



Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

THE SPECTACLE OF THE CANARY BORDER

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Nit, nit ay garabam

Man is the remedy of man

(Wolof proverb)

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ABSTRACT

The Canary Route of boat-migration towards the European Union has been used since 1994 and was consolidated as the deadliest of the world in 2021. In the meanwhile, the region of the Canary Islands registers the highest number of tourists overstays in the entire European Union, and the figure keeps growing. This paradox existing in the Canary Islands arises the question: Why is it possible that the region with the biggest number of overnight stays in the EU is also surrounded by the deadliest border in the world? Therefore, starting from theories of critical geography, and the Debordian concept of spectacle, an attempt has been made to unravel how the productive relations in regard to human mobility towards the islands are hidden by the spectacle of the Canary Border. The use of the concept of spectacle responds to the fact that it is a useful tool to try to uncover what the capitalist system and its neoliberal economy is hiding and *masking* in the Canary Islands border. To this end, qualitative inductive research including a bibliographic review together with a fieldwork consisting of semi-structured interviews in the Canary Islands was carried out. After analyzing the situation in the Canary pre-border, actual border and post-border, it was concluded that there is a continuum that persists for the benefit of capital accumulation serving the neoliberal economy allowing the death of thousands at the gates of a territory increasingly modified for the entry of millions.

PREFACE

When back in March 2020, the world seemed to stop in a way it never did before, I was living outside of my country of origin, concretely in Poland. At that time, most of the borders of the world were closed, and I, for the first time in my life, found difficulties to move across them. Even so, I was able to get back to my home country, Spain. But during the months during which, as so many people along the world, I was locked down, because of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, I became especially sensitive to the reality of the millions of people who *always* find it difficult or even impossible to cross certain borders. Furthermore, during that time, it was possible to see how the extraordinary measures imposed to contain the pandemic considerably aggravated that situation.

This awareness encouraged me to focus my Bachelor's Thesis (in International Relations at the Complutense University of Madrid) on the situation of a group of *cross-border women*, Moroccan season laborers, who, year after year come to Spain for the harvest of Huelva (Andalucía, Spain) red fruit. When the borders of Spain and Morocco were closed, some of these women were forced to spend their harvest earnings (crucial source of family income in the origin country) on the involuntary extended stay in Spain, while those who directly could not reach Spain, also lost that necessary income.

Inquiring on the multiple conditions that these workers had to meet to obtain the employment contracts that would allow them to travel to Spain (rural origin with experience in agriculture; married widowed or divorced; with children at their charge and under 45 years of age in a good physical condition), made me realize that their passage through the border was totally conditioned on their immediate return to Morocco, all of which was sustained thanks to a border regime that conditioned their hiring on those qualities that were understood to make them more vulnerable and exploitable in the face of the terrible working and housing conditions (increasingly publicly known and denounced) that awaited them in Huelva.

Simultaneously, I began to monitor the very important work that Ca-Minando Fronteras (Walking Borders) was carrying out by reporting *necroborder* policies and their consequent deaths at the gates of Europe. The tireless denouncing labour that every person part of this collective founded in 2002 by Helena Maleno was doing,- which evenled to the violent expulsion of Helena Maleno from Morocco (country where she lived

for over twenty years) after a joint operation between the Spanish ministry of interior (UCRIF) and the Moroccan police that sought to criminalize her for her commitment with the defense of human rights of migrant people, in the context of the increasingly widespread criminalization of solidarity with migrants-. Thanks to Ca-Minando Fronteras work, I was able to become familiar with the reality of the borders of the Spanish state at that time, which inevitably made me focus at the Canary border, which was registering high numbers of arrivals, but also of deaths, in the Canary Route of boat-migration towards the Canary Islands, therefore becoming the most dangerous border in the entire world.

Since then, I have been following the evolution of the Canary Route, especially in the months in which its borders were closed to the rest of the Spanish State and/or the European Union, moment in which multiple events of violation of rights and tension occurred as a consequence of converting the Canary Islands into *Prison Islands* for thousands of boat-migrant people.

In August 2021, I arrived at Radboud University and finally met Professor Dr. Henk van Houtum in person, expert on borders and also Director of the entity where I ended up doing my complementary internship to this Thesis: Nijmegen Centre for Border Research (NCBR). He finally became my thesis supervisor, and encouraged me to focus my Master's Thesis on the Canary Route, which was very familiar to him, since he previously worked around the previous period of great activity and mortality of the Route (registered between 2005 and 2008), resulting in the article *Europe's Shame: Death at the Borders of the EU* (2009) co-written with Freerk Boedeltje. That article, as well as all the accompanying and guiding work of Professor Henk Van Houtum have been crucial in the preparation of this thesis, for which I am enormously grateful.

Carrying out this whole research has been very challenging in many ways, I was facing something that I had never done before, also in a very serious context which deserved a lot of respect. For this reason, I could not be more grateful for all the help received in the Canary Islands by all the people I got to know and whom I sometimes had the pleasure to interview. I could never have imagined a welcome like the one I received on the two trips I made between March and May 2022 to the islands of Tenerife and Gran Canaria.

All the people with whom I had the opportunity to speak helped me infinitely to get closer to the reality of the Canary border, hidden behind its *spectacle* so complex and

full of edges, from the respect and affection of the land they inhabit, which although it hides behind a bloody border, it also hides thousands of stories of support, accompaniment, tireless effort and, above all, tireless fight against the violence of the *necroborder*.

With all this, I would like to remember them before starting the thesis and thank them for the unconditional support they have been providing throughout the entire investigation, without them it would not have been possible to approach this complex border that in this thesis I have tried to *de-spectacularize*. With special affection I would like to remember Txema, Natacha, Talía and Mariama, who supported this work so much from the very beginning.

Above all, I hope I have managed to capture in the same way that I feel my profound respect for the people who are forced to take the Canary Route; my great admiration for those who try to make things change once and for all; and my great rejection to the multiple *necroborder* policies that, according to Walking Borders, have already killed 978 people in their attempt to reach the borders of the Spanish State in the first semester of 2022; and that keep people dying for the mere act of migrating all over the world.

Finally, I hope that the reader enjoys reading this thesis, which I have done with much respect and dedication. I am also available to anyone who would like to contact me to talk or discuss on any of the issues mentioned here.

Thank you very much,

Elisa García Lerena

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The region with the highest number of overnight stays in the EU is surrounded by the deadliest border in the world. In 2021, the Canary Route was consolidated as the most dangerous and deadly migratory route in the world, with 4016 victims in a total of 124 shipwrecks (Ca-Minando Fronteras, 2022). In 2018¹, the Canary Islands were at the top of non-resident stays in tourist accommodations (Hernández et al, 2021).

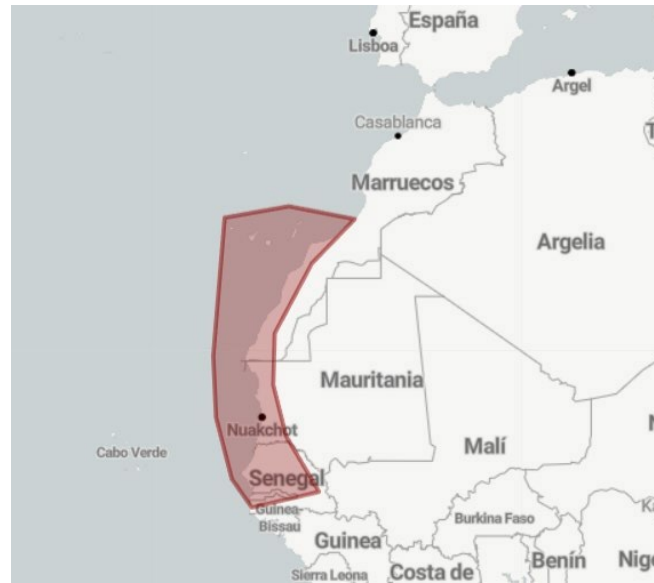


Figure 1 Map of the Canary Route elaborated by Ca-Minando Fronteras (2021). The Canary Route refers to the boat-migration route departing from Africa (fundamentally the coasts of Morocco and Western Sahara, but also Mauritania and Senegal) with destination Europe, specifically the Canary Islands, archipelago of the Spanish State located next to the west African coast.

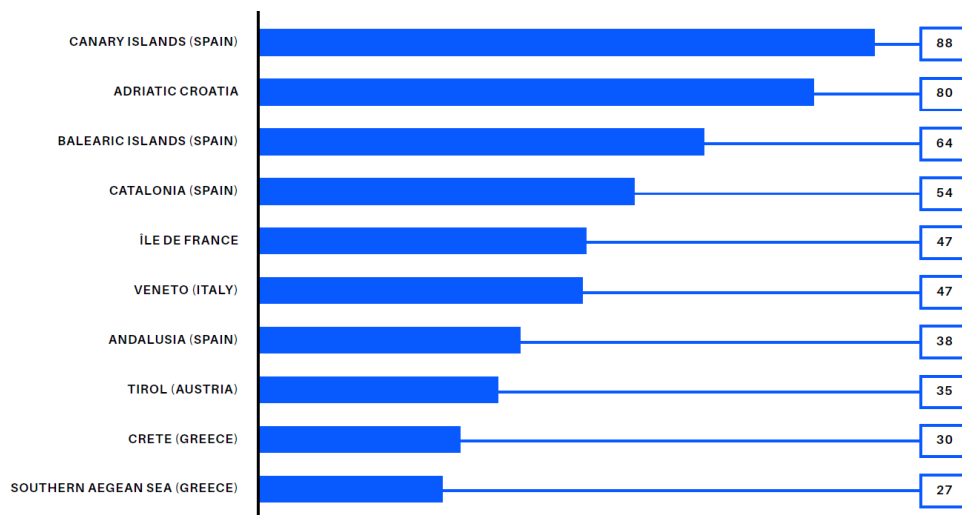


Figure 2 Overnight stays of non-residents in the main European tourism regions, 2018 (millions). Source: EUROSTAT. Retrieved from the Preliminary report of the Tourism Observatory of the Canary Islands (2021)

¹ 2018 is the last year in which there is register for all the EU regions.

The Canary Islands, part of the Spanish State, are located in the Atlantic Ocean, 1300km away from Europe's mainland and 100km away from the African West Coast. This unique geographical position, close to the equator, brings together one of the Canary Islands main attractions: its climate. With an average temperature of 20°C, the archipelago offers a climate and multiple natural landscapes that cannot be found anywhere else in the entire EU, but this same geographical position brings another possibility, together with tourism for which the EU seems to be not that excited about: boat-migration coming from the West African coast.

"(...) thousands of people who are denied entry are knocking insistently at the doors of this supposed paradise. Again and again, in zodiacs, in small boats, in cayucos or slave ships, immigrants from the African continent crash against the invisible walls of Europe" (Naranjo, 2006, p.14-15).

This makes the Canary Islands a particularly interesting and paradoxical place since in a space of only 7,493 square kilometers, two very different displays of human mobility, two whole very different realities, have coexisted in the Canary Islands for several decades now, establishing a sort of *continuum* in which the Canary Border seems to be increasingly open to tourists while the safe entry of boat-migrant people is denied. Now, since when has this been the case, and why is it allowed to continue?

1.1 Problem statement

1.1.1 Tourism in the Canary Islands

Until the middle of the last century, the Canary Islands were an impoverished territory, even in comparison to the Spanish mainland, since the situation after the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) and the subsequent period of economic autarky caused Spain to be strongly weakened economically (Márquez, 2018). Plus, the agrarian economy and the small regional industry existent in the Canary Islands were insignificant in the post-war world market (ibid).

But in the context of the so-called Spanish "developmentalism" (1959-1975) for economic modernization, the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco started to promote tourism in the Canary Islands, concretely mass tourism (Domínguez, 2008). Through the "Plan de Estabilización de 1959²" (Stabilization plan of 1959), the Dictatorship proposed

² The "Stabilization plan of 1959" consisted of a set of economic measures approved by the government of the dictatorship in 1959 to end the autarky that had existed since the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) whose objective was the stabilization and liberalization of the Spanish economy.

to end autarky and promote an opening to global capitalism in an attempt to carry out national reindustrialization through development (Márquez, 2018). The intentions underlying this plan also implied the passage from an industrializing nationalist ideology (typical of the autarkic period) to a consumer society (that made depoliticized middle classes) and was making its way worldwide (ibid.). Indeed, it was because of common interests between the old large agrarian property, the most dynamic sectors of the local middle bourgeoisie and international financial capital that the development of mass tourism in the Canary Islands took place (ibid.).

In this way, the number of visitors to the region was increasing year after year from the 1960s, and Franco promoted the propagandistic idea that "tourism contributed foreign exchange and acted as an economic 'locomotive'" (Domínguez, 2008, par.23). But the truth was that despite the arrival of more and more people every year was bringing undoubted benefits especially in terms of infrastructure in the islands, the exponential increase in tourist arrivals was far from becoming a direct improvement in the quality of life in the archipelago. Instead, what was actually going on was that "Franco's regime fueled tourism growth based on the social underdevelopment of the Canary Islands, of a very low-skilled workforce that moved from agricultural activities to services, maintaining high levels of exploitation and very precarious wages" (Márquez, 2018, p. .25).

The decade of the 1970s was characterized by the "tourism boom", especially that of "sun and beach", was accompanied by support policies to the sector coming both from the central and the regional government. This, added to the process of globalization and transnationalization of capital, gave entry for the first time to the Islands to more and more "international companies with greater market share and financial support" (Domínguez, 2008, par.16). As of this decade, the socio-economic and territorial transformation of the Canary Islands was consolidated (ibid.).

With the end of the dictatorship, mass tourism continued to be promoted on the islands, although not in the way that the Franco regime had foreseen (in the framework of the industrial sector), but rather in the framework of the services sector, which would take great strength at that time that remains to this day.

In 1992, a total of 6,019,221 tourists arrived to the Canary Islands, and in 2001, the figure rose to 10,137,202 (Domínguez, 2008, par.25). Nowadays, there is no doubt that the Canary Islands have established themselves as a relevant European tourist

destination of “sun and beach tourism” (Marrero, 2006; Domínguez, 2008; Hernández et al, 2021), that has turned the archipelago into an "an apparently exotic tourist destination, in a warm climate for the enjoyment of bathing, sun and tranquility" (Domínguez, 2008, par.5).

The problem is that a large part of the tourism development of the islands that has brought them to these figures has been carried out without taking into account the importance of conserving areas of high ecological value. The region has been years opting for macro-constructions and macro-projects to respond to the demand of mass tourism on the islands, a model that has proven unsustainable and has been occupying more and more territories of the islands and is expected to occupy more and more. The problem is that it seems that it is not taking into account that this development model "is destroying what makes the Canary Islands unique: their biodiversity" (Ravina Olivares, 2022, 26:07-26:10), which without will certainly bring with it environmental catastrophes, but also economic ones for the Canary Islands.

As stated by Domínguez, the “construction maelstrom” has “modified the natural dynamics of some spaces, alternating the tides, the circulation of the sands, endangering the conservation of some endemic species and destroying the orographic conformation of ridges and ravines, with a type of building that has not respected the original physiognomy of the territory” (2008, par.19).

Given the awareness that this was happening, there has been a growing concern about the sustainability of this type of tourism starting in the 1990s, which has led to attempts to capture new segments of tourist demand somewhat further away from mass tourism to safeguard the possible negative effects that it tends to have. In this way, efforts have been made to protect the Canary Islands through quality plans and control policies designed for the growth of the islands’ tourist infrastructure (Domínguez, 2008, par.25).

In economic terms, tourism in the Canary Islands represents around 30% of its GDP in years prior to the pandemic. In 2019, the tourism sector accounted for 33% of the regional GDP and 36.5% of employment (Instituto Canario de Estadística, 2022), thanks to the millions of tourists that have entered the region to enjoy its landscapes on a pleasant beach vacation at any time of the year.

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020 and tourism in the Canary Islands came to a complete standstill, it caused, as might be expected, a deep economic

crisis in the region, but there were certain “positive consequences” of the quarantine, which were that the cessation of arrivals of tourists to the islands and the consequent circulation of hundreds of boats had an extremely positive effect on the marine species that inhabit the waters of the islands³, registering (among many other benefits), much fewer deaths of cetaceans (Ravina, Olivares).

But it is necessary to bear in mind that mass tourism in the Canary Islands “is a double-edged sword, because although in the last century it contributed significantly to improving the quality of life in the Canary Islands, it is currently compromising its natural resources , which are one of the main reasons why thousands of people visit the archipelago” (Ravina Olivares, 2022, 21:30-21:53).

1.1.2. Boat-migration in the Canary Islands

In the meantime, the first arrival through the Canary Route occurred on August 28, 1994, when two young Sahrawis arrived in small boat to Las Salinas del Carmen, a village of Fuerteventura. From that first boat, the arrivals continued through which would become known as the *Canary Route*, experimenting periods of intermittent activity over the years.

Between 1994 y 1997 only about 40 boats got to the Canary Islands, but from 1998 more and more began to arrive (Naranjo, 2006). During 1999 more than a thousand people, -mostly Moroccans and Saharawi’s-, arrived in small groups by pateras⁴. That same year, the first of the many deadly shipwrecks that the route continues to accumulate to took place, taking its first seven victims (Castellano & Medina, 2014).

From 2000 the route diversified in many ways (Godenau & Zapata, 2022). Until then, it used to be a geographical proximity migration route in which Moroccan and Saharawi citizens departed from those same countries towards the easternmost islands of the archipelago (mainly Lanzarote and Fuerteventura) (ibid, p. 49), but in the new century, thank to the use of other kind of crafts: cayucos⁵, the boats were able to depart from more

³ The great variety of species present on the islands have even made the south of Tenerife receive important environmental awards, such as Point of Marine Hope by the organization Mission Blue or the qualification of the First Whale Sanctuary in Europe. (Ravina Olivares, 2022).

⁴ Pateras are small wooden boats originally used for fishing in shallow waters. They have been used for decades for boat migration.

⁵ Cayucos are wooden boats, originally used for fishing in open waters since they allowed to spend several months in the open sea without having to go ashore. Cayucos are considerably larger than *pateras*

distant places, concretely southern points of the African coast. From then, the route began to be frequented by people from many more nationalities, among which Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Congo, Guinea Conakry and Ghana stood out (Naranjo, 2006, p. 33). In addition, many more women (some of them pregnant and/or with small children) began to arrive in the cayucos.

Between 2005 and 2008, there was a considerable increase in the number of people taking the Route, drifting into what became to be known as the *Crisis de los Cayucos* (Cayucos Crisis). This greater use of the route is explained by the fact that during those years, the militarization of the land borders of Ceuta and Melilla was intensified, making the Canary route the “best way” to reach the European Union, which ended up in disturbing records in deaths and disappearances never seen before (Ca-Minando Fronteras, 2022a). The moment of greatest arrivals was in 2006, when more than 3200 people arrived at the Islands (Por Causa, 2022).

The Spanish Government approved the Plan of Action for Sub-Saharan África (2006-2008), known as *Plan África*, with the intention of preventing migration through development in the origin countries agreed thank to bilateral agreements with Gambia, Guinea, Cabo Verde, Mali and Niger and memorandums of understanding with Senegal (Black, 2021).

In 2007, *Operación Hera* (Hera Operation) started, in coordination with FRONTEX, the Spanish Civil Guard, the Spanish Maritime Rescue and the military and security forces from Mauritania, Senegal and Italy (PorCausa & Andalucía Acoge, 2018). Through different *Hera Operation*, the arrival of *cayucos* was progressively intercepted.

Later, and because of the externalization of European Union’s Southern border to West African countries, thanks to *Plan África II* (Africa Plan II) (2009-2012), the *Ruta Estrecho* (Estrecho Route) became the most frequented when trying to reach the Spanish territory.

and have more capacity (up to 100 people).

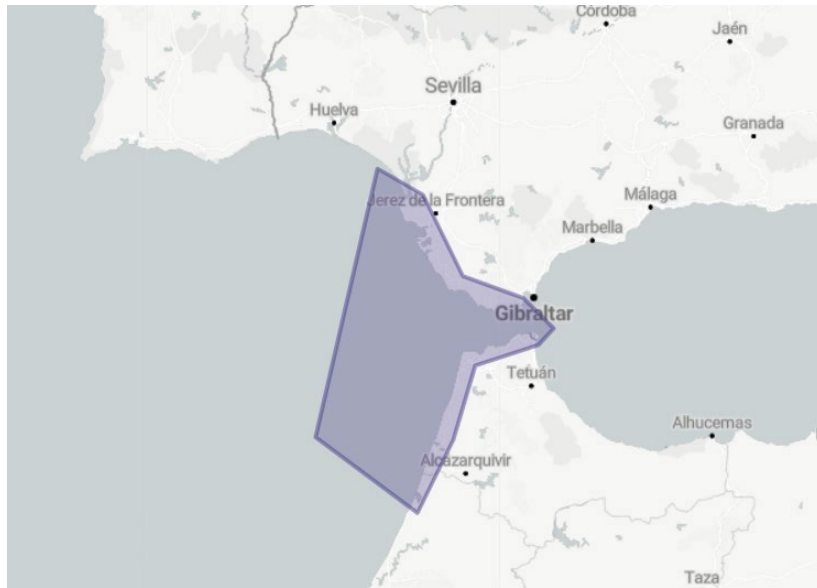


Figure 3 Map of the Estrecho Route elaborated by Ca-Minando Fronteras. The Ruta Estrecho refers to the route taken by boat migration that departs from Africa (from the coasts of Morocco) and arrives to Europe (to the Southern part of the Iberian Peninsula).

But the securitization of the Mediterranean border caused the Canary Route to be reactivated in 2017, yet those first arrivals were dismissed and there was no movement to organize an appropriate reception structure in anticipation of the increase of arrivals that was already taking place (Godenau & Zapata, 2022), instead, there was an overreliance on "the existing capacities and the possibility, always recurring, of combining returns to the areas of origin and transit" (ibid, p. 52). Although FRONTEX invested €990,957 in the Joint Operation (JO) Minerva, between the Canary Islands and the West African Coast in 2018 (Por Causa, 2021).

In 2020, year of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 23,000 people arrived to the Canary Islands (CEAR, 2021), while a total of 1784 lost their lives in the attempt (Ca-Minando Fronteras, 2021). Added to the lack of preparation for these arrivals, of course no one counted on the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic would have on human mobility (as in so many other areas involved in boat-migration). At the end of that same year, one of the most shocking images of the entire reactivation of the route was produced: the *shame* of Arguineguín, a pier on the island of Gran Canaria in which, at the end of the year, 2,600 people were overcrowded lying on the ground without the minimum health conditions, in what became the international image of the crisis ongoing in the Canary Islands (Martín & Bauluz, 2021).

“In those months, legal assistance, the detection and reception of minors, access to asylum and care for the most vulnerable failed. Although more than 10,000 hotel rooms were opened in record time, dozens of migrants began to live on the streets and the Police blocked ports and airports to

make it difficult for the new arrivals to reach the continent. The cocktail, in the midst of a health and economic crisis, caused outbreaks of xenophobia never before seen on the islands” (Martín & Bauluz, 2021).

