Disjointed knowledges, obfuscated visibility.
Border controls at the French-Italian Alpine frontier.

After almost thirty-five years since the implementation of the Schengen code in 1995, the reintroduction of controls at the internal borders of Europe appears as a priority of EU member states. The multiple crises of Schengen have been partly staged through the temporary reintroduction of internal border controls on the part of six EU member states[1]. Such a decision has impacted and reverberated widely across Europe and should be situated within a broader EU's strategy to regain control over migrants' "secondary movements"[2] (De Genova, Tazzioli, 2016; Guild et al. 2016). France's temporary suspension of Schengen since 2015 has transformed the Italian city of Ventimiglia along the coast into a chokepoint for migrants and, as a result of that, over the last three years some migrants have been rerouting their journeys towards the Alpine border, hiking mountain paths, which in particular in winter time are quite dangerous due to the snow and the extreme weather conditions. Bardonecchia, Oulx and Claviere: these cities on the Italian side of the Alpine border that can be reached by public transports from Turin, are the places from where many migrants start walking across the mountains to heading to the French town of Briancon. Yet, we should not think of it as a massive migration movement: in fact, only few thousands migrants crossed to France via the Alpine route over the last two years[3]. The Alpine migrant route has not been the stage of a "border spectacle" (De Genova, 2013) but, rather, of an uneven and opaque visibility.

While some episodes that happened there - migrants who died in the snow, quarrels between the Italian and the French police - have been in the spotlight, overall migrants' passages and presences

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[1] Germany, Austria, Denmark, France, Norway and Sweden have been suspending Schengen since 2015. Slovenia and Hungary also suspended it for few weeks the same year.

[2] The expression "secondary movements" is used by the European Commission to refer to migrants erratic journeys across Europe as a result of the spatial restrictions imposed by the Dublin Regulation. I put the expression in inverted commas as I do not want to endorse such a terminology; indeed, it conveys the idea of a sort of hierarchy of movements and it reinforces a sort of *norm of mobility*, assuming linear routes - from a point A to a point B - as the standard, and all the others as "secondary", unruly and to be controlled.

[3] According to the estimations made by the Red Cross and by the Police of Bardonecchia, about 6000 migrants have tried to cross the Alpine border between December 2017 and September 2019. Yet, these are only rough estimations made on the basis of the data collected by multiple actors that refer to numbers of push-back, migrants who had been rescued and migrants spotted at the rail stations of Bardonecchia and Oulx. Some migrants might be counted more than once, while others might have crossed remaining undetected.

on the Alps has not been highly spectacularised. And the Alpine border is not considered by state authorities a main hotspot of "migration crisis"; rather, it appears as a quite marginal border-zone.

The increasing presence of migrants in transit at the Alpine border has pushed local authorities to collect data about the migration phenomenon as well as to enhance the communication between the police and the humanitarian actors deployed on the ground. In fact, both the production of knowledge/non-knowledge and of visibility/invisibility do actively contribute to shape "borderwork" (Rumford, 2008) activities. How is migrants' presence at the border made visible or partially invisible ? Which kind of knowledge and partial non-knowledge are generated (Aradau, 2017; Stel, 2016)? And to what extent does it circulate? This article engages with these questions from the standpoint of the economies of knowledge and visibility which are at play in border-making practices. It builds on fieldwork and interviews conducted at the French-Italian Alpine border between 2018 and 2019[4], and it brings attention to the production and circulation of what I call here *disjointed knowledges* and, together, to the obfuscated visibility about migrants' passages and presences at the border.

The article proceeds as follows. It starts by taking into account the literature on border controls, pointing to the importance of conceptualising knowledge and visibility together. It moves on by illustrating how the Alpine passage has become a border-zone for the migrants. The second section focuses on "disjointed knowledges" meaning by data the partial lack of data collection and data exchange among different actors at the border: it shows that on the one hand this is the result of a partial disregard about migrants' passages, and on the other of a will of *not governing too much* and not be accountable for states' human rights violations. The third section analyses the obfuscated visibility that is at play at the French-Italian border, and how this ends up in partially invisibilising migrants' presence on the Alpine territory. The article concludes with some reflections on how to rethink border controls in light of fragmented knowledges and obfuscated visibility.

In so doing, it brings a contribution to political geography scholarship on border controls (Amilhat-Szary, Giraut, 2015; Parker, Vaughan-Williams, 2009; Walters, 2006) showing that regimes of knowledge and visibility - and the multiple nuances between them- are constitutive of border-making processes. By "disjointed knowledges" I refer to the partial lack of data gathering and data circulation across the border, as a result of asymmetrical political interests and of partial disregard in

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[4] I have done participatory observation in the city of Oulx and Bardonecchia, where I conducted interviews with state and non-state actors, including the Italian Police, the mayors of Oulx and Bardonecchia, local NGOs, activists, Prefettura of Turin, the Red Cross and Guardia di Finanza. As part of this fieldwork, I have also spoke to migrants who had been hosted in the temporary shelter in Oulx and who were waiting at the rail stations of Bardonecchia and Oulx.

monitoring and counting migrants' passages. This, as I will explain, is in part the outcome of a constitutive elusiveness of migrants' multiple crossings and, simultaneously, of states' *will not to govern too much, i*n order to eschew legal responsibilities. By speaking of *obfuscated visibility* I refer to the partial (but never total) invisibilisation of migrants' presence and, together, to the uneven visibility in state's activities for detecting migrants and for not loosing track of them. A focus on the migrant Alpine route enables foregrounding the "infrastructures of dis/connection" (Light et al. 2017) in data sharing and the disjointed knowledges that underpin daily borders operations. The French-Italian Alpine migrant route is a case in point for studying the diffraction and multiplication of borders beyond the geopolitical boundaries. In fact, mountain paths, temporary shelters and rail stations have been transformed into mobile and temporary borders were migrants are identified and stopped. It is also a particularly productive site for investigating the entanglements of knowledge, non-knowledge, visibility and invisibility in enacting border controls.

Methodologically, I explore political technologies of border-making, "from the angle of everyday practices of the diverse actors" (Cote-Boucher et al. 2014: 196) involved in governing migration; it shows that it is not through total surveillance and traceability that migrants' mobility is disciplined and obstructed but, rather, through disjointed knowledges, obfuscated visibility and partial non-registration. Disjointed knowledges and obfuscated visibility, this paper argues, are the markers of a *will not to govern too much,* as in such a way states are less accountable and responsible for human rights violations. Fragmentariness and blurriness are neither fully the effect of failures nor the outcome of a deliberate state strategy: they stem from political controversies and from a non-interest and unwillingness in knowing too much and making the border too legible.

