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## **Mediterranean Movements: Constituent Political Spaces**

### **An Interview with Sandro Mezzadra and Toni Negri**

Chicago-Palermo-Paris-Oulu (via Skype), November 7, 2014

Bologna-Chicago-Marseille-Palermo (via Skype), October 2, 2015

**Glenda Garelli, Alessandra Sciorba, Martina Tazzioli**

**Abstract:** This conversations between Toni Negri and Sandro Mezzadra (November 2014 - October 2015) focus on the politics of Mediterranean boundaries and situates migratory movements across the Mediterranean in the geo-political context of the Eastern and Southern shore. Looking at the proliferation of wars around the Mediterranean region and reflecting on the legacy of the Arab Uprisings, Mezzadra and Negri revisit the concept of the “autonomy of migration” initially proposed as a working hypothesis by Yann Moulier Boutang and then developed by scholars from around the world “as a heuristic model to investigate and intervene in the struggles of migration” (Scheel 2013: 576)<sup>1</sup> and critically interrogate its possible contribution to the field of migration and in terms of the current refugee crisis.

**Keywords:** Europe, migration, crisis, Mediterranean (political space)

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of the Autonomy of migration brings analytical attention to moments of autonomy of migratory practices in regard to any governmental attempt to control or manage them. Important contributions to this debate include:

Boutang, Yann Moulier. *De l'esclavage au salariat: économie historique du salariat bridé*. Presses universitaires de France, 1998.

De Genova, Nicholas. "The Queer Politics of Migration: Reflections on " Illegality" and Incurability." *Studies in social justice* 4, no. 2 (2010): 101.

Mezzadra, S. (2004). The right to escape. *Ephemera*, 4(3), 267-275.

Mezzadra, S., & Neilson, B. (2013). *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*. Duke University Press.

Papadopoulos, D., Stephenson, N. and Tsianos. V. (2008). "Escape routes." *Control and subversion in the twenty-first century*. London (2008).

Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe (2007). *Turbulente Ränder: Neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Grenzen Europas*. Bielefeld: transcript.

Scheel, S. (2013). Autonomy of Migration Despite its Securitisation? Facing the Terms and Conditions of Biometric Rebordering. *Millennium-Journal of International Studies*, 41(3), 575-600.

The conversation between Sandro Mezzadra and Toni Negri took place over the course of ten months and consisted of two Skype interviews and two email exchanges. Glenda Garelli, Alessandra Scieurba, and Martina Tazzioli conducted the interviews and facilitated the email exchanges. Toni Negri was the first to be interviewed on November 7, 2014. The editors then sent the transcripts to Sandro Mezzadra who was interviewed *on October 2, 2015. Mezzadra had received the transcripts of Negri's interview prior to our Skype meeting with him, and was asked the same questions, with an invitation to answer any point raised by Negri. Mezzadra's answers were then sent to Negri and the final transcript again to Mezzadra.* The interviewees were based in Paris (Negri) and Bologna (Mezzadra); the interviewers in Chicago, US (Garelli), Palermo, Italy (Scieurba), and between Oulu, Finland and Marseille, France (Tazzioli). Upon inviting the *interviewees, the guest editors shared a draft of the special issue's introduction.*

**Garelli, Scieurba, Tazzioli:** How do you see the Mediterranean as a political space? Where is it, first of all; what are its boundaries and borders? And how do you see migrations as contributing to the political processes of redefining the Mediterranean as a political space or the politics of the Mediterranean space?