Within this context, concretely in the month of November, the Spanish State relaunched *Operation Hera*, in collaboration with FRONTEX. Seven FRONTEX agents together with more personnel were sent to the Canary Islands in the attempt to try to stop and intercept the arrival of boats again (Por Causa, 2021, p.26).

According to the report presented by Ca-Minando Fronteras, which collects data on the victims on the different maritime routes arriving in Spanish territory, by 2021, the Canary Route was consolidated as the most dangerous and deadly migratory route in the world, with 4016 victims in a total of 124 shipwrecks (Ca-Minando Fronteras, 2022).

In the first semester of 2022, the Canary Route accumulates a total of 800 victims, being the deadliest of all of them, and according to Ca-Minando Fronteras this is due to “ Its physical characteristics, the boats too flimsy for the ocean, the long distances, the political relations between the countries in the area subject to maritime and land territorial interests, make collaboration difficult to defend the right to life between the countries, or that there are delays in the activation of rescue services” (Ca-Minando Fronteras, 2022, p.7).

The report prepared this same year by the collective also mentioned the recent death of 40 people on June 24, 2022 while trying to cross the Melilla fence, a result of the implementation of the renewed good neighbor agreement between Spain and Morocco (Ca-Minando Fronteras, 2022, p.17). The action of the Moroccan gendarmerie and the Spanish police was applauded by the Spanish President Pedro Sanchez, who even went so far as to pronounce the words: "It was a violent assault, well organized, well perpetrated and in this case, I believe, well resolved by the two security forces, both from Spain and Morocco" (Machuca, 2022). After the recent actions of Morocco and Spain in the fence, Morocco will receive 500 million euros from the European Union for the control of its borders, which is really scary if you think because as much as the last show of border control by Morocco has resulted in the murder of 40 people at the fence, it seems that they want to encourage them to continue doing the same.

1.1.3 The concept of spectacle

In this master's thesis, I will try to uncover the status quo, and more precisely, the paradoxical *continuum* that is taking place in the Canary Border by which thousands of people die trying to cross the same border that more and more people are invited to cross. For this, it will be essential to start from the premise that the border is "more a necessary and immovable continuum between opening and closing than a line" (Van Houtum, 2010, p.958).

Keeping that in mind, I propose the use of the term *spectacle* raised by the French philosopher Guy Debord in *The Society of the spectacle* (1967), in that work, Debord defined the (modern) spectacle as: "the autocratic reign of the market economy" (1998, p.2) and stated that "understood in its totality, the spectacle is both the result and the goal of the dominant mode of production" (ibid, p.8), as Debord himself clarified in his later work: *Comments of the Society of the spectacle* (1988). According to this, under the *spectacle*, boat-migrant people and tourists cross the same space but, as might be expected, do not occupy the same place, differentiating them based on the role they play under the capitalist mode of production. In the case of the Canary border, "The image that Debord discovers corresponds precisely to the image that articulates and subtends the capitalist system. Therefore, it is an image that, like the metaphor, while it shows a meaning, hides the reality it re-presents." (González, 2021, p.11).

This is precisely why I opted to use the spectacle, since what is currently going on in the Canary Border shows an image that "articulates and subtends the capitalist system: that of the millions of rich tourists enjoying the Islands as well as that of the poor, racialized boat-migrant people struggling or even dying to reach that same space when the fact, the important thing is that this image, *hides and masks the reality it represents*, by meaning the reality under the *reign of the neoliberal economy* within the capitalist system that only normalizes the paradox by which some enjoy the sea while others die in it but that rather even needs of that paradox to function and continue its existence and development, its continuum.

Debord starts from Marx's concept of commodity fetishism, elucidated in *The Fetishism of Commodities* in Volume One of *Capital* (1867). Marx explains how the product of the human being work is presented to him reflected as if it were a mirror, causing the social characteristics of this product of labor to be presented as objective characteristics or as social properties inherent in the nature of those products. In this way,

the product of work acquires the form of merchandise, whose fetishistic character springs from the very social nature of the work that produces it. In this way, what happens is that "There is nothing here other than a certain social relationship between men themselves, which acquires for them the phantasmagorical form of a relationship between things" (Marx, 2014, p. 36), losing the social characteristics of human labor (that come to be understood as natural, given), while the product of that labor comes to be understood as alien.

Borders are products of human labor, and what happens with the Canary border in particular is that the result of this labor has created a paradox as brutal, deadly and paradoxical as the one ongoing nowadays, but above all, what it is *mysterious*, since its fetishized (and even more, spectacularized, in the sense that everything has been converted to a spectacle) appearance is perceived as too strong and too consolidated as inevitable, uncontrollable and *alien* for the human as to glimpse the mere possibility of trying to disentangle the social reality that is hidden under the mask of that (spectacular) border. As Terry Eagleton collects from Marx's writings in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844): "human powers, products and processes escape from the control of human subjects and come to assume an apparently autonomous existence. Estranged in this way from their agents, such phenomena then come to exert an imperious power over them, so that men and women submit to what are in fact products of their own activity as though they are an alien force" (Eagleton, 1991, p.70). In the case of the Canary Border, it exerts an imperious power over the same society that socially produces and reproduces it, but since "society is no longer perceptible as a human construct" either (1991, p.85) it is not understood as "humanly alterable" (ibid).

But as much as the contemporary "society is fragmented by this commodity logic" and as much as "it is no longer easy to grasp it as a totality, given the atomizing operations of the commodity, which transmutes the collective activity of social labour into relations between the dead, discrete things [as the Canary Border]" (Eagleton, 1991, p.85), the concept of *the spectacle* allows to interrelate and connect "a wide range of seemingly unconnected phenomena" (Debord, 1992, p.9), since it happens that "the apparent diversities and contrasts of these phenomena stem from the social organization of appearances" (ibid.), and therefore are unified since they are all the result of *the atomizing operations of the commodity* to which Eagleton was referring and "whose essential nature must itself be recognized. Considered in its own terms, the spectacle is an affirmation of

appearances and an identification of all human social life with appearances” (ibid.).

The reproduction of this *human social life* is what reproduces the social space, which, just as the spectacle itself, is both "homogeneous and fragmented" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 320), and this is due to the "reproduction of social relations [of human social life]" (ibid, p.321), which results in the paradoxical reality of tourists and boat-migrants crossing the Canary Border.

Although it is clear that "Global inequality consolidates and irregularized migration flows towards and across EU's borders persist" (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p.), the question here will not be to delve into the brutal difference between these two realities, strengthening even more the vast border between these two borders that has been consolidated over the last decades. Therefore, the way by how I would try to use the concept of spectacle would be to think about society as a whole, despite the great difficulty this presents, because the spectacle encompasses it entirely, and has spread itself to the point where it now “permeates all reality” (Debord, 1998, p.9).

But no matter how much “the sensationalism of the spectacle (...) become the stuff of which consciousness is forged” (Harvey, 1989, p.54), or how much this spectacle that permeates everything produces *schizo* humans as argued by Deleuze and Guattari in the *Anti-Oedipus* (1983): the role of human beings, the subjects among all this spectacle of the Canary Border is extremely important.

human of the subjects among all this spectacle of the Canary Border is extremely important.

'Human beings' do not stand before, or amidst, social space; they do not relate to the space of society as they might to a picture, a show, or a mirror. They know that they have a space and that they are in this space. They do not merely enjoy a vision, a contemplation, a spectacle - for they act and situate themselves in space as active participants” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.294).

Based on all this, it is important to emphasize that deaths along with all the terrible events happening at the borders cannot be accepted and assumed as inevitable and alien to human action. And for this reason, it is necessary to understand that the spectacle of the border is the result of social activity, of human labor, no matter how much it has been deprived of its social characteristics, and no matter how much it is increasingly difficult to capture a complete picture of society. And this is how, by approaching the border from the concept of spectacle, I honestly consider possible to understand its consequences and

events as evitable by human action, as stoppable and not only as part of a mere extremely paradoxical continuum in contemporary borders.

Therefore, this will be done by looking at the spectacle existing in the Canary Pre-Border, in situ land border and post-border, attending both the representation of these three borders together with what is *hidden and masked* behind them to try to understand its reality.

1.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The research objectives are the following:

- Get to know the Canary Border and study how the logic of capital accumulation of the capitalist system has affected the Canary Border.
- Analyze how the productive relations in regard to human mobility towards the Canary Border are hidden by the spectacle of the Canary border.

Consequently, these are the research questions of the thesis:

- Why is it possible that the region with the biggest number of overnight stays in the EU is also the surrounded by the deadliest border in the world?
 - o How has this situation continued for over 30 years now?
 - o How is this happening in the Canary pre-border?
 - o How is this happening in the Canary border?
 - o How is this happening in the post-border?

1.3 Relevance of the research

Many studies have researched the Canary Islands, but most of them from its best-known and visible facet: tourism. In the meantime, the academic, political and mediatic disrepair to boat-migration towards the Canary Islands has been more than evident for a few years now. It is precisely this situation what motivated the realization of the present work with the purpose of getting to observe how the (little) attention received has been given as responses to certain ‘spectacles’ and within the framework of what I have already been referring to as the *spectacle of the Canary border*.

What is certainly not usual is to do research connecting the tourist facet of the Canary Islands with that of boat-migration, no matter how much both are highly related to how the Canary border and also to the way in which the Canary space is both produced

and consumed. But it is definitely interesting to reflect on how the *Canary border* as an idea seems to be only visible in the case of the thousands of people who cross it through the tortuous boat-migration, while remains invisible for the millions of tourists who “discretely” cross it and enter the region through its ports and airports to enjoy its touristic offer: “Borders that actively regulate the activity of some may not even be perceived to exist in the case of others” (Rumford, 2008, p.68) Approaching a space as complex and paradoxical as the Canary Border from its *spectacularity* is essential, specially considering that the issue remains unaddressed.

The Canary border has amply demonstrated that it is not the same space for everyone, and it is that, no matter how much the physical space surrounding the archipelago is objectively the same for all, since the set of bordering, ordering and othering (Van Houtum & Van Naersen, 2002) practices that actually produce and reproduce it affect in an extremely *paradoxical* way to the subjects who cross it.

According to Bialasiewicz, there is the need to “further theorize on and raise (public) awareness of the *paradoxes* that borders inherently represent” (2012, p.843). Many authors have agreed on the fact that “the political and ethical implications of this transformation of bordering practices [that led, among others to the current paradox in the Canary Border] continue to be under-theorised” (ibid.). This is why I believe there is a clear need for “more critical studies on the renaissance of classic borders and its antagonistic biopolitics and shameful necropolitics (the politics of letting die)” (Van Houtum, 2021, p.40).

Speaking now about insular spaces in general terms, it is relevant to notice how “the islands acquire a renewed interest in the migratory transit between continents, especially where this mobility has been intensifying recently” (Godenau & Zapata, 2022, p.55). Although it is true that there have been numerous investigations focused on some islands of the Mediterranean Sea (mainly Lampedusa and Lesbos), especially since what was known as the *Refugee Crisis of 2015*, the Canary Islands have received very little media and academic attention, despite the seriousness that its reactivation implied.

But despite this lack of attention, the Canary Islands constitute, without a doubt, a case of interest just because of the number of arrivals during the XXI century, but also, and perhaps even more significantly, because of its facet of “*testing laboratory* for the migratory policies deployed in the set of migratory routes between the African and the European continents” (Godenau & Zapata, 2022, p.55).

For this reason it is especially interesting revisit the Canary Islands, since it was the first insular region who received boat-migration in the whole European Union, and it is needed to get back not only looking at the spectacular events that have been occurring, but rather at its longitudinality in order to see which systemic circumstances and realities actually explain the paradoxical continuum that lasts until today.

Boat-migration routes of irregular migration towards the European Union are an important and serious reality for which thousands of people die every year practically on the same coasts where millions of tourists spend their vacations peacefully. The fact that these deaths continue to occur on boat-migration journeys to European islands or the European mainland, constitutes a shameful reality that the European Union has been facing (or rather turning its back on) for decades, but for which it seems to be no other political solution than to continue allowing these unjust and harsh deaths to happen.

For this reason, it is important to think about the underlying policy narratives that allow and favor the continuum of these events in the specific case of the Canary Islands, and maybe try that the present work can contribute to the creation of new policy narratives that rather than being based on actions in time of “spectacular situations”, “unprecedented crisis” or “exceptional situations”, address more to the reality underlying systemic logic by which the boat-migration continues to exist. It seems that what happens is that “the true crisis on maritime routes to Europe is the lack of united European Union and African policy aimed at safe, humane migration management” (Black, 2021, p.14).

Aunque en muchas ocasiones se haya tratado de disuadir la atención alegando que certain migration governance characterized the global south but was not aplicable to the global north, while the truth is that, politics of uncertainty, institutional ambiguity and manufactured vulnerability characterizing migration migration are nothing but related to the south, since it seems the exceptionalization of migration governance is limited to the Global South when that is not the case at all, the truth is that there is a strategic institutional ambiguity characterized by informality, liminality and exceptionalism that is constantly produced and reproduced in Europe.

Dealing with how these kind of policies are taking place in the Canary Islands helps to identify the specific mechanisms by which these measures are carried out, which is of great importance since “unauthorized migration will remain a challenging policy area that warrants open debate of strategic and normative priorities” (Carling & Hernández-Carretero, 2011, p.56). It is very worrying to observe what Black commented,

and that is that "Prior to the 1990s, deaths on these overseas journeys were unheard of, and now they have become almost an everyday occurrence" (2021, p.14).

I believe that this thesis could contribute to expanding the powerful message provided by Black that "no one should have to risk their life to flee violence or instability, or to simply seek out a better life, should always be maintained" (ibid.) Taking this as a basis, and assuming that in this work I will use a broad theoretical framework such as that of the spectacle, the practical relevance of this work lies above all in tackling the hundreds of deaths that continue to occur today in the Canary Border, and it is that as much as the increasingly visible impacts of mass tourism on the Canary Islands are relevant and urgently need to be approached (which is something that in fact is happening which can be seen with the increasing number of works around sustainable tourism in the Canary Islands), much more relevant is the fact that thousands of people die.

In short, it is imperative to study a border in which two such paradoxical realities are converging and are likely to keep on converging. A more global and systemic understanding is needed to understand why hundreds and hundreds of people are still forced to risk their lives in the attempt to look for a better life outside of their origin countries, while millions and millions are allowed to reach those same borders to enjoy them at the beach.

1.4 Practicalities of the research

Although I have been following the boat-migration situation that was taking place in the Canary Islands for quite some time now, at first, the monitoring I was doing was rather superficial, mostly limited to what appeared in the media or I could read in certain newspapers. But little by little I found out more about the situation that was really taking place in the Canary Islands, and, even more, I realized how little it was being said about it, so I began to search information through alternative media, especially through the social network Twitter, where a large number of migrant associations and collectives, journalists, lawyers, Maritime Rescue crew members or politicians were sharing and denouncing the boat-migrant situation that was taking place on the islands.

Undoubtedly, the role of the social network Twitter has been fundamental for this thesis, since it has been the tool that has allowed me to get closer to the Canarian reality before actually going there. Twitter has allowed me to gain access to participants, but also

obtaining information, reports or data both on boat-migration and tourism that was not available anywhere else.

The role of Twitter was so important that I was encouraged to carry out an investigation about its role as both a communication channel but also source of information of the reactivation of the Canary Route, which resulted in two different articles: “The possibilities of Twitter compared to conventional media in migration matters” and “Twitter as a channel and source of information on the reactivation of the Canary Route (2020-2022)”. This first parallel investigation became the springboard that I ended up using to contact people in the Canary Islands, to whom I explained that I was doing my Master's Thesis also on the Canary Border, and therefore they helped me shape the thesis, suggesting relevant topics and issues to address but also helping me to plan the fieldwork in the Canary Islands. Definitively, this first contact with insiders was crucial for the development of the investigation.

Thus, my approach to the Canary reality was gradual, and at first, remote, combining the study on papers, reports and information on the Canary Border added to multiple conversations through Twitter, video calls and emails.

During this whole approaching process, it was important to try to understand the uniqueness of the Canary Islands, an autonomous region of the Spanish state and an outermost region of the European Union. From the very beginning, I took into account that the fact of being Spanish was going to be helpful to get closer to the situation, being in my own country, knowing the language, etc. My Spanish citizen condition allowed me to be an outsider researcher but in a place that was not totally alien to me, but in reality, as I progressed in this research, I realized that the Canary Islands have many peculiarities with respect to the rest of the country, which even makes some people speak of the *tricontinentality* of the archipelago, since it is said that it is geographically Africa, politically Europe and culturally Latin America.

Apart from the multiple peculiarities of the islands, there were some local local factors during the time that the research lasted that caused the conditions at the moment of doing the fieldwork to change (Turkington, 2010). They highlighted the local effects that certain geopolitical circumstances had on the islands, such as the War in Ukraine or, in a much more direct way, the political turn of the Spanish government regarding Western Sahara, which greatly changed and conditioned the departure of boats both from Morocco and from Western Sahara.

Specifically, the two visits to the Canary Islands took place between March 16 and 23 (trip in which I was exclusively in Tenerife) and from April 20 to 27, when I returned to Tenerife and also visited Gran Canaria. Although I would have liked to be able to study the reality of all the islands, it was impossible to cover all of them in such a short time, so the field work was narrowed down to the two biggest islands.

Finally, it is important to clarify that an ethical approach was maintained at all times, trying to conduct the research in a beneficial and respectful way, taking into account the possible consequences it can bring with it (Hay, 2010), so many precautions were taken to ensure the safety of all the subjects, especially regarding their anonymous status, to protect them for legal or repressive actions that might compromise their safety and security when talking about sensitive issues.

CHAPTER 2: POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

"All science would be superfluous if the form of appearance of things directly coincided with their essence" (Marx, 1991, p.956).

Reality is not transparent, it does not speak to us about itself, so it is necessary to use *lenses* that allow to observe reality through science. The *reality* of the Canary Border is being misrepresented by its image: in the case of boat-migrants, it is being represented as an unbearable tragedy, and in the case of tourists it is misrepresented as a paradise, while the only *reality* is that there is a continuum of deaths of boat-migrant people and arrivals of millions of tourists. Therefore, I consider it is useful to explore the Canary border reality through the science of geography and specifically its explorations in the field of critical geography being helped by the concept of spectacle developed by Guy Debord.

2.1 Reflexivity and de-migratisation

Once this has been exposed, and continuing with how this investigation will be carried out, it is interesting to note that "an increasing number of voices, mainly from within the community of migration scholars, have been calling for more reflexivity on the part of migration researchers" (Dahinden, 2016, p.1). Aware of this commitment, and that reflexivity "is an essential process for informing developing and shaping positionality" (Holmes, 2020, p.2), which is also essential for research to be carried out ethically, I will help myself by this approach since it rejects the idea that social research is separate from the society as a whole and the individual researcher's biography.

In the context of this urgent need for greater reflexivity, I have to try to seek alternative theoretical approaches apart from the common ones in migration and border studies, since many of them are highly influenced by nation-state logic (Dahinden, 2016). Therefore, I will try to contribute to what Dahinden calls "de-migraticization" of migration research, consisting in framing migration research (or rather border research in this case) topics more broadly to try to avoid "the risk of supporting the view that migration-related difference is naturally given, even while it is trying to be critical of this paradigm" (Dahinden, 2016, p.2). In the case of this thesis, this will be especially important in order not to fall in describing the innumerable differentiations and distinctions that states and the market operating within the logic of the capitalist system

have already intensively and extensively marked between boat-migrant people and tourists in the Canary Border.

Also, the fact of using the concept of spectacle, is aiming to contribute to a further strategy to de-migranticize research also proposed by Dahinden, which consists in analyzing migration and border topics “through concepts and theories that have been developed outside of migration research” (2016, p.8), with the objective of linking “migration research issues more closely with social science and theory in general” (ibid.).

This need to de-migranticize responds to the fact that as much as it is true (and in part even beneficial) that in recent years, "migration research has succeeded in defining and institutionalizing its particular field of study, gaining visibility and structural power" (Dahinden, 2016, p.13), this has brought “the risk of not only contributing to the perpetuation of a migration apparatus, but also, and above all, of being marginalized within social science theory in general because it has created its own 'migration container field’”. (ibid).

Thus, it will not be a question of carrying out research from specific areas or *container fields* as Dahinden says, since “If we are come to grips with this 'problematic' [the paradox of the Canary Border] instead of turning to ethnology, ethnography or anthropology we must address our attention to the *modern* world itself, with its dual aspect- capitalism, modernity” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.123). This implies that this research will be a matter of observing, analyzing, and trying to understand the Canary Border reality through the analysis of (post)modern capitalism through the concept of spectacle, by approaching its images, the facts, moments, representations we can see while thinking in the structural processes they actually hide.

2.2 Operating in the terms of the spectacle

But of course, it takes a great effort to be consistent with what has been stated above, since the current reality of the Canary Islands is complex, and, in order to talk about it, it is tempting to follow the so far prevailing trend in critical border studies of narratives and discourses corresponding to “spectacular borders”, describing and explaining the tortuous and dangerous arrivals of thousands of people for whom the border is "exclusive, oppressive and deadly" (Kramsch, 2014, p. 66) and how paradoxical it is that on the same coasts where some die, millions and millions are invited to enjoy the

local wonders.

In general, border researchers are encouraged to continue inquiring on these 'spectacular borders', especially when eye-catching events occur, but that they are condemned to do so under the terms of the spectacle, since: "in analyzing the spectacle we are obliged to a certain extent to use the spectacle's own language, in the sense that we have to operate on the methodological terrain of the society that expresses itself in the spectacle. For the spectacle is both the meaning and the agenda of our particular socio-economic formation. It is the historical moment in which we are caught" (Debord, 1992, p.9). In this way, it is usual that despite being reluctant to play the game of the spectacle, which is, to write about specific crises or spectacular events of the many that occur on contemporary borders, there is no other choice in order to conduct or publish a research, and researchers cannot resist since: "The alienation of the spectator, which reinforces the contemplated objects that result from his own unconscious activity, works like this: The more he contemplates, the less he lives; the more he identifies with the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own life and his own desires". (Debord, 1992, p.16).

Consequently, it is very likely to fall into the problem of tautology in border research: "The tautological character of the spectacle stems from the fact that its means and ends are identical. It is the sun that never sets over the empire of modern passivity. It covers the entire surface of the globe, endlessly basking in its own glory" (Debord, 1992, p.10).

At this point, it is interesting to mention the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who was strongly concerned about the passivity of people in relation to the *spectacle*. Lefebvre also problematized citizen participation (pointing out that it would also fall into the tautological problem), since the citizen "will be permanently invited, questioned or summoned by local, regional or state authorities to "participate" through of mechanisms that do nothing but channel the possibilities of citizen intervention towards exercises of accompaniment and endorsement of municipal policies, thus shielding the scope of effective decision-making" (Martínez Lorea, 2013, p.24). That is to say, those same mechanisms with which the citizen is supposed to be able to be *active* (not merely passive) to the spectacle do nothing more than reinforcing it.

