

## On research and the politics of migrations: views out of place<sup>1</sup>

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1.

In the pages that follow I will attempt the exercise of linking together a critical assessment of the role of militancy in migration studies, with the perspective suggested by the study of forced migration in the global context, building on some of the insights raised by the workshop on Migration and militant research, hosted by the Politics department of Goldsmiths, University of London— which resulted in a special issue of the *Postcolonial Studies* journal entitled “Challenging the discipline of migration: Militant Research and Militant Investigation”— and the collective text “New Keywords: Migration and Borders” published by *Cultural Studies* journal in early 2014 (Garelli and Tazzioli 2013a; Casas Cortes et al. 2014). This attempt draws also on the opportunity I had of going through different context of knowledge production related to migration, encompassing the involvement in academic activities and the participation in two European research projects under the Seventh Framework programme and the experience in the sixth winter course on forced migration organized by the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (<http://www.gemic.eu/>, <http://www.mignetproject.eu/> and <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/WC2008/home.html>).

Migration and the politics surrounding it are present and relevant in our everyday life, in any corner of the globe. Its most obvious manifestation is the physical presence of people on the move, yet it involves a full range of activities, discourses and news—from our relationship with IDs and passports, the labelling of newcomers as clandestine, the almost imperceptible association of certain type of jobs with migrants, male or woman, black or white, the exhibition of Police control in the streets, the revolts in detention centres, strikes

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this paper develops material previously published in Grappi 2013.

and demonstrations, to the news on the sinking of boats in the Mediterranean or the death of migrant workers in the sweatshops producing for global firms—that show how migration is a materially contested terrain, a field of struggle where any type of weapon, including mainstream propaganda and the public force, is used in order to carry on the ‘border spectacle’ (De Genova 2013a). The relationship between a critical commitment with the study of migration and the political engagement inside this field of struggle is thus complex and ambiguous.

The views I present are out of place because I am neither a specialist on migration studies, neither a scholar on forced migration, even if both fields of research have been part of my academic and scientific path. A third element has been indeed crucial to me: the political engagement with migrants’ movements in Italy and in the transnational context, starting from the European space (<http://coordinamentomigranti.org/>, [http://www.noborder.org/crossing\\_borders/](http://www.noborder.org/crossing_borders/)). More than ten years of organizing, meetings and networking have been the place where the approach to a theoretical and academic study of migration has been constantly put under pressure by the political materiality of migrants’ and migration movements. The practical experience with migrants has somehow conditioned my study of migration while, at the same time, the theoretical engagement has been a laboratory to test and understand concrete challenges. Moreover, the constant effort to affirm migration and migrants’ struggle as core-issues for the political initiative of social movements, and, even when this effort has been successful, the difficulties of translating it into new practices and paths of mobilization, led me to understand the presence of a sort of unrecognized and normative ‘political epistemology’ on migration acting as a block in the capacity of social movements and radical groups to deal with migration.

If, on the one hand, this has to do with the denied reticence to overcome the consignment of migration to a lateral position or a matter for specialists, on the other hand the politics of migration forces us, both as scholar and activists, to accept the challenge to change our gaze and to adopt different priorities. The politics of migration is more often a problem of proletarian politics than of definitions, and migrants’ problems are more often the problems of working and living in a word of extremely precarised conditions, dominated by the global operations of capital (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013b), than of solidarity or humanitarian help. Being migrants is a very specific position, but this has to do more with the institutional, political and social conditions for the reproduction of these precarised conditions, than the mere description of disadvantaged groups. To address this specificity without losing its general dimension is a major task for critical thinking and social movements.

