

The Mediterranean: Bridging, Bordering and Cross-bordering in a Global Mobile Reality

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If we look at the Mediterranean only as a space, a dissonant geography is obvious. Its diversity is mistakenly reduced in a process of ‘diorthosis’, a cognitive and operational approach that starts from assuming the nature of things and functionality modes rather than arriving at a proper image via actual analysis.¹ The study of flows, of networks – i.e. the circulation of ideas, people, finances, and so on – challenges the continuous representation of the Mediterranean between homogeneity and otherness, and re-positions it as both a post-colonial imbricate site of encounters and currents and as a site of new hegemonic and counter-power discourse(s) and alliances. This paper explores the ‘mobility’ paradigm as an initial approach to contemporary geographies of the Mediterranean. The latter are being created not only by the media, powers and ideologies, but also by everyday people’s inter-ethnic, inter-cultural, and emotional interactions in places and digital communication channels. Such interactions are often characterized by blockages of inter-ethnic or inter-cultural exchanges, as well as by inequalities. They present and discuss initial paths of new encounters structuring North–South relationships, and vice versa, but also circular and East–West ones since they are typified by a variety of personal and virtual mobilities in terms of gender, motivations, emotional geographies, impacts, and circulation rather than origin/destination, and so on. It seems to me that the internet and people’s spatial mobility underline a deep process of change for the Mediterranean. A dialectic of diaspora politics, circuits of funds, weapons, empowerments, and emotions, challenge the boundaries of political communities in transformation. The Mediterranean thus appears as a global space of confrontation, emulation, opposition, dialectics, and change. Places, flows, wires and digital TV are the loci for all this. There is no assumption of ‘Mediterranean as a bridge of cultures’; instead, we all are actors in networking communities

1. Introduction

In this paper, first I will highlight the narratives and practices of bordering the Mediterranean space (divisions and fractures). Second, I present alternative thinking of regionalization theories, including voices from the ‘South’. Then, I present challenging

ideas about de-bordering, bridging, and cross-bordering, which stem from my fieldwork in North Africa and parts of the Middle East and from explorations of geographies of cyberspace and Web2. In the concluding section, I propose some original ideas in terms of regionalization concepts and approaches.

My ‘bordering’ discussion is organized around the following axes:

- criticism of the unitary fiction of a Mediterranean space derived from the outdated scientific invention of the Mediterranean;
- the instrumental views and regionalization constructs derived from EU policies and popular views in Europe;
- the hegemonic territorialization process in the South and the fracturing of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean societies;
- Islamo-phobia and the clash of civilizations;
- the securization processes of the Mediterranean as a border;
- internal European divisions and fracturing discourses such as the acronym PIGS (Portugal–Italy–Greece–Spain).

The de-bordering/bridging part of my paper discusses, in light of the proposed metaphor of ‘*Chora*’, narratives from people in mobilities (virtual and spatial ones), which seem to challenge the stereotypes of Euro-Mediterranean relationships, the Mediterranean as an immobile entity and the fixity of North–South schemes. These stem from my fieldwork in Morocco, cyberspace explorations of links among shores and their implications on the ground as well as from Moroccan scientific literature on migration/mobility.

2. Bordering: Unitary Fiction and Instrumental, Hegemonic Narratives and Practices

2.1. Unitary fiction

The scientific ‘invention’ of the Mediterranean has been something relatively new and it has construed a unified and unifying narrative of the Mediterranean. I would call it tentatively the Mediterranean ‘fiction’, or the ‘essential’ reading of the Mediterranean, and I articulate the different elements that resulted in this ‘fiction’ in the geographical imagination in the following passages.

The scientific concept of the Mediterranean was mainly developed by the French school (Reclus and Vidal de la Blache) and in the German geographical tradition.^{2,3} It was later elaborated by the Vidalians, who influenced Braudel’s work as well as popular views in Europe. However, this scientific concept of the Mediterranean is no longer adequate to the contemporary geographies of the Mediterranean space, given realities on the ground, and in light of globalization and mobility. The concept is therefore critiqued for being obsolescent, for the cultural-geographical distortions that result from it, for its leading to the discrediting of the Mediterranean as ‘Mediterraneanism’, and finally for disregarding the everyday (geopolitical) sensitivity of the Mediterranean.

The scientific view became obsolete because the modes of life, rooted in drought-land cultivation and nomadic herding on which it based its views, were gradually dissolved under the impact of modernization, even if the latter played out differently in Southern

Europe and on the South shore.³ Southern France and Italy became dissimilar vis-à-vis the Southern shores of the Mediterranean, but they also became dissimilar to one another.

The myth of a unitary Mediterranean essence was produced by a vernacular knowledge distilled from trips mainly undertaken by (Northern) Europeans and the resulting pictorial representations. For a geographical imaginary rooted in the culture of the Northern European 'Grand Tour', the unitary Mediterranean represents a mirror for European or 'Western' travelers.⁴ Although presented as universal, such an imaginary in fact pertains mostly to people from the North. The myth of the unitary essence of the Mediterranean posits a geography of permanencies down the centuries, and crystallizes stereotypical views of Mediterranean countries. Therefore, this essentialist interpretation of the Mediterranean cannot be accepted and is to be discredited as 'Mediterraneanism', a peculiar form of Orientalism.^{5,6} Instead of speaking of permanencies I prefer to look at what I call the legacy effects of the existence of tribes and clans, youngest State experiences, gender and society roles, post-colonialism, and millenary reciprocal influences across shores as shaping factors of the Mediterranean area.

In many cases, everyday geo-political realities around the Mediterranean present features of a post-colonial sensitivity.⁷ The Mediterranean in many ways is a post-colonial sea. Currently, the involvement of the USA and its allies in wars affecting many Muslim countries around the Mediterranean spur anti-Western feelings, vented in the media. At the same time, the colonial imagination has not vanished; it continues to shape popular Mediterraneanism (from Club Med to the Mediterranean diet revival). Tourist flows from North to South and cruises around the Mediterranean are further examples of the persistence of a (post-) colonial or oriental imagination.

2.2. *Instrumental Views and Regionalization Constructs: The 'Jellification Risk' or the EU-ropéanization of the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East*

I here refer to studies about concepts and practices of European integration which stem from the recent geographical debate on Europe building and critiques of EU cross-border policies. I propose the term 'jellification'. It recalls metaphorically what is also happening in the Mediterranean waters, with increasing numbers of non-native jellyfish colonizing marine life, decreasing biodiversity, and poisoning the water. In light of this, the metaphor refers – perhaps too strongly – to the instrumental views of European policies with regard to neighbouring countries and their implications for territorialization effects. Not unlike the non-native Mediterranean jellyfish they risk reducing the regional potential.

From the perspective of studies on the Europe-building process, European scholars are aware of the ambiguities, challenges, and contradictions, or the ungraspability of 'Europeanness'. Sometimes they refer to a vague concept of doing things *à la European*. However, when we refer to research perspectives on the Mediterranean space, scholars too simply resort to an 'iconographic characterization' of the Mediterranean⁸

(Gottman's concept⁹.) From a postcolonial and orientalist perspective this leads to a marginalization of the Mediterranean and its realities, an interpretation of a Mediterranean with no 'perspective' of its own, and without appreciating any changes.⁸ The trap of an iconographic characterization is that it neglects the complexity of an interplay of spatial fixity and ceaseless circulation. Thus, the events of 2011 took many Europeans by surprise.