This happens in a context in which "the spectacular society hegemonizes the horizons of possibilities and imagination, which could eventually re-signify the staged socio-political situation" (González Arandeda, 2021, p.12), and "the spectacle represents

in itself a vast inaccessible reality that can never be questioned” (ibid, p.13), many researches are at risk of resulting in “nothing more than a rearrangement within the hermeneutical framework that has formed the spectacle” (ibid). It is therefore important to problematize the imaginative possibilities that the spectacle of the border allows us, since “without problematizing this imagination, the danger is that the study of borders will therefore continue to lag behind the increasing spatial and temporal sophistication of bordering practices in global politics.” (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2009, p.586). Hence, “The act of thinking beyond what is, to embrace what is not yet, requires a fugitivity outside of 'good-sense', of 'good-thinking', of 'making sense' in terms of the socially acceptable political geography.” (Kramsch, 2022, p. 17), and the positioning towards the opening of horizons of change is perceived as a potential threat to the prevailing "status quo".

It is a fact that as much as we have reached a point where there is a high quality production of academic research more “spectacle” oriented, it has not truly contributed to the search for alternatives: as much as border researchers are "increasingly able, almost in real time, to illuminate the modalities by which, since the 1990s, the EU has managed to extend its capacity of control beyond its territory over migratory flows from the sub-Saharan continent" (Kramsch, 2022, p. 13), the situation has hardly changed and deaths continue to occur.

Bearing all this in mind, I have tried to be aware that limiting myself to dealing with the current situation derived of the reactivation of the Canary Route could imply that "by focusing exclusively on the 'spectacular' spaces of EU external bordering practices, we run the risk (often against our best intentions) of constructing narratives that in the end only serve to reinforce borders as sites of oppression and domination, rather than seeing them as spaces of contestation, resistance and possibility “(Ferrer-Gallardo & Kramsch, 2011, p.200), and also restricting potential progress towards new possibilities now that “Crisis is far from being synonymous with emancipation” (Jappe, 2014, p.25) and that “knowing what is at stake becomes fundamental and having a global vision⁶, vital” (ibid.) and not a “theoretical luxury that is away from the real and practical

⁶ Of course, the need to opt for a global vision does not imply discrediting the numerous efforts, both academic and on-field, that are being carried out in the Canary Islands, especially in the context of a strong academic border research where there have been “a rich and largely emancipatory agenda, and have sought inspiring paths to enrich the classical static view on borders with post-modern and post-foundational research” (Van Houtum, 2021, p.40).

suspensions of human beings in struggle, but rather constitutes a necessary condition for any project of emancipation” (ibid, p.26).

In this attempt to get out of the ‘spectacular spaces of the EU’, it has been crucial at all times to look at the 'non-spectacle' of the paper-border, of the visa-border that forces one to look instead of the 'spectacular' “fenced walls guarded with guns” in the “externalized paper walls guarded by pencils and computers that have become the first line of defense of states” (Van Houtum & Van Uden, 2021, p.21) and where the “crises ” truly are produced and reproduced continuously.

At all times, I have tried to consider whether I was truly contributing to some kind of alternative thought on the situation while making it visible or if I was simply contributing to enlighten the appearance of the Canary Border, making the spectacle more and more detailed every time. For this purpose, I always kept in mind David Harvey’s words stating that: “mapping even more evidence of man’s patent inhumanity to man (...) allows the bleeding-heart liberal in us to pretend we are contributing to a solution when in fact we are not” (Harvey, 2016, p.39). Therefore, as much as in multiple points of the investigation, I have felt the “need” to detail what was exactly happening in the Canary Islands, (because of course it causes me great frustration), I have tried to reflect on whether or not the count of all the deaths, all the injustices, all the nightmares the Canary Border entails was actually helping to think towards the production of alternative spaces or just reinforcing the actual ones.

2.3 Final Statement

Once all this has been clarified, I will try to follow the lines of David Harvey who understands that it is "both logical and imperative in our times to seriously consider the changing geography of the world from a critical anti-capitalist perspective" (Harvey, 2016, p. 20), and also with the certainty that, as González Araneda points out: It is urgently necessary to discover the spectacular-capitalist reality of contemporary societies, since in its center it preserves a destructive tendency of the world", (2021, p.25), since such and as he himself picks up from Agamben, "capitalism does not aim at the transformation of the world, but at its destruction" (ibid.), and that is why it is so necessary that alternative proposals are made from all possible areas (including academia) that can actually contribute to a transformation of the world in which the paradoxes of the border produced by human action can also be reversed by that same hand.

“As the triumphant progress of modernization has reached the furthest lands of the planet and practically the totality of human production and consumption has become money and market mediated, and the processes of the commodification, commercialization and monetarization of human livelihoods have penetrated every nook and cranny of the globe, global solutions to locally produced problems, or global outlets for local excesses, are no longer available” (Bauman, 2004, p.5).

Finally, with this last quote in mind, what I tried to present in this thesis is an attempt to "unravel the relation between the temporal dynamics of accumulation of capital and the production of new spatial configurations of production, exchange and consumption" (Harvey, 2016, p.46) that allow us to understand the paradoxical continuum of the spectacle of the Canary Border from a global perspective.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The creation of this research design was an iterative process, so in order to "form a clearer picture of how a certain phenomenon work [the spectacle of the Canary Border]" involved "a constant cycle of data collection, analysis and reflection" (Vennix, 2019, *ibid*, p.231).

Therefore, the research design and methods were changed a couple of times during the whole development of the work, always adapting to all the circumstances that conditioned it, especially in relation to the participants and the state of the route during the dates when the fieldwork was carried out.

3.1 Methodological approach

The idea of this research, from the very first moment, was, just as occurs with qualitative research, to "study phenomena in their natural context whenever possible, and to intrude on that context as little as possible" (Vennix, 2019, p. 231), which is why I tried to be as respectful and aware as possible at all times, taking special care in not establishing a border between the researcher and the participants, but understanding that we are all social subjects within the same society.

But it is important to mention that, when approaching the reality of the Canary Islands through qualitative research, I could not really set aside my pre-existing 'biases', so I am aware that "I was always liable to interpret the opinions and ideas of the research subjects in light of their own opinions and ideas" (Vennix, 2019, p.230).

Specifically, I helped myself with the grounded theory whose tradition recognizes research as an iterative process (which has already been mentioned), "in which themes and theoretical understanding emerge from field research rather than theory providing an overarching framework at the outset" (McKendrick, 2010, p.427).

Also, I opted to use an inductive method for this master's thesis since it implies going from the specific -from observing a set of empirical phenomena which in this case is the Canary Border- to a general statement- *spectacular* borders in general-. (Vennix, 2019, p.28). The research heavily relied on observations of empirical phenomena on what occurs in the Canary Border, but later I worked more systematically on them (through the concept of spectacle) trying to "find patterns of regularities" (*ibid*, p.30) on how the

paradoxical Canary Border functions, being helped by several different sources and previous works to do so.

The fact of opting for an inductive research was especially useful since it allowed a more spontaneous, participative, process, which contributes to reinforce the idea that “people affected are not only *object* of the research, but also *subjects* capable of building knowledge” (Vera et al, 2020, p.379).

Also, it was taken into account that the information used for this research comes from "narratives, texts, social constructions of culturally situated subjects who, therefore, must actively and consciously participate both in the process of analyzing this information and in the validation of the resulting findings” (Sartorello, 2020, p.96), that is why communication with the participants has been crucial throughout the work and will continue to be so after this thesis is submitted.

3.2 Research design

This master’s thesis has concretely had an intensive research design, as “the emphasis is on pattern and regularity in data” (Clifford et al, 2010, p.11)- people crossing the canary border, depending on their categorization as a tourist or a boat-migrant, “which is assumed to represent the outcome of some underlying (causal) regularity or process” (ibid.)- the social relations going on in the Canary Border.

3.2.1 Bibliographical research

A bibliographical review of secondary sources was carried out, trying to find the most relevant and up-to-date existing and accessible sources, mainly coming from academic articles and books related to geography, migration, space, tourism and border research. Also, reports on official data coming from the European Union and the Spanish State were checked, but, considering the usual lack of clarity that institutions show regarding boat-migration, the work of different kind of organizations that collect and share relevant and updated data about the current situation was collected. To do this, at all times, I kept in mind that "Secondary data may already have been manipulated for particular, possibly political, purposes" (White, 2010, p. 62).

It could be said that in general, I have used a lot of knowledge provided by NGOs and different organizations and associations that, as is usual in this field and Luiza

Bialasiewicz already comments: “It is these organizations that have provided some of the most sustained and perceptive studies of the on -the-ground practices- and effects- of the externalization of EUropean borders and I would like to acknowledge by debt to them” (2012, p. 844). For this reason, the use of the reports provided by the collective Walking Borders should be highlighted.

Also, in order to bridge possible information gaps regarding certain topics or questions related to the Canary Border, other more “informal” sources were reviewed, especially Twitter, since it has a great role in the information and communication in the field of migration (Gualda & Rebollo, 2020) and concretely of the current boat-migrant situation in the Canary Islands. It could be said that this research has been a highly internet-mediated research (Madge, 2010), since a very significant way to gain access to data (but also to gain access to interview participants) was precisely Twitter. For this reason, during the months that this investigation has lasted, the monitoring of different Twitter accounts has been carried out, among which the following stand out: @walkingborders (Caminando Fronteras collective), @HelenaMaleno (Helena Maleno Garzón), @alarm_phone (Alarm Phone-Independent support for people crossing the Sea to the EU), @txemita (Txema Santana), @CGTsalvamento (Main union organization of the Spanish Maritime Rescue Service), @salvamentogob (Official account of the Spanish Maritime Rescue Service).

However, when dealing with these Twitter sources, it was taken into account that Twitter can become the idea media context for the confrontation of groups of pro-migrant and anti-migrant people (Toudert, 2021), which can lead to the degradation of the quality of the data published there (Castillo de Mesa et al, 2021); or to the creation of a biased and reductionist vision, which can seriously affect social imaginaries with regard to the migration topic (Olmos, 2013).

Secondary sources coming from visual imagery productions were also analyzed critically, considering that “They inspire us to think, feel and act, and we produce distinctive geographies accordingly” (Bartman, 2010, p.139). I highlight here the work of the Spanish photo-journalist Javier Bauluz: *La Ruta Canaria. Más allá del muelle*. (The Canary Route. Beyond the pier) which was taken as a great reference.

3.2.2 Empirical research: semi-structured interviews carried out in the Canary Islands

I opted for semi-structured interviews since allow for an open response in the participants' own words rather than a “yes or no” type answer (Longhurst, 2010, p.105) which enable to “understand how individual people experience and make sense of their own lives” (ibid) and also make a “significant contribution to geographic research, especially now that discussions about meaning, identity, subjectivity, politics, knowledge, power and representation are high on many geographers' agendas” (ibid, p. 112). These kind of interviews are dynamic, flexible, open and also facilitate the dialogue between the researcher and the interviewee, allowing the subjects to adapt, motivate the interlocutor, clarify terms, identify ambiguities and reduce formalisms (Díaz-Bravo et al,2013; Smith & Osborne, 2008).

3.2.2.1 Interview guide

Although the interview guide set out below was drawn up, the fluidity of the conversation was always prioritized, trying to make it as natural as possible and not so much a conversation based on questions and answers. Thus, participants were allowed to focus on the topics they most wanted to talk about, events they knew the most about, what was of most interest to them, etc.

When proceeding with the interviews, it was taken into account that certain inequalities around issues of gender, race, ethnicity or power could influence the answers (Aparna et al, 2020). Therefore, it was crucial to adopt an appropriate attitude, setting aside my own opinions “because we are all inclined to make judgments about situations, people and so on, without even thinking about it” (Vennix, 2019, p.220) “an interviewer needs to formulate the questions carefully and accurately. The more clearly the question is formulated, the greater the chance of clear answers and the lower the chance of miscommunication” (ibid, p.221) “There is a real difference between what can be said and what can be written on paper” On the other hand, my interactions with the participants were always non-judgmental, no matter how much the interviewee was commenting contributed to “reproduce and even legitimize discrimination through complicity” (Longhurst, 2010, p.112).

The interviews were carried out between March 17th, 2022 and May 16th, 2022, most of them in person in the Canary Islands of Tenerife and Gran Canaria, but some of

them were carried out through videocalls due to schedule incompatibilities of the participants.

All of them were audio-recorded with the prior explicit authorization of the interviewees. Afterwards, all of them were transcribed and analyzed.

Thus, this was the list of questions that guided the interviews:

1. How long have you been living in the Canary Islands?
2. What do you do for a living?
3. How do you think the Canary Islands are known internationally? And at a national level?
4. If you think of the Canary Border, what is the first image that comes to mind?
5. What image do you have of migration to the Canary Islands?
6. What image do you think the citizens of the Canary Islands have about the migratory phenomenon?
7. The Canary Route has been used since 1994, when the first small boat arrived in Fuerteventura, and it has now established itself as the most dangerous migratory route in the world. What do you think is the reason for it to continue to be traveled?
8. Regarding the reactivation of the Canary Route in the past few years, has it affected your life, your day to day in the Islands? If so, in what way? (Professional, personal...)
9. Do you consider that the arrival of small boats to the Canary Islands is news today? Or not any more?
10. Do you consider that the Canary Islands are prepared for the arrival of migrants?
11. How do you think the public administrations welcome people who arrive through the Canary Route? And the local population?
12. At the end of 2020, in the context of the increase of arrivals to the Islands, there were multiple demonstrations and racist outbreaks. What do you think was the reason for that?
13. How do you think the living conditions of those who have just arrived to the Islands through the Canary Route are?
14. Do you know the conditions of the camps in which the people who arrive through the Canary Route are housed? What do you think of them?
15. Do you feel you can do something about the situation? Or do you feel more like a spectator of what happens?
16. In your opinion, how do you think the EU and the Spanish State are managing the arrival of migrants through the Canary Route to the Canary Islands?
17. Do you consider that the Canary Islands are prepared for the arrival of tourists?
18. How do you think the Canary population receives tourists who come to the Islands?
19. Over the years, have you been noticing some changes regarding the reception of tourists to the Islands?
20. Over the years, have you been noticing some changes in the reception of migrants from the Canary Route to the Islands?

21. In what programs or projects are you working/collaborating on migration issues? Do you do it in collaboration with any entities? How?
22. Do you think there is enough information about the arrival of small boats to the Canary Islands? In your opinion, is it adequately informed?

3.2.2.2 Interviewing participants

Ethnographic (field) research was conducted in the Canary Islands between the months of March and May of 2022, for a total of fifteen days. The purpose was to get to know the Canary Islands. After being there and “collecting” all the information, I tried to reflect on all the stories the participants told me to see how they fit into the pattern of the spectacle of the border (both for boat-migration and mass-tourism).

In order to get in contact with the research participants, I began addressing the potential interviewees with whom I have already had previous contact in relation to the research topic, specially Txema Santana, and also, I established contact with two professors of La Laguna University with whom my supervisor, Henk Van Houtum, previously worked with: Dirk Godenau and Noemí Padrón Fumero.

From those first contacts, I started expanding the network of contacts and potential interviewees, through the sampling technique known as *snowballing* as the collaboration of some participants helped me to get in touch and also recruit other ones (Valentine, 2005). The participants were, in many times, respondents, informants and also carriers of information indifferently (Vennix, 2019, p.147).

Here I present the table with the list of the people I was able to interview and whom I will refer to and quote later in this thesis. Some information about their work, personal circumstances and connection with the thesis topic is given to briefly contextualize their comments and contributions in the interviews.

It is important to note here that some of the names are fictional while in some other cases only the (real or fictional) name is provided, according to the wishes of the participants.

Name	Job title	Origin	Time living in the Canary Islands	Vinculation with the research topic	Date and modality of the interview
Dirk Godenau	Professor at La Laguna University and researcher at OBITEN (Tenerife observatory of immigration)	Germany	25 years	Expert in immigration in the Canary Islands.	March 17 th , 2022. La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.
Jorge Ruíz	State worker as a psychologist in a secondary education school	Spain (mainland)	17 years.	Together with his partner, he fostered a little girl from Ivory Coast that arrived to the Islands through boat-migration together with her aunt during sixteen months.	March 17 th , 2022. La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.
Noemí Padrón Fumero	Economist. Professor at La Laguna University.	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Expert in tourism in the Canary Islands. She collaborated writing an article after the Cayuco Crisis: Europe's Shame: Death at the Borders of the EU.	March 18 th , 2022, La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.
Talía Acedo	Secretary and coordinator of the municipal group <i>Unidas Se Puede</i> in the San Cristóbal de La Laguna Townhall	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Her job in the San Cristobal de La Laguna Townhall implies working a lot regarding the two centers in the municipality: <i>Las Raíces</i> and <i>Las Canteras</i> .	March, 18 th , 2022, La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.
Rubens Ascanio	Deputy Mayor of the City Council of La Laguna and head of the Social Welfare Department of the City Council, co-	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Political functions linked to the migratory reality in the municipality.	March 21 st , 2022, La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.

	spokeperson for <i>Unidas Se Puede</i> of the City Council				
Sukeina Ndiaye	Arabic and French interpreter, cultural mediator	Western Sahara	Over 20 years in Tenerife.	Works in policestations and courts with boat-migrant people. Translator and cultural mediator with the ONG Accem specialized in attention of migrant people and refugees.	March 22 nd , 2022, La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.
Mariama	Intervenor and volunteer with migrant people, refugees.	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Work in multiple care and internment centers for migrants in Tenerife.	March 22 nd , 2022, La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.
Natalia G.Vargas	Journalist	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Journalist with great implication in the migration topic.	March, 23 rd , 2022, La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.
Andrea Rodriguez	Journalist and photojournalist	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Journalist with great implication in the migration topic.	March, 23 rd , 2022, La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain
Zahra Zerbaoui	Graduated in Business Administration and Management.	Morocco	12 years in the Canary Islands.	Collaborator of the Immigration Observatory of Tenerife and with the San Cristobal de La Laguna Town Hall.	March, 23 rd , 2022, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Tenerife, Spain.
Daniel Buraschi	Social psychologist. Expert in Migrations	Italy	15 years in the Canary Islands.	Collaborates with OBITEN, consultancy in terms of social intervention, participative methodology, work with migrant people, professor at La Laguna University.	March, 24 th , 2022 (Online videocall).

Mamadou Niang	Social activist, judicial world	Mauritania	8 years in the Canary Islands.	Participation in a project of juridic assesory for migrant people.	March, 28 th , 2022 (Online videocall).
Txema Santana	Journalist and expert on migration and borders	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Currently works for the vice-presidency of the Canary Islands government and previously worked for CEAR (Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid). He also organizes talks and meetings focused on integration with the local population.	April 20 th , 2022, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria, Spain.
Soda	French philologist	Senegal	3 years in the Canary Islands.	Cultural integration and accompanying work with boat-migrant people. Juridic translations in French for boat-migrant people asylum documents.	April 20 th 2022, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria, Spain.
Carmelo	Translator	Born in Spain (Canary Islands)	4 years in the Canary Islands.	Translator and collaborator in accompanying boat-migrant people.	April 20 th , 2022, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria, Spain.
Manuel Cabezero	Expert on tourist marketing in the Canary Islands	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Involved in different reception projects for migrant people in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, mainly ATLAS (Alternative Travel Local Association), founded in 2015 that	April 21 st , 2022, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria, Spain.

				currently hosts boat-migrant people.	
Daniel Arencibia	Lawyer	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Involved voluntarily to provide legal advisement to boat-migrant people.	April 21 st , 2022, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria, Spain.
Saida (fictitious name)	Interpreter, social worker	Morocco	23 years in the Islands	Collaboration and working for associations to help boat-migrant people.	April, 22 nd , 2022, (Online videocall).
Alberto (fictitious name)	Activist	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Collaboration and activism for associations and independently to help boat-migrant people.	April 23 rd , 2022, (Online videocall)
Olalla	Economy student	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised there.	Collaboration to help boat-migrant people in La Laguna, Tenerife.	April 25 th , La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands.
Abdou Kane	Nursing assistant	Senegal	13 years in the Islands	Took the Canary Route in 2006. Co-founder of <i>Aquí Estamos</i> , organization to help boat-migrant people in the Islands. Collaboration with development projects in Senegal.	April 26 th , La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands.
Javier Ríos	Denuncia-Documentary director and actor	Spain (mainland)	2 years in the Islands	Directed <i>Aquí Estamos</i> , documentary about the Canary Route.	27th April, 2022, La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands.
Louelia Mint El Mani	Lawyer	Western Sahara	24 years in the Islands.	Lawyer, activist, expert on boat-migration people.	May, 8 th , 2022 (Online videocall).
Luis Prieto	Sociologist	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised the Islands	Member of neighborhood associations	May, 10 th , 2022. (Online videocall).

				where macro-centers are located in La Laguna, Tenerife.	
Silvia	State worker	Spain (Canary Islands)	Born and raised in the Islands.	Member of the assembly of attention of boat-migrant people in Tenerife.	May, 16 th , 2022. Phone call.
Laura (fictitious name)	Social worker	Spain (mainland)	2 years in the Islands.	Worked in a macro-center.	July, 17 th , 2022. Phone call.

3.2.2.3 Analysis of the interviews

Once the interviews were finished, I transcribed them, in order to get the most out of them, as it helps “evaluating and organizing data in order to understand meanings in the text” (Cope, 2010, p.451). I tried to transcribe them right after, during my time in the Canary Islands, with the intention of making this task easier as the conversation was fresher (Longhurst, 2010), so the data collection and analysis processes were blending in time.

Since “it is not the case that a qualitative researcher simply records people’s stories and give them a narrative” (Vennix, 2019, p.207), and “reflection on what all those ‘stories’ mean and how they fit into a particular cultural pattern” (ibid.), after the transcription, I proceeded with the analysis of what was said in the interviews, with the aim to provide an increasingly clear picture of the Canary Border.

The analysis led into the identification of patterns and formation of categories that were selected with both the theory and the data in mind. A data conceptualization of the most relevant issues to study the Canarian border was carried out, through a mapping process that made it "possible to understand, at a fixed point in time, not only the tensions between informal interviewee-defined areas and formal geographical boundaries but also how interviewees from different backgrounds conceptualize the space that they live and work in" (Orford & Webb, 2017, p.1)

CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Space

In recent times, the concept of space has been gaining relevance, and there has been a claim that “*space matters* (...) for understanding capital in the era of globalization has been a distinctive feature of the so-called spatial turn in humanities and social sciences (...)” (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017, p.133).

When trying to analyze the *reality* of the Canary Border, the concept of *space* will be of great importance. This *reality* is part of what Immanuel Wallerstein calls the capitalist world-system, a system which’s *raison d’être* is the logic of capital accumulation, that produces changes in space through different forms of social change (Wallerstein, 1974). Hence, as Henri Lefebvre genuinely explains in *The production of space* (1974) space is not given, but socially produced (and also consumed) according to the needs of the reproduction of capital accumulation. This implies that the way space is conceived, experienced, planned and presented is inherently political, and inevitably represents the paradigm in which it is conceived, in this case: postmodernity.