It is essential to develop engaged and critical scholarship in order to understand, deconstruct and criticize the dominant gaze on migration, yet this is not enough to sustain a political assessment of migration, the political contestation of border regimes and the transformation of their social results. It is not only that a theoretical critique cannot substitute the need of concrete actions, it is also that scholars, even though they can conceive themselves as ‘militants’, are part of the social dynamics produced in the contested political terrain relating the movements of people and the simultaneous attempts to exploit, block, discipline and govern it. This many-sided dynamic generates problems that I proposed to analyse under the name of ‘militant research conundrum’ (Grappi 2013). My approach to this conundrum is organized around few, fundamental, questions: is militant research a category, or a concept, to be applied to the work of the researcher? If so, how can *militancy* relate with *research*, when one takes into account that research is a particular form of labour with specific and highly misleading traps in terms of supposed autonomy, freedom and independence? If not, how do we deal with the incisiveness of the particular outcome of research, namely communicable knowledge, discourses, concepts, interpretations? Finally, how do we posit the researcher *vis-à-vis* migrants and the sociopolitics of migration?

As Glenda Garelli and Martina Tazzioli, that promoted the discussion at Goldsmiths, explain, the proliferation of scholarly interest in migration and the subsequent becoming an object of study of migration resulted in a double dynamic: on the one hand, the study of human mobility has been institutionalized, leading to «a ‘becoming of the discipline’»; on the other hand, this very same process has coincided with «a kind of ‘disciplining’ of migration knowledge practices» (Garelli and Tazzioli 2013: 245). As happened in the past with other critical field of enquire, like for example race and gender studies, their recognition and inclusion in the formal organization of academic knowledge implies a partial subsumption of the critical potential of their findings inside the productivity measure of the global knowledge machine. With migration studies, this phenomenon is often directly related to the research of mobile and flexible policy patterns with the ability, if not to govern, at least to channel and manage migration movements across international borders and inside States. As now widely recognized by critical scholarship, migration and border policies are more a flexible instrument, capable of being mobilized in different ways and to use different practices, than the simple control of borders. This heterogeneity of practices is able to translate in the language of technocratic governance, and thus de-politicise, even expressions and terms that have been thrown in the public debate as part of a critical effort. The same word ‘migrant,’ rather than immigrant, is now widely use by mainstream media and government agencies,

while concepts such as ‘freedom of movement’ constantly overlap with the financial and trade discourses. The ‘battle of words’ that accompanied the process of globalization has been important, especially in countries where migration has been long considered as a new and somehow temporary phenomenon, like Italy. Migration and migrants are thus both an object of study, and an epistemological question that creates tension in all scientific disciplines and public discourses, they can also be a vantage point from where criticize these same disciplines and public discourses (Mezzadra and Ricciardi 2013). Nevertheless, following the expansion of neoliberal techniques of government, migration research if not politically assessed is under the constant risk to become an instrument for the political disciplining of migration itself.

The production of knowledge about migration has, in many instances, a direct impact on the way migration is framed in terms of political discourse and policies. At the same time, the political discourse and the policy framework impact on the way migration is studied. The problem here is double folded: if, on the one hand, we are confronted with the ‘methodological Europeanism’ inside the global academia, which «posits Europe as the blueprint for migrations’ epistemology» (Garelli and Tazzioli 2013: 247), on the other hand engaged researchers themselves are positioned inside social relations which relevance overcomes the borders of the campuses and libraries. Since the academic work is by itself conceived more and more as global in scope and reach and the funding schemes that lies behind large research projects involve partners from different countries and continents, this counts both for researchers that position themselves in the older centres of knowledge production in western countries and those working elsewhere in the world.

2.

A recent discussion in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* has take on this question moving from Loren B. Landau’s denounce of the «tyrannies of partnership» (Landau 2012). Landau explains how the resource unbalance between partners in international research projects often brings to some power relation in favour of Northern universities. At the same time, she stresses that the policy-oriented approach of these large research networks, filtering «the voices heard on the global stage», leaves to the network the double authority over research priorities and visibility. Looking for a solution, Landau fell short to a patronizing view, suggesting that people responsible of these large network should put more effort in «building southern capacity and influence», somehow implying the idea that the problem is how to

include southern circles in the supposedly 'relevant' debate. She also suggest to focus more on «local politics, not global principles» because these are «what typically matters most» for migrants (Ibid: 555, 565). These are problematic assertions.