To elucidate the point, it is useful to recall the debates in geography concerning the internal dynamics of Europe-building from the perspective of territorialization. For Clarke and Jones, a regionalization concept of Europe conceives it as a bordered area that is in constant flux, with its changing territories variously including and excluding peoples with often conflicting 'European' conceptions, attitudes and visions; processes of socialization and learning are produced along scales of power dialectics, including local ones, and stress the importance of territorial considerations to Europeanization (at its simplest, being or becoming (more) 'European').¹⁰

Even more explicitly, an old definition of Europe, which takes into account the mutable spatio-temporal conditions of regionalization concepts and processes states that 'Europe' is a historical idea, with different connotations at different times; and that this very fact is one of the basic difficulties in discussing the question of European integration.¹¹ The basic ideas of continuities and of the fixing of boundaries of regions, including and excluding dialectics of conceptions, attitudes and visions, originate from networks, drivers of information and communication, a 'sense of being'. They developed from daily experience (for example trade and commerce) and spread and consolidated through talk and story-telling to engender Barraclough's 'unity of civilization'. Altogether they lead to the formation of a specific geographic knowledge and imagination. Duroselle underscores the fusing of territory and history in European identities,¹² noting that no region or period in Europe can be fully understood in isolation from the rest (Ref. 12, p. 413). Unlike in the past however, these identities are no longer controlled by high codified cultures (steered by universities or elites) that served as gatekeepers of knowledge and information and guaranteed clarity and an 'official' spatial imagination.

Did not the thousands of years of ceaseless circulation and navigation in the Mediterranean produce a durable, even if tacit knowledge of similarities, even without pretending to a 'unity of civilization'? Even if we are not in search of the Mediterranean as a Region with fixed boundaries, similarities and common paths may be revealed in light of global and mobile reality, as this is the contemporary world in which we dwell. I do hold that such accounts can be proposed for the Mediterranean area, without therefore lapsing into Mediterraneanism. What can be observed and experienced about everyday life practices that show similarities among the Mediterranean's shores while challenging the popular (à la) Braudelian unitary vision of the Mediterranean and at the same time refusing the clash of civilizations theories? The latter theory, in spite of every false evidence and rising fears of diversity, is impossible to uphold for such a closed basin as the Mediterranean: here, a never-ending history and geography of encounters and circulation takes place, linking the destinies of 'Europe' and Mediterranean basin societies. These destinies have to be understood and governed not emotionally, even if

emotions provided by popular and populist knowledge should not be neglected. The concept of 'inner sea' appears more helpful.¹³

If scholars are aware that the European integration idea can be instrumentalized, and European diversity can be mistakenly reduced and instrumentally fixed according to the nature of things and functionality modes (*diorthosis à la Farinelli*), why cannot the same awareness apply to the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean after decades of 'diorthosis'? And obviously *diorthosis* is the result of an internal hegemonic view of societies enhancing poverty and oppression all around the Mediterranean as well. What about the nature of interwoven historically and territorially contingent knowledges in the Mediterranean Basin and beyond? Shall we discuss the invisible links through wires and all kinds of interconnections across the Mediterranean Basin? Is any kind of 'Bordering' or 'Wall' strategy and practice helpful in the long run while simultaneously letting no-go zones exist such as ethnic religious districts in Europe? Put differently: what about going beyond the narratives of the elites or the media when framing everyday contexts? And what about people's everyday narratives and practices?

Studies should consider how vernacular knowledges about shores are produced, shared, consolidated by new gatekeepers and drivers (such as the internet, digital TV, the migrants' storytelling, political diasporas, tourists), and thus affect concepts of Europe, the Mediterranean, religion, encounters, 'métissage'. Looked at this way, Europe and the Mediterranean are not simply intertwined but part of Europe's destiny and this applies to both EU and non EU Mediterranean countries. However, the (geopolitical) challenge now is that popular knowledge in an increasingly bordered reality is mediated by digital TV and other mass media that convey a sense of Islamo-phobia as well as of religious intolerance and violence by some Muslim circles. This is the troubling path in the post-colonial inner sea but also in light of mobile realities of migrating people. These are the ties increasingly tightening up the Europe, North Africa and Middle East region.

The colonial imagination, or put in other terms, the instrumental view of the Mediterranean construct, is also echoed in the rhetoric for a Euro-Mediterranean cooperation grounded in a 'EU-ropeization' of the Southern Mediterranean and Middle East.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) inaugurated in 2003 is the expression of the EU's geo-strategic interests in the Mediterranean, which aim to establish 'a standard of proper behaviour around which actors' expectations would converge.'^{17,18} ENP represents a manifest effort by the EU to orchestrate new forms of socialization and learning among its member states focused on a binary Mediterranean 'other', creating a new Europeanization space;¹⁹ a Europeanization that is designed to produce a Europe of boundaries in which a variety of geopolitical, transactional, institutional and cultural forces create a world of separated spaces framing inclusions or exclusions.²⁰ These will lead to the creation of 'EUropean' norms, which will serve as 'important learning points around which discourses and identities are fashioned.'²¹

In the Mediterranean basin, the peculiarity of the sea border influences and challenges the same meaning and functionality of cross-border cooperation (CBC). The ambiguity between cooperation and securitization is resolved by presenting the Mediterranean border as a space of flows, in an attempt to strengthen 'positive' flows (of people, goods

and capitals) and reduce 'negative' flows (e.g. irregular migration).¹⁸ Euro-Mediterranean policies, and the European Neighbourhood Policy more generally, are therefore not unitary but fragmented and heterogeneous policies that distinguish between different actors, different policy domains, different regions, in order to adopt a strategy of simultaneous inclusion/exclusion, openness/closure, cooperation/control.^{22,23}

The new political scenario caused by the so-called Arab spring, as well as the limits of previous strategies, are bringing about a number of interesting reforms in Euro-Mediterranean relations. Instrumental European views of neighbouring countries no longer suffice to address questions such as the relations between Europe and Turkey, after the failure of Sarkozy's concept of the Union of the Mediterranean and recent developments in Turkish politics, partnering operations and regional paths affecting the relations between Europe and Morocco in light of geopolitical instability, and the tragedies in Libya and Syria. Local actors and the civil society, for example, should be granted a greater role in the future.²⁴

A reduction of the Mediterranean in light of the evolving needs of European policies and internal popular vulgates standardizes the geographical complexity and popular imagination of European citizens towards the Mediterranean Basin countries. Europe, in the guise of its leading elites, thus neglects the local societal paths and needs. This contributes to creating fractures or cognitive distances, causes volatility, and compromises Europe's politics as well as the image that inhabitants of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean shores have of Europeans. Moreover, it increases exclusion and conflict within Europe itself.

Multicultural views also play a role in bordering European societies internally. Multiculturalism as a political-geographic concept of physically separated cultural zones, including non-controlled private or religious schools and related learning contents and results, indirectly contributes to producing no-go zones for non-Muslims, for instance, and thus signals another failure of Europeanness in terms of coexistence, education and the practice of human rights.