In the paradigm of postmodernity, these changes have been characterized by flexibilization and acceleration of capital accumulation processes, a: “time-space compression” (Harvey, 1989). Even though in this thesis I focus way more in the “space compression”, rather than in the temporal compression, the temporal perspective also requires attention, since as Walters points out: “Concerning the political and social codification of population and their movements, the ascription of status, the geopolitical division of the desirable and undesirable, and the regulation not just of the migrant’s [or tourist’s] experience of space but also of their time” (2002, p.572).

All of this has meant that the space of the Canary Islands, “has been and is being constantly made, remade and sometimes even destroyed in order to absorb rapidly accumulating surpluses of capital (...) because the reproduction of capital accumulation requires it” (Harvey, 2016, p.15). All these changes, which Harvey names “spatial fixes” are caused by the needs of capital accumulation⁷, and consequently construct capitalism’s

⁷ Mezzadra & Neilson (2017) further refer to the way in which this concept helps to trace “capital’s movements of geographical relocation in search of profitability, control, and the resolution of crises nicely captures this mobility of the frontiers of capital” (2017, p.72)

“own distinctive historical geography” (Harvey, 1989b, p.343).

However, it is important to note that space is extremely complex, precisely because of its interdependence with the capitalist system, that makes social spaces to “interpenetrate one another and/or overlap one another” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.86). That is why, as Lefebvre clearly explains, it is necessary to stop seeing the structure of 'social' space as "the homogeneous and isotropic space of classical (Euclidean/Cartesian) mathematics" (ibid.) and opting instead for the approaching of “a structure much more reminiscent of the puff pastry of 'mille-feuille'" (ibid.).

Now that the relationship between space and capital is clear, it is important to attend to what characterizes this relationship. The main characteristic that I will highlight in this thesis and that is also widely related to the idea of crisis previously discussed is that, within the continuous search for greater capital accumulation, "the struggle to maintain profitability sends capitalist racing off to explore all kind of other possibilities (...) [which] result is to *exacerbate insecurity and instability*⁸” (Harvey, 1989b, p.106). All this allows to comment that the only *secure* thing about postmodernity is precisely *insecurity*, and “speed and urgency become the dominant framework, based on the established logic of threat and rising panic” (Borrelli et al, 2019, p.52), and this, of course, affects the space.

4.2 Production and consumption of space

At this point, it has already been stated that borders [as explained in reference to the paradoxical Canary Border] are produced by social production and therefore are not something alien to human beings above which we do not have any kind of possibility of action. At the end of the day, borders are “just” a particular kind of space, so this impossibility, or rather “supposed impossibility”, could also be applied to the concept of space.

As Henri Lefebvre clearly explained in his masterpiece *The production of Space* (1991): there is no empty space, in the same way that space is not given or determined. Instead, it is produced, and it is moved, constructed, destroyed, signified and occupied by

⁸ Subsequently, it will be agreed that within the logic of space-time compressions, together with insecurity and instability, the relation between capital and space is also very characterized by other elements such as crisis, exceptionality, provisionality, etc.

the social relationships of the subjects among it.

The fact that space is not given or natural, but rather the product of human social relations, means that people are not mere spectators of what happens in it, no matter how much an active effort is made to naturalize space and make it alien, to rip out its social characteristics, or rather, to naturalize certain spatial trends (just as the whole of space in the postmodern society) in favor of capital that favor certain groups of people while disfavoring others, giving rise to complex paradoxes such as the ones existing in the Canary Border.

4.2.1 Tourist spaces

Now that the changes that can occur in space in favor of the needs of capital accumulation have already been discussed, it is necessary to talk about one of the ways in which it is possible to carry this out, that is “trying to bring money into an urban region through tourism and retirement attractions” (Harvey, 1989a, p.9), which is exactly what it has been taking place in the Canary Islands since Franco proposed it (as was mentioned in the first chapter of the thesis), because, as Lefebvre explains, both tourism and leisure have “become better areas of investment and profitability, adding their weight to the construction sector, to property speculation, to generalized urbanization” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.353).

The previously mentioned tendency to instability and insecurity characteristic of the relation between space and capital in postmodern times, "has been accompanied on the consumption side" (Harvey, 1989 cond, p.156), which, in the context of a "postmodernist aesthetic that celebrates difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the commodification of cultural forms (...) seem to underly a remarkable proportionate arises in service employment since the early 1970s" (ibid.), decade when, as it was exposed in the introduction, the Canary Islands became more relevance as a sun and beach mass tourism destination.

Moreover, Lefebvre posits a very interesting fact which is that within the logics of production and consumption of capitalism, there is a moment when people leave their habitual residences, their 'production' space, and move towards the consumption of space: "the moment of people's holidays, formerly contingent but now a necessary moment" in which people look for a space with certain qualities: "sun, snow, sea". It is a time when

people leave the "regions exploited for the purpose of and by means of production (of consumer goods)" to go to the regions "exploited for the purpose of and by means of the consumption of space" (1991, p.353).

Then, the Canary Islands present a consolidated market identity that revolves around sun and beach tourism, a type of tourism that implies "mass migrations of tourist hordes" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.122) as a result of which it is possible to "see space being consumed in both the economic and the literal senses of the world" (ibid.). Furthermore, in the Society of Spectacle, Guy Debord commented that: "Tourism, human circulation considered as consumption, a by-product of the circulation of commodities, is fundamentally nothing more than the leisure of going to see what has become banal" (Debord, 1992, p.94). Following this, it could be said that the Canary Islands space has gradually become banal and has been consumed (in a literal way) at accelerated rates: "it has gone from less than a few thousands arrivals in 1960, to more than 13 million in 2015" (Hernández et al, 2015, p.383), producing an unsustainable consumption of energy, water and land and a great production of waste that exceeds the capacities of the Islands.

But of course, these tourists come to the spaces that they understand as "space consumption" looking for "total passivity on the beach, mere contemplation of the spectacle of sea and sun" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.385), which in the case of the Canary Islands arises the already mentioned deadly paradox, or even, *paranoia*, when it is seen that on those same coasts some human beings passively look at the ocean, other human beings suffer to get out of it.

What this causes is that despite the fact that in principle the space is "divided up into designated (signified, specialized) areas and into areas that are prohibited (to one group or another)" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.319), there comes a time when it is inevitable that these realities coexist, that they interrelate in such paradoxical ways in the same space, invoking terrible images such as the ones of the tourists and the dead boat-migrant people laying in the same beach.



Figure 4 Image of a couple of tourists laying in the same beach where you can see a dead person laying in the sand. Picture taken by Javier Bauluz in the Playa de Zahara de los Atunes (Cádiz, Spain), in September 2, 2000.



Figure 5 Picture of a group of tourists laying on the beach while some boat-migrant people are trying to reach land in a small neumatic boat in the greek island of Kos. Picture taken by Yannis Behrakis (Reuters) in August 5, 2015



Figure 6 Tourist holding a baby that got through the Canary Route to Playa del Águila (Gran Canaria) in November, 19, 2019. Picture taken by Borja Suárez (Reuters)

4.3 Borders

In general terms, a hegemonic way of dividing people in space has been through borders, that used to be "essential of the characteristic discourses of the inter[nation]state system, consubstantial with the modern world system" (Cairo, 2001, p.35).

Currently, based on all the spatial changes that have been mentioned, the (post)modern Nation-States are now rather "a territorial entity struggling to impose its will upon a fluid and spatially open process of capital circulation" (Harvey, 1989b, p.109), trying to hold on the (increasingly weak) idea of "nation", on which they have traditionally been based, understood as "a fiction projected by the bourgeoisie onto its own historical conditions and origins, (...) as a way of magnifying these in imaginary fashion, and (...) as a way of masking class contradictions and seducing the working class into an illusory national solidarity" (Lefebvre, 1991, pp.111-112). With postmodernity, the Nation-State has been facing several challenges that have been forcing it to "construct an alternative sense of community to that based on money, as well as a definition of public interests over and above the class and secretarial interests and struggles that are contained within its borders. It must, in short, legitimize itself" (ibid.), and doing so will mean trying to put an end to "masking class contradictions" (ibid.) by defining "interests above the class interests" (ibid.), that is, trying to cover up the social relations that are produced within the Nation-State and which are the ones that, after all, produce and reproduce its borders.

But stateness no longer has the capacity to legitimize itself as it had in modernity, since in postmodernity, there has been a clear "loss of sovereignty for the state under globalizing conditions" (Walters, 2002, p.568) so it is important to avoid falling into the "territorial trap" (Agnew, 1994) that contemplates states as fixed sovereign units throughout space with great power over borders. Since we are currently facing what Wallerstein calls a 'spatial and temporal limit' that indicates the "impossibility of superimposition (of the economic system) on the linear border state" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017, p. 73) under the rule of a world market that "refers to a spatiality of capital that structurally exceeds the topographic space of the state" (ibid, p. 67).

For that reason, it is necessary to understand that bordered Nation-States are no longer what they were and that instead, "borders are vacillating" (Balibar, 1998, p.220), but that does not imply that they are disappearing or that the contemporary world is a 'world without borders': "On the contrary, borders are being both multiplied and reduced

in their localization and their function” (ibid.), while they are being “continually reconfigured” (Bialasiewicz, 2012, p.442) while changing hand in hand in favour of the needs of capital accumulation within the postmodern capitalist world-system. Therefore, in this thesis, the approach to the border will be established looking at how “the regulatory functions and symbolic power of the border test the barrier between sovereignty and more flexible forms of global governance in ways that provide a prism through which to track the transformations of capital and the struggles that mount within and against them”. (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017, p. 7).

4.3.1 Global capitalism and borders

Currently, borders are increasingly open to the movement of goods and services, but not so much to the movement of people, after migratory mobility has become one of the biggest "problems" of the 20th century (Lloyd, 2019). This has resulted in what Walters has called a “double movement [in which, on the one hand, there is] the liberalization of trade and finance at regional and global levels [and on the other] a new set of political anxieties about borders, crime, illegal migration and terrorism, along with political demands and initiatives to reassert the power of the border” (2002, p.561).

This is what many authors have referred to as the liberal paradox, which refers to “the 'discursive gap' between national-identity oriented electoral concerns and economic push factors for open labor markets” (Stel, 2021, p.8), in which: "international economic forces push for greater openness in trade, investment and migration, whereas the international state system and powerful domestic political forces push towards greater closure" (Sørensen, 2012, p.66). But it has already been mentioned that the idea of nation, understood as a functional fiction to hide class conflicts within a state, is increasingly weakened, and it is increasingly difficult to bet on an idea of protection of a (national) State that it has less and less power relative to that of capital and market forces.

This leads to think that it is not that borders are (only or mostly) paradoxical due to the multiple realities that can converge on them, but that paradoxes even get to Nation-States, also dependent and subjugated to the needs of the market and capital accumulation. With all this, there are several trends that characterize contemporary borders, among I will highlight the externalization and privatization of borders. In this way, borders are increasingly managerial-managed “based within a host of calculative and administrative practices” (Bialasiewicz, 2012, p.861), and as frivolous as it may sound [since borders

can be extremely deadly for some as it has been already shown throughout this work], as Bialasiewicz picks up from Andrijasevix and Walters, “borders are increasingly constituted as a 'problem of management' (...) that dominate the EU's understandings of 'globalised' border management” (ibid.).

Regarding borders externalization, according to Garcés-Mascareñas and Sánchez Montijano, “the outsourcing of border control implies turning migratory control into a bargaining chip: development aid, trade agreements or liberalization of visa policy in exchange for border control and readmission agreements (...) The flows migratory processes are controlled from the outside and not from within, (...) this is the role of the buffer-states or guardian-states (2016, p.1), thus, it consists of entrusting other states (EU neighbours, or even the neighbors of their neighbours), the task of protecting the external borders of the EU. In this way, multiple migration control agreements are established between states. In the case of the EU and its neighbours, it is way to get "economic co-operation and a more fluid and privileged bilateral relationship with the EU" (Ferrer-Gallardo & Kramsch, 2016, p.167) in exchange, establishing a millionaire business around border management.

On the other hand, there is the increasingly present privatization mechanism. Every time, there are more and more actors (and more diverse) in charge of migration, which, added to the increased use of NPM (New Public Management)-inspired reforms, makes it possible to detect “a dispersion of authority and blurred lines of responsibilities” (Borrelli et al, 2019, p.48) when talking about borders.

Many authors have been studying for years the privatization of immigration control, which has even transcended reception and detention centers for migrants which have come under the rule of "profit maximization and cost reduction" (López-Sala & Godenau, 2019, p.255), with all that this implies, as will be developed later in the chapter on the spectacle of the Canary border. The point is that the fact that more and more non-state actors are present in more and more activities related to border management (and migration) means that the parameters from which these efforts are viewed are much more entrepreneur focused” (Cuttitta, 2014, p.199). Achille Mbembe even gets to explain this through the idea of “privatization of sovereignty” in "a context characterized (...) by the global deregulation of markets and capital movements” (Mbembe, 2011)

The main consequence of this is that a moment of “dispersion regarding the notion of responsibility” (Borreli et al, 2019, p.69) has been riched. Moreover, this has also

brought with it a larger “lack of coherence within the practices of states, whereby national and local level governments are often in conflicts” (ibid.), conflicts that in fact serve to reinforce the idea that more actors are required in the matter due to its conflictivity and complexity, but also brings along another powerful and dangerous idea which is that of directly relating managing borders to conflicts, or even to crisis that nobody know how to manage.

Speaking about borders and border management in terms of “crisis” or “conflicts” seems to be something highly understandable and even more, operative considering that in the contemporary changing context characterized by instability and insecurity, any possible solution to a “crisis” can be accepted, even without “a lacking oversight and audit of contracted private enterprises” (Borreli et al, 2019, p.64), since “whose legitimacy is affirmed for as long as they can be seen to be effectively responding to ‘unprecedented’ or risky situations” (ibid) . With all this, “the discourse of crisis has led to humanitarian responses, in general the government of unease, and the framing of migration as security problem, allows for rules of emergency to become permanent. In general, it has prompted European states to employ restrictive measures”. (ibid, p.53).

Thus, given the slightest opportunity, it is possible to speak (and act) in terms of a crisis, as has been happening since 2020 with the Canary Route. What is described as a "migratory crisis in the Canary Islands" in reality is nothing more than "a new management crisis in a country that has received boat-migration on its coasts for more than 30 years" (Bauluz, 2021, p.11). In this way, as various authors point out, the use of the term crisis is also operational due to the fact that " postpones discussions on long-term governmental solutions” (Borreli et al, 2019, p.69), causing crises to perpetuate while more and more investments, economic agreements (in short, capital movements) are involved in borders. It is for all of this that it can be said that there has been a clear marketing (and consequent dehumanization) of border management in which human lives no longer matter as long as borders are profitable.

4.3.2 Contemporary borders

Under this domination of the capital, there are several spatial distinctions and divisions way beyond the Nation-State that are successfully explored under the concept of bordering, theory that, drawing on Michel Foucault's spatial distinctions between "the same" and "the other" (Foucault, 1988), is mainly defined in the creation of a “Supreme

Self (us) and a Other (them)” (Kramersch, 2014, p. 65), “through the territorial fixing of order” (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen , 2002, p.134) which ends up creating “spatial morality” (ibid, p.135).

It is clear that borders are now much more than dividing lines between states, which makes it necessary not to focus on “lines on the map and in the sand [but rather to] understand a border as a constant, contextual work in progress, dependent not only from its material set-up but also from the everyday social construction of the here, we and them” (Van Houtum, 2021, pp.35-36). Furthermore, William Walters proposed that *bordering* “represents a particular art of government, an art of international government” (2002, p.564). Walters understands that the border is not a mere line, adding that it is not even a physical location, or even a symbol, but a “larger heterogeneous assemblage of discursive and nondiscursive practices” (Walters, 2002, p.572) and adds that “something similar can be said of the biopolitical border” (ibid.). The idea of biopolitical border comes from the foucaultian concept of biopolitics, which is the set of strategies aimed at directing power relations in order to rationalize life and make it manageable on the basis of characteristics such as health, hygiene, birth rate, longevity, races, etc (Foucault, 1999). Thus, the biopolitization of the border has meant that “it is signaled by the political concerns, events, and means by which the border will become a privileged instrument in the systematic regulation of national and transnational populations-their movement, health and security” (Walters, 2002, p.572).

But more and more authors agree that borders are no longer based on biopolitics, but on necropolitics, a concept developed by Achille Mbembe, that argues that XXI century's capitalism is rather governed by necropolitics that turn human beings into commodity deciding who should live or die according to exclusively economic criteria (Mbembe, 2011). There are many authors and even collectives that, drawing inspiration from Mbembe, currently refer to borders directly as necroborders, as is the case of the well-mentioned collective Ca-Minando Fronteras, which in addition to the term *necroborder* includes others such as *necrocapitalism*, *necropower* when talking about borders all over the world (Ca-Minando Fronteras, 2021).

This type of governmentality that ends up translating into border necropolitics is quite marked by what Nora Stel collects under the (intentional) institutional uncertainty (2021). Stel argues that these inaction and ambivalence that can be seen in contemporary borders respond to a deliberate technology of power, pointing out that these

inconsistencies, these exceptional performances cannot only respond to the aforementioned liberal paradox, but rather qualify that one can speak of 'organized hypocrisy' and not merely an 'unconscious organizational strategy' (ibid, p.8), plus, other authors such as Whyte point out that "Uncertainty is coming to play an increasingly important role" (2018, p.18). Following Giorgio Agamben's (2005) work, it could be even said that, just as exceptionality, uncertainty has become the norm.

This can be understood due to the fact that uncertainty is both the consequence and the goal of the uncertain, instable and insecure logic of capital accumulation that produces and reproduces space and consequently, necroborders. So it is that, just as Debord explained when talking about the spectacle, by stating that it was boat goal and consequence of the capitalist system and its neoliberal economy, so is the uncertainty that deliberately controls contemporary borders.

4.3.3 EU borders

“We would like our citizens to continue enjoying the freedom of movement at the internal borders, we need to secure the external borders and this is what this agency and this regulations aims to do” (...) “You have to be fair with those who deserve protection, harsh with those who are praying with the vulnerable and firm with those who are seeking to break the rules” (European Parliament, 2021)

These were the powerful and dangerous words that Roberta Metsola, the President of the European Parliament has come to utter. And it is that, in recent times, the EU has been making it clear that “people on the move are not welcome in Europe any longer” (Lloyd, 2019, p.14), which has led to the catastrophic point where “The Eu external border is now the deadliest border on earth” (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p.297).

It is highly paradoxical to see how the privileged nations (among which the EU countries are included) are propoting “an ideology of liberalism, equal opportunities and/or capitalist meritocracy [that apparently] only applies to people who luckily have been born with the 'right' passport. (Van Houtum & Van Uden, 2021, p.22). There is a clear “cosmopolitan paradox” that simply assumes that “the same border can be experienced in different ways by different sections of the population (in the sense that some people find it easier to cross a border than others), for whom the border then does not appear cosmopolitan at all.” (Rumford, 2008, p.68).

Just as Metsola stated, the EU wants (only) its citizens to freely enjoy circulation within its borders, while it is necessary to secure the external borders to do so, being “firm with those who are seeking to break the rules” (European Parliament, 2021). But, what kind of rules are people seeking to break? Those who make it impossible for them to reach the European Union through regular and legal ways? It is thus clear that “The way the universe of capital relates to the freedom of movement of individuals is thus inherently contradictory: it needs 'free' individuals as cheap labor forces [while] it simultaneously needs to control their movement since it cannot afford the same freedoms and rights for all people” (Zizek, p.43). It seems that the European bordering, derived from the rules of capital, inherently makes it impossible for all people to enjoy the same freedoms of movement.

Thus, there is a “discriminatory regime based on the lottery of birth” (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p.299). After being born, we all receive identifying documents that “don’t even belong to you. A Canadian passport says this passport is the property of the Government of Canada. Your identity belongs to the state. Why? You called this freedom cause you could travel, but it was always golden chains. You wear them lightly. Ours are iron, choked tight around our necks” (indi.ca, 2020, par.12).

What is worrying about this “lottery” is not only that is not only that freedom of movement is intended only for its winners, but that the consequences for the losers imply risking their lives in their attempt to migrate to the EU: "the dying of migrants is consubstantial [since] principally and strategically at the gates of the EU a moral distinction between the value of human beings is made" (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p. 299), and that makes it possible to speak of a "Bureaucratic annihilation of the bodies that do not 'matter'" (De Michelis, 2017, p.4) in Europe.

Throughout the last decades, the EU has been producing and reproducing this paradoxical deadly border by promoting several different policies that only come to respond to the needs of capital accumulation, which has involved, above all, millionaire investments based on a "more technological conceptions of border enforcement, often involving remote imaging systems, surveillance videos, the development of large-scale databases, code breaking, and the entry of border and migration security surveillance techniques aimed at biopolitical management [or even the creation of] new border agencies, such as FRONTEX (the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union) (...)

rapidly becoming well-funded, powerful, and highly visible actors in this spectacle (De Genova et al, 2015, p.68). But of course, all these measures remain not “addressing or solving the underlying problem.” (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p. 300) but they simply produce and reproduce its injustices and deaths constantly.

Moreover, these spectacular measures help to ensure the fact that when we look at the policies in Europe that have led to the situation we currently find ourselves in, we do not look at what truly strengthens this "birth lottery" by which some enjoy mobility while others die for it, which are the *paper borders*.

4.3.3.1 EU paper border

Most likely, when thinking about the biopolitical border or even the necroborder what first comes to mind are the several border surveillance systems the EU displays along its external borders, but there are also much more powerful elements, although undoubtedly much less spectacular, such as “Passports, visas, health certificates, invitation papers, transit passes, identity cards (...), laws, regulations...” (Walters, 2002, p.572) that imply crucial, and ultimately deadly bordering, ordering and othering practices (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002). All these elements conform EU’s *paper border*, a common external visa border that is “arguably, on the most significant landmarks in the recent history of EU’s b/ordering policy” (Van Houtum & Bueno Lacy, 2020a, p.712). This is actually part of a trend in which “the relation between borders and territory is becoming ever more complex [in which] borders are not only found at territorially identifiable sites such as ports, airports, and other traditional ‘border crossings. Instead, they are increasingly ephemeral and/or impagable: electronic, non-visible and located in zones that defy a straightforwardly territorial logic” (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2009, p.583).

And it is that, contrary to what one might think, EU’s toughest borders are not maritime, neither are the imposing fences of Ceuta or Melilla where hundreds of migrants risk their physical integrity and even their lives trying to reach the Spanish State, no. Without any doubt, EU’s deadliest borders are paper borders (Van Houtum & Bueno Lacy, 2020), and it is “the externalized paper walls guarded by pencils and computers that have become the first line of defense of states” (Van Houtum & Van Uden, 2021, p.21), since those first paper walls are the ones in which “people are blocked entrance first and foremost, and often from afar, so dislocated from the actual in situ border (...) adding to

the ‘non-spectacle’ of paper borders" (Van Houtum, 2021, p.35). It is in this paper borders “where human beings’ worth and freedom are determined on the basis of their origin, condemning them to journeys of life and death if they wish to undo that injustice and cannot afford to buy golden passports. The paper prisons that are the current configuration of visa borders have created are sustaining and amplifying the global inequality in mobility and welfare” (Van Houtum & Van Uden, 2021, p.23), it is those paper walls that make people have no other choice but to risk their lives through boat-migration or trying to jump a fence to enter the European Union (even without the certainty that after), since, after having managed to physically get to the EU, after successfully crossing the sea or a fence, they still cannot cross the paper.