Rethinking knowledge and visibility together:

Practices of border-making cannot be fully grasped through the lens of security: the very notion of "border controls" encapsulates heterogenous techniques, knowledges and practices; and such an heterogeneity should be maintained as fundamentally irreducible. In fact, as Didier Bigo has aptly stressed, "it is essential to avoid an approach framed solely in terms of securitisation theory, which often implies presentism" (Bigo, 2014: 211). However, while Bigo questions securitisation in order to highlight the "virtualisation of borders" (211) and control through channelling mobility instead of stopping it, here I foreground disconnections, frictions and partial non-surveillance in border policing operations. This article mainly draws on border studies and critical security studies literature to engage with disconnections and obfuscations that are at stake in border-making practices. Through

an insight into the production and governing of the Alpine migration route, this paper nurtures debates in the field of political geography, as it argues, first, that analyses about the sorting functions of borders need to be supplemented with a study of the production and circulation of knowledge and visibility at the border- what is known and unknown, visible and invisible. Second, in dialogue with political geography literature that stresses the fuzziness and unevenness of bordering mechanisms (see Burridge et al. 2015), the article engages in conceptualising these moments of partial non-recording and non-control, pointing to the disjointed knowledges and obfuscated visibility that are at play at the border.

Yet, as I illustrate further on, paying attention to obfuscation and disconnection does not mean thinking of it in terms of state' lacks and failures. Rather, the article argues that migrants' mobility is obstructed through what Andrew Burridge and colleagues defined as the "uneven geographies of bordering" (Burridge et al. 2015: 243), which also consist of modes of partial non-control, non-registration and obfuscation. Building on such an analytical perspective, this article asks "which knowledge about migrant crossing is generated at the border and to what extent does it circulate ?", and "which regimes of visibility are at stake?". Insights about the circulation of data, as well as about the multiple obstructions and chokepoints that are at play in such economy of circulation are situated here within a broader analysis about knowledges and visibility at the border.

The focus of this paper on the Alpine migrant route between Italy and France does not intend to reproduce the image of the border as a line or as a wall. In fact, the border is a complex mobile assemblage in which material, digital, epistemic and biopolitical components coalesce. From a spatial standpoint, as geographers have demonstrated, there is a "growing dissociation between border functions and border locations" (Amilhat-Szary, Giraut, 2015: 6; see also CasasCortes et al. 2015). In the wake of that, this article shows that borders are blurred and wide areas (border-zones), whose boundaries are unceasingly reshaped by practices of control and their contestations. Importantly, the border is not formed only by physical obstacles; it is also a site of data collection and circulation (Pallister-Wilkins, 2016). The material and the digital components of bordering mechanisms need to be articulated with biopolitical mechanisms of control. Indeed, as Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson have remarked, "at the border there is a certain intensification of political and even existential stakes that crystallise relations of domination and exploitation, subjection and subjectivation" (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2012: 60; see also Balibar, 2002).

Political geographers have contended that the present context is characterised by a multiplication of borders as mobile dots (Cuttitta, 2006; Hyndman, Mountz, 2008; Mountz, 2011), as hotspots of cri-

sis (Tazzioli, 2018) and as flows (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015). As part of that scholarship, some authors have investigated the governing of migration through ambiguity (Nassar, Stel, 2019; Oesch, 2017), ambivalence (Altin, Minca, 2017), discretion (Gill et al., 2018) and uncertainty (Duns, Cons, 2014), showing that "state control can be exercised not only through specification but . Yet, this literature has mainly centered on camps, encampments and enclosed spaces, and much less on border-making practices, and on how migrants' passage and temporary presence is managed at the border. In critical security studies a g growing scholarship has investigated decision-making practices at the borders (Cote-Boucher, 2016; Hall, 2017), the datafication of border security (Amoore, 2013; Frowd, 2018), the implementation of smart borders (Jeandesboz, 2016) and the border connections generated through "the stretched screens of border officials, police, visa officers (Dijstelbloem, Broeders, 2015a: 25).

Scholars ream have questioned "how migration is governed in absence of a global regime" (Robinson, 2018: 419; see also Geiger, Pecoud, 2013; Punter et al. 2019), starting from the assumption that border management has become more and more an object of shared knowledge and of a common regime of truth among "the professionals of the management of the unease" (Bigo, 2006: 14). The standardisation of security practices and border controls (Leese, 2018) goes together with a generalised streamlining of the lexicon and knowledge generated at and about the border. In his research on border controls in Mauritania, Philippe Frowd has investigated how the circulation of knowledge standards depends on shared material infrastructures and on the alignment of global policies and norms, which is actualised through international agencies such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (Frowd, 2018). Such a general trend towards the standardisation of knowledge is well recounted by Gregory Feldman who, in his book *The Migration Apparatus,* analyses "how migration management is overall moving towards convergence" (Feldman, 2011: 7).

Yet, he also highlights the multiple obstacles and local resistances that such a political project constantly encounters (Feldman, 2011)[5]. In fact, as Nora Stel has compellingly argued, migration governmentality is often enacted through an active and deliberate production of ignorance and not-knowing (Stel, 2016). In line with analyses that draw attention to moments of obstruction, non-knowledge and obfuscation, I am interested in developing an analytics of the disjointed knowledges and obfuscated visibility that are at play at the border. It contends that an analytical focus on

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[5]Indeed, far from presenting it as a smooth process or a seamless border regime, Feldman asks "how to deal with a situation in which policy officials patently ignore the migrants in their immediate presence?" (Feldman, 2011: 5).

border controls should not lead us to "losing sight into their patchy, makeshift, inconsistent and failure-prone character" (Burridge et al. 2015: 245; see also Martin, Mitchelson, 2009).

Questions around the production of visibility and invisibility at the border are intertwined with interrogations about knowledge production: indeed, which knowledge is generated and shared about border crossing? And therefore, which legibility and visibility of the border is produced ? However, these two aspects - visibility and knowledge - are usually treated separately in the literature. The interplay between knowledge, non-knowledge, invisibility and visibility is actually crucial for grasping mechanisms of border-making. Instead, for critically engaging with borders as political technologies for sorting people, we need to pay attention and conceptualise to the proliferation of fragmented knowledges, partial non-knowledges as well as obfuscation. The epistemic blurriness of the border requires adequate analytical tools for investigating border-making processes. Recent works have convincingly pointed to the crucial role of secrecy in states security practices (Belcher, Martin, 2013; Walters, 2015), and have endorsed Foucault's contention that power always requires a certain degree of secrecy (Foucault, 1998). Nevertheless, neither secrecy nor transparency allow fully capturing the field of tensions which is at play at the border. In fact, the frictions and obstructions in sharing data, depend less on state's secrecy and lack of transparency than on the constant production of opacity and disjointed knowledges about migrants' presences and passages.