2.3. *Internal European Divisions and Fracturing Discourses: PIGs*

There is another bordering trend in Europe, which has implications for the Mediterranean countries. As Cavalli explains in reviewing Leggewie's *The Future is in the South. How the Mediterranean Union can Revitalize Europe*,²⁵ it is a common perception in Germany and, generally speaking, the North of Europe, that the countries of the South of Europe, from Greece to Portugal, are victims of their vices; they spend more than they earn, they are burdened with debt, and they constitute a danger to Europe's common currency and therefore for the virtuous countries, such as Germany. If a politician, especially from the right but even the centre or the left, seeks immediate acclaim and easy applause, he or she must continually repeat that the money of the German taxpayer should not be used to pay the debts made by others, especially by the 'Southern' neighbours. Rather, they should say that it is better to split the 'Euro'-Zone in two, one side with a strong currency and the other a weak currency, the latter prone to periodic devaluations. In this perception it is better to oust the PIGS that threaten Europe's peace and prosperity. Obviously this vision

is not dominant, but it is certainly popular in today's Germany. It is based on racist and conflicting visions and views.²⁵ It is a narrative, a regime of truth, which neglects the complex interplay among financial markets, the role of elites, and the positions of winners and losers in which citizens are trapped. As a result, 'Europeanness' itself is caught in a trap. The whole future of Europe, not only of the border countries on its shores, is played out in the Mediterranean. A Europe that closes its eyes to the problems that arise in the Mediterranean is a Europe that waives its opportunity to govern its own future.

2.4. And Outside Europe? Hegemonic Territorialization or Deterritorialization.

Bordering societies and dividing people also occur, obviously, outside Europe in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that neo-liberal discourses and practices run through Mediterranean urban and regional planning, simultaneously adopting Western models and adapting Mediterranean stereotypes.²⁶ By affirming the interests of oligarchies and elites, including local ones, neo-liberal planning disintegrates social and human tissue and thick locations, exacerbates economic inequality, and subsequently increases globalization and suffering by deterritorialization and dispossession.²⁶ Urban informalities, ghetto zones, and zones for ultra-rich people are the products of real estate market profits for elites, which increase poverty and discrimination in the non-European Mediterranean.

2.5. Islamo-phobia and the Clash of Civilizations

If there is no unitary essence, no classical Mediterranean geography à la Kaiser, pointing out the discontinuities and, in different terms, the post 9/11 rhetoric and the recent political turmoil, emphasizes blocks and clashes of civilizations that likewise do not properly account for the countless streams, meetings, cruises, contact points, and the porous nature of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean space is not easily reduced to an essentialist immutable framework.²⁷ Later, I will refer more extensively to Mediterranean imbrications and encounters. I now continue by sketching borderings between Europe and the Mediterranean that distance people on shores from their continental land mass (Europe, MENA – Middle East North African Countries).

Drawing upon internal debates on Islamo-phobia and with reference to ongoing dialogues among cultures, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd reminds us of Ibn Al Arabi's alternative to aggressive popular views and propaganda as circulated in special circles and on the web.²⁸ The core of mutual understanding lies in reaching the deepest spirit of a worldview, whether religious or secular; i.e. the spiritual side of a religion rather than religion in its institutionalized structures such as Churches and dogmatic expressions of ultra-Orthodox faith. Zayd explains that what overshadows the spiritual Islam in our current era is shari'a-oriented Islam; i.e. Islam as a legal system about what is lawful, halal and haram. The doctrine of haram, which overrides the spiritual and ethical basis of Islam, is the rationale of Islamo-phobia, locally and universally. In my view, religion per se is never an issue for bordering or politics; a different point is how any religion can be interpreted, taught, finalized and

instrumentalized for hegemonic purposes and thus can become a source of conflict, violence and oppression.

Another stereotype from essential readings of the Mediterranean is ‘Mediterranean hospitality’ in which hospitality is disputable.²⁹ Increased conflict and destruction of places and people, from the Balkans to Syria, appeared as ‘urbicides’,³⁰ ‘diversitycide’, masses of refugees, de-bordering, re-bordering, and cross-bordering of violence and hate, which provide instability, inequality, and pain. If power confrontations in a post-colonial sea raise the issue of in-hospitality and violence in the Mediterranean, can the Mediterranean be seen only as a conflictual and a geostrategically significant space? A liquid continent of pain?

2.6. The Mobility Issue and the Securitization of the Mediterranean: Camps, Detention Centres and the Mediterranean as a Border

Mass migration and European policies of containment through identification centres can limit personal freedom for months or years. These practices challenge the idea of a European identity based on human rights protection and enforcement and instead reformulate it as characterized by detention practices for non-criminal people. Detention is conceptualized as a paradoxical process where crisis and criminalization squeeze the global migrant population from all sides: ‘Detention policies may promise “security” through containment, borders, and exclusion; but, viewed as an integral part of global political economic circuits, these promises ring hollow and as recent research in detention studies suggests, the only “secure” outcome of these policies is the unparalleled global expansion of migrant detention’.³¹

Another bordering geography, in this case a border within a country not among countries but still bordering people and societies, is that of geographies of asylum and refuge; specifically, the geography of a refugee camp as a distinctive political space.³² In the particular case of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, Ramadan suggests an analytical strategy for refugee camp space.³² This strategy takes three analytical cuts into the space of the camp: a critical take on Agamben’s space of exception that accounts for the complex, multiple and hybrid sovereignties of the camp. Ramadan’s spatial analysis of the camp offers a way of grounding geopolitics, seeing its manifestations and negotiations in the everyday lives and practices of ordinary people. Thus, the camp is much more than an anonymous terrain of conflict or a tool of international agencies: understanding its spatiality is essential for seeing the everyday politics and material practices of refugees with ties and flows spanning the region (Figure 1).

3. De-bordering: Alternative Views for Releasing the Mediterranean from the ‘Unitary Cage’ and ‘South’

Predrag Matvejevic questions whether the boundaries and limits of the Mediterranean can ever be defined: ‘Its boundaries are drawn in neither space nor time. There is in fact no way of drawing them: they are neither ethnic nor historical, state nor national; they are like a chalk circle that is constantly traced and erased, that the winds and waves, that

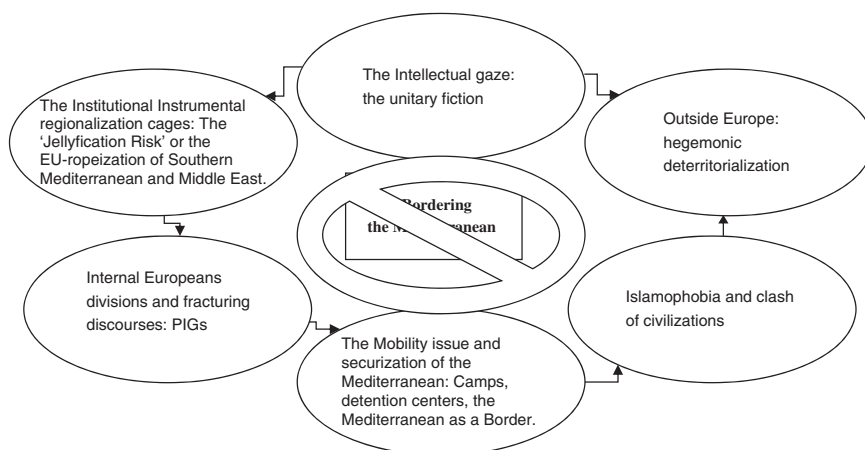


Figure 1. Bordering the Mediterranean.

obligations and inspirations expand or reduce'.³³ Indeed, there is no need for a solution to the boundary issue; neither is looking to create the Mediterranean as a 'regional subject' (Ref. 27, p. 346).