As much as the more physical, more spectacularly⁹ visible borders of the EU are hiding the paper ones, the truth is that it is precisely these paper borders that unify the reality of the boat-migration that reaches the EU. In the specific case of the boat-migrant people who arrive in the Canary Islands, it can be said, with complete certainty, that the only thing they have in common and for what they can be unified is precisely the paper border. It is highly paradoxical to think about how this paper border has been maintained for the already more than two decades since the first arrival through the Canary Route, especially taking into account the great enthusiasm that is maintained to facilitate European tourists to get to the Canary Islands, for whom there is not even a hint of a paper border, it seems quite clear that “lives of EU-citizens are valued differently than the lives of those who come irregularly by boats and wish to become part of the EU” (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p.299). In addition, the non-creation of alternative ways that guarantee them paper to climb that border and reach the EU safely, it is going to continue making them looking for new irregular entries, which actually leads to "more phobia and criminalisation, which is answered by yet higher fences and further tightening of the legal ways to enter the EU, after which the vicious circle starts again" (ibid, p.300).

This clear paradox, clearly and spectacularly present on the Canary Border is just another terrifying sample of the “exacerbation of a longstanding b/ordering and othering trend in the policies of the EU” (Van Houtum & Bueno Lacy, 2020a, p.708), in which thousands of deaths are expected and allowed, since, “These deaths are seen as the bodies of the nobodies or what Zygmunt Bauman called lives that are implicitly perceived as

⁹ In the sense that they offer more visible images that hide and cover the masked and hidden reality behind them with more success.

waste” (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p.300).

Hereinafter, I will help myself of the dissection into three interrelated b/ordering mechanisms elaborated by Henk Van Houtum and Rodrigo Bueno Lacy of the EU border regime: the pre-borders, the actual land borders and the post-borders (2020).

CHAPTER 5: THE SPECTACLE OF THE CANARY PRE-BORDER

Who crosses the Canary Border? How do they come? Why do some do it through the Canary Route of boat-migration? Why do some do so through ports and airports?

According to what has been commented in this thesis, it is already clear how extremely paradoxical the Canary border is when looking at boat-migrant people at the one side and tourists at the other side. Now, it is crucial to consider that it actually begins to be paradoxical long before reaching the in situ Canary land border.

Thus, it will be interesting to see the two ways in which the Canary border crossing is proposed: from Africa through the Canary Route or from Europe through airports and ports. Of course, it must be qualified that what is going to be commented on in these two sections are basically generalities, because, to begin with, not even all the people who arrive through the Canary Route come from the African continent (some of them come from Asia, although to a much lesser extent); and not all the people who come to do tourism in the Islands are from the European continent, since the Canary Islands receive tourists from all over the world.

5.1 From Africa through the Canary Route

5.1.1 The African continent: appearance and ignorance

In general, it could be said that from the European Union, from the Spanish State and from the Canary Islands, there is a deep ignorance of the African continent and of the multiple realities that its countries and its people entail.

It is striking that there is such great ignorance also from the Canary Islands, which are even geographically located on the African continent being that they are actually closer to the continent than from what they are from each other: Lanzarote is closer to Morocco than to El Hierro. Dirk Godenau, Professor at the University of La Laguna (ULL) and member of the Immigration Observatory of Tenerife (OBITEN) of German origin, with whom I was able to speak, explained to me that in reality, “as much as many strategic documents talk about the 'tricontinental strategic position', the reality is that in sociocultural terms it is bicontinental: we look to Europe and we are connected to Latin

America” (D. Godenau, personal communication, March 17, 2022).

In fact, many of the people with whom I was able to speak during my visits agreed that "the Canary Islands live with their backs to Africa". In fact, as Noemí Padrón Fumero, a Canarian economist who is also a professor at the ULL, explained to me, a real effort has been made (and *is* being made) in the Canary Islands to separate the region from the African continent, producing: "an isolation and a cultural and political attempt to separate the Canary Islands of Africa, and the *blacks* of the *whites*. In fact here in the Canary Islands people did not sunbathe because they did not wanted to look tanned, because the color of the skin greatly determined your ancestry, your rank in Canarian society” (N. Padrón, personal communication, March 18, 2022).

This intentional distancing has been leading to a strong lack of knowledge regarding a continent historically left aside, which means that on many occasions, it appears in the collective imagination practically as an extremely poor "country" and about which nothing concrete is known, being common to have a very homogeneous image in which Africa is all "hunger and poverty", as pointed out by the Senegalese nursing assistant and co-founder of the association *Aquí Estamos*, Abdou Kane, who also added that this image, this appearance of Africa in the face of Europe was operative, since the luxury that actually exists in Africa cannot be shown, because “if the NGOs show the existing luxury in some places in Africa, they would lose their partners” (A. Kane, personal communication, April 26, 2022).

For all these reasons, more and more activists of African origin are making an effort to explain that Africa is by no means a "poor country", but rather a highly rich and varied continent, and even more so, as the President of the Association of Sahrawis of Tenerife, Sukeina Ndiaye stated: “each African continent is a continent in itself, due to its cultural diversity, its dialect diversity, its diversity of beliefs and religions” (S. Ndiaye, personal communication, March 22, 2022).

This great ignorance of the continent from which the majority of people who take the boat-migration route towards the Canary Islands come from tends to frivolize and homogenize the realities of those who take the route. This was pointed out by Mamadou Niang, a politician based in Lanzarote of Mauritanian origin: “there is never a moment to stop and think, to make an effort to understand the causes that originate boat-migration, that make a person from one day to the next, take the decision to take a patera” (M. Niang, personal communication, March 28, 2022).

So, in this section, I will try to show some of the possible reasons that can encourage a person to make the decision and the consequent risk of taking the Canary Route.

5.1.2 Neocolonialism in Africa

In general terms, one can speak of an important plundering of natural resources by European enterprises in Africa nowadays. For this reason, one of the possible motivations that must be taken into account when thinking about reasons why to take the Canary Route is precisely the plundering of resources that Europe has historically been carrying out and continues to do, which was commented on in greater or lesser detail by a large number of the people with whom I was able to speak during the trips to the Canary Islands.

Abdou Kane, who himself took a *patera* to reach the Canary Islands back in 2006, commented that: “If they had left us our resources, we would stay there with our family, because Africa is losing a lot of youth, and the future of a country is its youth, if all the youth leaves, the country becomes much poorer” (A. Kane, personal communication, April 26, 2022).

But it is that on many occasions, there are no resources left for the African population. Thus, one of the specific cases that I was most often told about in terms of the plundering of resources was that of fishing on the West African coast, since I came across many stories of fishermen (mostly Senegalese), who had had to take the Canary Route because they no longer found any type of fishing in their country of origin, in fact, I even heard how there were people who had traveled the Canarian Route up to four times for this same reason, as Mariama, a socio-cultural animator from Tenerife, closely linked to the reality of boat-migration on the island: “They told me about a fisherman who was deported four times, but imagine the situation of the man, who got into debt again to try his luck on the route again, imagine...” (Mariama, March 22, 2022).

The point is that the technology used by European boats (industrial fishing) destroys the country’s artisanal fishing. As the Senegalese translator and activist living in Gran Canaria, Soda, explained to me: “Senegalese artisanal fishing cannot compete against industrial fishing (which is scraping the entire Senegalese seabed). This is very dangerous since traditional fishing also represents an important economic chain for the

country, because when the fishermen (men) go to the sea for fish, the women hang it to make dried fish, salted fish and then sell it to buy clothes, to pay the the child's school, for health, for everything. (...) This whole chain is breaking. There are thousands of people who live by fishing and in the sea now there is no fishing” (Soda, personal communication April 20, 2022). That is why the point has been reached where, as Soda continued: “The boats that are used to get to the Canary Islands are boats that used to be used for fishing, but now they take people to another place where they can make a living, because people have to look for alternatives to get out, it has always been like this” (ibid.).

Continuing with the specific case of Senegal, the lawyer expert in migrants rights of Saharawi origin, Loelia Mint El Mani explained: “In Senegal, the plundering of natural resources has greatly affected, not only fish, but also agriculture in the area. south, which have been looted by multinational companies causing the population to have had to leave to survive” (L. Mint El Mani, personal communication, May 8, 2022). This idea was precisely what the documentary director of *Aquí Estamos*, Javier Ríos, wanted to convey in his work, as he stated in the interview I had with him, the idea that: “They are here because we are there. Africa has historically been a plundered colony, and nowadays we still have the same colonialist agreements” (J.Ríos, personal communication, April 27, 2022).

On the other hand, Carmelo, translator with great knowledge of the boat-migration situation in the Islands explained: “European overconsumption and extractivism, both in the specific case of Senegal [the country that we mainly talked about since the conversation was with both him and his wife, Soda, who is Senegalese], as in the global South it is causing climate change whose consequences is that fish is scarce, the sea is advancing and is eating the land, well, in general it is giving a climatic change that also causes migrations. Europe cannot continue with this rhythm of life that is bringing more and more climate refugees” (Carmelo, personal communication, April 20, 2022). But it is important to point out that despite the fact that, as Carmelo rightly commented, there will be more and more climate refugees due to European extractivist practices in Africa; there is evidence that shows that this will not imply a “mass migration”¹⁰ of the south to

¹⁰ This can be said, in the first place, because migration is going to continue its growing trend regardless of environmental changes (as it is driven by many more economic, social and political processes); secondly, in order to truly entail large-scale displacement (that supposed mass migration), it

the global north that many talk about in order to elaborate populist anti-migration discourses.

At this point, I would like to mention that it is important not to establish a simplistic link between migration and climate change, because that link may lead to a depoliticization of migration that prioritizes talking about environmental or climatic factors “out of control”, turning it into something alien and natural in order to mask the underlying processes and productive relations that have to do with the environmental consequences of European extractivism.

And it is that European extractivism, which consequences Europe seems to be so surprised afterwards, is nothing more than the expected result of the agreements that the EU is carrying out with multiple African countries today. That is how Rubens Ascanio, First Deputy Mayor of La Laguna (Tenerife) explained it: “African resources are exploited by multinational European companies (...), by companies with European capital (...), and when the 'result' of this massive looting of territory arrives [referring to the arrival of people through the Canarian Route], the EU agrees that the problem just belongs to the Canary Islands, not to the European companies, which are the ones that actually explain migration, it is so perverse, so terrible. It is a practically Kafkaesque reality” (R. Ascanio, personal communication, March 21, 2022). Talía Acedo, also working in the municipality of La Laguna as secretary and coordinator of the municipal group *Unidas Se puede*, commented that she herself was even scared when she discovered that Senegal’s fishing was being depleted, but even more when she found out that “within the fleet that has come to fleece Senegal, the majority has been Spanish, but it has been particularly from Euskadi, with which it is a thing of: My God, it has been us! It was not the Russian giant or the Chinese giant! It was us!” (T. Acedo, personal communication, March 18, 2022).

It seems that if seen from this point of view, if we look at the extractivist reality that underlies the desperate boat-migration, if we are aware of this reality, everyone understands why “they are here”, and it is that effectively “we are going there”, and we

must go hand in hand of political instability, poverty or violent conflict; and lastly, because the poorest and most vulnerable people are often deprived of the ability to migrate, so the possibility of migrating outside the continent is not at all open to everyone (De Haas et al, 2020).

are going to take their resources with us.

The point is that it is often difficult to think of this link between European plunder in Africa and boat-migration to Europe, and this, in part, is due to the fact that, as Hooper and Kramsch point out, Europe goes to great lengths to shape its image and mask its "current complicity in production of exploitative and oppressive relations within as well as beyond its newly minted frontiers" (2007, p. 527). And it is not possible to separate the fact that these neocolonial, imperialist logics are actually necessary for capitalism, inevitable today and that is what perpetuates them, making them accept "the processes of imperialism and colonialism as aspects of any history of globalization" (Rumford, 2009, p.75)

But how do European companies manage to reach African countries? Who gives them permission to go there and do what they do? It is important to remember that all these extractivist agreements carried out by the EU on the African continent are signed by the governments of African countries, which, as several interviewees commented, are "failed" states with which Europe can negotiate at will.

Mamadou Niang, mentioned at various points during the conversation we had that, in his opinion, the first causes that forced people to take the Canary Route were precisely the political leaders of the countries of origin. Also, he explained that in his country, he had to suffer a dictatorship, and that although "in 2005 theoretically the dictator left, there is still a dictatorship. It is an elite that governs, a group that is the *military junta*, that brings people in to govern while excluding people, putting them in an extreme situation of oppression. Mauritania is a country where slavery is still allowed" (M. Niang, personal communication, March 28, 2022). When he was telling me about this, he clarified that he wanted me to understand where his political activity was, all his political will, all his need to be vindictive was coming from. He also told me that this was precisely the story of many people from the African continent, people who tried to escape from unsustainable political situations that make them come with all the means at their disposal to try to find a better life. What happens is that, as he himself explained, the fact that these specific situations are perpetuated in those countries in part due to the fact that: "many conditions have been created for these States to be failed States, where it is decided who governs and who doesn't, for example with the currency that is the African franc, that currency is the central bank of Paris who decides, which means that it is consequently the central bank of Paris who decides what Africans eat, how much they eat... They have

control of the African currency of many countries, sub-Saharan above all” (ibid.)

The Slovenian philosopher Žižek picks up this same idea, and it is important that “the first thing to recall that most refugees come from 'failed states', states where public authority is more or less inoperative (...) In all these instances, this disintegration of state power it is not purely a local phenomenon but the result of international economics and politics; in some cases (...) it is even a direct outcome of Western intervention. It is clear that this rise of 'failed states' in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries is not an unintended misfortune; rather, it is one of the ways in which the great powers practice their economic colonialism” (Žižek, 2017, p.37). Taking this into account, it is very clear that it is highly paradoxical and problematic that Western countries, in this case the European Union specifically, are leading to great problems since "they are guilty of everything what is happening in Africa, you cannot say that they do not come, that if you come you will receive a decent welcome [once you arrive in the EU], and then you sign a contract with your governments so that they let me fish your sea” (A.Kane, personal communication, March 26, 2022). Evidently, the European states do not want the 'counterpart' of their historical, traditional and habitual plundering in the African continent for which they have used and continue to use all kinds of colonialist political techniques.

In addition to Senegal, another country from which I was also able to learn a lot throughout the interviews was Morocco, since many of the people who take the Canary Route come from this state. Many of the Moroccans who take the route take it as a result of denouncing or suffering human rights violations in their country of origin. Thus, there are many (especially young) Moroccans who also take the Canarian Route to reach the European Union, a situation that, moreover, Morocco does not make an effort to stop since "The flight of young nonconformists in a small boat has always been a formula ideal managed by Morocco to reduce social tensions in a country immersed in a deep crisis of redefinition of its State model” (Naranjo, 2006, p. 81). As Sukeina Ndiaye, explained to me: "Morocco has many of its citizens abroad and every year there are more, there are many, and they are provided with documentation outside their country. . Within their country they are not provided with anything, but outside they are, because it is convenient, in addition, that is how they make large amounts of money enter the country in the form of remittances” (S. Ndiaye, personal communication, March 22, 2022). Furthermore, she added that those young people who arrive from Morocco through the Route, "are all

devastated, 95% of them are drug addicts, or addicted to all kinds of pills, and drink..." (ibid.) Carmelo , who as a translator also closely knows the reality of the Moroccans who arrive through the route commented that "In Morocco there is terrible violence. There are people who only said Morocco no, Morocco no, they can't even tell. There are many boys who even started crying, when in Africa it is frowned upon for a man to cry" (Carmelo, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

But in the countries of origin there is more and more social awareness of what their governments are carrying out: of the relationship of subordination with respect to the EU. This is how Soda explained it talking about her country of origin: "In Senegal, people are increasingly more politicized thanks to the work of many people, many activists, people who know perfectly well what is happening in their country, there is more and more awareness, before there was not so much awareness of all this massive exploitation. Now everyone is aware that this must change." (Soda, personal communication, April 20, 2022). Furthermore, she added that: "Africans know how to elect people democratically who are really going to know how to work for our countries, because Africa has everything", but of course, he also added in a critical and crude way the fact that: "we have to choose a president who is not afraid to die, because there are many presidents who are assassinated by the locals with the complicity of Europe" (ibid.)

5.1.3 Appearance of Europe in Africa. Idealization of the EU?

Although lately there has been a de-idealization of the European continent by those who take the Canary Route, as there is more information and knowledge about what arriving to the EU really is, it is true that the "European dream", the false conviction of a strong welfare state for all in the EU that it actually promotes also reaches Africa, which makes African arrival in the EU to be quite idealized. José Naranjo explained it in his book on the Canary Route that was published back in 2006, in the heat of the Cayuco Crisis, a stage in which many "reckless adolescents bewitched by the glare of a Europe that enters their lives through the Internet and the satellite dishes that dot the African villages but that deny them passage time and time again" (2006, p.109).

If this was the case in 2006, it is not hard to imagine that there is even more information on the internet today about what life is like in Europe. Abdou Kane even commented that the mentality of an African, even today, is that "there are no poor whites, when I watched soap operas, I always saw luxury. In addition, there is also what we show

ourselves, I don't do it, because I'm not one of those who take photos with great cars and then upload them to social media, but there are Africans who do that here and call on the boys to come to Europe. If we talk about the salaries we earn here in Spain and compare them with a person who is there, of course, we attract a lot of attention by telling about some things that happen here" (A.Kane, personal communication, April 26, 2022). And this is very true, it is very widespread today that we upload to networks social constant samples of our belongings, of what we do, of what we achieve that is understood to make us attractive in this capitalist world, even though everything is mere appearances of reality.

But of course, even so, it is really hard for many young Africans to deal with some illusions about Europe, "the contrast between the good news announced by the returnees and the harshness of everyday life is an abyss that can only be bridged thanks to *the Adventure*¹¹" (Naranjo, 2006, p.75).

Mamadou Niang was commenting that he himself arrived at that time, and that in his view this image of what the adventure entailed "has a lot to do with this false capitalist model that is sold from Europe, the image that is usually transmitted is that the money here falls from the sky, the image that is usually transmitted is not real. I know people who have come to leave large estates in their homeland that they could have farmed but didn't and ended up in enclosed greenhouses, working for someone else in appalling conditions." (M. Niang, personal communication, March 28, 2022).

Today there is more and more awareness within the population, hope that things will change" (Soda, personal communication, April 16, 2022). In other words, there is now more awareness of why people are going to Europe, they are more aware that they are going to Europe because Africa has been plundered, there is no longer such a strong idealization. And it is that, as Abdou Kane was commenting, the key is to "get them out of their heads that Europe is the future, because it is not" (A.Kane, personal communication, April 26, 2022).

But the problem is that the European dream continues to be sold, a dream that is really not as wonderful as it may seem, and in which obviously not all people from Africa want to come. It is very common to hear that if the borders were opened, everyone in

¹¹ *The adventure* was the term under which the journey of young Africans through the Canary Route was known, especially in the context of the Cayuco Crisis.

Africa would want to migrate to Europe, but this is not the case at all, it is a Eurocentric image that matches that same cosmopolitan ideal (Rumford, 2008), capitalist of the EU but that there is nothing true in reality, if not that it is pure appearance. In addition, as Soda pointed out: "There are many people who think that everyone in Africa would want to come to Europe if the borders were opened and that is totally untrue!" He would not go, if you ask me, I would tell you that If I have everything in my country, I wouldn't leave. I can't live life here with my neighbors because I can live in Africa. This is not Africa. I can't live like this. Africa is life, it is human warmth. It has nothing to do with Europe, much less with the image of Europe. To give you an example, one day, when we moved here [to his house in Las Palmas in Gran Canaria where we met], I wanted to give a bottle of bissap [typical Senegalese drink] and food to a neighbor, but my husband explained to me that they didn't do that here, but of course, for me it wasn't like that because for me, my neighbor is a member of my family. That's a big shock on a personal level." (Soda, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

5.2 Paper border

The clear lack of knowledge regarding Africa and its multiple realities is highly problematic, since it tends to homogenize the realities of those coming from the continent, when they are actually truly diverse, as pointed out by Louelia Mint El Mani: "This whole system puts the entire migration process in the same bag, which for me is very complex and very broad (...) Every person who arrives in the Canary Islands has their own reality, their own history, their own migratory process (...) It is not only about an impoverished population that wants to leave to improve their lives, there are many factors (...) But in the end, the essential point is that they are forced to risk their lives when trying to migrate (...)" (L.Mint El Mani, May 8, 2022).

As has been mentioned throughout the thesis, the profiles of the people who opt for the Canary Route have changed over time, the Route is highly diverse and there is not such a thing as a *single story* of the Route, in fact, there are as many *stories* as there are people who take the route, but the story of all these people is unified under one crucial border: the paper-border.

It is true that in the first instance the country they come from influences, and it is that, to a large extent, "The permission to travel to a country is based on a discriminative taxonomy, as it is mainly determined on the basis of the national origin (place of birth) of

the would-be traveler. The people from states on the self-constructed negative' list have to acquire a visa before traveling with them (...) Even when one has to migrate for life-threatening reasons, there is often no other way than to travel sans papiers, irregularly, without the ease of taking a plane and safe route” (Van Houtum, 2021, p.35).

The only thing that is homogeneous and that allows "putting in the same bag" the great diversity of people who take the Canarian Route is not even the country they come from (because the stories differ greatly from one region to another, or even from one family to another), if not that each and every one of those people with names and surnames, each with their own story, have no other way of reaching the EU than risking their lives through boat-migration. Thus, as Godenau and Zapata state, what does confer an insurmountable homogeneity to the entire route is "the precariousness of means to face a dangerous and uncertain journey" (Godenau & Zapata, 2022, p.50).

And it is that getting to cross the paper border is practically an impossible mission. In the case of Senegal, for example, Soda commented: “They don't let you apply for asylum because of your economic situation or the effects of climate change, rather the only reason for them to give you asylum is political, religious or gender persecution. If you don't have money to eat and you're going to die, you should be granted asylum. The economic reason should be an option, as well as the effects of climate change” (Soda, personal communication, April 16, 2022).

It is not at all easy to obtain a visa from Senegal to travel to Spain, as is the case with many of the African countries from which the people who take the Canarian Route come from, since “the requirements for family reunification - such as length of residence, economic means, the issue of housing or the need for medical insurance - make it, if not impossible, a long procedure, tedious and complicated. Job search visas are not adapted in times to the reality of the labor market” (Ruano Blanco, 2020).