**Toni Negri:** This is a complex question since the Mediterranean is defined from many vantage points. Here are a few examples. From the vantage point of US foreign politics the Mediterranean is an internal sea opening up to Southern Europe, European Russia, and the Middle East—that's why the US has been maintaining a persistent interest in the Mediterranean from the Cold War up to our days, from the Arab Uprisings to the subsequent wars. For Arab countries the Mediterranean represents an undoubtedly crucial site for migratory movements, for internal class struggles that find a line of flight toward Europe through the Mediterranean. This is certainly true for Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt these days, the big countries directly facing the Mediterranean. Turkey instead presents a different scenario, a scenario that actually points to Iran through the Caucasus region. Moreover, a question about the Mediterranean has to take into account Israel; its osmotic

relationship with the United States; its internal affairs which determine the relationship with Gaza and the instrumental use of terrorism; and its fear of a new Iranian hegemony in the Gulf area. Let me briefly expand on this last fundamental point: it is from this Mediterranean vantage point that we should look at the fact that the United States are forced to somehow open up to Iran in their strategy to isolate China and in their controversial opposition to the so called Islamic State. Finally your question on the Mediterranean brings in the point of view of Southern European countries, for whom the Mediterranean is certainly their sea. But we need to be careful here, very careful actually, on this idea of Mediterranean “nostrum”: what will become of the Mediterranean depends on Europe.

**Sandro Mezzadra:** Yes, as Toni pointed out, the question of the Mediterranean as a political space is a very complex one. Let me take it from here: the Mediterranean has played a crucial role in labor history and it’s important to keep mapping the way in which the Mediterranean continues to be a crucial political space in labor struggles. At the same time, it is important to map these different types of movements that criss-cross the Mediterranean: we should look at the Mediterranean to map the multifarious global processes and dynamics that are reshaping it as a political space. I think we may need to approach your question with a kind of double movement, in order to shed light on the tensions and conflicts that are played out in the Mediterranean nowadays. On the one hand, we have to identify different kinds of dynamics and flows that traverse the Mediterranean space—I am thinking, for instance, of military flows, which are particularly important today given the wars and conflicts on the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. But at the same time the Mediterranean is also constituted by the logistical dynamics that traverse it ... think of container ships and oil tankers, for instance. But also think of the Chinese presence in the Piraeus Port in Greece, to get an idea of the stretch of the Mediterranean space! And we have to keep in mind the movements of migration that trace another geography of the Mediterranean space and are revealing the continuous reframing of the Mediterranean as a space of control. From this point of view, just keeping in mind these heterogeneous movements and dynamics it is very clear that the Mediterranean is a dense space, a kind of solid space, where important

conflicts and tensions are played out—conflicts and tensions that have an impact beyond the choppy waters of the Mediterranean.

**Garelli, Scieurba, Tazzioli:** Toni mentioned Southern European states in terms of the *Mediterranean political space* ...

**Sandro Mezzadra:** This topic allows multiple points of entry. First, I would say that there is a Mediterranean peculiarity within the very material constitution of the European Union: Spain, Italy, and Greece are important junctures of this Mediterranean Europe that has been at the center of the European crisis over the last years. This is a first aspect in the relation between Europe and the Mediterranean. The important question for me is whether we can imagine a Mediterranean Europe as a space within which forms of resistance and political experimentation can contribute to a radical re-imagination of the European space as a whole. It's not about a mythology of Mediterranean Europe, a kind of cultural or even "anthropological" divide within Europe; instead I look at what is at stake in it from the point of view of its possible resonances within the European space as a whole. Moreover, when speaking of a Mediterranean Europe, it is fundamental to point out that it is a border-Europe; it is a Europe that is geographically projected toward its outsides. This aspect should be particularly emphasized when speaking of the predicament of the European Union and of the possibility for a Mediterranean Europe to be a site of resistance and at the same time a site for a constituent imagination of Europe. To quote Étienne Balibar (2009), we could say that Mediterranean Europe is a "borderland" Europe where crucial challenges for the future of Europe are at stake. The relationship between Europe and its multiple outsides, for instance, plays itself out in a very concrete sense on the Southern shores of the Mediterranean, but also in the greater Middle East, and this means war, this means a politics of peace in times of war. This is a kind of radical challenge for Mediterranean Europe, which is a kind of European borderland in the literal sense.