The emergence of the Alpine migration route:

In order to explore which modes of knowledge and tactics of (in)visibility are implemented at the border for governing migration it is important to retrace the transformation of the Alpine passage into a more controlled migration route. In fact, retracing the history of the Alpine passage enables not falling in the trap of presentismae. As I mentioned above, the partial rerouting of migration movements from Ventimiglia towards the Alps is the outcome of increasing border enforcement along the coastal area, at the crossing point of Ventimiglia. The French push-back operations along the coast are usually followed by forced transfers of migrants made by the Italian authorities from the city of Ventimiglia to the hotspot of Taranto, which is located 1200 km Southern (Capiroglio et al. 2018)[6]. Actually, the Alpine border is by no means a recent crossing point. On the contrary, it has a quite longstanding history of "clandestine" passages: as I have been able to retrace in the archive

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[6] https://www.ecre.org/asylum-seekers-transferred-from-northern-italy-to-taranto-hotspot/

of the Alpine Rescue office in Bardonecchia[7], during the II World War, many Italians escaped through the Alpine passage, and since the late 1940s on, some Italian citizens crossed there to go to France in order to find job; then, "between the 1970s and the 1880s, it became a crossing point for migrants from outside Europe, and more consistently then in the 1990s, when people from the former Yugoslavia fled and passed through Italy"[8]. Yet, the history of the Alpine crossing should be analysed together with the specificities of the present context: indeed, over the last three years the Alpine passage has become a much more controlled and policed route, where migrants are subjected to police violence, repeated push-back operations and identification procedures. Thus, bordering-making practices have intensified and migrants' passages have become object of state's concern.

In so doing, the Alpine passage has turned into a border-zone for the migrants, which is quite hard and dangerous to cross. The geography of the territory - high mountains - the extreme and variable weather conditions - snow and low temperatures in winter -, the border patrolling and the migrant-hunt carried on by the police make that space a potential deadly border-zone for the migrants in transit (Del Biaggio, Heller, 2017; Tazzioli, Walters, 2019). In this regard, Tugba Basaran's analysis of the legal production of the border-zone helps in grasping the interplay between law, administrative measures and migrants' exclusion from the access to rights. Instead of seeing border-zones as spaces of exception, Basaran points to the "flexible multiplication of these spaces" (Basaran, 2008: 346) which "are characterised by legal proliferation rather than being outside the law" (Basaran, 2008: 340; see also Neilson, 2014)[9]. In a similar way, in her historical account of border controls procedures, Sara Casella Colombeau challenges discourses on the so called "Schengen crisis" by pointing to the continuity in police operations along the French-Italian border and highlighting the administrative measures and laws that de facto allow states to push migrants back (Colombeau, 2019).

Along the Alpine route migrants are identified, policed and pushed-back to Italy through a series of uneven measures which change over time in a quite unpredictable and frantic manner. However, this happens less through legal exceptions than through the implementation of local administrative

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[7] As part of this archival research, I have analysed the documents about the rescue operations conducted on the Alps, between Bardonecchia, Claviere and the French side of the border. Every document contains the nationality of the person who had rescued, and the dynamic of the inicident -e.g. if the person was about to enter France "illegally".

[8] Interview with the head of mission of the Alpine Rescue in Bardonecchia (21/10/2019).

[9] Importantly, the establishment of border-zones does not impact on everyone in the same way: on the contrary, border-zones are characterised precisely by a differential and racialising functioning, which affect some populations and not others.

measures and peculiar twisting of the law. A case in point is represented by migrants who are pushed back soon after crossing the French border without having the possibility to lodge the asylum claim in France. At the migrant shelter in Oulx, volunteers have witnessed the irregularities of the French police on a daily basis: "every day, in the middle of the night, the Italian police brings here, in the shelter, between 5 and 10 migrants on average, who are pushed back by the French authorities. Often, there are minors among them. But we do not have an exact number about this, as we do not identify migrants, and we do not want to: we are just providing logistical support and a safe space to stay. Therefore,, so some people might be counted more than once if they have been pushed back multiple times"[10].

 If on the one hand this ordinary police practice is in violation with the international law and the right to claim asylum, on the other French authorities play with the very blurry definition of "frontier" in the French law, which states that this latter might extend up to 20 kilometres after the official border-line (Rodier, 2002). In fact, as Basaran explains, the production of border-zones allows states to restrict access to rights: "the creation of the border zone and the legal fiction of the border zone are intended to prevent refugees from applying for the refugee status. To apply for refugee status one needs to be on the territory" (Basaran, 2010: 56; see also Colombeau, 2019). Hence, the border-zone constitutes a sort of uneven spatial expansion of the border, generating legal ambiguity through the law. In fact, the production of a border-zone (the territory between the Susa Valley and Briancon) has reshaped the legal and political geographies of the French-Italian Alpine passage.

By zooming out from the French-Italian Alpine crossing point, it becomes apparent that the hardening of controls at the internal borders of Europe are part of the EU's frantic attempt to regain control over migrants' "secondary movements": the temporary but protracted suspension of Schengen in France and in other EU member states[11] has been justified as a measure that contributes "to a substantial reduction in the secondary movements of irregular migrants" (European Commission, 2016). The deterrence of secondary movements emerges in fact as one of the most urgent priorities of the current EU migration agenda (European Parliament, 2018). As Elspeth Guild and colleagues have observed, the reintroduction of border controls had been enacted without proving evidence of the concrete risks associated to migrants' presence (Guild et al. 2016): "there have been no statistics on the number of people crossing borders and seeking asylum, or assessment of the extent to which

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[10] Interview with M. and S., two volunteers who work in the migrant shelter in Oulx, November 13, 2018.

[11] By the end of 2015, also Austria, Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden suspended Schengen.

reintroducing border checks complies with the principle of proportionality and necessity" (Guild et al. 2016: 9)[12].