Abdou Kane commented on his personal experience with the embassies in his country of origin, Senegal: “I can say that there is a mafia in the Senegalese embassy, because whoever gets a visa has money, whoever doesn't have money doesn't get a visa, or has to have a lot of money. The visa that costs you up to €6,000 to leave Senegal. If visas were made easier, how am I going to take a small boat risking my life? Most of those who come by boat have applied for a visa. I myself got it denied twice, so what is the problem? The only way out I had was by sea. I chose the sea and came here.” (A. Kane, personal communication, April 26, 2022).

Abdou Kane went through this in 2006, when he arrived in the Canary Islands, the same year in which José Naranjo referred to a (paper) "border that only those with a lot of money can overcome. (...) The only way for the rest is the lottery of the *cayuco*, in which some win and others lose" (Naranjo, 2006, p.125). Unfortunately, today the situation is still very similar and people still have to play the "lottery of the *cayuco*".

It seems that it is definitely not interesting to open the borders, despite the fact that, as Louelia Mint El Mani pointed out: "there would be many ways to do it, to open the consulates to open options to options that already exist... But the fact is that borders comprise an extremely powerful business, the mafias they move a lot of money, human trafficking organizations move a lot of money". In short, it is a great business, but it is also very operational and beneficial for the States and the markets that thanks to the borders can have a very vulnerable (and therefore exploitable) population.

In fact, lately, with the whole situation of thousands of refugees fleeing Ukraine due to the Russian invasion, it has been possible to see how it is possible to establish alternative and safe routes towards the European Union in record time. In this way, Manuel Cabezudo, Canarian specialized in alternative tourism in the Canary Islands who currently has a hostel based on alternative tourism in the neighborhood of La Isleta, in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, commented: "Now with the issue of the crisis of Ukraine has seen how the EU in less than a week generates a mechanism so that these people can be regularized, so that they can come, while here, which are dying, which are deaths and deaths and deaths, safe routes and corridors are not created" (M.Cabezudo). In this same line, Louelia Mint El Mani went a step further, and in the conversation I had with her, she commented that: "the debate cannot be focused on why 'with the Ukrainians yes, with the Africans no, but rather on what is being done with the Ukrainians, how are these channels being established, and how can we adapt them for the africans, because it could be the way for thinking about safe channels for the Africans'" (L.Mint El Mani, 2022).

In general, when talking about the Canary Route Pre-border, it is important to keep in mind that there is a serious lack of knowledge about the African continent, about the multiple realities that comprise the diverse countries that make it up, and each of the life stories of the people who decide to migrate towards the EU through boat-migration. But the important point is to keep in mind that the only thing that all these people actually have in common is that they have had to risk their lives in their attempt. That is the point that really deserves attention, and that is that we must also remember, as the social worker

of Moroccan origin Saida clarified is that: “we must remember that the migratory phenomenon in the Canary Islands is surely going to occur throughout life. Geographically, the Canary Islands are located on the African continent. It is the most dangerous route, but people will continue to use it because as long as there is hunger, misery and human rights violations, there will be no other and people will continue to take the routes available to them” (Saida, personal communication, April 22, 2022).

As long as there are paper borders, as extremely strong as those encountered by those who want to enter the EU through the Canary Islands, the Canarian Route will continue to exist and will continue to be busy and deadly.

5.3 From Europe through airports and ports

The millions of tourists who year after year come to the Canary Islands are mainly coming from the European continent, mostly the United Kingdom and Germany but also from other countries such as the Netherlands, France, Ireland, Italy and Belgium (Hernández et al, 2021).

Broadly speaking, the fact that so many people feel encouraged to come to the Canary Islands is because they make it easy for them: all-inclusive packs, which they buy directly at the source, highly competitive prices, the convenience of moving to a place where they will find a culture similar to their own. The tourist model of the canary Islands has been defining itself as “sun and beach mass tourism destination” throughout the years: “the fast and fast and fluid transport guaranteed by charter flights and the organization of Travel Agencies, which put into practice the “forfaith” or “packettravel” travel system, lead to the attraction of popular social sectors, to whom it is opened a world of opportunities: an apparently exotic tourist destination, in a warm climate for the enjoyment of bathing, sun and tranquility and, at the same time, they are guaranteed the maintenance of their cultural habits (hours, meals, security,...)” (Dominguez, 2006, par.5)

This "outstanding tourism supply" has been offered and improved since approximately the 1960s, and "has led to a mass tourism model supported by international tour operators.” (Hernández et al, 2021, p.5). The fact that only the 30% of the tourist expenditure actually takes place in the archipelago encourages tourists even more to come the Islands, but at the same time, as could be imagined, is detrimental to the tourist sector of the islands, and to the rest of the economic sectors of the islands, that hardly experiment

any change in their demand due to tourism.

The tourist image of the Canary Islands has been strengthened more and more over the years, to the point where, currently: “The Canary Islands also play a very important role in the strategies of global tourism business groups, particularly those most linked to the vacation segment and the so-called sun and beach tourism” (Hernández et al, 2021, p.9). But the Canary Islands have had to make a great effort to "attract more and more tourists to achieve economic growth, since commercial margins in tourism are relatively narrow given the subordinate position of the archipelago in the global tourism value chain" (ibid, p.10).

The main motivation of tourists who come to the Canary Islands is to leave their usual place of production to enjoy a quiet vacation in a comfortable and simple destination where they can enjoy a quiet vacation of sun and beach of the to be able to take lots of photos to later show to their family and friends when they return to the Europe Mainland.

In fact, it is interesting to note how, today, one of the ways to measure the satisfaction of tourists who come to the Canary Islands is precisely through social networks, "which have become a decisive factor in choice and recommendation". (Hernández et al, 2021, p.33) That is why the Canary Islands strive to offer spaces that are attractive for taking photographs.

Closing this first section of the pre-border, it could be said that it is important to know both the motivations and the realities that people have to go through in preparation for crossing the Canarian border. The problem is that in the case of the boat-migration it is highly difficult to access these stories, since after all they are stories that are not interesting, that raise resentments and even stir consciences if we think about issues such as "they are here because we have taken away their livelihoods there." In addition, it is possible that he is not interested in the fact that knowing the stories could help us get closer to these realities, not seeing them as something so unknown and foreign, beyond our reach: “I think that all this can be combated, I think that the If fears are faced with reality, with the stories of a population that is coming, all those fears can be destroyed, ending that unified enemy of such an extensive group that is the population that arrives through small boats” (L. Mint El Mani, Personal communication, 2022). In addition, it is difficult to find people willing to attend to these stories, to listen to them... The important thing is to keep in mind that there are so many paths, so many stories that make you end up taking a small boat, a canoe or even an inflatable boat to leave Africa and try to reach

Europe.

CHAPTER 6: THE SPECTACLE OF THE CANARY BORDER

Now, I move into the in situ Canary land border. In this chapter, it will be important to pay attention to the characteristics of the island borders of the EU in general and specifically those of the Canary archipelago.

6.1 Externalization within the EU: insular European borders

In this thesis, it has already been stated that one of the keys of contemporary border management is precisely the externalization of borders, now, it is a matter of applying this trend to the specific case of the Canary Islands to see and analyze how it is displayed.

It has already been seen how the EU is characterized by a border regime of migratory containment, but what happens is that there are occasions, such as those described by the Italian-born social psychologist, expert in migration, Daniel Buraschi: "when it is not possible to deport, at least we have to contain the migrations in the most external circles of the Spanish periphery, in this case, the Canary Islands" (D. Buraschi, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

Generally, when it comes to the externalization of the EU's borders, it is usually carried out through in neighbouring countries which are not part of the EU such as Morocco or Turkey (for instance), countries with whom well-paid agreements are signed to control migration flows towards the EU. But what makes the Canary Islands case so interesting is the fact that this externalization of EU borders has been carried out in a territory within the EU itself, but in a territory extremely far from the mainland, away from the EU's view. As Rubens Ascanio explained: "this territory is not so visible in the media, it is comfortable to set migration contention aside there (...) there has been a reaction of 'we don't want to know anything about that southern border, do whatever you have to do', I see that it is going to happen here as with the entire Eastern part of the Mediterranean: island territories that were absolutely forgotten" (R.Ascanio, personal communication, March 21, 2022). Also Luis Prieto, sociologist and resident of one of the neighborhoods in which one of the macro centers for boat-migrant people on the Island of Tenerife is located, commented, pointing out that these retention trends that were now seeing within the EU in the Canary Islands were not new at all, but rather that: "this policy

of keeping all the boat-migrant people at its borders, which in its day was Turkey, which had a large amount of EU funds and the establishment of centers and/or camps on the external borders of the EU, and was indeed a progress in International Relations, and as a result, migrants continued to be held in the Mediterranean Islands or Islands such as the Canary Islands, which became retention spaces” (L. Prieto, personal communication, May 10, 2022).

And it is that indeed, this has already been seen over the last few years with some Mediterranean islands such as Lampedusa or Lesbos, which have also become outsourced spaces for migratory containment within the EU itself. Thus, the result of this is that the responsibility for managing migration processes that clearly exceed local capacities has been located unofficially but also officially “in those [island] border spaces” (Godenau & Zapata, 2022, p.55). This was widely commented on by the two workers from the City Council of La Laguna with whom I was able to speak (Rubens Ascanio and Talía Acedo), who told me that they had felt how the EU made it clear that managing the EU in situ borders was not their problem: “what they come to tell us is practically that this is our ‘problem’ when it is not just our problem at all, and it is not a ‘problem’ of the City Council of La Laguna...” (R.Ascanio, personal communication, March 21, 2022).

In reality, the fact that all this border responsibility is being dumped on the Canary Islands is highly problematic, and comes to contravene Roman law. This was explained to me by Daniel Arencibia, an expert lawyer in rights violations of boat-migration people, who explained explained that co-responsibility in the EU borders was absolutely necessary, as he explained: “If we have a house, a property, between ten owners and there are six who make the facade and four who are inside and the facade has to be changed, all of us who belong to the common thing [the property], have to finance the border, the limit of that common thing we own in common, because it is the border that protects us all, and if some of the owners are not border it is exclusively because others are border, are at the front. So, this idea hat comes from Roman law, that we are all responsible for the common thing [the EU], and that Spain and the countries of Southern Europe have been demanding from the EU for decades, suddenly goes down the drain when Madrid says no, it is said that within Spain, the border territories of Spain should be the ones to take all the blame, so to speak. It was nonsense, it was nonsense for the migrants, for Spain, for the traditional politics of Spain, for the Canary Islands society, because here we started to see a problem... (D. Arencibia, personal communication, April 21, 2022).

In the case of the Canary Islands, it is already more than evident and actually remains like so, how the co-responsibility of the European Union treaty was completely forgotten, and Spain, and more specifically the Canary Islands, was left to manage everything on its own. Thus, it was decided to concentrate all these boat-migrant people in the Canary Islands, without the management of the increase in arrivals being distributed throughout the national territory, and this gave rise to problems, since there was a large concentration of people. Daniel Arencibia provided a very clear explanation on the dangers of concentrating people in a same space: “if you concentrate in the same place in Spain all the plumbers or all the lawyers, for example, in a town in Cadiz, you have a problem, because there will be a huge unemployment of plumbers or lawyers. The problem is in the concentration: you have concentrated everything in the same place where you clearly do not have enough infrastructure, where you do not have enough personnel, where you do not have enough financial means, where you do not have the capacity to absorb people in an orderly way. I don't know, you are inventing a problem, and that was a problem that Spain had, which was to concentrate everything in the South, to concentrate everything in the Canary Islands". (D. Arencibia, personal communication, April 21, 2022)

All this concentration, in the distance of a territory that, as explained by the journalist and adviser to the vice-presidency of the Canarian government, Txema Santana “is closer to the origin [African continent] than to the destination [in most cases, Europe's mainland] (...) means that people who have arrived in the EU remain far from the sight of the EU" (T. Santana, personal communication, April 20, 2022). As previously commented, the Canary Islands are not visible to Europe's mainland, not even in the media or in the academia, since: "a crisis in Ceuta does not sound the same, even if it is an extracontinental territory, precisely because of its proximity, that a crisis in the Canary Islands, and that simple correlation already determines the measures that are taken regarding the migratory situation in these islands" (ibid.).

It is highly remarkable that no matter how much “Borders and boundaries have long figured prominently in the public's attention” (De Genova et al, 2015, p.66), the Canary Islands have hardly received any attention, and in this, as Txema Santana commented me: “Geography is key, and it is also key in the feeling of the people who live on the islands, when it comes to seeing the solutions that are proposed, because the delay in considering it as a political space integral not isolated, that is to say: in the

political space we are one, we are isolated in the geographical space. Well, considering ourselves an integral political space, where the measures - measures are the same for everyone, the delay in considering this has caused thousands of people to accumulate here in an infra-social situation, in a very social situation. fragile, with what that entails” (T. Santana, personal communication, April 20, 2022). Along these same lines, Daniel Buraschi, an expert researcher in social psychology and migrations, of Italian origin, commented that "When we go to congresses, conferences, European projects, people are usually amazed both in the academic field and in the political field and also in In the activist field, it is striking to see how the situation is totally unknown in contrast to cases such as Ceuta or Melilla, from which many people usually hear about, outside of Spain, and perhaps other issues that everyone knows, such as Lesbos or even Ceuta and Melilla, which are also in Spain” (D. Buraschi, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

6.2 Externalization outside the EU

Although externalization within the EU itself is what attracts the most attention with regard to the Canary border, in reality the most remarkable aspect is the work of externalization outside the EU that Spain has been carrying out since 2006, causing some to claim that “Spain has been an outstanding student in the outsourcing of border control” (Garcés-Mascareñas & Sánchez, 2016, p.1). Thus, Spain has been signing agreements with multiple African countries for years, aware that when it came to preventing people from arriving in Spain, it was easier to prevent them from reaching the Canary Islands border than to return them once they were inside Spanish soil, having to manage and maintain the stay of these people many times indefinitely (as in fact was the case during the worst months of the pandemic).

Among Spain’s multiple agreements with African countries, those that have been established with Morocco, undoubtedly the "main guardian of the southern border" (Garcés-Mascareñas & Sánchez, 2016, p.1), stand out. This fact has placed Morocco in a highly privileged position, which has a free hand when it comes to dialogue with the EU, since after all, it holds the key to boat-migration towards the European Union, providing the country of great power in negotiations for resources and territories.

The clearest example of this is the case of Western Sahara, where Morocco has been committing multiple human rights violations against its population for years, in a territory that it proclaims as part of Morocco, but that in reality has been pending

decolonization since 1976, when it ceased to be the 53rd province of the Spanish state. It is interesting to delve briefly into the issue of Western Sahara, since lately there have been relevant changes regarding this territory. On March 18, 2022, there was an unexpected turn that would change the historical trend of Spain regarding the conflict, as the government of Pedro Sanchez decided to support the autonomy plan for Western Sahara proposed by Morocco in 2007, thus leaving aside the path that both the United Nations and the Saharawi people had opted for: the referendum of self-determination. The point is that everything suggests, and in fact the Spanish government itself has hinted at it, that this recent turn is an attempt to please Morocco, so that it remains docile and helpful in its work of controlling irregular entries to the EU.

Even more, numerous tensions are taking place between Spain and Morocco around the Western Sahara, a territory very rich in resources, especially in phosphates, as Carmelo commented, which makes the EU to be quite interested in it, but everything points to the fact that Morocco will continue to control it, because, as Manuel Cabezudo from the ATLAS association explained: "Morocco is in fact the strongest country to keep the Western Sahara resources. And one of the main reasons why it is so strong is precisely because it is very well funded by the EU in exchange of the border control (closure) to its borders to boat-migration. Morocco has the key to put pressure on the EU, Morocco does not allow not allow migrants to leave the its coasts or the coasts of the Western Sahara it also controls if it is not truly interested in it" (M.Cabezudo, personal communication, April 21, 2022). Commenting on all this, I do not intend to go into a geopolitical analysis of the Canary Islands, but to explain that all the movements of the great powers, all geopolitics, end up translating into the opening or closing of the migratory routes such as the Canary Islands, along which thousands of people are forced to transit and many others to die, it is important to see how the multiple geopolitical and geostrategic movements that are currently taking place are translated and how this affects such a naturally rich territory as the one near the Canary Islands.

It is a fact that, for several decades now: "Morocco had given an impressive lesson in realpolitik to Spain at the expense of the immigrants themselves, as it had also done with tomatoes or fishing. Not for nothing is it said that Moroccan diplomacy is the best in the world" (Naranjo, 2006, p.80). Undoubtedly, Morocco has learned to use with great mastery to use "the patera as a weapon and political strategy" (Naranjo, 2006, pp.93-94), in fact, for any issue, be it for the management of the occupied territories of Western

Sahara, or be it "in terms of tomato exports, or in terms of fishing", as Dirk Godenau explained, who explained that for Morocco it was really operative to put on a show at the EU borders to try to get the EU's attention with whatever issue was needed (D. Godenau, personal communication, March 17, 2022).

This has been seen in recent years, especially with specific episodes such as those that took place in the month of May 2021 when Morocco opened the Ceuta fence allowing thousands of young people to enter Spanish territory in the context of a serious and tense diplomatic crisis between Morocco and Spain, when the leader of the Polisario Front (national liberation movement of Western Sahara) was admitted to a Spanish hospital. Undoubtedly, these moments in which Morocco allows jumps to the fences or the entry of thousands of young people and minors, as happened in May 2021, is offering a tremendous border show that reaches all television stations in the country and even in Europe itself, but when talking about how the relationship between Morocco and Spain affects the migratory flow, the Canary Border tends to be completely ignored: "it seems that the Canary Islands do not exist in this equation" (D.Buraschi, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

It is sad to observe how Morocco and therefore, its people is acting and even more so if one thinks that, as Helena Maleno, who herself has lived for more than two decades in Morocco, says: "Hospitality is a trait that defines the different peoples of Morocco, think about the hundreds of stories of travelers welcomed in desert oases; but that imaginary is threatened by border externalization policies, which call into question important values of the culture of the countries that suffer them" (Maleno, 2020, p.150). But in reality, these are the rhythms of geopolitics the consequences of space managing in the contemporary capitalist system in which it is increasingly consolidated that *borders kill*.

In fact, to put a more recent event (that was also mentioned in the introduction) on June 24, 2022, a group of migrants from Sudan, South Sudan, Chad, Mali, Yemen, Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal, Niger, Guinea Conakry, Burkina and Liberia (Ca-Minando Fronteras, 2022, p.25) tried to jump the fence that separates the Moroccan city of Nador from the Spanish city of Melilla, and a massacre occurred that resulted in the death of 40 persons due to the tremendous police violence applied by Morocco. with the approval of Spain, whose Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, came to issue that:

“Morocco also suffers from a problem of migratory pressure coming from other countries

in the rest of Africa, and in particular from a highly unstable area as we know, which is precisely the Sahel, sub-Saharan Africa. If you see the images, you will see that the Moroccan gendarmerie has worked hard to try to prevent this assault on the fence of the Autonomous City of Melilla. Therefore, I think it is important 1- to recognize the extraordinary work that the State security forces and bodies are doing in the autonomous city of Melilla, and in general in the fight against irregular migration, and secondly, also to recognize the work that the Moroccan government has done in this case, in coordination with the security forces and bodies of the Spanish State to try to stop a violent assault and that precisely what it does is call into question nothing more and nothing less than our territorial integrity , because I insist it has been a violent assault, well organized, well perpetrated, and in this case I think well by the two security forces from both Spain and Morocco. And therefore, I also want to thank the work of the Moroccan government, and underline how important it is to have relations like the ones we have with a strategic partner such as Morocco” (Sánchez, P, 2022).

These were the words of the President of the Spanish Government at a press conference in Brussels, where he was participating in the European Council. Through these words, from which, although he later clarified that he supposedly had not seen the images to which he was referring, we can draw many conclusions, and that is that in the first place, he speaks of Africa as the great unknown, he speaks specifically of the region of the Sahel calling it "highly unstable", somehow denying the possibility to think about the particular situations of the people who live there and who have been motivated to try to jump the fence, if not simply as something alien, unstable in the face of stability and the security of a Europe, and of a Spanish State that what it wants is to maintain and safeguard its territorial integrity. But above all, Sánchez was concerned to congratulate the work that Morocco was carrying out, and its security forces, making it clear that the way to act in the face of desperate attempts to jump the fence is violently.

Now the situation we find ourselves in is that Morocco will receive 500 million euros from the EU to control its borders, even though the last border *spectacle* ended with the murder of dozens of people at the Melilla fence. If you think about it, those 500 million euros come to directly reinforce this, what happened recently in Melilla, and if they are being "rewarded", the message is being sent that they want it to continue like this, right? This is how Helena Maleno collected it on her Twitter account: “After the Melilla massacre, the European Union awards Morocco 500 million euros. More money, more pain, more death.” (Maleno, 2022).

For all these reasons, it is important to keep an eye on the externalization of

borders, either with Morocco or with the rest of the EU's neighboring countries, to realize that, without a doubt, externalization of borders kills.

6.3 The EU and the Canary Route. Beyond externalization

But it is not only important here to talk about border externalization, since the actions, or rather, the non-actions of the EU on the Canary border must be briefly discussed. The point is that despite the fact that the arrival of boat-migration has not stopped since 1994 and that there have been two "migratory crises" of considerable importance, the Spanish State has been years preventing the Canary Islands from becoming an EU migratory hotspot in which the European agencies of FRONTEX, Eurojust, Europol and the European Asylum Agency can intervene just as they do on the islands of Lampedusa or Lesbos.

According to the Por Causa Foundation of journalism and migration, this is due to "the bad image that the establishment of a hotspot would generate in the Canary Islands, whose main economic engine is tourism" (Por Causa, 2021, p.26). This is highly interesting, and it is that despite all the economic interests and support that FRONTEX, or that the entire border industry, that, as Carmelo explained: "involves billions: for those who manufacture fences, for those who do the computerized control of the devices at the borders, everything that these programs do, all those security subcontracts, surveillance, in a large number of areas" (Carmelo, personal communication, April 20, 2022) moves, tourism has ended up prevailing in the Canary Islands, and it is because, as Debord explained: "Each individual commodity [understanding both the products of border industry and tourism as commodities] fights for itself. It avoids acknowledging the others and strives to impose itself everywhere as if it were the only one in existence" (Debord, 1992, p.32). Contrary to what one could think, it is not FRONTEX or the whole of the border industry who decides what happens to the Canary Border, but rather it is the greatest source of capital accumulation in that space, that is, tourism, what really decides on the Canary Space.

No matter how much capital accumulation could be generated with FRONTEX or other European agencies acting as if the Canary Islands were actually a *hotspot*, since as much benefit for the accumulation of capital it could bring, mass tourism brings much more.

6.4 Journeys

In this section of the Canary border, it is inevitable to talk about the different types of journeys that people who come to the Canary Islands have to undertake.

6.4.1 The Canary Route of boat-migration

In the first place, it is important to clarify that the Canary Route is really only one of the boat-migration routes towards the EU that currently exists and that departs from the African continent. Also, it is crucial to remark that among the population that migrates towards the Canary Islands, Africans only represent a small number, since immigrants mainly come from Italy and Venezuela. Lastly, of course not all of the African population that migrates to the Canary Islands do so through the Canary Route of boat-migration.