**Garelli, Scieurba, Tazzioli:** In light of the current Mediterranean situation—and particularly global asymmetrical wars and the enduring financial crisis—how would you

*re-consider the two main contributions to the movement's debate about migration, i.e. the theory of the "autonomy of migration" and the critique of the division between economic migrants and refugees?*

**Sandro Mezzadra:** Let's start from the "autonomy of migration". In my work I always stressed that the autonomy of migrations should not be seen as a kind of label for a grand theory capable of explaining everything in migration movements. For me the "autonomy of migration", shortly put, is a gaze on mobility that allows us to highlight the political stakes of migratory movements. For scholars who in these years participated in the conversation surrounding the "autonomy of migration" (De Genova 2010, Mezzadra 2004, Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, Papadopoulos et al 2008, Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe 2007, Scheel 2013), what happened over the last weeks and months is a kind of challenge of displacement. On the one hand, you have this spectacle of huge masses of people on the move, who are presented as completely driven by dynamics of war and dispossession, completely driven by smugglers and other actors; but, on the other hand, you have an apparent reality of a kind of autonomy in these movements. What was particularly striking in the summer of 2015 was precisely this tension, the strong opposition between these two poles. I think that this field of tension should be an important kind of challenge for scholars engaged in discussions about the "autonomy of migration". On the one hand, we have to stress that migration is always related to a number of dynamics—in this case particularly the wars in Syria and in the greater Middle East and the reorganization of the power relations in the region. On the other hand, we have to continue to be attentive to a kind of politicality of movements of migration. What happened over the last few months has been particularly important in this sense: we have been confronted with an amazing capacity of migrants and refugees to articulate explicit political claims in the multiple border-sites that have by now become iconic for what happened in the summer of 2015. The summer of 2015 does not have just one iconic place—there is no Lampedusa which can be taken as an emblematic icon of what happened. There has been a proliferation of border-sites that correspond to a kind of power of migratory movements that could not be effectively contained by the European border regime and its spectacle. In all these sites—from the island of Kos to the railway

station of Milan; from Ventimiglia and Calais to the border between Hungary and Serbia—what’s striking is migrants’ and refugees’ stubbornness in explicitly articulating political claims. If I had to summarize a lesson from the summer of 2015 for scholars engaged in debates on the autonomy of migration, I’d say that this lesson would be to be more attentive to the structural environment within which migration takes place while at the same time to be even more radical in thinking the political character of the migration movements.

**Toni Negri:** Let me comment on the notion of the autonomy of migration. The main problem with this perspective is that it is not clear what the axes of this autonomy are. Migrations are always constituted by masses of people, and these people always move starting from individual or group experiments about how they survive, and express and reproduce themselves in their situatedness. But as we were saying a while ago these scenarios are also contingent on how Europe will configure itself, whether it will succeed in structuring itself as its own power or whether it will become an appendage of Asia—and there’s still hope this is not going to happen. In light of the increasingly tragic situation in refugees’ countries of origin, the flight across the Mediterranean will continue and will intensify. In this situation we are witnessing the attempt to move the axis of control out of the Mediterranean swamp and into Arab countries, or anyway countries facing Mediterranean Europe. I never quite fully grasped the breadth of the concept of the autonomy of migration. It’s a similar difficulty to the one I experience with the conceptual division between economic migrants and refugees. It’s clear this division has always been extremely weak and that anyway it had to be opposed ... I mean, it is obvious that any economic migrant is also politically situated. Migration will keep being an increasingly political and at the same time economic process. It will increasingly become the flight of people enslaved by wars and religious extremism.

**Sandro Mezzadra:** Radical scholars have of course been skeptical about the distinction between migrants and refugees, about an absolute boundary between economic migrants and refugees. But first of all we have to keep in mind that is not only a question for radical scholars. In several papers produced by international organizations including, but

not limited to, UNHCR you can find the same kind of concern, the same kind of epistemic confusion regarding the very possibility of tracing a firm border between migrants and refugees.