On the one hand, as Paula Banerjee observes in her response to Landau, there is no real problem of capacity empowerment of so called Southern scholars. These scholars have produced scores of analysis, studies and theoretical assumptions, without the need of any help from the outside. «It was therefore possible—Banerjee writes—for northern scholars to deny the presence of these theories not because we did not make them, but because they were always political and often in contention with those put forward in the policy making of the North» (Banerjee 2012: 572). Banerjee raises the crucial point of the contested meaning of concepts such as 'forced migration,' when she argue that the approach of northern scholars and research centres towards the south is basically politically biased, and «there is a larger politics involved in theory making». These theories «are made so that the northern agenda of development and profit making vis-à-vis the south can continue and the concomitant forced migration of people stays within the south». Banerjee's line of reasoning imply the possibility to use the same concept by different actors and the possibility to politically contest the hegemonic discourse by considering "the discourse on forced migration" as "part of a larger discourse" on global economy and global unbalances. Moreover, the different paths of migration and the different dynamics of forced migration inside context that are often conflated in to the definition of 'Global South' leads Banerjee to sustain that «there is no global South» and that this «is considered northern vision», where political problems are simplify and categorized inside policy terms or geopolitical areas in order to depoliticize them (ibid: 571, 572 and Banerjee 2013).

Banerjee's location of forced migration as fact and as a definition inside the contested field of global economics and global politics allow us to enlarge our gaze to what has before been defined the problem of working and living in a word of extremely precarised conditions, dominated by the global operations of capital. Economic and power relations that go against any attempt to classify forced migrations as humanitarian problems came into play. Before going into this point, however, what needs to be stressed again in this debate is the use of the north-south divide in such a way that somehow underestimate the reframing of differences and unbalances inside contemporary global dynamics. What follows is the very narrow definition of the 'northern universities' given by Landau, confined to the universities of Europe, Australia and North America. Yet it is difficult to consider these spaces as homogeneous and responding to the same logic and geoeconomic position. What must be

assessed is a larger process of corporatization of universities, in the organization of labour and its measurement through productivity criteria, and the strong competition among the most prominent, often at detriment of other, less powerful, universities independently from their geographical positioning. If there are universities competing at the global level inside these spaces, their relation with other institutions in the same regions is not dissimilar to the one portrayed by Landau as a North-South relation. At the same time, the capacity of this North to bear of the power of the purse inside global competition is coming under discussion. While it is certainly true that most leading universities are located in the 'North,' it is important to understand that they are so because they are both historically prestigious institutions, in some cases, and global enterprises. As such, they play in a context where their power is the result of a mix between existing and quantifiable private and public funding and the capacity to become a financial asset in global markets. These developments bring about radical changes, including the rising power of universities in different parts of the world. As Stephen Castles observes intervening in the same debate, «increasingly, researchers from outside the old power centres of North America and Western Europe are taking the lead in building research networks and setting academic agendas» thus leading «on to the question of whether the division of the world into 'south' and north' is meaningful, at a time when new economic centres are emerging in Asia, Latin America and Africa too» (Castles 2012: 574).

This 'global university' is among the producers of a new transnational intellectual class, whose labour life constitutively develops across borders. The classification of this intellectual class as part of an international labour market elite is nonetheless contradictory, primarily because of the high level of precarisation of labour inside the university (Ross 2010). When militant research takes place inside this space—a space that is already politicized from above—the militant researcher needs to frame his/her discourse in a useful way for his/her academic career and to make the most of his/her engagement, or to find space for discussion. This space of power relations and precarious conditions is one feature of that «multiplication of labour» that displays itself along the borders, and needs borders in order to operate (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). This frustrates at the beginning any pretention of radical separation between the researcher's position and the very conditions of reproduction of migrant's condition, and the possibility to objectify the subject of the research without becoming part of this reproduction process. Yet, a social and political gap distances the researcher, its field of activity, and the migrants. This paradox explains both the need and the insufficiency of bringing research into the realm of the political investigation. The problem of the researcher is that militant research can only take place within this dilemma and dealing with these