Such a lack of evidence in justifying the re-establishment of border controls resonates with the general opacity and the lack of shared knowledge about push-back operations and migrants' attempts to cross borders. In this regard, it is worth noticing the *uneven geographies of migration control*, between highly monitored places- e.g. the Hotspots or the harbours where migrants lands- and more opaque border-zonese. More precisely, the articulation between knowledge, non-knowledge, visibility and partial obfuscation is far from being homogenous at the internal Europe's borders: , knowledge production and visibility are geographically highly uneven and subjected to what a *desultory temporality,* that is to incessant changes at the level of border-making operations and administrative measures. nt As I have been told by a lawyer from the Association of Legal Studies on Immigration (ASGI), "every border, or better every crossing point, functions in a peculiar manner and according to a specific temporality"[13]. Therefore, knowledge and visibility and their multiple nuances are strongly articulated to each other. For instance, while push-back operations along the coast are recorded systematically by the authorities, until the beginning of 2019 along the Alpine border these were registered in a quite irregular and uneven way, as the Red Cross in Bardonecchia told me; and more broadly, the data exchange between the two side of the border is only partial and often asymmetricaly.

 Td he uneven management of migrants' presences ise constitutive of border-making and of daily practices of border controls[14]. The production of disjointed knowledges and obfuscated visibility takes place within a fuzzy space of governmentality, characterised by legal ambiguities: indeed, tthe *legal fuzziness* of the border-zone obstructs migrants' access to the asylum procedure and creates a grey-zone where more than governing through the exception, the law itself is twisted by using existing margins of manoeuvre (Basaran, 2010; see also CNCDH, 2018)[15]. The unevenness of border

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[12]Border controls has not been re-introduced only in the name of the migration crisis in 2015; in 2017, France declared the state of emergency as a response to the terrorist attacked which happened in the country. The prevention of potential terrorist threats, and not migrant invasion, has become the main reason through which France extended the re-establishment of border controls at the end of 2017. It is on the basis of the anti-terrorism law that border controls have been extended beyond border-posts and can take place at rail stations, harbours and inside the national territory (Anafe, 2019).

[13] Interview with an Italian lawyer of ASGI, Turin, December 28, 2018.

[14]https://www.amnesty.fr/refugies-et-migrants/actualites/a-la-frontiere-franco-italienne-des-violations-systematiques

[15] The link between the legal fuzziness of the border-zone and arbitrary controls has been highlighted by the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) that has shown that push-back operations at the French-Italian border take remain partially unaccounted and uncounted due to the legal opacity (CNCDH, 2018).

controls - characterised by moments when migrants are highly monitored and others of partial non-registration - generate effects of disorientation on the migrants, forcing them to constantly readapt and reinvent spatial tactics for crossing and for finding legal leeway to apply for asylum. In this regard, Elizabeth Cullen Dunn and Jason Cons speak of "aleatory sovereignty" to refer to the fragile, unpredictable and haphazard" processes through which sovereignty is enacted (Dunn, Cons, 2014: 96). However, despite the aleatory dimension is partially at stake in daily border procedures, this should not be confused with a "topological zone of indistinction" (Agamben, 1998: 37): both the idea of an aleatory sovereignty and the concept of indistinction recall the image of "a unitary notion of the state" (Neilson, 2014: 15). Instead, the Alpine French-Italian border shows that it is less a question of state's arbitrariness than of a multiplicity of conflicting interests and actors at stake[16]. In fact, Italian authorities are not concerned in controlling and stopping the migrants who try to cross to France; on the contrary, many of them silently hope that some migrants manage to go out from Italy. Instead, on the French side of the border, the containment and push-back of the migrants in transit from Italy is a declared goal that is performed by the French police on a daily basis. Yet, despite these asymmetries and conflicts, due to states bilateral agreements[17] the Italians and the French ultimately cooperate in the procedures to returns migrants to Italy, while non-state actors, like the local NGOs in Oulx and Bardonecchia have been trying to monitor the psh-back closely to denounce human rights violations.

Disjointed knowledges:

Rail station of Oulx, December 21, 2018, 7:20 pm: a group of nine migrants of different nationalities just arrived in Oulx by regional train from Turin, with small backpacks and without adequate equipment for hiking on the mountains and walking in the snow. In the small hall of the rail station, they are approached by a cultural mediator of a local NGO, who tries to convince them about the dangers they might encounter in their attempt to cross the borders. Yet, the nine guys are very determined to make it to France and one of them replies to NGO volunteer: "we are here, it is worth trying, we have crossed the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean, it can't be worse than that". From

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[16] As Guild and colleagues have pointed out, single national cases or the governing of specific border-zones should be situated within a broader European trend which consists in fighting the so called migrants' "secondary movements", that is migrants' movements across Europe which is enhanced by the spatial restrictions imposed by the Dublin Regulation (Guild et al. 2016).

[17] The most recent agreements between the the French and the Italian police about border control operations have been signed in July 2019. This agreement is not public. As the Italian police in Bardonecchia told me, it mainly regulates the push-back procedures.

Oulx, they take the local bus to reach the village of Claviere, from where they could start walking in the snow at night, in order to dodge French border patrolling more easily due to the darkness. Yet, at 3 am, five of them are taken back by the Italian police to the shelter in Oulx: after being spotted in the snow by the French police, they have been fingerprinted and then handed over to the Italian authorities. The four other migrants have probably managed to enter France, although, "we do not know what happens on the other side of the border, and they could be pushed back later on, after reaching the city of Briancon"[18]. This episode does not represent an exceptional event but, rather, an ordinary scene of border policing which takes place on a daily basis along the French-Italian migrant route.

Such a scene of ordinary violence enables investigating multiple aspects of how borders work — e.g. police operations, migrant solidarity networks, technologies used for for detecting migrants, humanitarian actors at the borders. Here I draw attention to the knowledge produced on migrants' border crossing, which data is collected, by whom, and how it is shared and not shared among the actors deployed on the ground. In this section I focus on the entanglements between disjointed knowledges, partial non-knowledges and the frictions in the circulation of data about migrants' passages and presences - which includes those who try to cross and those who, after being pushed-back are temporarily hosted in the centres of transit on the Italian side of the border. Indeed, the articulations between knowledge, non-knowledge and the partial non-circulation of data, are factors that are constitutive of border-making processes (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013). Indeed, as Huub Dijstelbloem and Dennis Broeders have pointed out, the border is "not only a technology for managing the movement of people, things and capital but also a knowledge space whereby registers of movement and mobility enact population" (Dijstelbloem, Broeders, 2015: 31).