In a way, what we can say against the background of recent developments in Europe, and not only in Europe—just think of the Rohingya migrant crisis around Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines in 2015, for instance ... So what we can say is that while we have to continue to be critical of the distinction between economic migrants and refugees, there is also a need to rethink the very notions of refuge and asylum. We are once again in a kind of paradoxical situation. On the one hand, we criticize the foundation of asylum as a partition system but at the same time we should also recognize that people on the move are asking us to imagine new political and legal tools capable to make the asylum system effective. We have to work at the boundaries of these two positions. This means to develop an even more radical criticism of the very possibility to distinguish in absolute terms between migrants and refugees on the one hand; but, on the other hand, we need to rethink the legacy and normative instruments of asylum since we are confronted with movements of people who ask us to rethink these tools. In this condition of “epistemic crisis”—where the arbitrariness of power as well as resistance employ the acknowledged difficulty of distinguishing between economic migrants and refugees—we are confronted with a proliferation and multiplication of taxonomies, subject positions, legal tools, which are almost exploding the figure of asylum from within. In this situation there are many risks, but a radical and pragmatic politics of asylum should work “within and against” these tendencies and this conceptual confusion.

**Garelli, Scieurba, Tazzioli:** The Arab Uprisings triggered a series of political transformations and struggles that reach further than the countries where they originated. Four years after their outbreak the geopolitical scenario has radically changed and presents an epistemological challenge. If on the one hand it is important to fight a secularist and progressive reading—*through a “not yet” framing of the current phase* or asking if in fact these revolutions have failed—*on the other hand it’s clear that the current political scenario is very far from the 2011 revolutionary claims.* Equally

clear is the fact that this situation is creating a political impasse on the Northern shore of the Mediterranean in terms of how to read the unfolding scenario. Within this context we would like to ask you two questions: along which paths could the analysis of the current political movements be complicated, also in light of their entanglement with religious dynamics and of economic investments in these countries from European and Gulf states? What is your evaluation of the legacy of the Arab Uprisings on the Mediterranean region?

**Toni Negri:** There is a lot to be said about your question. I remember what I first felt when the Arab Uprisings started and it was something similar to what your average Italian high school student may have when studying 1848: a profound revolution was unfolding; the call for democracy and social welfare was driving it; and it was going to deeply impact the ancien régime, with its various Metternich figures. It was a very banal sensation that referred to a specific historical model. Let me be clear on this: I am not one of those who believe that we can make history by analogies or homologies, that history can repeat, or even that causal motives can re-emerge in the same way in different times. So I am talking about this parallel simply as an emotion. What I think is that in any revolutionary situation there are always two very strong tendencies: on the one hand the request for liberation and on the other hand the desire for and the imposition of stabilization. In abstract terms a revolutionary movement is always a birth, a genesis, and a repression that proceeds on a continuous path.

**Sandro Mezzadra:** The first thing that comes to mind is that what I was calling the politicality and political nature of migratory movements actually has a lot to do with recent struggles in the region and even with the Arab revolutions. What is particularly important and has not really been at the center of discourses surrounding the migration crisis in the summer 2015, is the intimate relation with the Syrian Arab Spring, with the specific form that the so-called Arab Spring took in Syria. It would be very interesting to look at the language through which migrants articulate their claims from this point of view, focusing on the continuities with the experiences that led to the current war. The revolutions have been characterized by a sort of underground circulation of political

language and imaginary mobilized by migrants. It was very apparent in 2011 with Tunisian migrants, and it is becoming again very clear now, over the past few months, with Syrian migrants and refugees. Regarding the situation on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, it is for certain that many hopes and many expectations raised by the Arab Uprisings in 2011 seem to be quite naive nowadays. And nevertheless I am convinced that those experiences continue to live in the daily struggles and in the popular imagination in the region.