A missing point in the literature on the Mediterranean lies in neglecting the complexity of the interplay of spatial fixity and countless circulation, in spite of Gottman's ideas. The Mediterraneanist and Orientalist iconography can lead to a marginalization of the Mediterranean. Thus, a deeper engagement, avoiding characterizations of the Mediterranean as spatial fixity or historical continuity, or what I earlier referred to as 'iconographic characterization', is required. One should keep in mind that the Mediterranean is a 'postcolonial space' and a locus in the production of alternative modernities.²⁷

Views from the South outline the Mediterranean as a contested space and stress the notion that a Mediterranean politics without the Maghreb cannot be imagined. For centuries, the Maghreb has been constantly interlinked with Europe.³⁴ Even if the Mediterranean cannot be characterized in iconographic or orientalist terms, it still clearly emerges as a geographic notion of a differentiated space and a space of differences. Historically, it is an area of deep interconnections as well as violent conflicts. In contemporary geography, the Mediterranean is still an area of interactions posing a number of dilemmas and problems:³⁵ 'On parle souvent des deux rives de la mare nostrum, on oublie qu'elle on a plutôt six : la rive européenne homogène et riche, la rive balkanique véritable espace mosaïque, la rive eurasiatique avec la Turquie médiane, la rive orientale et son croissant (levant) fertile, la rive égyptienne et son dieu Nil, enfin la sud occidentale avec le Maghreb.'³⁶ If we regard the Mediterranean as a space of differences, several gaps and breaks between two shores are outlined. The low commitment of European investments in the South vis-à-vis the US commitment towards 'their South' or Japan's towards its South is to be blamed here. Further gaps risk being generated by the impressive pace of climate change in the region.³⁷ Only recently did the Union for the Mediterranean attempt to address these gaps and establish dialogue and trust.³⁸ Gaps and

breaking points are even exacerbated by a common trait pervading Northern and Southern societies: they are ‘ill of identities’.³⁹ That is to say, they are in search of their identity. Both feel menaced by the other and are now closer via telecommunications and media for the South and via human mobility for the North: ‘Ce qui joue sur le pourtour méditerranéen, ce sont des drames d’identité, culturelle, religieuse, nationale et ethnique’ (Ref. 39, p. 95). These ‘identity dramas’ rapidly worsen under globalization.³⁸ In a context of spatial-temporal compression and reduced physical distance in the Mediterranean Basin, it is precisely the instrumental EU vision of the Basin and the legacy of internal macro-region building entertained by Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Basin countries (for instance the ‘Panarab’ vision) that weaken the citizens’ perspective of the Mediterranean as a space of identification: ‘la Méditerranée est resté absente de la symbolique d’identification et appartenance arabo-musulmane, qui a plutôt priorisé l’unité Arabe et la consolidation des liens dans la UMMA, fondu sur la religion et la langue communes, de ce fait la méditerranée comme espace d’identification n’a jamais était pensée et encore moins célébrée’ (Ref. 34, p. 194). Thus, from the Mediterranean South and East, priority accorded to Arab-Muslim common features of identity has distanced shores and peoples, and fragmented the Mediterranean space thus far.

4. In Search of Cross-bordering (Bridging?) Thoughts and Practices

Elsewhere I proposed the concept of *Chora* to discuss ongoing attempts to conceptualize the Mediterranean and to analyse corresponding practices.⁴⁰ Quoting Olsson,⁴¹ for Derrida, following Plato, a chora is where the subject establishes his/her own place. To this end I first suggest that we reject ‘diorthosis’ in order to avoid that Mediterranean diversity be mistakenly reduced to a cognitive process and operational approach predetermining the nature of things and functionality modes before realizing a proper image of the object under investigation. Second, I suggest that we consider ‘Europe’ to be as dynamic a concept as the Mediterranean, without however implying that there is no regional subject to be grasped here. The point is that regional definition becomes a dynamic construct. Third, I suggest that Europe is not only interwoven with the Mediterranean, but that actually Europe is part of it. The use of the term ‘Euro-Mediterranean’ is misleading; ‘Europe’ already has a Mediterranean connotation.

The crucial issue then becomes: is the Mediterranean basin becoming an ‘inhospitable’ chora? Or are people starting to set their chora in a post-colonial sea? How can change be ‘mapped’ and governed in a non-not emotional way, in a spirit of true cooperation and solidarity even? My suggestion is to map the changes through the narratives of ordinary people, more so than through those of the power or other elites, and especially through the narratives of those in mobility (whether virtual or spatial) and their territory-building across shores. Contemporary tracks (or routes) for Mediterranean geographies then shape up as a horizon for me rather than a cartography ultimately producing cartographic ‘mediterraneanisms’.²⁷ Claval explicitly points out the horizons of people’s expectations in helping contemporary geographical studies of the Mediterranean beyond the approach of development/developing.⁴² I will refer to mobility flows that are shaping new geographies of

Euro-Mediterranean relationships and changes in the South, and especially in an interesting country such as Morocco.

5. Bridging, De-bordering, and Cross-bordering: Mobilities, Encounters, and Changes

5.1. The Role of Emotions and Affect in the Process, and Injecting these into Regional Analysis

The narratives of people in mobility challenge the stereotypes of Euro-Mediterranean relationships, including the idea of the Mediterranean as an immobile entity and the fixity of North–South schemes. They result from the author’s fieldwork in Morocco in the framework of the ongoing FP7 Project, Euro-Mediterranean Changing Relationships-MEDCHANGE, and from the cyberspace exploration of virtual links among shores and implications on the ground.

In my approach, regional analysis refers to a broader context, which is dwelled upon, constructed, and criticized by ordinary people, and encompasses both virtual and traditional geographic spaces. Encounters, mobilities, and dialectics bridge Mediterranean shores and societies. Intellectual, geopolitical as well as emotional attachments, abilities, and changes can occur in a novel geographic space where networks, bounded places and practices are blurred and simultaneously involved. Attachment and belonging become more complicated since flows of information and communication produce mutual regionalization (i.e. Italy–Morocco) and unusual cooperation, transcending or by-passing the usual North–South or European economic or security cooperation schemes. Connectivity at a distance can replace the need for a migrant community established in Europe to seek contact with its immediately surrounding environment. The driver here is a new reality of mobilities more than migration (push–pull and separate geographic areas linked to economic motivations).

Therefore, I will now discuss several drivers that contribute to changing Euro–Mediterranean relations:

- Virtual and real mobilities crossing: for example mass mobilization in real places and online democratic movements; activists’ virtual and spatial mobilities across shores in search of a ‘common sea’ (for example Tunisia–Italy and vice versa, really ‘mare nostrum’ in the meaning of a common sea); Blogs, Web2 activism challenging the social status quo and producing new forms of solidarities and links among shores.
- Human mobilities within countries and across shores coupled with digital communications crossing borders and making the Mediterranean a web of communication and a basin of opportunities.

If the space of flows has blurred borders and made places more flexible, wireless communications appear to constitute a novel spatiotemporal context in which all human intellectual abilities, not only rationality, are involved.⁴³

In what follows I draw upon a paper resulting from fieldwork in Lampedusa, which I discussed at an AE social sciences session in Paris 2011 and which benefited from

Manuel Castells's comments as the session's discussant.⁴⁴ I further draw upon another (joint) paper on Tunisian–Italian activists' mobilities,⁴⁸ and upon my ongoing fieldwork in FP7 Marie Curie IRSES Euro–Mediterranean Changing Relationships – MED-CHANGe. The findings highlight a process of regionalization not based on instrumental or elite views, but rather on the narratives of everyday people and their quest for dignity.