contradictions. Engaged researchers often move from methodological statements implying the recognition of the separation between the objects of enquire and the epistemic environment where the enquirer acts. At the same time, they express the need to work towards a research-praxis that poses the contestation of these separations among its primary goals. Contestation, indeed, is unsatisfactory and insufficient: what is needed is to recognize these differences and to understand their functioning, their role and what does it means to work towards their interrelation. In the following pages, I will try to elaborate on this open question in relation with the specific object of this book that is, studying forced migration.

### 3.

Forced migration is defined by IASFM as the forced movement of people, displaced within their own countries or across borders, due to prosecution, to flee war, to escape famine, or because a major development project (<http://iasfm.org/>). As seen before with Paula Banerjee, forced migration is in fact framed –in the international debate, both academic and by institutions that deals with forced migrants, including UN agencies and States – in a way that depoliticizes its contents, and with the fundamental aim to keep forced migrants in their own place, without disturbing the very dynamics that forced them to move. The main preoccupation of the mainstream discourses on forced migration seems to be how to deal with the people who move, leaving the dynamics behind their movements untouched, while at the same time alluding to an impossible – and scarcely desirable – world where anyone could, theoretically, remain in the place where he or she is and be happy that way. This is not surprising, given the humanitarian framework dominating what has been critically named in the New Keyword project as the «politics of protection»(Casas-Cortes et al: 16-19). Based on the Geneva condition, «the humanitarian framework, under which different practices of displacement are administered and varying forms of protection organized, obscures the political context that produces displaced people in the first place», naming, «the nation-state order and the violence its reproduction involves».Moving from this «methodological nationalism», the solutions envisaged for the refugees, such as repatriation to the country of origin, reintegration in the host society, or resettlement to a third country, «all aim at transforming the ‘anomaly’ of refugees back into the ‘normalcy’ of nation-states citizens».At the same time, the protection regime works as «a partitioning instrument» based «on a distinction between forced (political) and voluntary (economic) migrants» that have been

revealed to be empirically untenable. This has consequences both for the academia and the politics of migration, due to the «disciplining effect» of the division between Refugee, Migration and Forced Migration Studies (ibid: 17, 18.).

As the global agency set to deal with refugees and other defined as not labour migrants, UNHCR Statute defines his work as “entirely non-political” and states “it shall be humanitarian and social and shall relate, as a rule, to groups and categories of refugees.” And yet the whole process is political starting from the power to define and name who can be entitled to some protection and who actually deserve protection. The present refugee protection regime can in fact be described as «a partitioning instrument», which «effectively intensifies the precarious existence for many while offering protection for few». People included in protection regimes, coherently with the depoliticizing nature of the process, are reduced to «a bundle of material needs». Protectionism and patronization are the background for the «authoritarian dimension» of the humanitarian regime, since protection is given only to people that obey and behave as demanded and the protection regime requires (ibid.). The state-gaze feature that has been related to the protection regime is a model that, in a more scattered and sparse way, resonates a «moral economy of deservingness» (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2012: 243) that encourages all migrants, whether illegal or illegal, to interact with their own personal biographies always trying to mirror the institutional discourses, be that accumulating formal «emblems of good citizenship» (ibid.) such as certificates of reliable economic and legal conduct, or describing themselves as pure victims in order to have a place in the policies of protection.