**Toni Negri:** The reaction the Arab revolutions triggered in the long run has been proportionally critical as these movements took on a religious, sectarian, and fanatic mode, which was dramatically underestimated at their outbreak. We thought the region was way more secular than it actually is. It was a mistake to underestimate the capacity and the strength of Islamic society. This by the way is the same mistake we had already made in 1979 in the context of the Khomeinist revolution. But this time the mistake was worse: we failed to understand the extent to which the Arab Left had been radically destroyed in these past few years. The Arab Left had a formidable history from the 1950s up to the end of the last century. From Nasser to Arafat, the Arab Left partly managed and carried out the Algerian revolution, for instance. As we already witnessed in 1948, the emersion of religious forms is rather terrible. And it gets even more depressing and problematic if we think that this situation is also rooted in the osmosis between the United States and Israel as well as this bloc's alliance with the feudal and religious monarchies of the Gulf ... well, if we only look at the situation from this angle, it is clear that the first result of the Arab Revolutions is not good.

But I don't think the Arab revolutions can be interpreted only in these terms. The other side—the one that I described earlier as the request for liberation that is part of revolutions—is still working underneath. Any intense revolution—and the 2011 Arab revolutions are of this type—holds this other dimension, a social dimension that grows increasingly important with time, that is, the dimension of class struggle. I believe that the situation will become increasingly contradictory in these countries and a class struggle impetus will manifest, especially in Sunni contexts where the relationship between domination and poverty, between class struggle and the struggles of poor people,

is particularly intense. This is not like the situation in Iran, where Khomeinism was established but had, despite everything, to deal with the important basis of Iranian socialism, a solid basis, from 1917 to Mossadeq, and to the deep communism of Southern Iraq and Barsa where the continuity with the communist experience persisted and where Khomeinism had to root in a somehow positive way in order to avoid future uprisings with a strong social impact. In the context of the Arab revolutions, instead we witness the expansion of social contradictions from within the context of a ferocious religious repression. So I think the current situation in the countries of the Arab revolutions will come to a break and that the struggle will gain center stage again: the closure of the Mediterranean—both in terms of border policies and of the turn the Arab revolutions took—is an extremely important factor in possibly determining a counter-effect to European policies, a sort of internal counter-effect.

**Sandro Mezzadra:** Let me try to get back to the question you were asking about religion, even if this should be taken as the topic for a different interview because it is really a big question. Of course it's clear that we continue to have a deficit regarding our understanding of this topic. We continue to be trapped in the polarity between secularism and fundamentalism, which does not allow us to see the stakes that lie behind the persistent and growing influence of religion in many parts of the world, not only in the Mediterranean, but also in Europe. To put it briefly, we tend to think of religion only in terms of manipulation of the masses. That religion is the opium of the masses, of course, is something that we should think about. But we should also read the entire passage within which Marx writes this sentence, where it is said that religion has been the soul of a world without heart, that for centuries religion has been articulated as “the sigh of the oppressed creature”. Maybe it is this second part of Marx' passage that helps grasp the materiality of the religious imagination that is so important in the countries we are talking about.

**Garelli, Scieurba, Tazzioli:** In the political project you recently launched with many others<sup>i</sup> the word “Mediterranean” features as one of your tags. What is the political and

conceptual work that you are trying to do at EuroNomade<sup>2</sup> on the notion of Mediterranean? Can we still speak of a political laboratory in the Mediterranean, using the same expression EuroNomade uses for Latin America?