Behind the visible and spectacular scene of the migrant-hunt performed by the French police across the mountains, the daily functioning of the border also involves a certain kind of knowledge production, or better different modes of knowledge. Scholarship on the politics of knowledge in migration governmentality has looked at the mechanisms of surveillance and control enacted by states and non-state actors as well as at the production states' legibility through security practices (Andersson, 2016; Bigo, 2014)s. In so doing, they have scrutinised what is taken out from public sight and knowledge. These analysis need to be supplemented, I contend, with scholarly works that have pointed to miscounting, ambiguity and non-recording as constitutive of migration governmentality (Pinelli, 2018[7]; Rozakou, 2017). Barak Kalir and Willem van Schendel' analysis is geared towards

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[18] Interview with a volunteer from the city of Oulx, 22 December 2018.

"states' policies and practices that produce nonrecording" (Kalir, van Schendel, 2017: 2) and invite us to consider these not as lacks of failures but, rather, as tactics and mechanisms deployed by states for getting rid of political responsibility towards unwanted populations. This literature is helpful to grasp how partial non-registration and fragmented knowledges are constitutive components of the making of state's legibility (Scott, 1998). Yet, this article partially departs from an approach which tends to analyse partial non-recording as an "essential element of statecraft" (Rozakou, 2017: 38); indeed, mis-counting, frictions in data sharing and asymmetric knowledges about migrant crossing can be better investigated by starting from the multiplicity of actors involved at the border and of the local political conflicts among them.

Hence, instead of centring on state's illegibility and legibility, I am interested in exploring the production of disjointed knowledges which are at play at the border. Relatedly, more than asking whether or not partial non-registration is the result of an intentional state-strategy I shift the attention towards the impact that the unevenness and opacity of border controls have on migrants and on how border controls should be reconceptualised in light of that[19]. In this respect it is important to clarify that if migrants are unevenly recorded and controlled, this does not mean that they are less obstructed in their movements. Indeed, first, migrants could object of violent police harassment and human rights violations without being able to prove it, or they might be pushed-back multiple times at the border without sometimes getting any expulsion paper. In fact, as I have argued elsewhere (author XXX), in many contexts mobility turns out to be a political technology used by states for regaining control over migration: indeed at the internal frontiers of Europe migrants are entrapped in a forced hyper-mobility which push them to constantly reroute their journeys.

Second, opacity and partial non-registration constitute for the migrants a constantly reversible terrain of struggle: indeed, on the one hand fit means more chances for the migrants to cross the border without being detected, on the other it might involve state's unaccountability for the human rights violations committed by the police. In particular, if we look at the asymmetries in data collection and data sharing activities between the two sides of the border, we can speak of *disjointed knowledges t*hat are produced and circulated across borders. Speaking of d*isjointed knowledges* it enables us to come to grips with a heterogeneity of modes of non-recording, asymmetric controls and uneven data circulation, which in fact could not be grasped through the binary opposition between se-

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[19]Indeed, building on Foucault's methodological assumptions about power that he advances in *The Will to Knowledge*, I consider here power relations as "both intentional and non-subjective" (Foucault, 1998: 94): that is, their intelligibility can be understood by retracing the articulation of multiple tactics, local frictions and objectives through which a certain general outcome is produced, and not by indicating a directly causal-effect or an actor that would have aimed at that.

crecy and knowledge. Migrants' passages are counted according to quite approximate estimates and through an informal information-exchange chain, by other actors in the Valley. Claudia Aradau's reflections on what she calls "controversies over non-knowledge" (Aradau, 2017: 2) enables us to come to grips with the disjointed knowledges generated at border and with the obstructed and misfunctioning data circulation among actors. Indeed, as she poignantly draws attention to an "epistemic terrain where datafication produces opaque circuits of knowledge and nonknowledge" (Aradau 2015: 6). Citizenship focus on border-making practices along the French-Italian Alpine migrant route enables showing the articulation of disjointed knowledges, partial lack of data and quarrels around what counts as knowledge, the which data and information are ultimately useful.

By accounting for the nuances of knowledge and non-knowledge and to the disputes around what counts as knowledge, we can grasp the fragmented terrain of border controls: indeed, such an analytical perspective enables unsettling the image of the border as an homogenous dispositive of government showing instead the conflicting rationales and discrepant strategies through which border controls are enacted. On the Italian side of the border, the actors involved either in controlling or in supporting the migrants in transit (the municipality of Oulx and Bardonecchia, the priest of the city of Bussoleno, two local NGOs, the Red Cross and some local volunteers) do exchange information in real-time by using two WhatsApp collective chats. One Whatsapp chat contains information about push-back operations. "Every day we circulate data in real time which include the numbers of migrants pushed back by the French at the borders and some other basic information, for instance, if we spot minors, women, or sick persons" the mayor of Oulx told me, showing the WhatsApp chat on his mobile phone[20].

The other WhatsApp chat reports the number of migrants spotted at the rail stations of Oulx and Bardonecchia and who are hosted at night in the shelters opened by local NGO. Interestingly, the number of migrants who transited through Bardonecchia, Oulx and Claviere does actually correspond to detected migrants' passages and not to their actual presence, since some of them could have been pushed-back from the border multiple times and counted more than once, while others could remain undetected. The production and circulation of disjointed knowledges emerge quite blatantly as long as we analyse the information recorded by different actors at the border and what everyone of them knows about single cases of push-back. The multiple and partial databases where this information is stored are telling of the frictional circulation of data and, together, of the asym-

[20] Interview conducted with the mayor of Oulx, November 13, 2018.

metrical visibilities about border crossing produced by the states - in this case, Italy and France. Let's start from the two above mentioned WhatsApp chats activated and shared by local actors in the Susa Valley: who does get access to this data collected on the chats ? The data, as it was confirmed to me by the mayors of the Susa Valley, is sent to the Prefecture of Turin. This latter receives the numbers and the data provided by the Red Cross of Susa that counted 434 migrants pushed back from the French Alpine border in two months - between October 20 and December 20, 2018.

Relatedly, official statistics from the Italian Home Office and the French police reveals that the French-Italian border is characterised by asymmetric knowledges about migrants' push-backs. How many push-back operations are counted by the Italians? And how many are reported by the French authorities ? The Italian Home Office had reported 7063 migrants' push-backs to Italy along the Alpine route (from the in 2018, 6072 in 2017, and 6256 in 2016. Instead, the number of push-backs reported by the French police is "only" of 1899 in 2017 and 315 in 2016. The asymmetry in data collection between the two sides of the border is more or less inverted along the coastal border-line: while Italian authorities reported 24 273 migrants' push-backs from Menton to Ventimiglia in 2017, and 17529 in 2016, the French police counted 44. 433 in 2017 and 31 285 in 2016.