The nature of information produced, transmitted, and consumed changes. Rather than the traditional model of subjectivity predicated on the rational individual (e.g. homo economicus), the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in the political mobilization of the Tunisian people points to the catalytic role of collective emotions and affect, which have long been dismissed as irrational or insignificant in the literature on regional change.⁴⁴ It is evident from the tales by migrants that the cause igniting mass mobilization was a shared emotional state dominated by indignation, anger, and outrage. Mass mobilization cannot be explained only in terms of rational norms and expectations but must also be thought of in terms of 'irrational' factors such as emotions. Thus, if the literature on regional change is to take politics seriously, it must also address issues of affect and non-rational behaviour.^{45–47} This applies to democratic as well as violent movements. My argument is that information and solidarity between activists and citizens during the so-called Arab Spring movements reinforced ties among ordinary citizens from Europe and other Mediterranean shores. Societies felt closer as empathy is a factor of human cohesion. Parallel to wars, disruptions in the Mediterranean indeed lead to more cohesiveness.

The widespread presence of the internet in everyday life, especially among the young, and including mobile access, reduced social and spatial isolation and provided a channel for public discourse, but above all it reinforced collective emotions of outrage. Technologies such as cell phones, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and satellite television clearly enhanced the spread of indignation and anger, and facilitated the coordination of demonstrations. Young people, educated and living in urban areas, networked, created bridges and channels of information, forged solidarities across borders (e.g. de-bordered, bridged), acted as a 'collective' and created collective awareness.

The causes and effects of the Tunisian democratic movement were also profoundly shaped by local 'emotional geographies' that have largely escaped the attention of the scholarly community concerned with regional change. The popularity and power of ICTs were also embellished with the introduction of vernacular channels of communication (e.g. digital social networks, image and video sharing) and platforms in Arabic. These changes in the local information landscape have had a profound impact in encouraging political mobilization throughout the non-Western world (but also, to a lesser degree, in the Western world). This process can lead to a narrative of the Mediterranean as a space in pursuit of dignity. Basically a 'young people construct'.⁴⁸

5.2. *The Mediterranean Internet Mobility, Circulation, Network! Regionalization? The Role of Activism Mobilities in Bridging, De-bordering Mobilities*

Recently, activism and the quest for and attempts to attain free speech and expression have affected all countries in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and the Arab Peninsula.

From information gathered from Moroccan publications, the web, and local colleagues and people, it became clear that new generations and enlightened members of the middle class, through the use of networks in diverse and differentiated spaces, broke 'silence' and challenged, especially in Morocco and Tunisia, the usual gatekeepers of information and traditional taboos, which have never before been challenged.⁴⁹ It was a networked movement in which bloggers read and commented about other bloggers; this encourages discussion and altogether de-borders frontiers, expressing freedom and the need for freedom and showing political maturity, and the rise of an urban social segment. All this apparently does not look to produce new elites but inaugurates a sharing of expertise, experiences and cultural environments among different Mediterranean countries. This (virtual) mobility broke the usual North–South scheme for the circulation of ideas and made the South–East connection even stronger in an unusual regionalization pattern across all Mediterranean shores and beyond.

The Mediterranean internet of wired everyday people is shaping changes not only in the political domain by challenging traditional political communities but also social orders in the MENA (and Europe). Two driving forces can be highlighted: from one side, the internet bridges cultures, for example, fostering citizens' activism and the pursuit of free speech;⁴⁸ the other force is digital (satellite) TV, which generates geopolitical discourses and competition (for example, Saudi Arabia-Qatar with Al Arabya-Al Jazeera) and reaches many people in mobilities in Europe as well as northern African countries. In addition, they appear as geopolitical forces, influencing perceptions and narratives in countries that were less exposed in the past to the Middle East or the Gulf countries.

By challenging some taboos, the internet has been 'territorialized' across the Mediterranean as a locus of demand of transparency, access to information, and as a force breaking down the traditional political community, customarily shaped exclusively by restricted circles of information gatekeepers. As it turned out, this was an opportunity to nurture the exchange of experience and knowledge among people in various countries and to let them interact better than television or newspapers have, thus far, allowed people to. Indeed, cyber-journalism is an example, from Tunisian Jasmines to the Syrian war, of the changes in peoples' communicative paths across the Basin.

One institution that is already being challenged via the internet is marriage: the blog 'réseautage' sociale www.Mariage-marocaine.ma, disseminates via the internet discussions about the experience of marriage in other countries and about non-national customs. I see this as cross-bordering and bridging behaviour along shores. Sex before marriage and other sexual taboos were first discussed on the web. This kind of debate could have been violent if social networks had not prepared the terrain.⁵⁰ Minority rights, including those of homosexuals, likewise found room for discussion on the web. All are clear novelties and challenges in societies, which, as is the case in many Muslim countries, are primarily ruled by religion-inspired codes and behaviour.

Internet and bloggers focus debates, and aggregate and develop a new social agenda, which ultimately results in a national community. For example, in Morocco, bloggers created the regional information hub 'Blogoma'. The latter represents a different type of regional pole and regionalization compared with the more

traditional ones like the functional regional hubs in terms of, for example, economic attraction or transportation hubs. Moreover, bloggers and socially networked people read each other's work, discuss and develop debate, and trust each other, thus creating solidarity across countries and along shores. Some examples are discussed below and expand the issue of geographies of information and communication as a driver of Mediterranean regionalization and integration.

A network of human relations, solidarity, mutual help and recognition has been built across boundaries. It is an ongoing regionalization process across countries, and along vectors of empathy and trust, which have geopolitical significance. With 'Retweeting 25 October 2012', Slim Ammou geolocalized his phone and passed information to cyberspace in order for other networked people to track, in real time, his arrest by police and deliver the information along the liquid continent to shores and encourage indignation and resistance. The same happened to the Moroccan blogger Samira E., in Egypt in February 2011, and with Facebook page 'the 10 June 2010 Facebook Page <<Nous sommes tous Khaled Said>>'. Khaled Said was harassed by police, the related video was posted on YouTube, a Facebook page was opened, and had >300,000 followers in December 2010.⁵⁰ Through this page, activists coordinated spatial mobilization, coordinated action, sit-ins, protests etc. A collective was created. This page was a crucial milestone for Egypt's revolution since it focused awareness and indignation.

The Algerian practice of video blogs, a national network of citizens' denouncing police or public servant abuses and corruption was watched and quoted across the Mediterranean and emulated everywhere.

The following blogs were interlinked, watched and read reciprocally:

- DZactiviste (Algeria); NAWAT (Tunisia); Mamfakinch (Maroc); @Mujtahido (Saudi Arab); Société des blogs syriens; Alyemen55. blogspot.fr; House of Yemenite bloggers.
- Moroccan solidarity campaign for Syrian bloguese Ghazzani #freerazan on Twitter.
- Rima Dali informs the world on Syrian suffering.