Even though these clarifications might seem unnecessary, it is clear that in the Canary context there has been an entire “apocalyptic rhetoric surrounding [African migration towards the EU] tends to blow out of proportion the true scale of this migration, besides, creating an inaccurate impression that African migration to Europe is essentially about 'illegal boat crossings' (De Haas et al, 2020, p.264).

The consequences of these impressions end up being that when someone thinks about migration in the Canary Islands, the first thought is directly the *humanitarian border*, a border behind which a series of policies and interests remain hidden, a border that cause the death of some and that nobody seems to want to unmask and shed light on.

In fact, the humanitarian border contributes to the establishment of 'moral borders', with all that this implies, which, as Daniel Buraschi explained to me: "there are people who are within our moral space, our moral community, and people who are outside our moral community to which the same norms of justice do not apply, there is not the same emotional response, for example empathy or indignation, in the same way that we are not open to feeling responsible" (D. Buraschi, personal communication, March 24, 2022) It is a very beastly separation that begins with the paper-border that we talked about in the previous chapter, continues with the boat trip itself, and as we will see later, is perpetuated with the post-border.

To the construction of this humanitarian border, which is especially explicit in the current land (or in this case, maritime) border, contributes greatly to the vocabulary and

discourse that is usually used to talk about the arrival of migrants, since, as Carmelo complained: “People talk of *wave, invasion, rebound*... It is almost the same vocabulary as with the covid pandemic. On the other hand, Ukrainians are directly tagged as *refugees*” (Carmelo, personal communication, April 20, 2022). That is why we must actively fight against the dangerous use of these types of terms, when they are really dangerous, and that is why “dehumanizing language such as “waves” and “surges” of migrants should be avoided at all costs. (Black, 2021, p.14). Furthermore, as Gabriella Sanchez suggests, it would be necessary to question: “How do people on the border itself feel about the discourse of ‘spikes’, ‘invasion’ or ‘unprecedented arrivals’?” (2022, p. 218).

It is as simple as thinking about what Olalla, an economics student who had been volunteering to improve the situation of boat-migrant people in La Laguna, told me: “They are people just like you, you must not act as if you are not seeing these people. It is very hard to think about what they had to go through on the trip and then come here and not even be treated as if they were human beings” (Olalla, personal communication, April 25, 2022).

Returning to the boat-migration journey itself, it should be said that, in general terms, the journeys involve an extremely precarious organization, since the boat-migrant people have to entrust their displacement to “passers-on, intermediaries or organizations more or less experienced in this type of initiative always through informal channels” (Godenau & Zapata, 2022, p.50).

The journeys do not start at the moment when the boat is taken, in fact, they start much earlier, years before in most of the cases, as Abdou Kane told me: “People spend 5 years to be able to cross the borders of Mali, Mauritania or Morocco. They go there, they swindle them, they cheat them, they have to go to work trying to get out of those countries” (A.Kane, personal communication, April, 26, 2022). Sukeina Ndiaye commented that on many occasions she had come across people who had even taken between up to five years to be able to get on the boat, and that she was told by boat-migrant people “how they had been beaten, they had taken all the money, how the owner of the boat he had kept his money without guaranteeing him a place in the boat” (S.Ndiaye, personal communication, March 22, 2022). Mamadou Niang also commented on the same fact: “boat-migration implies many years of travel, there is people who even die in the desert waiting for the time when they manage to get on a boat, and most of

those who arrive have already spent two years or more away from their homeland” (M.Niang, personal communication, April, 2022).

The fact that these trips are so hard, and in fact more and more, is due to the multiple policies that the EU is carrying out (through mechanisms such as the already mentioned border externalization), hand in hand with the partners with whom it is signing agreements to prevent certain people from migrating towards the EU. These policies cause different unintended consequences, unintended effects that imply what Soda stated, that: “it is increasingly difficult to migrate, we are increasingly looking for other options, it is more dangerous, but we must do it” (Soda, Personal Communication, April 20, 2022). For example, more and more people opt for the use of unstable pneumatic boats since it is more difficult to track them, more difficult for them to be intercepted by European control devices, but as might be expected and Soda was commenting: " There are many people who die because when they leave the beaches, they turn off the GPS so as not to be intercepted by the surveillance mechanisms, with what as much as the boats were somewhat stable, many boats got lost and instead of taking 3 days, remain lost at sea for 7 or 8 days, running out of food, sometimes even without gasoline. There have been cases of boats going astray and reaching Cape Verde or even the Caribbean, but of course, they all arrive with deaths” (Soda, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

Every journey through the Canary Route is a true horror: “On every boat, a new story, a new odyssey” (2006, p.58). In fact, when I was speaking with people who themselves migrated through boat-migration or were particularly close to the boat-migration reality of the Canary Route, they repeatedly told me that the horror stories are infinite: “There are many stories, there are thousands and thousands, each one lives it differently, it is a dramatic experience, and when you think they are not going to tell you anything else, there is something missing that makes the situation even worse. Many have seen people (including family or friends) pass away, others survive shipwrecks, live in situations that are very difficult to overcome and manage” (S. Ndiaye, personal communication, March 22, 2022).

Knowing this, it is hard to imagine how a horror such as the Canarian route can become so expensive, not only in personal terms, of course, but also in economic terms, because "The lack of legal channels to migrate has put a price on freedom, literally. Steep migration prices are being paid to help undo the lack of visa-free travel opportunities. The system of restrictive paper borders has thus led to the emergence of migration trade, a

financial service industry for the normatively excluded, be they poor, or rich (Van Houtum & Van Uden, 2021, p.22).

In short, the Canary Route journey is way too expensive (in all senses, but above all in terms of personnel) and with too many risks and potential complications for it not to be a key decision for the people who take it, who They decide to play the Cayuco lottery, as José Naranjo said, of which, as we already know, some live while others do not (2006).

6.4.2 Rescues

During the *Cayuco Crisis*, the rescues of the Canary Route were carried out by the Spanish Civil Guard, whose operations often ended with the shipwreck of the small boats that were destabilized after the fear of seeing the agents. After these situations, many voices were “raised to criticize the use of large and tall vessels to carry out rescues at sea, especially to pick people who travel in fragile boats so loaded that their railings rise only a few centimeters above sea level” (Naranjo, 2006, p.56). These dangerous situations, these avoidable shipwrecks have occurred again on numerous occasions over the years and some of them have even been collected by academic articles such as the case of a Civil Guard patrol boat that crashed with a *patera* on 13 December 2012, when “six people were lost at sea. Only one corpse was recovered. Three of the survivors remained in the Canary Islands. The rest were repatriated to Morocco” (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p.296).

When I found this article, I recognized the story because it was precisely through the case of this shipwreck that the lawyer Daniel Arencibia started to voluntarily take migrant people rights violation cases in the Canary Islands. He told me how after spending some time away from the Canary Islands he returned to the Islands and found out how “the Civil Guard patrol ran over a *patera* that was practically reaching land, but the patrol boat began to persecute the *patera*, in an act of prioritizing the police work of border control over the rescue work that should prevail according to the law (...) This is why I have been fighting for almost 10 years so that the Spanish Maritime Rescue and not the Civil Guard is in charge of the rescues of boat-migration, as a result of the death of those 7 people (...) After the deadly incident, some colleagues from Madrid contacted me to tell me that the boys were going to be send back to Morocco, so I reached the boys and talked to them, I sent the matter to court, I asked he Civil Guard for criminal responsibility

for the homicides that had taken place. We stopped the deportation for some time, a very important media fight...” (D. Arencibia, personal communication, April 21, 2022), but as Ferrer-Gallardo and Van Houtum later collected in the article, indeed, only three of them managed not to be deported.

This is simply one of the stories behind the rescues that take place on the Route, which also generate so much controversy today. This type of negligence continues to occur, these deaths that are so avoidable, but there is little responsibility for them and the only consequences of these “incidents”, as people like Daniel Arencibia or Sukeina Ndiaye told me, is that they are managed by establishing a responsible person or group of people among the people travelling in the boat.

But it is difficult to reflect on the paradoxes and injustices of these rescues, because there is very little knowledge about what actually happens at sea, and, as one might expect, this little information remains *masked* under the sound of some repetitive headlines that have been appearing in the Spanish TVs for way too many years now, headlines such as: “Maritime rescue has rescued Africans and transferred them to the pier”, “Maritime Rescue has found so many people at sea”, “Maritime Rescue found 3 boats and transferred them to land”, etc.

In addition to masking the responsibilities of what happens on the high seas with the boat migration, what this type of headlines also ends up promoting is an absolute indifference in the people who listen to this information, since, after all, they end up downplaying it to a mantra that has already been stripped of all meaning and that has been distorted and dehumanized after so many years by reinforcing the construction of the humanitarian border. Therefore, we can say that there is a discursive spectacle that hides all the reality that lies behind each rescue, each shipwreck, it is lost and it is inaccessible to arrive through the usual channels at “the criminality and horror hidden under the politics of rescue and the discursive spectacle of the humanitarian border” (De Michelis, 2017, p.9).

6.4.3 Deaths in the Canary Route

But on many occasions, not all the available rescue means that could save the lives of thousands are coordinated, and many people die trying to reach the EU. We can say that there are too many obstacles when dealing with boat-migration rescues, as Helena

Maleno explains: “The system and its rescue services could have done much more than what they did to save them. If they lost their lives it was because of institutional racism, because of the borders where a silent war has been established” (Maleno, 2021, p.83).

When talking about shipwrecks, about deaths and about corpses, the discourse revolves around some traumatic descriptions that only contribute to reinforce the humanitarian border, always in the bases of informing little in a very impersonal and even, dehumanizing way. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary to remember that, at all times, one must think that these tragedies are not about figures, but about people, about stories, trying to fight against a massacre in which, as Achile Mbembe explains: “lifeless bodies are quickly reduced to the status of simple skeletons. Their morphology inscribes them in the register of undifferentiated generality: simple relic of an unburied pain; empty, meaningless corporealities; strange deposits plunged into cruel stupor” (Mbembe,p.87). It is therefore very necessary to never stop think about people dying in the border as people who are perfectly aware about the potential risk of their lives in the route.

Plus, these numbers of deaths are probably not even definitive, since it is estimated, according to the thousands of relatives of the people who take the Route contact to different people involved in the situation, as Sukeina Ndiaye commented: “I am convinced there are many people who remain in the sea and of which nothing is ever known. Just with those who contact me, families who contact me and don't even know me, and I don't have any relationship because I know them through a person, who is perhaps looking for his son and can't find him, so he looks for me so that I entrusted it to my daughter Lala (Louelia Mint El Mani, lawyer, and also Sukeina's daughter), but it always happens that we search, and search, but we don't find anything, which makes it very difficult for families to mourn” (S. Ndiaye, personal communication, March 22, 2022). It is truly tragic to think of the thousands of people who lose their lives at the border, and those who “are too often buried without a name, when they are buried at all: the bodies of more than 1,000 people remain missing in the Atlantic Sea crossing , according to MMP data. (Black, 2021, p.13).

Despite the fact that the figures are very high, and that in fact the little attention that the Canarian Route is receiving does not make any sense when it has reached more than 4,000 deaths in 2021, which is a real outrage, when, considering that as Daniel Buraschi collected: “6,000 people had died in the Mediterranean, and in 2016, and in 2015, 4,500 had died, but in comparison, the number of studies, research, political hatred,

social indignation, etc, etc, had been enormous and nothing comparable to the little that had reached the Canary Route” (D.Buraschi, personal communication, April 22, 2022).



Figure 7 Infographic elaborated by Ca-Minando Fronteras showing the 4016 victims of the Canary Islands Route

Despite the alarmingly high figures, and the fact that they should be much more worrying and receive much more attention than they currently receive, it is important to think that they are people with first and last names, following the journalist Irene Ruano Blanco: “It is not about figures but about people who have managed to arrive or who have disappeared, behind which there are stories of life and families. As much as they are used to attack, generate hatred, invent problems and strengthen racist discourse. Something to which not only a part of the political arc is contributing” (Ruano Blanco, 2020). In short, that “this story is not told in figures, but rather with names and surnames, with families that were left behind. Broken lives in an invisible wall” (Naranjo, 2006, p.59). It is interesting that Naranjo specifically referred to the invisible wall, because despite being truly invisible, it is also truly invisible in the thousands of deaths ongoing in it.

It is remarkable that every time there is a greater awareness of the danger of the route, as Mame Cheikh Mbaye, president of the Federation of African Associations in the

Canary Islands, said, “The whole of Africa is in mourning. Each family or each town recognizes someone who has disappeared at sea” (Ruano Blanco, 2020). Also Abdou Kane commented that “taking a *patera* is a very difficult decision, you have to think about how many people have died in Senegal, many have died, it is a disaster, no mother wants her son take a *patera*.” (A. Kane, personal communication, April 2022).

In other words, if there is more and more information, if boat-migrant people already know how dangerous boat migration is, what we must really question is how, even so, they decide to take the Canary Route. Txema Santana told me that at times has even been tempted to think: “damn, a dead baby, who puts their baby in what is practically a floating coffin?! (...) but then I think that what is criminal is not even remotely the father or mother who has decided to put the baby in the boat, but the fact that that person had to look for a better life for his/her baby through the dangerous boat-migration. It is criminal to criminalize the decision to come through boat migration when you have not put a bridge that allows another possibility, that is what is criminal...” (T. Santana, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

I have wanted to dwell briefly on the question of the criminalization and stigmatization of the deaths themselves because it is another of the consequences of this whole network that is so *masked* and whose result continues to be the death of thousands of people for the mere fact of wanting reach the European Union. In general, it could be said that the whole journey contributes to a “increasing de-humanization and criminalization of migrants by institutions and the media that alternatively deploy images of the ‘drowned’ and the ‘saved’ in order to serve both compassionate, self-gratulatory agendas and populist discourses of contamination and invasion. (De Michelis, 2017, p.2).

Undoubtedly, the visible part of the trips through the Canarian Route: “Images of crowded ships, documentation of deaths at the border, deployments of border guards in so called “hot spots” [which is what the Canary Islands are in today, no matter how much the strength of the tourism industry wants to avoid it] of border regions and the recourse to military imagery and language all serve to enact the spectacle of the border and deepen the architecture and practices of the border regime” (De Genova et al, 2015, p.67).

6.4.4 Arrival to the Canary Borderland

The appearance of the arrivals through the Canary Route is usually that of almost

footage images in which people are shown disembarking from the Maritime Rescue vessel, escorted by a civil guard and a Red Cross volunteer.



Figure 8. Disembark in the Canary Islands. 13th May, 2022. By Borja Suarez Melian. This image is just the general image offered on the news in Spain, always the moment of disembark from the Maritime Rescue boat, showing that somehow the journey is over with the arrival to the Spanish territory when in reality right after this image, boat-migrant people are given a return order, right in the pier.

But at the end of 2020, coinciding with a context of the very serious health and tourism crisis ongoing to the Islands, the appearance of the arrivals changed drastically, it was an appearance that went way beyond the monotonous disembarkation at the Canary Piers that we Spaniards are accustomed to seeing in our televisions: it was the spectacular image of the Arguineguín Pier.



Figure 9 Arguineguín Pier. November 17, 2020. EFE. The pier was completely overcrowded for several weeks. Pateras and cayucos kept arriving with people who were crowded into the pier in terrible conditions.



Figure 10 Arguineguín Pier. November 22, 2020. Picture taken by Borja Suarez Melian



Figure 11 Arguineguín Pier. November 13, 2020. Picture taken by Borja Suarez Melian

6.4.4.1 Arguineguín Pier

During way too many months, the situation arose that, at the Arguineguín Pier, up to 2,500 people were held after their arrival through the Canary Route.

This was the result of a strict policy of containment carried out by the Spanish government, a policy that, as Daniel Arencibia told me: "having 2,600 people lying on the ground, forced to sleep on the ground, shoulder to shoulder in the midst of a pandemic when the Spanish law says that it is illegal to give someone degrading treatment, for me it is absolutely illegal, because these people were lying on the ground with rats, without even access to a bathroom, skipping the distance and the sanitary measures required by covid..." (D. Arencibia, personal communication, April 21, 2022).

In Arguineguín, there was "A spectacle of enforcement at the border, whereby migrant illegality is rendered spectacularly visible" (De Genova, 2013, p.1181). This spectacle, this appearance, this image, is, as Noemí Padrón pointed out, precisely "the image that they want to give, that we are not prepared, and that we don't want to. Also, the problem is that people quickly buy into the chaos, get worried, and respond very negatively. But the image that they want to convey is none other than provisional, they

wanted to give it that point of provisionality, of not knowing what to do, of lack of control...” (N. Padrón, personal communication, March 18, 2022). And, as Txema Santana commented: “the initial spectacularization of the Arguineguín pier aroused passions and emotions that reified people, and there, at that specific moment, it conditioned that decisions were not made, they continued people arriving, they were shown as all, then all to hotels, that policial way of doing things also raised a feeling of danger, of fear, that permeated society.” (T.Santana, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

This policy of *containment*, of concentrating more and more migrants on the pier, with the consequent unprecedented spectacularization of the arrivals, meant that what was happening became more *alien* to the majority of people, which left the door open to talk about "invasion". Thus, the Arguineguín pier was a clear example of how the EU is “obsessed with stopping undocumented migrants, literally at all costs, even though the sensationalized chaos and manufactured 'insecurisation' at its borders” (Van Houtum & Bueno Lacy, 2020 , p.721), and therefore it was also seen how this chaotic, apparently uncontrolled presentation of thousands of boat-migrants trapped at the border, at the pier, also brought the counterpart that was “undermining solidarity with refugees while strengthening the hand of populist EUrosceptics, who exploit the threat inherent to the aesthetics of the iron border to push their demands for even higher walls and an ever more vicious border regime” (ibid).

Thus, the multiple images of what was going on in Arguineguín, *masked* the situation of the thousands of people lying on the ground, trapped in the pier, became the “international image of the crisis”, (Martín & Bauluz, 2021), or even more: “an spectacle that transcended to the international level” (Godenau & Zapata, 2022, p.52), showing, once again, how “unauthorized arrival is reduced to bare life” (Macedo Abreu, 2019, p.123).

While much effort was put into strengthening this appearance, this *mask*, much effort was also put into hiding and *masking* other issues. Thus, a police cordon was established in the face of the publication of absolutely scandalous images of what was happening in the pier, which revealed many illegalities and irregularities, such as people being held for much more than 72 hours, (which is the maximum legal in Spain to be retained without a court order), or that all the hygienic measures required by the pandemic situation (and the most basic ones as well) were being repeatedly breached.

The cordon was larger day after day, achieving its actual purpose by making it impossible to adequately inform about what was happening, but not only to journalists and researchers: also to the lawyers or even the families of the migrant people, who were unaware of their situation and the multiple violations of rights that were taking place in the pier (G.Vargas & Domínguez, 2020).

As might be expected, this had serious consequences for the situation of the migrant people, that was being increasingly dehumanized and *masked* thanks to the spectacular mask that was covering the pier. And it is that, as one would expect, as the journalists Natalia G Vargas and Andrea Domínguez collected in an article, it is almost impossible to photograph pain from 1km away. The consequences of not being able to see each other were quite serious for the relatives of the migrant people, who could not even know if their relatives had arrived safely from the journey, since a quite useful method to reassure families that people have arrived safely is through the images of the arrivals, but of course, only crowds of people could be distinguished in the pictures taken during those months in Arguineguín, making it impossible to see the faces and gazes of the people, which prevented from having any graphic portray document that would confirm the relatives of the migrant people their “safe” arrival to the Islands (G.Vargas & Domínguez, 2020).

On the other hand, neither did lawyers have access to the migrants in the pier, since the cordon also prevented and blocked informing about the multiple violations of rights to the lawyers working for the boat-migrant people, who could not even access and talk with their own clients informing them of the many rights they were being denied in the pier.

In short, what was sought in Arguineguín was to produce an appearance of the Canarian Route and of the people who travel it as alien as possible, so that it would be easier for no one to be encouraged or involved in thinking about what could be done there or how to stop the situation and find alternatives, if not simply try to normalize it and assume that no one could do anything about it. A *spectacle* was created, which is, as Debord states, *objective and consequence* of the capitalist system itself, which makes the border “produce its own spectacle, its own representations. When we speak of the border spectacle, we emphasize the need to be aware of these various moments and forms of production and of the power-knowledge networks that constitute the border regime and give rise to their public image” (Mezzadra et al, 2015, p.68). And in those moments in

the pier, a very strong terrible public image was created and recreated constantly.

But it is important to point out that evidently during all the time that this situation lasted, there were many people who raised their voices against what was happening there, trying to denounce it, make it public and change it, because once again, we must remember its the subjects who produce space.

6.5 Mass tourism journeys

On the other hand, through the Canary in situ border, there is the parallel reality of the dozens of charter flights thanks to which millions of tourists arrive to the Canary Islands. These planes are often spotted by the small boats that transit the Canary Route: “They see other lights, boats that pass in the distance, planes flying over their heads loaded with sun and beach tourists. But nobody sees them” (Naranjo, 2006, p.57).

These charter flights are getting cheaper almost every year, making the desirable sun and beach holidays in the Canary Islands more and more accessible for the European middle class. Plus, their frequency is also higher over time, as I could realize myself during my stay in the Canary Islands, when I was able to realize how difficult it was not to take small breaks when it came to having conversations because of the great noise caused by the planes when they were close to land in the islands.

But the crossing between the parallel lines of the Canary Route journeys and of those charter flights occurred at a highly convulsive moment, when the Islands were closed to human traffic by air and sea as a health measure derived of the pandemic situation, which made it impossible for the tourists, but there were arrivals of people (of course to a much lesser extent, since the figures are incomparable) through the Canary Route.

This situation, added to the policy of concentration of migrants on certain spaces, or even in the actual border land, as was the case with the one in Arguineguín, generated rejection among the Canary population, so shocked by how the pandemic was producing a profound crisis in the sector most of their citizens economically relied on: tourism. Thus, some people expressed ideas such as these collected by the lawyer Daniel Arencibia: “we can't become Lampedusa, because if we become Lampedusa, my bread is in danger, my children's bread is in danger, then, well, it's better that they [boat-migrant people] don't come (...) if the Canary Islands are going to become the Spanish Lampedusa and people

are going to be accumulated here so that they get bored and decide to leave, (...) I prefer them not come in a first place, so that there is no possibility that they accumulate in the Canary Islands”. (D. Arencibia, personal communication, April 18, 2022).

It is important and interesting here to remind that not every *cayuco* and *patera* is rescued and arrives at the Canary piers. Although it happens less often, some pateras directly reach the Canary shores, and it is at this moment that you can see the paranoid and paradoxical image of the boat-migrant people trying to get out of the water with the tourists calmly resting looking at the sea , sunbathing. Tourists expressly go to the beach looking for the tranquility of their vacations, looking for “total passivity on the beach, mere contemplation of the spectacle of sea and sun” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.385), while migrants literally have no other option to reach the EU. This means a huge paradox, or even a paranoia, since it is seen that on those same beaches where some human beings (the tourists) look passively at the ocean, other human beings (the boat-migrant people) struggle to reach mainland looking for a better life.