**Toni Negri:** Within EuroNomade we have been working to revise some of our theoretical tools to reflect the new global net everything is part of. This work has been directed also to the notion of laboratory. Doubtlessly this notion of laboratory has to be radically revised since the economic crisis is harshly attacking the way democratic governments operate in Latin America. But a revision is also needed because this Latin American laboratory has deepened its democratic capacity to impact on and transform Southern societies away from a neoliberal path. With this, however, we also witnessed a sense of confusion and misunderstanding—a sort of political disorientation, so to speak—on the part of forces close to the communist movements of Latin America. What is happening in Brazil is a case in point. The idea of laboratory was also rooted in our interest in postcolonial movements and in the 2011 Uprisings. For instance, the proximity between Tahrir Square and the squares of the Indignados—which some of us traced, had to stand by, or supported—derived from a rushed analysis. For instance, I remember a conversation between some Egyptian bloggers, some representatives of the Indignados, and even some people who took part in the Carnation Revolution in Portugal ... well, in this particular conversation, everybody seemed to be on the same page, and that from 1968 nothing had changed, and that these different movements acted in unison. Well, it was something of a little grotesque spectacle. However, this does not mean that there weren't deep connections at play across these different movements. What is certainly true is that today the Latin American laboratory is in crisis as much as any supposed Mediterranean laboratory as we began to imagine it some years ago. Thinking of the Mediterranean laboratory, I still remember the intense mobilization in Paris when the post-revolutionary wave of migration came to France ... it was an extraordinary moment.

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<sup>2</sup> Euronomade is an online platform that pursues theoretical and political innovation in the field of the multiple crises that crisscross contemporary capitalism. Its political epistemology is eloquently summarized by website's subtitle: "Inventing the common, subverting the present." It works through a collective mailing list, annual workshops, and publications on the website: <http://www.euronomade.info/>

It was a time when we thought these groups could renew the language and ways of struggle of the European intellectual proletariat. We were too quick to assume a continuity between the meridian<sup>3</sup> project and sensibility, and the project and sensibility of those arriving from across the Mediterranean. But we have to recognize that many of these hopes vanished, although it is important to underline that even if the hypothesis of such convergence disappears, the experience remains and it becomes part of a political and intellectual legacy.

**Sandro Mezzadra:** In 2011 we didn't pay enough attention to the regional dynamics in the Mediterranean, both in the discussion within movements and among intellectuals in Europe and, most importantly, in countries like Tunisia and Egypt. I remember at the time being quite struck by the national confinement of those movements, by the lack of a regional imagination. For instance, the whole history of pan-Arabism didn't play any role within those movements. This is something I am saying just to take stock of the composition of these movements. The prevailing political imagination in those movements was a national imagination. Let me be clear: this is not an easy critique from the Northern shore of the Mediterranean; it's something I realized looking at what was happening and talking to activists and intellectuals coming from those countries. There was a significant gap, once again, between these national imaginations and the power of regional dynamics that were putting pressure on these movements, and that were shaping the general space of possibility for the action of these movements. I am thinking for instance of the role of the Gulf States; I am thinking of the dynamics of reorganization of power within the Middle East that put pressure on the possibility for action of these movements. The lack of a regional imagination was a real problem from this point of view, in a situation in which regional dynamics are at the same time intertwined with global dynamics, and play a very important role in shaping the space of political possibilities.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Meridian' refers to the tradition of Southern Thought in the context of the Mediterranean (e.g., Cassano, F., Bouchard, N., & Ferme, V. (2012). *Southern Thought and Other Essays on the Mediterranean*. Fordham Univ Press).

**Toni Negri:** You know with EuroNomade and the Mediterranean maybe we focused more on the situation in Mediterranean Europe rather than on the politics of migratory waves from across the Mediterranean. Comrades who worked on the Orizzonti meridiani section of EuroNomade talked about the Mediterranean as offering an alternative to the construction of a new neoliberal process in Europe. We certainly had the political hope that a different perspective would come from the Mediterranean, the hope for a different type of cohabitation and of a more free and equal social organization, one that would be profoundly productive but not just of wealth but also of an overall general welfare. But I don't think that the groups that will keep crossing the Mediterranean into Europe could actually be the bearers of that Mediterranean hope we were talking about. This is especially the case since these people compose a labor force which is increasingly better equipped for the post-industrial context and I believe they will be transitioning into jobs in big manufacturing complexes. I am not sure how this debate can become part of EuroNomade's Orizzonti meridiani but it is clearly important to open the question about the Mediterranean again in relation to the destiny of Europe.