As we know from the experience of migrants themselves, even in the worst situation, their knowledge of legal mechanism and their capacity to creatively use it always escape the attempts to bureaucratize their existence, forcing institutions to continuously except to the rule. This State-centric logic is nonetheless one of the main problems when we approach the need to give help and resettlement to forced migrants and refugees. While the regime is transnational, in fact, the definition of the subjects is related to a specific threat and a specific lack of protection by a State, and their status, albeit international, has always to be validated and recognised by another State. In spaces like the European Shengen regime where the Dublin III regulation applies, to apply for asylum means to be trapped in the arrival country, with the consequence that one of the main challenge for migrants entering Europe is not to survive or to find a safe haven, but to reach the place where they want to stay before being registered in the Eurodac database (Kuster and Tsianos 2013). What in the case of IDPs is starkly visible –the limit of any discourse related to compensation or resettlement, as it



requires to the same actor that causes, or allow, displacement to solve its consequences –is thus a general political condition of the protection regime. The same States responsible for the definition of the international regime that prevents people to freely move and settle should guarantee the protection for the displaced. Behind this intent is in fact a legitimizing protocol for the states. This is rooted in the history of the refugees system itself which assumption, at the time of its adoption in 1951, was to show the western countries moral superiority facing the ‘unfree world’ and only a few people would actually move from one country to another applying for asylum and protection (Grappi 2010). At the same time, this system operates transnationally and represents a negotiating tool for geopolitical reasons, creating instruments of governance capable to overcome the states where it is applied, when they are weak or ‘failed’. Besides and before the dramatic spread of war and calamities, the history of world migration and the active use of the legal framework made by men and women who moved bring to the explosion of this system and its crisis.

#### 4.

Keeping in mind these problems and the technical definition of forced migration, my suggestion is to broaden its sense and its scope. Without diminish the concrete reality of forced migration and its specificity, I suggest to read the ‘forced’ in forced migration in relation to migration at large, labour regimes and the production of subjectivities in capital relations. If we distance ourselves from the classical understanding, we can frame forced migration in a different way and consider woman and man that move on the surface of the globe are ‘forced’ to adapt and interact with the legal regime by which their are defined as forced or economic migrants, refugees and so on. At the same time, they are ‘forced’ to experience the direct intertwining between this legal framework and what can be termed as the hidden political dimension of the labour market in global capitalism. The problem of the relation between research and militancy should thus be posed at the level of the materiality of migration as a social fact. One could reinvent here Marx’s eleventh these on Feuerbach, by saying that «migration researchers have only interpreted the migration regime, in various ways; the point is to change it». Evoking Marx’s definition of Capital, migration can be described as a social relation mediated by special ‘things’ such as documents, papers and different statuses. Such ‘things’ are produced by the joint role of the many authorities managing migration regimes, namely the State and the supra-national organizations involved

in the regulatory systems of visas release, and by the continuous re-shaping of their material meaning which depends on the balance of power within a transnational labour market. The 'hidden abodes of production' are thus where we must place any attempt of critical reading of the social relations involved in migration, here included the position of the researcher.

Philosophical debate on the political subject has placed migrants at the core of transformative politics. Authors like Jacques Rancière and Etienne Balibar have written extensively on the role of migrants in any attempt to subvert any given political order and revealing the institutional racism at the core of contemporary discourses on citizenship. At the same time, albeit in different ways, they both traced a parallel between the condition of migrants and the history of proletariat, identifying. If Rancière describes today's migrants as a «part of no part», like French proletariat in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Balibar, intervening in the political debated raised by the *sans-papiers*' protests in France, defined them as the «modern proletariat»(Rancière 2004: 29 and Balibar 1997, 2013). These arguments have in common the recognition of the specific position of the undocumented migrants as bearer of the power to overthrow-reverse the existing social order within the background of citizenship, defined around the sovereignty principle and the national logic (this applies, as Balibar argues, also for the construction of a supra-national polity as the European Union). Yet, they also reveal the strict relation between migration politics and class politics.