Such a discrepancy in statistics is not just a numeric issue; it is also telling of the fact that, ultimately, states are not interested in monitoring what might happen to the migrants who cross - if they are in danger, if they get lost on the mountains[21]. In this sense, we can speak of a partial disregard in monitoring and counting migrants. And yet, this partial disregard in monitoring the phenomenon is also combined with a more strategic *will not to govern too much,* as I mentioned earlier on: indeed, the partial lack of knowledge and the obstructions in data circulation make states less accountable for the border violence and law infringement they commit.

The Red Cross and the Police in Bardonecchia usually register every day about twenty push-back operations made by the French police, although it is a rough estimation based on their monitoring activities[22]. The production of disjointed knowledges is confirmed not only by numbers, as the above mentioned statistics demonstrate, but also by the daily border operations. For instance, on the Italian side of the border, in order to know whether migrants had been fingerprinted by the French authorities, local NGOs need to ask the migrants. Although there is not something like a standard-

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[21]However, being untraceable is of course a double-edged sword for the migrants: on the one hand it can mean higher chances for the migrants to get lost on the mountains and expose themselves to dangers, on the other it constitutes a weapon of flight which increases the chances to cross without being detected (Ansems de Vries, 2016; Papadopoulos et al. 2008).

[22] Number given to me by the local Police in Bardonecchia (22 october 2019) and confirmed by the Red Cross.

ised practice as it constantly changes over time, usually French authorities count and fingerprint the migrants; but the result of the fingerprinting is not shared with the Italian police, nor it is sent to the European database EURODAC. After the identification procedure, the French police gives to migrants the paper with states the interdiction to enter the national territory (*refus d'entree*), and this however takes place in a quite uneven manner - some migrants had been given the paper, some others did not, as it emerges from the testimonies I collected at the border by speaking with migrants and activists. It follows that not only the border is asymmetrically controlled - as the Italian tend not to stop the migrants, while the French do.

On the Italian side of the border, the police counts the migrants who are returned by the French authorities - although in 2017 and 2018 many migrants had been dropped into the Italian territory on the sly, without officially "returning" them to the Italians. Usually, once migrants are taken back to Italy, the Italian police proceeds by quickly identifying them through the SPAID system[23], which is a mobile device used to take migrants fingerprints and check if their records are already stored in the Italian and in the EURODAC databases. If, as in the large majority of the cases, migrants turn out to be already identified in the national and in the European system, they are released on the Italian territory. And, in this case, their passage is stored in the Italian Police database only, while no digital trace of those crossings and push-backs are left on a European level. If not, they are taken to the Police station are properly identified[24].

Instead, the French police is primarily interest in not-authorising migrants' entry to France and in verifying that they had already been fingerprinted in Italy[25]. The non-delivery of the *refus d'entree* to the migrants is in fact a state tactic for not being accountable nor responsible for asylum seekers. The irregularities and unevenness in border policing operations overlap with the illegalities, frequently committed by state authorities. A case in point is represented by French police officers who fill in the *refus d'entree* form by ticking the box, in the place of the migrants, which states "I want to leave the territory as soon as possible", denying in this way migrant's right to claim asylum and speak with a lawyer (Anafe, 2009; Asgi, 2018). Similarly, unaccompanied minors are often pushed-back without any check on their age, in violation of the international law. The partial absence of data and shared knowledge across the borders about push-back operations and migrants' crossing

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[23] It is the Italian acronym for Peripheral System for Taking Digital Fingerprints.

[24] This procedure has been explained to me by the Police of Bardonecchia which in that context acts also as Border Police.

[25] And therefore, on the basis of the Dublin Regulation, their asylum claim could not be processes in France.

should not be read through the lens of failure and lack; rather, it is in part the outcome of a political disregard about that specific knowledge of the phenomenon.

The main preoccupation of the local authorities seems to be to carefully manage migrants' presence, by preventing that migrants might become (too) visible, and by keeping low the overall number of migrants stranded at the Alpine border. Instead, the monitoring of migrants' movements and of their repeated attempts to cross are considered by the national authorities authorities as something not of concern. This emerges quite clearly from the migration office at the Prefecture of Turin, who answered my question about whether and how they are monitoring migrants' passages at the border and their multiple attempts to cross: "actually, we do not have time for this kind of work, why should we collect this data? We do have even too much data that we do not know how to use. In fact, we are busy in managing migrants who are hosted in the province of Turin"[26]. Isomein this case the non-interest in collecting data, or better some data in particular, draws attention to the degrees of uselessness of data gathering and data sharing activities (Aradau, Blanke, 2015).

Monitoring migrants' passages and forced returns at the border is in fact relevant to the same authorities more for getting an estimation and the overall numbers than for controlling individual migrants. Nevertheless, if on the one hand there is a direct correspondence between what is (politically) relevant and what is counted (statistically), on the other it is worth noticing that the data collected and stored by the Italian police is about push-back operations only - and not for instance about migrants' passages. How does the fragmentariness of knowledge impact on migrants' lives? Even if some of the migrants manage to cross to France and to stay there, they are forced to undertake convoluted geography and they need to try multiple times before making it (Ansems de Vries, Guild, 2018; Tazzioli, 2019). A focus on the Alpine migration route enables foregrounding to highlight the effects of "exhaustion" (Welander, 2019), mobility obstruction and destitution generated over migrants' lives. Exhaustion, legal destitution, and protracted uncertainty are ordinarily experienced by migrants, as a result of the ongoing obstruction to the asylum procedure and of the repeated push-back operations at the border. Disjointed knowledges emerge not only from the frictions between local and national authorities but also from the incessant changes in border control operations. And this has tangible effects on migrants' live and geographies, as long as it , contributes to disorient migrants through administrative and border policing confusion. Therefore, the *governing of migrants through opacity* is also generated through a series of non-knowledges due to the frantic and unpredictable variations in border policing.

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[26] Interview with the migration office at the Prefecture of Turin, Turin, December 27, 2018.