**Sandro Mezzadra:** Yes, migration presents the crucial challenge to reinventing the Mediterranean as a space of cooperation, under the label of freedom and equality. I am aware that this is a very abstract phrase that should be made more concrete in a detailed analysis of what is happening on the ground. But it is clear that migratory movements call upon us, call upon Europe, and they do so also from the point of view of what I was calling the need to imagine and construct a new space of cooperation within the Mediterranean. A few days ago I was writing a short article with Brett Neilson on what has happened in the Mediterranean in the summer of 2015 and I was reminded of the words by Frantz Fanon at the end of *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967), where he famously writes [and I am paraphrasing here]: "Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them". You will remember this famous statement. What I was thinking is that these words have some sort of weird resonance when they are read against the background of what happened over the last weeks and months. Because we have been confronted with masses of dispossessed people, profoundly heterogeneous in their composition, heading toward Europe but at the

same time challenging Europe to account for its imperial past, for its implications in the wars at its borders, and also for the lethal and catastrophic effects of the workings of its borders and migration regimes. I think this is a good way to grasp what I was calling before the “politicality”<sup>4</sup> of migratory movements. Again, the Mediterranean Europe I was talking about is the best vantage point to grasp this politicality in its very concrete and material sense.

**Toni Negri:** I agree and would add that the biggest problem today that touches all of us, is that this crisis will keep stretching and impact the value and consistency of financial capitalism on a global scale. To expand on this, I would say that the restructuring of global order, of imperial order, if you will, is a long-term process where many things are at this moment being radically upset. Actually, we are witnessing the coagulation, the tightening of many continental units, like Latin America, China, India, the United States ... we are faced with huge doubts in terms of the realization of a unitary Europe or, actually, of a unitary bloc of power; and these are questions that have to deal with general migratory fluxes, which are to be dealt with not only from the side of political command, but also from a monetary, financial, and productive angle. Given the presence of Israel and Israel’s osmosis with the United States, the Middle Eastern question will remain the hardest to solve. The other problem the Mediterranean confronts us with is the relationship between the notion of class struggle and these new forms of protest, struggle, organization and armed fight in different guises. I remain convinced that class struggle will allow us to evaluate the levels of demystification and rupture produced on the terrain of religious fundamentalist movements. And finally there is the problem of migration, which has been a state problem for long but needs to be rethought. For instance, the maximum level of freedom of movement and the smallest possible number of deaths by shipwreck should be two starting points. We should also succeed in creating connections—both in terms of organizing and politically—with democratic groups working in Latin America and, for example, to connect with the movement of democratic groups working in single member-states who are active in Mediterranean countries. The Kurdish

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<sup>4</sup> “Politicality” refers both to the contested politics and the political subjectivity of migratory movements.

example is an extraordinary case in point. The PKK is a communist force, which moved away from nationalism in a shortsighted sense even if it is obvious that the problem persists at the national level. The PKK has developed models of communitarian organizing, both militarily and economically, with radical democratic forms and forms of radical transformation for women, especially if we compare their condition to that of Islamic cultures. Let's say that this is the example of a model that could have a big influence ... It is a model of organization that derives from a series of struggles and political traditions. I know that Kurdish comrades—I met many of them in Turkey in the past few years, in Istanbul and Ankara—are open to our political perspective and actually it seems like it has exactly been the Italian autonomous thought tradition which allowed them to overcome a series of nationalist limitations in their approach and a certain centralized, maybe slightly Stalinist, organization. The biggest problem is that the analysis has to become political, it has to take on ongoing trends from a political standpoint, as dispositives that need to be faced one moment at the time, shot after shot so to speak. The problem for how to move to political action on the Southern and Eastern border of the Mediterranean is fundamental today and it is clearly linked to the overcoming of the current situation of European movements. We can no longer think in horizontal terms. We have to find some type of verticality that will give us the power and strength to articulate political discourses.