«Migrants and non-immigrants – as writes labour sociologist Harald Bauder– integrate when they perform *distinct* roles in society and in the labor market». As a consequence, «in the context of immigration, labor market-integration does not necessarily imply that immigrants are paid equally or have equal access to occupational opportunity as non-immigrants». On the contrary, «integration means that immigrants have a distinct economic function that is vital for local, national, and international economies to operate» and that «they affect labor supply and thus wage-structure and other labor conditions» (Bauder 2006:9). This distinct function depends on multiple factors, but it is related to the specific concrete condition of migrant workers within the transnational labourmarket, which acts as a specific global regime in transnational production chains. The fact that migrants, even refugees and asylum seekers, everywhere in the world need some sort of documents to be inscribed in the legal regime, and their documents define the relation they have with work, and vice-versa, seems to be the general rule. Assuming the existence of different conditions and different situations, this is strongly related to what Nicholas De Genova calls the «deportation regime». In this regime, «it is *deportability*, and not deportation as such, that ensures that *some are*

*deported in order that most may remain* (undeported) – as workers, whose pronounced and protracted legal vulnerability may thus be sustained indefinitely» (De Genova 2009).

The first and obvious consequence is that migrants' vulnerability and powerlessness, that is part of the victimization discourses, is mainly their imposed weakness vis-à-vis the State and the employers. The second and more pervading effect is the drawing of a line between migrants and not-migrants depending on their legal definition, and of many lines among migrants depending on their specific status. If for migrants this means to be constantly and differently haunted by the border and threatened by their legal status inside and outside the workplace, for non-migrants it contributes to the definition of a status of belonging defined by what can never happen to them. He or she can't be deported in the current historical scenario. He or she can't become a number inside a transnational protocol that defines their deservingness of protection or any other aid. The two sides are anything but homogeneous: they are, instead, crossed by differences, first of all by gender differences. Nevertheless, focusing on this cleavage is important in order to grasp the field of tension where migrations take place. In fact, contrary to the common understanding of the State role in regulating, supervising or blocking migration movements, what the different authorities involved in the management of migration primarily do is to define statuses and hierarchies in order to create the conditions for a transnational movement – a total social fact – more functional to the market and the production-system (Burawoy 1976, Castles & Miller 2009, Mezzadra 2006).

The complex apparatus of laws, regulations, administrative and bureaucratic differentiations concerning migration – that we name institutional racism – is thus related to different *wages* of citizenship and regularity, to paraphrase David Roediger, working as tools of division and hierarchyization of society (Roediger 1999, Grappi 2012). Differences are produced through institutional racism which in turn, through the differential inclusion of migrants, impacts on the positioning of migrants and non-migrants in the social domain (Mezzadra & Neilson 2012). In this perspective, it is important for researchers to politicize the social order on which migrants and the researchers themselves are included, without accepting the partitioning logic behind the classification of migrants that follows the different needs of the states, the international agencies such as UNHCR and, ultimately, the transnational labour market of global capitalism. In this way we can appreciate not much the failure of the migration policies, included protection policies, but what can we learn from the movements of migration which, by using their knowledge of the legal system, by refusing reclusion in supposedly humanitarian camps, or by contesting their working conditions, transcend the transnational regimes that wants to control them and the global division of

labour. The theoretical consequence is that the emergence of the political subjectivity of migrants, in most cases, rises in sites that are not immediately visible and intelligible even if we adopt a gaze based on the dyad 'inclusion/exclusion'. On the contrary, this dyad itself must be included in the larger picture of global capitalism (Mezzadra & Neilsen 2013).

5.

The researcher and the militant should address the question of what does it mean, then, to be part of this social relations shaped by the multifaceted migration regimes and their production and enforcement of visible differences. What is necessary is to recognise that the willingness of being against the border regimes or the widespread exploitation of migrant labour around the globe is insufficient. The public denounce of the inefficacy or corruption of transnational regimes of protection is often doomed to produce the reinforcement and legitimization of their prerequisites, instead of opening a space for their contestation. As data from UN global migration statistics reveals, South-South migration is today as common as South-North migration. In 2013, more than 82 million international migrants who were born in the South were residing in the South, a number close to the 81.9 millions originating in the South and living in the North. Overall, UN survey number in 232 million the international migrants living abroad worldwide, with a majority (136) living in the "developed countries" and 96 million in the "developing countries". This means also that more than 50 million are North-North migrants. Gallup estimated in the period 2009-2011 four main pathways of global migration: South to North, representing 40%, South-South representing 33%, North-North representing 22% and North-South, covering 5% (IOM 2013). Global trends in the following years arguably confirmed this deployment of human movements across the globe.