Bloggers also meet in places linking mobilities in both virtual and new dimensions of an integrated Mediterranean and regionalization process, as in the case of Tunisian and Italian students and activists.⁴⁸

Today, all the world's TV chains circulate videos posted by militants from South or East Mediterranean. They have definitely reversed the stereotype that idea circulation always starts from the North. A pattern of regionalization, which contributes to changing the status quo, provides mobilization in different countries (for example, the 10 June 2010 page Facebook 'Nous sommes tous Khaled Said'); solidarity across countries (for example, the Moroccan solidarity campaign for Syrian blogger Ghazzani when she was arrested in 2008); through sharing and forming collective emotions (for example Rima Dali informs on Syrian suffering); communication flows agglomerate and aggregate societies' segments (for example the Facebookers' associations); re-shaping Mediterranean and Middle East North African Countries bloggers' and social networks; but also South-North Mediterranean views, such as the electronic journal Yabiladi.com,

MRE-marocains residents à l'extérieur, or exiled Syrians who have internet access and cooperate with Global Voice. From virtual space, activists go on to spatial mobilities as in the case of the Blog Day in Morocco in 2005 or in 2009 in Sanaa, the general meeting of Arab bloggers and human rights activists.

From mutual solidarity and networked information, a national aggregation of social network constellations arose and linked them, thus bridging human nodes in different countries. It formed a networked Mediterranean activism building a common discourse of geopolitical significance against dictatorships and, likely, a construction of shared identities and territorialities in pursuit of democracy.

5.3. *Euro-Mediterranean Mobilities as a Regionalization Process: Reversing the North–South Paradigm? The Moroccan Mobilities Case*

Migrants' geographical dispersion shapes a new reality, which refers to transnational networks and migratory movements. The 'connected migrant' is a new phenomenon that relates to the growing interconnection between human mobility and new technologies. The E-Atlas 'diasporas' dates back to 2003, when the sociologist Dana Diminescu developed her research programme on the basis of the new concept of the connected migrant.⁵¹ The idea of creating an atlas of diasporas on the web was part of a global approach anchored to the paradigm of mobility established in the 1980s.⁵² Diminescu's model of mapped mobility practices arises from the use of ICT, in order to 'consider the migrant in all her forms of mobility (physical, imaginary, virtual)' (Ref. 51, p. 570; author's translation).

The first phase of migrants' presence on the web was filtered online through sites managed by professionals on behalf of associations or institutions. However, in the last ten years the spread of Web 2.0 and 3.0 users has fuelled a proliferation of migrant virtual communities structured around traditional sites, blogs, forums, and more recently social networks and sharing platforms. On the epistemological level, the focus is the paradigm of e-diaspora, through online community practices triggered by the interactive web, including all the sites run by and for immigrants, both in the home country and abroad. Geographically dispersed and heterogeneous in terms of socio-economic conditions, the 'diaspora' is not a static entity but a dynamic rooted in the fluidity of the Internet and reinventing itself from time to time. Research thus shifts away from migrants as industry workers. Migrants increasingly act as traders and import-export entrepreneurs mastering a different Euro-Mediterranean economic area^{53,54} and its regionalization process (FP7 Euro–Mediterranean Changing Relationships – MEDCHANGE concept).⁵⁵ The most advanced research deals with transnational networks, nomadic territories and migrants who move from one place to another as an alternative to integration or assimilation, or with just *homo economicus* looking for job opportunities in various places. Thus, the migration paradigm is increasingly abandoned by researchers and re-conceptualized as 'mobility'.

Morocco is an exemplary case to explore new dimensions in the regionalization process, interlinking North and South and bridging shores because of multifaceted mobilities. In Morocco, since 2000, the migration phenomenon has been quickly

becoming more complex with the arrival of the Saharan migration, which questions the future of Morocco as a transit country or an immigration, perhaps even multi-migration, country.⁵³ The new South–South migration to Morocco is paralleled by European nationals also choosing Morocco as their residence. Economic migration from Southern European countries to Morocco was spurred by the economic crisis of 2008, but there is also a growing phenomenon of retired people, especially from France, who relocate to Morocco because they cannot afford a similar lifestyle in Europe.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the profile of Moroccan migrants changes and they now target diverse destinations. Research, following new directions, now studies origin and arrival destinations simultaneously.^{56–58} Moroccan researchers investigate and reflect on the situation of sub-Saharan immigrants and their future;^{59–62} but they also reflect on the drivers of migration while challenging the old explanatory models; they probe the effects of the economic crisis of 2008 on the situation of migrants, but also in respect of human rights and the perception of Europe.

Developments over the past 30 years have resulted in the transformation of migration practices,⁶³ showing migration, which at the beginning was confined to the Rif and traditional emigration destinations, extending to the entire Moroccan territory. This reconfiguration is usually seen in relation to developments in the new destination countries, Italy and Spain. The journeys from the place of origin to the place of migration are no longer linear and involve various stages as distances become longer: within Morocco, new migration routes evoke polarities imposed by illegal forms of migration to these new destinations.^{54,64} In Europe, the destination of the migrant is never final. Migrants are less likely to take root and, conversely, more often to look elsewhere for better living conditions. As a consequence, they often move from one country to another in Europe. Mobility projects are redeployed and new trajectories arise based on new perspectives imposed by circumstances.⁶⁵

Circulation replacing migration is transnational and involves several borders and poles. It removes the migrant from his or her territorial identity and replaces this with a network identity. This predominance of the network over the territory has led researchers to analyse the relationships between countries of the Southern Mediterranean, including Morocco, and Europe with new paradigms and concepts.^{66–69} Thus, studies evoke circulation instead of migration,⁷⁰ based upon the circulatory territory concepts, nomadic territory,⁷¹ or migratory pathways,⁷² better to highlight the effect of globalization on new migrants' attachments to their places. As much as mobility becomes structural, it also marks a weaker belonging to the host environment, and the relationship with the country of origin is consolidated. In fact, the Moroccan person in mobility continues to demonstrate a strong attachment to his/her country and his/her native region and sends remittances home. This attachment to the homeland is marked by frequent returns, transfers, and participation in developments at 'home'.⁷³ The prominence of the Moroccan identity in host locations around the world and in cyberspace justifies, for some authors, the use of the term diaspora.⁷⁴ This term, however, can be questioned because of its inflationary use and proneness to multiple interpretations. It also does not reflect the diversity of migratory situations through the relationships that nomadic and/or sedentary migrants have with places.⁷⁵ Moroccan mobilities actually fit into a dual relationship with the territory, marked by a nomadic mobility in search of access to the resources here and

there (Europe and Morocco), and a sedentary claim to citizenship in Europe while continuing to display a Moroccan identity.⁵³ This brings it closer to the paradigm of mobility, making the category of territories defined by national boundaries irrelevant.