Obfuscated visibility:

"The visibility of migrants' presence in Oulx mainly depends on the time frequency of the regional trains which come from Turin", a local succinctly told me. Indeed, anytime that a train from Turin stops in Oulx, the rail station becomes for few minutes a sort of micro migrant hub: usually few migrants, less than a dozen each time, get off the train, although the number changes according to the time of the day. Their presence becomes more visible in the evening, between 6 and 9 pm, when some volunteers from local NGOs approach the migrants in order to convince them to spend the night in the temporary shelter, located few meters away, instead of hiking towards the border when it is dark and they might get lost. A police van usually patrols the area in front of the rail station, not for stopping the migrants but for eventually identifying the activists who give maps and advice to the former. After no more than half an hour the migrant scene fades away until the arrival of the next train.

Notably, migration scholarship has focused on the production of hyper-visibility and on the enactment of border spectacle (De Genova, 2013), on the dynamic play between visibility and invisibility (Ansems de Vries, 2016; Cuttitta, 2014; Mountz, 2015), as well as on migrants' "hidden from view" by the states (Mountz, 2015: 185; see also Atac et al. 2016)l. Visibility is played out also for tracking and governing migrants at a distance and for surveillance purposes (Dijstelbloem et al. 2017). In this regard, Foucault's statement, "visibility is a trap" (Foucault, 2012), well encapsulates the effects of control enacted through the implementation of visibility conceived as surveillance. Visibility is usually played out according to asymmetric dynamics and, in fact, asymmetries are precisely what "transform visibility into a site of strategy" (Brighenti, 2007: 326).

Partially shifting away from a logic of surveillance, anthropology scholarship is useful to come to grips with the nuances of visibility, and to observe how obfuscation and opacity, more than invisibility as such, are used for disciplining migrants. Zachary White introduced the neologism of "myopticon" to describe the regime of visibility and knowledge that asylum seekers are subjected to in Denmark: the myopticon, he argues, "implies a different kind of power to that of Foucault's panoptic model, one that relies more on uncertainty than on accurately knowing or disciplining its subjects" and which is characterised by discontinuous surveillance (White, 2011: 18). Similarly, Barbara Pinelli has highlighted the opacity which underpins the hosting and governing of asylum seekers in Italy. She invites us to study this fuzziness of the asylum regime not in terms of lack or failure but, on the contrary, as what allows states to get a hold over migrants' lives by governing through

uncertainty and opacity: the effectiveness of control, she contends, "is further strengthened by its blurriness, which creates confusion, uncertainty and distress in the asylum seekers" and it is "guaranteed by the confusion and opacity generated by this system of surveillance/care" (Pinelli, 2015: 11-13).

In so doing, both White and Pinelli show that a specific knowledge production (uncertainty) and the economy of visibility (discontinuous surveillance and opacity of control) are mutually intertwined in the mechanisms of migration control. This paper echoes these analytical perspectives by considering the nexus between knowledge and visibility and the related production of opacity and disjointed knowledges at the border. Nevertheless, differently from works that centre on enclosed spaces - reception centers, detention centres, hotspots - it engages with more mobile borders and blurred spaces, which cannot be mapped neatly. Ultimately, if as Foucault highlights, visibility spatial economy and modes of governing are mutually interdependent (Foucault, 1980), when we confront with border-zones and people on the move, questions of visibility are not narrowed to surveillance and they also concern the exposure or opacity of migrants' temporary presence. Opacity is not the outcome of a linear state's strategy. Rather, it stems in part from a will of not governing too much - in order not to be accountable for the migrants; and in part it is produced through political asymmetries and conflicts among different actors - primarily between the French and the Italian police, and to a lesser extent between state and non-state actors, with these latter that have deployed infrastructures of support and relief for the migrants). But opacity is not just a matter of governmentality: it is repeatedly enacted by migrants, through their resoluteness in re-adapting tactics of crossing and finding new ways for dodging controls. Indeed, migrants persist in crossing the border, regardless of the risks and dangers they are exposed to along the Alpine route. Thus, in order to grasp modes of governing through opacity, migrants' subjective drives and "incorrigibility" cannot be taken out from the picture (De Genova, 2010; see also Mezzadra, 2016).

To sum up, migrants' elusive mobility, local conflicts and states' *will not to govern too much - in order for* not being accountable - are all at play in producing generating opacity at the border. Opacity, obfuscation and the nuances of (in)visibility should not be regarded only as effects of governmental strategies; rather, these are produced also through migrants' struggles for movement and the related attempts to cross without being spotted in the snow. Yet, it is important to highlight the narrow leeway of action that they often have. Indeed, as William Walters and Barbara Luthi have aptly noticed, "no ready-made trajectories are available under cramped conditions, and no linear mobility is part of the experience […] Actions in this context are […] saturated by fleeting imponderableness

and moments of uncertainty" and, therefore, "obstructed agency" characterises migrants' struggles for movement (Walters, Luthi, 2016: 4). It is from within cramped spaces, and not through a sheer confrontation with police officers and border patrols, that migrants strive for enacting freedom of movement and eschewing controls.

But shall opacity and obfuscation be used interchangeably ? In fact, the term "obfuscation" it is not only about the lack of visibility and intelligibility, but it rather implies a certain degree of intentionality in making things messy and partially unintelligible[27]. Instead, "opacity" designates more generally a lack of transparency and clarity. In this paper I have adopted both terms precisely to stress the nuances between opacity - as a lack of visibility because of migrants' elusive movements and state's disregard and difficulty in generating knowledge - and obfuscation as the result of a will of not governing too much in order not to be accountable for states' duties and violations. Such ambivalence is indeed constitutive of the border regime and is played on multiple levels: on the one hand between states' will to obfuscate and the lack of visibility and knowledge due to the elusiveness of migrants' movements; on the other between opacity and obfuscation as states' weapons, and opacity and obfuscation as tactics appropriated and played out by migrants themselves.

"In order to prevent a human-plug effect…we render migrants' presence invisible"[28]: the words uttered by an officer from the municipality of Oulx encapsulates well the tactics deployed both by state and non-state actors to cope with migrants' presence in the Susa Valley. Despite quarrels and conflicting interests, overall the actors involved in monitoring and supporting migrants' transitory presence in the Valley - the Red Cross, municipalities, NGOs, local volunteers - ultimately converge around the attempt of not making migrants' presence too visible. Indeed, far from staging a "border spectacle" (De Genova, 2013), the actors deployed on the ground have closed-off the public visibility of migrants' presence and have avoided discourses about a "migration crisis", in order "to avoid that the Susa Valley could become a new Calais or Ventimiglia"[29]. As the coordinator of the temporary shelter in Oulx succinctly put it, "migrants who transit here are semi-invisible presences, they just pass, or even when they are here, nobody really pay too much of attention to them; they are like the undergrowth in the forest".