**Garelli, Sciarba, Tazzioli:** Let us close with a Mediterranean scene from the summer of 2015, the city of Ventimiglia with refugees stranded on the rocks along the shoreline, *their organized struggle, and their most recent eviction ...*

**Sandro Mezzadra:** What happened in Ventimiglia is particularly important, for the simple reason that Ventimiglia is some kind of internal European border. It was not the first time that Ventimiglia became a kind of hotspot of European border politics over the past few years. You will remember in 2011 it was the same thing with Tunisians at the Menton-Ventimiglia border. The important thing to be said is that what was this year called the migration crisis—once again the migration crisis—very quickly came to challenge one of the pillars of European integration, that is to say, the Schengen system.

Ventimiglia was not the only internal border that was invested by these tensions but it became iconic. This shows how the attempt to contain at the very territorial margins of the European space the challenge of migration didn't work at all. Many of us have been stressing that there is an important articulation between the EU border regime and its so-called external frontiers and the proliferation of internal borders within the European space itself. This tendency became dramatically apparent in sites like Ventimiglia. In Ventimiglia, we were confronted with an amazing capacity of migrants to explicitly articulate their claims in political language: "We will not go back" was one of their slogans. What was also striking in Ventimiglia was the participation and commitments of migrant activists and supporters. I have the impression from my current location in Berlin that this summer there was a kind of new generation of activists involved in migration and border politics, that played an important role in many parts of Europe: from Greece to Ventimiglia, from Austria and Germany to Hungary, and the so-called Western Balkans. Of course, Ventimiglia was a very important location for border and migration politics in Europe this summer, but what we've learnt these years is precisely that border sites are very mobile and this means that a politics of contestation of borders can't remain fixed on a single site. A politics of contestation should correspond to the mobility of borders themselves, starting from the awareness that this mobility is a reply to the mobility of migrants and refugees. In the summer of 2015, there was a kind of striking instantiation of what I call the mobility of borders. Let us think of Germany, the joy of the decision to welcome refugees under the pressure of an adversarial public opinion in this country, and then the decision to close the borders with Austria, a few days after that. If you take this sequence and try to understand the symbolic meaning of this sequence, I think we can say that it is something very simple and again very general: over the last few years and under many pressures—from the economic crisis, to the renationalization of politics in Europe, and to the emergence of a new Right which is aggressively anti-migrant in many European countries—well, under all these pressures, there was an apparent crisis of the European border regime. If you happen to live in Germany at this time you can't avoid seeing that this is a country which needs migration, a country that could not reproduce itself from a social, economic, even cultural point of view, without existing levels of migration and without fostering more migration. This is a point that is

very clear if you look at debates in governmental agencies in Germany and in many other European countries. The European Union stresses again and again that Europe needs migration. How has this need been matched over the last years? My answer is: through differential inclusion—I don't expand this notion, because I have done it many times before (see, for instance, Mezzadra and Neilson 2011). We have been criticizing the outcomes of differential inclusion in terms of hierarchization and of the establishment of new forms of domination and exploitation in Europe, through a specific migration regime. But I think that we should be aware that this machine of differential inclusion didn't really work over the last years and this posed a problem also to European elites. This is the situation in which the so-called refugee and migration crisis emerged in 2015. And it's fair to say that the Merkel government in Germany saw in what was happening a sort of opportunity to bring the machine of differential inclusion back to work. What I was saying about welcoming refugees and shutting down borders with Austria can be definitely read along these lines.

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i EuroNomade – see <http://www.euronomade.info> (last accessed 10 August 2016).