Mobilities across the Mediterranean Basin have become even more of a shaping factor of Euro–Mediterranean relationships since migrants have become connected via the internet, leading to the reconceptualization of segregation/integration factors based on spatial concentration or dispersion. Considering mobilities as Euro–Mediterranean factors of relationships leads to interesting alternative models for characterizing social groups and identifying social segregation and integration as poles of one continuum.^{76,77} Euro–Mediterranean relationships are also shaped by, and increasingly themselves shaping, tensions about gendered perspectives of mobilities and integration/segregation dynamics in Europe as well as in the empowerment process going on in Europe and the Maghreb-Mashreq. The mobility of women has become an essential fact of Moroccan emigration in the 1970s, following family reunification. The first generation of migrant women basically followed the father or husband. Long invisible, these women over the years acquired power in the family, often strengthened by the presence of children and a relative financial autonomy. Second- or third-generation migrant girls often have access to education and employment that gives them a different profile from that of their mothers. Still, even if they are considered social and economic actors in their own right now, life is not always free from family constraints. Some are empowered and identify with the values of modernity of the host society, while the majority fail to go beyond the cultural conformity and/or religion imposed by the community of origin.⁵⁴ It is in relation to this dual socio-cultural field that women felt and still feel called upon to position themselves in recent migration, through education, marriage and/or work. To this existing situation has now, however, been added the position of women recruited for seasonal agricultural work in Spain, those called to live in the Gulf countries with domestic contracts, as well as that of artists or health care specialists. These developments yield an ever more complex picture of female emigration and call for approaches using more articulated gender registers and thus configuring new circulations and impacts in the Mediterranean contexts. Vause has identified four angles from which to approach migrant women studies: family reunification, labour markets, family strategies and migration networks.⁷⁸

Moroccan female migration means a profound social change. If women were sometimes able to avail themselves of the opportunity to design and build a life project outside of the country and without being supervised by a man, this happened because the Moroccan context was marked by a relaxation of cultural restrictions and the trend was more permissive with respect to women's mobility away from the social control of the family. The effect of migration on the status and condition of the non-migrant women is discussed in consideration of the new tasks assigned to them within the family and village due to the absence of men, the changing social relations as a result,⁷⁹ and the acquired margins of freedom to become independent actors,⁸⁰ leading more autonomous lives beyond family control.⁸¹

The overlap between political power and migrant associations in the host countries seems to be an emerging trend shaping Euro–Mediterranean relationships, particularly when it comes to the geopolitical competition that Muslim countries encourage for the control of Mosques in Europe. Between 1996 and 2006, there were nearly 1600 associations for Moroccans abroad. Bilateral cooperation on issues of security and preference from a hosting country towards a certain non-European Mediterranean country are also set via the network or constellation of cultural associations managing Mosques and communities.

It is urgent, then, that we study the phenomenon of mobility in Morocco in the light of the new features of the Moroccan migratory space. Morocco is now required to perform several functions and migration roles simultaneously. In addition to its historical role first as a temporary emigration country, followed by permanent migration, and then circular migration, Morocco now also performs the function of a country where populations from the South are permanently or temporarily settled, while at the same time developing into a temporary place of attachment for Europeans. This complexity of migration functions explains the difficulties of redefining the status of Morocco in the regional and global migration system and modifies the analytical frameworks.⁵³ Return migration as a rising phenomenon provides challenges of reinsertion in the return society but also a bridge with Europe (as in the FP7 MEDCHANGe concept). Such redefinition is underway; the country's decision to launch in 2014 a foreigners' regularization campaign for those who settled in the country and a recently issued Census of Foreigners in Morocco is the first episode of public policy in this direction. In my opinion, return migration is an emerging bridge for cooperation among shores.

Professional and unemployed people (crisis) mobilities are a rising phenomenon and, in my opinion, a driver of changing Euro–Mediterranean relationships. From Spain, and also Italy, young Europeans moved to Morocco looking to start up businesses in, for example, tourism in Marrakesh, while older Spanish people went looking for jobs in Tangiers. In relation to a European geography of crisis, not only do foreign direct investments (FDI) go South but migrants looking for employment also head South. Foreign communities in Europe, Europeans in the South, refugees and asylum seekers: all raise challenges and concerns, signalling the need for a better European-wide governance of mobility issues, reflection on contemporary cosmopolitanism, and what it means to live together in the Mediterranean Basin (Figure 2). Thus, are we building the Mediterranean as a *chora*? The Mediterranean looks like a sea of opportunities rather than a border. Mobile people connect States and places in everyday routines and claims. They are agents of change in their home and host countries.

6. Conclusions: Lessons for Different Regionalization Concepts and Practices?

This paper has critically reviewed the significance of the images of the Mediterranean and tried to correct some cognitive mistakes in light of outdated high culture readings of the Mediterranean, such as the intellectual gaze of the unitary myth, and the

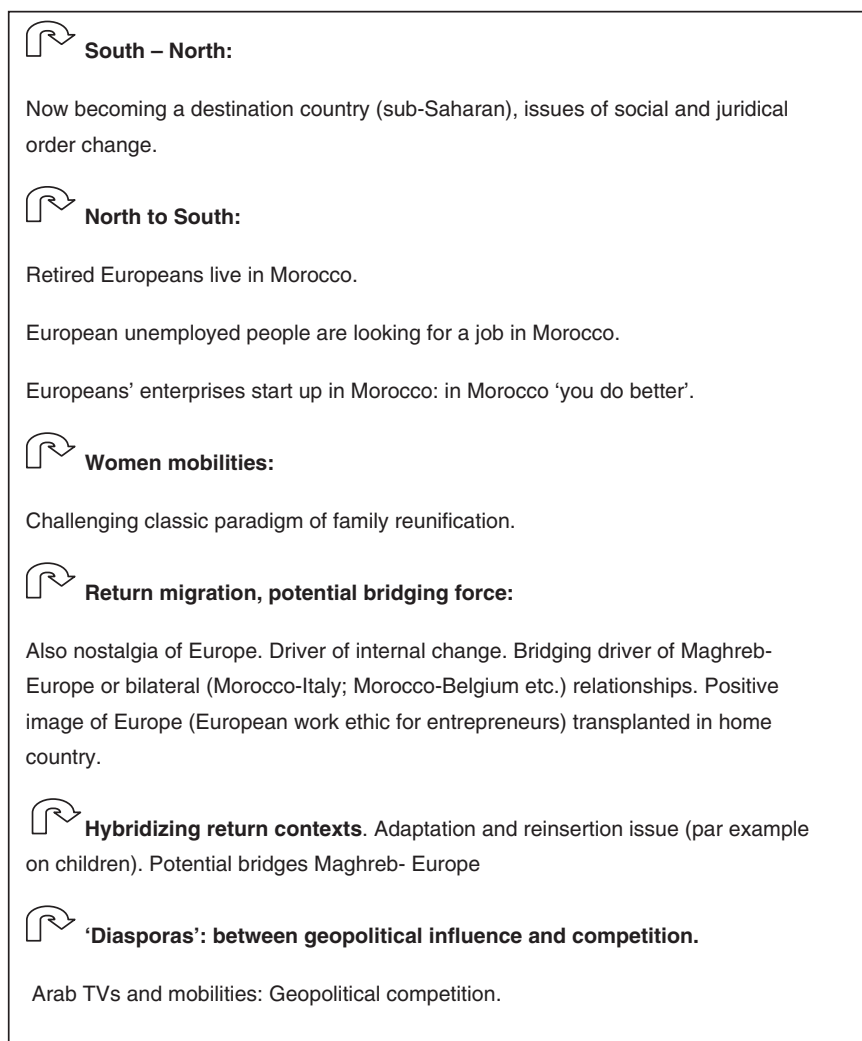


Figure 2. Moroccan mobilities: reversing mobilities paradigms and stereotypes of the Euro-Mediterranean relationships and regionalism.

instrumental Eurocentric views of regional cooperation embodying the political gaze and a source of turbulence. I developed this thinking based upon the dialectics between spatial change and legacy, which are different from the micro-history or *longue durée* of Braudel. I advocated reshaping the regionalization concepts and cooperation practices in the Euro–Mediterranean space in light of the changing relationships in Europe–North Africa–Middle East. These relationships are shaped by all kind of flows that are reversing the customary North–South paradigm, the East–West regionalization, and increasing ties across the Basin. Finally, the Internet age has brought about structural changes in the circulation of people, ideas, information, and goods.