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[27] Indeed, existence of a verb - "to obfuscate" - indicates that obfuscation is actively produced.

[28] Interview with an officer of the municipality of Oulx, December 28, 2018.

[29] Interview with the major of Bardonecchia, November 14, 2018.

The possibility of they called a "human-plug effect" at the border, that is of groups of migrants stranded on the Italian side of the border, worried the local authorities. In particular, the protracted and visible presence of the migrants in the cities of Oulx, Bardonecchia and Claviere was seen as a potential threat to the flourish tourist economy in the area. Keeping migrants' presence under the threshold of cal visibility practically involves hiding and removing them from the public view.

Mobile infrastructures of solidarity, put into place by locals, activist and NGOs from the Susa Valley, have provided temporary shelters and medical support to the migrants in transit. Such a widespread mobilisation of citizens and small organisations is generally welcomed by the local authorities, first because they do for free what the state does only minimally - in terms of economic resources mobilised for hosting the migrants in transit; and, second, also because migrants's presence is channeled and does not become too apparent to the public eye made less visible. Migrants are supported and concealed from the public sight at the same time. Migrants do not camp in the street at night, and therefore they do not constitute a "problem". Therefore, more than a a logic of "care and control" (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015), the mobile infrastructures of migrant solidarity at the French-Italian Alpine border appear as operations to *support-and-conceal* the migrants in transit - that is to host them and prevent them from dying, while at the same time taking them out from the public view.

How are the migrants who try to cross the French border portrayed by the national authorities and in the public discourse ? Migrants are actually seen neither as potential threats nor as victims and lives to be saved. Indeed, the daily migrant-hunt which takes place along the Alpine border is not carried out in the name of a potential migrant danger. Rather they are seen as burdens that neither France nor Italy want to take care of. As part of that, the French police, physically hamper many migrants from claiming asylum once they manage to cross the border: ,as NGOs reports have demonstrated, French authorities ordinarily violate the law explain (Amnesty International 2017; Anafe, 2019). As I mentioned above, in the alpine area migrants are also perceived as a troubling factor **for** the local touristic economy. At the same time, migrants who try to cross on the Alps are not even narrated in the media or by local authorities and volunteers as lives to be saved. Or better, migrants are informed by locals about the extreme risks they run if they decide to cross, in particular during the winter season: "you should not cross now, it is too dangerous and the chances of dy-

ing or getting lost are much higher than in Spring. So, please wait when the snow won't be there anymore"[30].

Even if dissuaded by locals from crossing, ultimately migrants on the Alps are not depicted as bare lives nor as victims; rather, they are seen as resolute and stubborn individuals, who do not give up in their goal of reaching France. As I have been told by a volunteer in Oulx, "migrants are very much determined, stubborn; it is so difficult to convince them not to go ahead; you can enforce border controls, you can try to discourage them, but they will try again and again"[31]. Thus, subjects who are deemed to be at risk - exposed to an extreme mountain environment - are presented in the local media like people who put themselves in danger. In fact, migrants' exposure to extreme weather conditions (snow, unpredictable weather, cold) and to a potentially dangerous landscape (the mountain terrain itself), is currently used as an argument by different actors at the Alpine border to demonstrate that migrants put themselves at risk by trying to cross in a dangerous environment.

Conclusion: Governing through opacity?

Far from being a fully legible and controlled space, the French-Italian Alpine border is crisscrossed by modes of partial non-registration and by an opaque visibility. What does the production of disjointed knowledges and opaque visibilities tell us about border controls ? As William Walters has remarked, border controls do not mainly work through individualisation: "as a technology, control express little interest in shaping the identity, moulding the subjectivity of its target" as its main function is policing (Walters, 2006: 189). Data collection and border policing activities along the French-Italian Alpine migrant route show that the knowledge and visibility produced at the border do not respond to a logic of individualisation. The estimated numbers of migrant passages, the asymmetrical counting and the production of obfuscated visibility make clear that individual migrants are not the main preoccupation of the authorities. What matters, for the purpose of governability, is to obstruct migrants, without however fully blocking them. The obstruction of migrant movements is not only a physical one but it is also produced through legal discrepancies, asymmetric controls and frantic changes in the daily police operations.

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[30] Declaration of an Italian police officer outside the rail station of Bardonecchia speaking with a small group of migrants.

[31] Interview with S. a citizen from Oulx who volunteers to support the migrants in transit, December 21, 2018.

Therefore, we can only offer partial accounts of that, which mirror the actual variety of modes of control which differ according to space and time. Drawing attention to disjointed knowledges and partial non-registration, the paper has shown that control at the internal border of Europe should be conceptually and practically disjointed from surveillance and constant monitoring. The disjointed and inaccurate knowledges about migrant crossing reveal that the actors at play there try rather to roughly tack stock of the phenomenon, in order to keep it governable. Control at Europe's border-zones is about disrupting and deterring migrants' passages.However, a critical study of borders as a political technology for sorting people needs to put at the core migrants' incorrigible presence: if it is undeniable that migrants are persistently exhausted by police violence and are disoriented by un-predictable changes in border policing, at the same time the constant readjustment of the border regime is a response to the "stubbornness of migration, its ungovernable moments of freedom" (Mezzadra, 2016: 36) that force states to reinvent mechanism of capture.

Nevertheless, in exploring disconnections and obfuscations in data-circulation activities this paper does not claim for more accountability and transparency. Rather, it contributes in crafting an ana-lytical sensibility about the epistemologies and practices of border making, showing that these are made of substantial disjunctures, frictions and obfuscations. This enables disrupting the image of seamless borders and fully legible border-making practices. In the end, claims for more trans-parency, knowledge and visibility would not automatically turn into a support of migrants' struggles for accessing the asylum and for moving on: recalling Foucault's formula, visibility is also a trap, in particular for those individuals whose movements and presence is illegalised by states laws (Aradau, 2017). Disjointed knowledges, legal discrepancies and obfuscation might restrict migrants' access to right and mobility, but they might also be tactically twisted by migrants themselves. Thus, it is not on the side of visibility and full legibility that a critical appraisal of border control should be situated; rather, it would be more appropriately stand on the spectrum of the strategies and struggles - sometimes silent, other times loud and visible - for turning the undecidability, fragmentariness and opacity of the border regime into a weapon for political claims.

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