in many EU countries to keep them out.

xiv Interview with Coast Guard officers at the Coast Guard headquarters in Rome, June 2015.

xv The expression "motley migrant mob" is a way to rephrase Peter Leinebaugh and Markus Rediker's expression "motley crowd" (Linebaugh, Rediker, 2000) that designates the heterogeneous composition of piracy in the XVII and XVIII century. However, as I explain later in the paper, I contend that the term "mob" is more appropriate than "crowd" to account for minority movements.

xvi https://paris-luttes.info/l-appel-de-la-chapelle-suivi-de-3456 ;

xvii http://www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/paris-75019/migrants-au-lycee-jean-quarre-la-situation-est-devenue-intenable-24-09-2015-5123887.php

xviii They asked for a place to stay and they claimed their right to humanitarian protection.

xix Actually, about 100 migrants had not been relocated in a hosting centre. http://refugiesen-lutte.wix.com/newsblog#!L%C3%A9vacuation-du-Lyc%C3%A9e-Quarr%C3%A9-Maison-Des-R%C3%A9fu-gi%C3%A9s/cjds/562a3fc00cf201c73ae5c374

xx As Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos observe, "it is no coincidence that the word mobility not only refers to movement but also to the common people, the working classes, the mob" (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos, 2008: 56).

xxi Interview with UNHCR officer, Tunis, August 2014.

xxii The majority came from Syria, but there were also many from Afghanistan and Iraq.