However, the main issue remains: how to tackle the issue of new regionalization theories of the Mediterranean while escaping the naïve views of the Mediterranean as a border, implying a geography of ‘fractures’ or of a clash of civilizations, as well as a vague interface, suggested by the metaphor of the Mediterranean as a bridge of cultures? I opted for the metaphor of Chora and the method of listening to the narratives of people along the Mediterranean Basin’s shores regarding their perspective in crossing and encountering, cross bordering (bridging?) and re-bordering, in person but also through internet-mediated communication.

In my view, the metaphor of mobilities and networks challenges the fixity of North–South schemes, of the Mediterranean as an immobile entity, and the paradigm of the clash of civilizations. The current emerging geographies of interconnections call for a geography more based on networks, and on intertwining mobilities ranging from diasporas, the internet, foreign direct investments – including Arab sovereign funds and new types of exchange – to large infrastructural projects and hegemonic attempts; they suggest a delimitation of the Mediterranean region expanded to the Gulf with new trajectories to and from the Orient.

I used the case of Moroccan mobilities to highlight dramatic changes. They actually fit in a dual relationship with the territory, marked by both the nomadic mobility that seeks to provide the means of access to the resources of the territories here (Europe) and there (Southern shore), and the anchoring of sedentary people claiming citizenship while displaying their Moroccan identity.⁵³ This weakens the category of territories defined by national boundaries, which a lot of migration studies still rely on, and calls for a more accentuated ‘Mediterraneanized’ view of Europe.

Mobilities across the Mediterranean Basin have become a stronger factor shaping Euro–Mediterranean relationships since migrants are connected via the internet. This drives a reconceptualization of segregation/integration factors based on spatial concentration or dispersion in favour of intertwined cooperation and communication among shores, re-insertion issues (return migration) as well as a networked practice of citizenships across shores, which urges interlinked changes in Europe and the South.

The rising phenomenon of women’s mobility and agency adds complexity to changing relationships in the area and calls for approaches better articulated to express gender views since they are configuring new circulations and impacts in Mediterranean contexts across shores.

The overlap between political power and migrant associations in the host countries seems to be an emerging trend shaping Euro–Mediterranean relationships, particularly when it comes to geopolitical competition between Muslim countries for the control of Mosques. Bilateral cooperation on issues of security and preference from a hosting country towards a certain non-European Mediterranean country are also set via the network or constellation of cultural associations managing Mosques and communities.

Currently, the Mediterranean has a new centrality of interconnections in Euro–Africa–East and, above all, a new self-awareness, which is not only that of capitals (oil and elites) but of newly arising citizenships in the Arab Muslim world as well as in Europe in a quest for equity and justice. Driving factors in this are the internet and the social media.

The geography of crisis in Europe and the US thus anticipates a new world order where networks of common people and money–power flows constitute new geographical dialectics. Europeans go South in search of a job and a better life. Some North African people return home and start to re-shape societies or push for changes. Women in the North, South and East commit and perform female agency, which challenges the status quo.

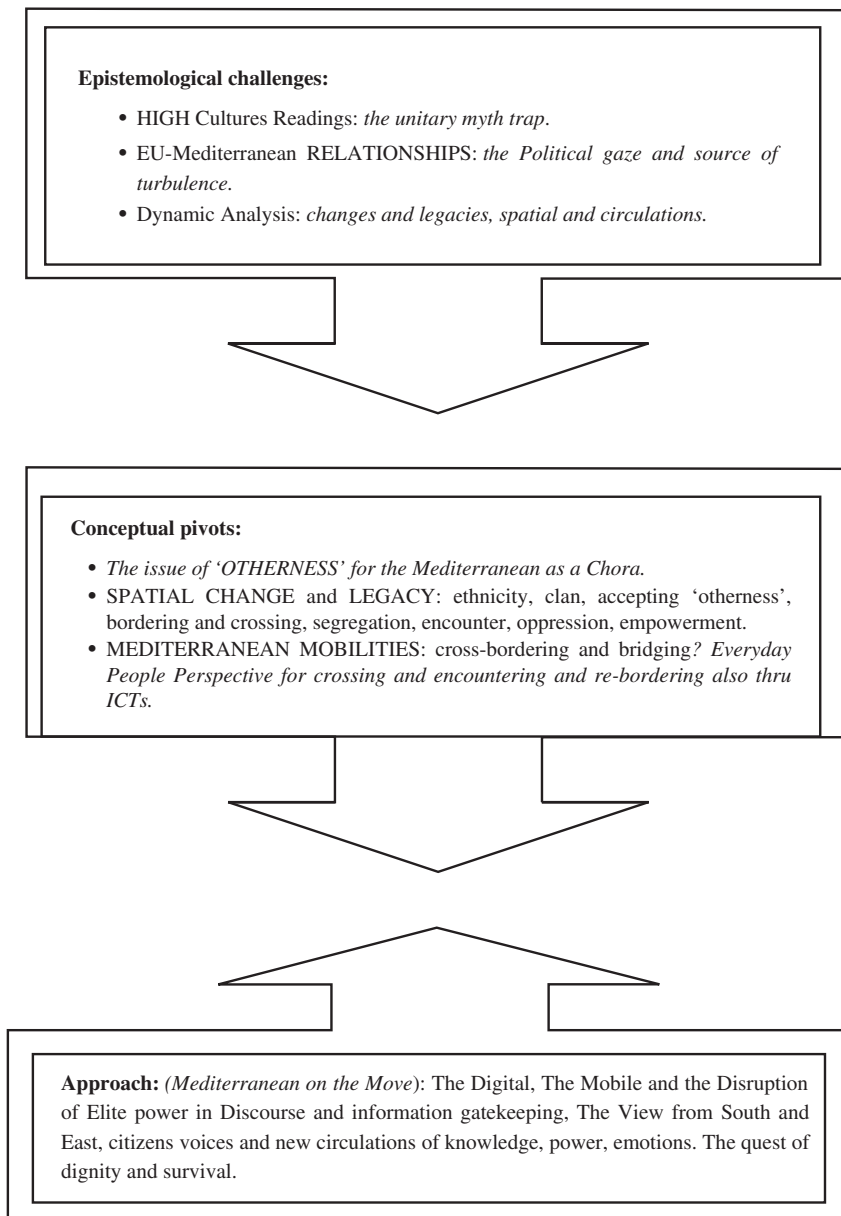


Figure 3. A theory of the Mediterranean region.

This new ‘Thing’, the ‘Mediterranean on the move’, results from the digital, the mobile, and the disruption of elite power in discourse and information gatekeeping, the rise of views from South and East, the voices of citizens, new circulations in quests for dignity, the reversion of North–South stereotypes (Figure 3). All these emphasize this inner sea as a space for opportunities of all kinds of mobilities and exchanges that are often not seriously considered by politics. Meanwhile, asylum seekers and refugees escaping from war reveal the poverty of European humanity and question the building of Europe and its political projection and moral influence in the World.

There is no assumption of the ‘Mediterranean as a bridge of cultures’ – we are all actors of networking communities.

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