To stress this complexity doesn't mean to affirm that all these paths are equal. As we know, some of these paths are deadly paths, as in the case of the Mediterranean or the Sahara crossing, while other can be practices through regular flights, such in the case of financial traders (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013a: 111-118) and, for example, the students and the researchers in the university, an intellectual class that experiences its precarious condition across borders. Some of them are forced movements; some of them are free movements. Yet this definition also needs some complications: what does it mean to be 'forced,' when we can describe in the same category people obliged to leave their homes by violent persecution, and people forced to work because their documents are kept by their employers and they can't

leave the working place, if they don't want to suffer violence from police, be arrested, jailed and often expelled without any safety measure? This situation involves millions of migrant workers that often never reach the supposed North. Suffice to look towards the Arabic peninsula and see who built the shining towers of Dubai and other UAE cities, or turn our gaze towards Malaysia electronic industry where, following a report by the NGO Verité, almost one third of the workers are in an 'unfree' condition (Kelly 2014). Similar situations can be found also in Europe, North America, and Africa or inside India and China. To give just another example, recent news set the number of Indians locked in jail abroad in around six thousands. What is interesting to note is that among sixth thousands, the large majority, more than 1.4 thousands, are lodged in Saudi Arabia, while other thousand in United Arab Emirates. The UK, traditionally related to foreign Indians, counts only 441 Indians in its jails, Pakistan, the bordering nation, has 468, Bangladesh only 128, while US, the country with the world largest prison population, 426. In we add the states of Qatar and Kuwait, it will turn out that half of the Indians jailed abroad are in the Gulf Area, and the reasons they are in jail must not be much different from what it was two years ago, including mostly the «violation of visa rules such as overstay and illegal entry, non-possession of valid travel documents, economic offences and violation of employment contracts» (Business Standard 2014; Economic Times 2012).

These are conditions that more and more do not relates to exceptions or perversions of the system. On the opposite, they are part of a complex reorganisation of economy and production at the global scale in the last decades. This applies even to a strict definition of forced migrants and IDPs, given that more and more the condition behind their need to move are created by global developments such as the construction of industrial corridors, dams, or the competition for raw materials such as minerals used to assemble microchips and conductors in the high-tech industry. Even climate change, among the main causes of displacement, is being finally understood as less a problem of scientific innovation and green policies, than of free marked ideology and global capitalism (Klein 2014). All these processes have been described as dynamics of «expulsions» through the transformation of growing areas of the world into «extreme zones» for «new or sharply expanded modes of profit extraction» for global capitalism (Sassen 2014). On the one hand, as Sassen observes, «these diverse causes of displacement and the futures of those who have been displaced are calling into question the United Nations' formal classification of displaced persons, because mostly such people will never go back home—home is now a war zone, a plantation, a mining operation, or dead land» (Ibid.), on the other hand, this calls for a different and systemic

approach to migrations and forced migrations that faces the political challenge to reverse the order of the discussion and work towards ‘the real movement who abolishes the present state of things’. Migrations must thus be assessed and conceptualized vis-à-vis the global transformations of production, power and the economy, which include a profound redefinition of the State form, its capacity, its role and its functions. Migration is a fact that involves our everyday life and the politics that attempts to govern and exploit it works through a complex heterogeneity of measures and technologies across class, race and colour lines, and gendered power relations (Grappi 2012, Grappi and Sacchetto 2013). Even when we are confronted with forced migration, thus, is unrealistic to confine the definition of the problem, and the possible ways out, by employing definitions of ‘unfreedom’ or ‘willingness’ that are incapable of put under scrutiny the ongoing process of creation of the labour force as a commodity, and the imperative of its political containment and disciplination inside transnational production chains that constitute the materiality of our global times.

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