CHAPTER 7: THE SPECTACLE OF THE CANARY POSTBORDER

7.1 Boat-migration management in the Canary Islands

7.1.1 No one is responsible for a crisis

It is mainly the Spanish State that is dedicated to managing boat-migration people reception in the Canary Islands, together with the competent Canary authorities and institutions. The point is that, as has already been mentioned, the state no longer has the hegemonic role in managing borders and migrations it used to have in a “context marked by the progressive dismantling of the State and by the denial of legitimacy of its intervention in the economic field in the name of increased efficiency” (Mbembe, 2011, p.80).

Thus, the role of the Canary institutions and authorities in regard to boat-migration reception in the islands has been disintegrating to the point that it seems that no one bears the responsibility of dealing with the reception of the people who arrive through the Canarian Route. This has meant that the image, as well as the message that has been transmitted at this respect is that all the competent institutions were absolutely overwhelmed, incapable to manage the situation what was branded as “migration crisis” derived from the reactivation of the Canary Route.

Therefore, the reactivation of the Canary Route become to be known (and approached) as a new “migratory crisis”, and as also happened with the Cayuco crisis, have been “approached, as their name indicate, as exceptional situations, emergencies. However, it is not a circumstantial situation but a structural situation derived from the way in which migrations and the application of these policies are legislated or attempted to be legislated” (Ruano Blanco, 2020). The fact is that, as José Naranjo narrated referring to the Cayuco crisis in 2006, but which would perfectly fit the current situation: “no one did anything. Only when the situation overflowed did the rush and improvised performances come” (Naranjo, 2006, p.97). And so, when actions where required, in those moments in which the “crisis” level has been reached, it seemed that there was a situation in which little or nothing could be than, that has already practically acquired a life of its own, becoming something way too alien for any subject to consider taking responsibility for it, it was already out of any human capacity or control. But of course it is not that *alien*, It is just the spectacle consequences of waiting until it is too late.

Also, it seemed that the mismanagement of boat-migrant people reception was because of the lack of resources of the Canary entities and authorities: a matter of shortages in this region in particular. But this was not true, and it is that there were situations of absolute negligence that, following the words of Noemí Padrón: "themiserias and mundanities that I have seen are not even up to the Canary Islands level¹²" (N. Padrón, personal communication , March 18, 2022).

Thus, what the professor was referring to is that it was not so much a question of lack of resources, but rather a problem of managing responsibilities added to the fact that, according to her: "in Europe there is the culture that migration gives money, and that having a 'migration crisis' like the one in the Mediterranean gives you power, gives you negotiation power with the administrations. So perhaps what is emerging is the belief that migratory flows are a not a problem but a possibility to negotiate with the EU, and also that the problem is not yours but European" (N.Padrón, personal communication, March, 18, 2022). In this way, Noemí Padrón was explaining two key facts: that migration towards the EU moves a lot of money, and also that the managing of this migration is Europe's responsibility. The point is that what ends up happening is that Europe pays the Canary Islands to manage the "crisis" while the Canary Islands "cry" to receive all those found, although, of course, as much as there are funds and resources, if they are not properly coordinated, little can be done.

Although much has been said about the supposedly lack of resources, in reality the problem has been more a question of an absolute lack of organization and coordination. This is what Talía Acedo (quite familiar because of her job with the resources that the City Council of La Laguna has or does not have), told me: "We are more and more prepared for the arrivals in the Canary Islands, yes, okay, but then, I can categorically say that these resources are not being coordinated among all the administrations, starting from the state, continuing with the Canary Islands, then the councils, the municipalities... there is no networking or cooperation among them" (T. Acedo, personal communication, March 18, 2022).

It is important to emphasize that this lack of cooperation stems from the fact that the different administrations do not want to assume their responsibilities regarding

¹² During the conversation with Noemí Padrón, we reflected a lot on the "Canary Islands Level", on the level of provision of services and capacities of the Canary Islands, pointing out that its "level" is substantially inferior to those of the rest of the territories of the Spanish state, despite the considerable improvements that have been made in recent decades.

migration management, so they choose to *pass the buck* while accepting the different financing that is available. Daniel Arencibia made several very interesting points along this, commenting that “here [in the Canary Islands], at an institutional level, the principle that *the worse the better* prevails, and it is relatively easy to understand. It occurs in several areas of the administration, not only in the field of immigration. This means that: I do not want to take charge of this competition, of this responsibility, it is not my problem. So, if it deteriorates, I don't give a damn about the situation of these boat-migrant people, so if it has to be that an international newspaper like The New York Times or LeFigaró comes to make a front page out of the situation, all the better because then the government will end up acting and thinking: I'm taking them from here to another place, the situation here has already become a front page and I do not like that” (D.Arencibia, personal communication, April 21, 2022).

The results of this lack of coordination, of this lack of taking on responsibilities and competencies, is first that a crisis context is produced and second that the reception resources that are provided for the people arriving through the Canary Route are usually deficient, as practically all the people who I was able to speak commented. Sukeina Ndiaye, for instance, insisted on how “the reception has to be complete, a more solid accommodation is needed, especially from the defense ministry or the public institutions that are here, or the Canary government, they all have a responsibility with these people that goes through their institutions” (S.Ndiaye, personal communication, March 22, 2022).

On some occasions irregularities or illegalities are even undertaken, allocating resources that are not designed at all and much less *prepared* for the reception of people, which is something that has apparently been done for decades in the Canary Islands. During the *Cayuco Crisis*, the responses that were given kept migrants in terrible living conditions, in a bureaucratic and physical limbo, having to stay for days in very degrading spaces as the old airport terminal in Fuerteventura, which even housed 1,300 immigrants in 1,500 square meters in a very unhealthy and overcrowded environment (Bárbulo, 2004). Only after four years of protests against these hosting conditions that were completely covered up was dismantled that was kept completely covered up it was dismantled, four years had to happen so that the improvised center was closed. Unfortunately, this happened in 2006, but throughout the recent reactivation of the route, multiple shameful chapters have occurred and continue to occur when it comes to how to

manage the reception of boat-migrant people, as it was the case of the Arguineguín pier which has already been mentioned, or the case of the reception centers for migrants, which will be discussed later.

Thus, what has been commented here confirms that the consequences of this management of boat-migration in the Canary Islands has a long history, and that, more worryingly, nothing indicates that it will change at any time, since the situation comes from long, already since 1994.

Just as José Naranjo dedicated himself to portraying the previous “crisis”: “The worst, however, was the pathetic image that appeared again. Conflicting institutions that tried to pass the ball from one roof to the other, which, in addition, contributed to generating in public opinion a greater rejection of some boys that nobody wanted to have with them (...) the political battle was preferred over the exercise of responsibility” (Naranjo, 2006, p. 137). And it is that, following Debord, in the (currently spectacular) society, in the context of “the autocratic reign of the market economy which had acceded to an *irresponsible* sovereignty, and the totality of new techniques of government which accompanied this reign” (1998, p.2)

In a general way, It could be said that with this shift in responsibility, this dispersion of responsibility, the government has effected a depoliticization of service provision, rendering it a managerial issue as opposed to a political or policy focused debate, effectively shutting down prospects for alternative possibilities concerning the management of asylum seekers, ultimately leading to political neglect of the issue, and a reduced quality of service provision (Borreli et al, 2019, p.63).

7.1.2 Turning the Canary Islands into a jail

The multiple containment policies that were implemented in the Canary Islands specially in 2020 and 2021 ended up turning them into a prison in which the people who were arriving through the Canary Route were forced to remain in what at that time was an indefinite period of time. This became a highly problematic situation, since it was difficult to manage so many people who also came from such difficult contexts and were going to have to continue to face highly complicated situations also after their arrival in the EU.

First, as I was told during many conversations in the islands, the vast majority of

the people who arrived through the Canary Route did not want to remain in the islands, they wanted to continue their way to other parts of the EU, where, in many cases, they had relatives or friends who were going to be able to help them get a new life in Europe, but instead they were held in a territory where they did not want to be, even more so when they were doing it illegally. At that time, many migrants were held in the Canary Islands for long periods without valid justification, alleging different reasons (often related to the COVID-19 pandemic), that prevented them from traveling even when they had the required documentation to do so (Bauluz, 2021).

In fact, to maintain these confinement situations on the islands, it was often necessary to resort to illegal techniques, and at that time the rights of free movement of many boat-migrant people were repeatedly violated, through illegal measures, such as the establishment of border-controls in airports, something that is illegal because this kind of controls cannot be established in non-border areas, as the lawyer Daniel Arencibia explained to me, also, he commented that only racialized people were required for their documents in the controls, which is something illegal as well. (D.Arencibia, personal communication, April 21, 2022).

But this “jail” was not only spatial but also temporal, since it meant a quite harmful slowdown in the life projects of the boat-migrant people, that as has been discussed before, in the current context of acceleration of production in the neoliberal economic system implies serious consequences, allocating them in an ever-more vulnerable situation, because these people needed to continue their migratory route, get a job in Europe, start building a new life keeping on with their goal of finding a lineable life in Europe (or at least to survive there).



Figure 12 "We need to get out of here, work and earn money. Our families depend on it" (A.Domínguez, 2021)



Figure 13 Picture also taken by Andrea Domínguez in which people were carrying banners with messages such as: "No more murders in the sea or racist migrant centers that violates human rights" or "Solo queremos vivir dignamente" (We just want to live with dignity)

7.1.3 The hegemonic tourist post-border space hosting boat-migrant people in the midst of a pandemic and tourism crisis

At the end of 2020, given the considerable increase in arrivals of boat-migrant people, the Minister of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, José Luis Escrivá, explained in the Parliament that the Spanish State decided to use “hotels that are empty or in ERTE¹³ due to a limited period of time (...) If we have to use hotels, then we will, or do immigrants not have the right to use hotels?” (Verifica RTVE, 2020).

All the people with whom I was able to speak agreed that the main problem was that the population was not informed of the real conditions of the use of the hotels and the population found out little by little and on many occasions in fact by social networks or striking images showing how spaces that had always been occupied by the much desired (and at that time so rare) tourists by the apparently undesired (and at that time abundant) boat-migrant people.

There was not even information on the fact that this government measure was actually reactivating hotels that had been closed for months due to the pandemic, in an ERTE situation. This resulted in a very visible and very spectacular situation totally surrounded by disinformation before which the population was not even aware that “the hotels charged for having migrants hosted. It was not explained, the population was not made to understand, everything was done suddenly” (Saida, personal communication, 22 April 25, 2022). Neither there was information on what were the hotels being used for, “which was actually to keep the people who were arriving in quarantine, who were also restricted from leaving their rooms on many occasions” (Olalla, personal communication, April 25, 2022), so some Canary citizens were very indignant at seeing how “everything was being given for free” to the boat-migrant while it was not provided for the people already living in the islands, something which was not true, since, according to what Rubens Ascanio explained: “The access to accommodation resources of the Canarian town halls is 99% for the population that has an Spanish ID; and that in terms of aid in general, more than 89% is for the population with an ID” (R. Ascanio, personal communication, March 21, 2022).

¹³ ERTE (Expediente de Regulación Temporal de Empleo- Temporary Employment Regulation File) is a modality of work regulation whereby a company in an exceptional situation (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) has the authorization to temporarily suspend employment contracts of its workers temporarily when experimenting technical or organizational difficulties that risk the continuity of the company, as was the case with some hotels in the Canary Islands.

But it must be remembered that, at that time, the general atmosphere of the population was highly tense, since the Canary Islands were experiencing an unprecedented tourism crisis that greatly concerned the population, who were seeing their livelihood in danger due to the accommodation of migrants: “This is a community that lives from tourism, which makes them see as if they live from tourism, when in reality not so much, since the benefits of tourism do not directly affect the people of the Canary Islands but even so people were seeing their daily bread threatened.” (Saida, personal communication, April 22, 2022).

Thus, the Canary population found out about the hotels situation little by little, and on many occasions through social networks or striking images showing how spaces that had always been occupied by the much desired (and at that time so rare) tourists by the apparently undesired (and at that time abundant) boat-migrant people. These striking images and headlines were basically “seeking an aggressive response from the population... Every day you could see a new denigrating, xenophobic, racist story on the situation of the hotels. It was full of phrases such as 'massive arrival' or 'they come to take away what is ours'. (...) That generated some groups of the Canary society to attack boat-migrant people on the street and on social networks (...) of course it was only a little part of the population, but you could see them making noise against boat-migrant people” (Saida, personal communication, April 22, 2022). The most brutal example of this were the different acts by the mayor of Mogán, in the south of the island of Gran Canaria, whose attitude was “to go out into the streets, encourage people to demonstrate against migrants and with brutal arguments” (R. Ascanio, personal communication, March 21, 2022). In those demonstrations, “the discourse of moral exclusion” (Daniel Buraschi, 2022) against the boat-migrant people prevailed. This meant that everything revolved around affirming that it was absolute madness that spaces that hegemonically served to house tourists could not be used under any circumstances by boat-migrants, understanding that they deserve less and not something as ostentatious as hotels, It seemsthat, as Irene Ruano Blanco reflects, “that migrants do not benefit their image and therefore, they have to be transferred to any other facility as long as it is less dignified.” Because the tourist and the migrant do not deserve the same. Each one has to maintain their place in the perfectly delineated system in which the former sit in the hammocks of the all-inclusive and the latter are exploited on the other side so that this can happen” (Ruano Blanco, 2020).

7.1.4 Macro-centers managed by NGOs

After staying in hotels, migrants were transferred to macro-centers that were opened in the context of the *Plan Canarias*¹⁴ activated by the government in which "the minimum conditions regarding the dignity and rights of people and in those who were intended to keep them indefinitely" (Asamblea de Apoyo a personas migrantes en Tenerife, 2022, p.3)

These centers, called CATEs (Centros de Atención Temporal de Extranjeros-Temporary Care Centers for Foreigners) were managed by different NGOs and were distributed throughout all the islands. During my two trips to the Canary Islands, I was able to visit three of them: Las Raíces (managed by ACCEM) and Las Canteras (managed by IOM), both in the province of La Laguna, and Canarias50 (managed by the Spanish Red Cross), in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

Regarding the conditions of these centers, they were characterized by being large spaces in which with deplorable habitability conditions (extreme temperatures, rain that entered the rooms that migrants had to live in, portable toilets, cold showers, scarce meals and in poor condition, etc), as all the people with whom I could speak in the Canary Islands could tell me. In addition, the immigrants who were arriving were not attended to personally, but rather an industrial treatment of the people was given that contributed to the homogenization of those who were forced to live there, but in reality, there was great diversity and disparity among the centers: "no matter how homogenized to the people who are inside the centers, it is necessary to understand that coexistence does not have to be the best, in addition, this added to the fact that the conditions were for authentic survival, so conflict was really present" (Z. Zerbaoui, personal communication, March 23, 2022), or as commented by Luis Prieto, very familiar with the situation of the Las Raíces center in particular since his house is next to the center itself " There was a high rate of conflict as a result of the poor conditions of the bad conditions that existed." (L. Prieto, personal communication, 2022).

In addition to the terrible conditions, it is interesting to reflect on the reception model that the macrocenters present per se, because, as Rubens Ascanio once said, it was

¹⁴ The *Plan Canarias* (Canary Plan) was presented at the end of 2019, and its purpose was to settle proposals for temporary reception places for migrants arriving through the Canarian Route.

surely "the worst possible model" (R.Ascanio, personal communication , March 21, 2022). Luis Prieto, for his part, commented that he believed that there had been "a very strong movement to avoid the macro-centers, to avoid the industrial centers to give it a more human dimension, closer to the people, because when that smaller dimension is given you can talk, and if you can talk, you can get closer to the person. The possibility of creating small local networks is a great advantage that disappears with the macrocenters" (L. Prieto, personal communication, 2022).

Many authors have been studying this type of centers, or more specifically the camps in which migrants live after arriving in the EU after the boat-migration. Giorgio Agamben, probably the most recognized in this regard, refers to the camps as the materialization of "the norm of contemporary political-juridical ordering", which converts these centers "a space of normalized exceptionality" (Macedo Abreu, 2019, p.123). And it is that, without a doubt, the macro-centers of the Canary Islands respond perfectly to places where exceptionality, emergency, crisis reigns, with all its consequences.

Of course, first of all, it is important to point out that these centers are not camps, although colloquially they are usually called that, they are not camps, as Daniel Buraschi explained to me very clearly: "It is necessary to make an important clarification of what these centers are, since commonly speaking, and also throughout the interviews, the use of the word center used to be mixed with that of camp, when in reality there are important differences between them: "in the Canary Islands there are macro-centres , but people talk about camps, right here people talk about Las Raíces Camp, when Las Raíces is not a camp, but rather a macro-centre. If you think of a camp, you start thinking of Lesbos, Calais, but no, they are camps... In those camps, activism enters, you go, you help, and such, this small self-managed city is created. Here the only camp that there was was the external camp of Las Raíces, and that of El Fraile, where in summer 70 people have come to be on El Fraile beach, and a micro-camp has been created, those are the only camps in the sense strict, which have similar characteristics. But these are macrocentres, which receive financing, are paid by the Ministry of Interior and managed by NGOs in military spaces where you do not enter, and neither do I. The difference is not trivial" (Daniel Buraschi, 2022).

Buraschi commented three very important characteristics of these camps that have a great implication on their management and their consequences for boat-migrant people:

firstly, that they are financed by the Spanish State, secondly that they are managed by NGOs and thirdly that they are located in military spaces.

As for the fact that they are financed by the Spanish State, it is important to note that these centers are well financed, as confirmed by two workers from two of them, Laura and Saida, who commented that despite all the economic resources, the management continued to be disastrous, thus Saida said: “the work has been disastrous, because that is the classification, where are the 87 million euros that are also allocated to the organizations? Because you cannot see them, they are not seen (Saida, personal communication, 2022).

Secondly, in terms of private entities (NGOs) managing the centers with public money, it is interesting to pay attention here to what Dirk Godenau commented, and that is that no matter how much "NGOs are financed by public funds, and their image is that they are all volunteers, and since they are all volunteers, they do everything well, they are good people (...) the truth is that I have my critical view of this, because I consider that the environmental policies be in the hands of Greenpeace, in the same way that migration cannot be in the hands of Caritas (a Spanish well-known NGO). For this reason, I observe that the weakness of the Spanish Welfare State is manifested in how NGOs work, but of course, since they are NGOs, people do not openly criticize them, and therefore, people do not criticize the management of the public administration, of the State either. and the EU in these centers” (D. Godenau, personal communication, March 17, 2022). What Godenau commented on is especially interesting, and it is that it is true that it were the NGOs the ones managing these centers, but NGOs were only the mask of the Spanish State, that was the true responsible in migration matters and therefore also the responsible for the clear negligence that were taking place in the macrocenters

Continuing with Godenau's reflection, it is important to emphasize the second point, that the publicly financed NGOs that manage these centers and are publicly financed are also part of the migratory industry, although it is difficult to see, because it is undoubtedly much more “masked” entities such as the spectacular Frontex. Godenau went on to comment how: “those who create the term NGO, those who create the issue of the migratory illusion, pointing out that Frontex are the bad guys, that they are the industry, while instead we who take (large) funds for this, We move based on good will. It is curious how (in my opinion), Spanish society continues to have a good and naive view of NGOs, making them hardly even have to be held accountable” (D. Godenau,

personal communication, March 17, 2022).

But every time a more realistic and disenchanting vision of what NGOs really do is taking place, that the social psychologist Daniel Buraschi commented: “contrary to what has happened in Lampedusa, contrary to what has happened in Calais or Lesbos, here the big NGOs are contributing to build a story of institutional racism and a securitization spectacularization of the border, which is quite worrying, but, again, this is quite forgotten in the research field” (D. Buraschi, personal communication, 2022).

This security spectacularization was based on many acts and conditions of the centers, which without a doubt, as it will develop, are the best example of how all responsibility was set aside and completely blurred in favor of economic benefit, because as he said Mariama “everything was very poorly organized around people, it is very well set up with regard to organizations and their profitability” (Mariama, personal communication, March 22, 2022). Practically all the people with whom we were able to talk with, agreed on the bad conditions existing in the centers, but without a doubt, the managerial part of the entire reception management was brilliantly explained by Silvia, who told me that “The conditions are what they are because it is a business, the Conditions are not reception conditions, the conditions are those that allow charging for the execution of a contract. That is to say, these companies, the NGOs, have seen a profitable business and therefore are capable of, knowing that they do not provide a humanitarian welcome, to set up a device to collect. Indeed, these centers were opened as the number of arrivals increased, they emerged and were granted to different NGOs to manage them. The point is that these concessions were made on the basis of emergency contracts, for the most part, which Silvia explained: “An emergency contract is much more profitable than a contract processed calmly, with guarantees... An emergency contract is resolved super fast, with four little things, with a little project, and of course, that's what matters. That interests the company. And it is different to release a project with good conditions, with certain characteristics, etc...” (Silvia, personal communication, May 16, 2022).

It can be affirmed that the privatization of these centers at the hands of NGOs responds to a trend of privatization typical of capitalist current times and others that authors, among which stand Ana López-Sala and Dirk Godenau, have been studying for years: the privatization of migratory control. The entire framework on which these centers are hidden invites, or almost forces, to question just as López-Sala and Godenau state: “if this privatization exclusively benefits the companies or also responds to a political interest

beyond the discursive resource that alludes to the reduction of costs and the efficiency improvement” (2019, p.255-256).

These centers are being constantly very questioned for the actions they carry out “indirectly becoming accomplices of unjust and cruel policies" since "The objectives of profit maximization and cost reduction can potentially deteriorate the quality of the services and goods supplied to levels not in accordance with the necessary standards." (López-Sala & Godenau, 2019, p.255). What ends up happening is that: "Despite the initiatives that may be developed to supervise outsourced services and equipment, the private status of these companies and the arguments about commercial confidentiality can greatly limit access to information both by part of the public opinion, as well as, potentially, of the governments, which favors the lack of transparency and the opacity". (López-Sala & Godenau, 2019, p.255).

In short, what these centers are onl focused in moving capital quickly to set up a company that is as profitable as possible, although it has been more than proven that the model of the macrocenters was not the best option at all, "there is no host model, no there is an intention to welcome, there is just an intention to collect money. This has been clearly seen, because if they do not give him the minimum of warm clothing, in the conditions in which they were tremendously cold, and they put up some plastic tents for you when it rains, and the water runs inside the tents, and if there are not enough lawyers for everyone, and if they are not informed of the situation they are in, and they are kept there for months , and they are kept for months in these conditions..." (Silvia, personal communication, 2022).

But the situation that has occurred, and continues to occur in the Canary Islands, is that "it has been revealed in the Canary Islands that we cannot trust the attention they receive from the historical entities that were in charge of welcoming migrants, and it has been shown. This has been seen on all the islands” And more, he continued: “I think that what we did here in the Canary Islands was to question the NGOs, and that is very interesting: civil society distrusts the NGOs and had to react, then that seems tremendous to me. We leave the NGOs in a terrible position. If the NGOs were supposed to reach the questions that the State did not reach through some resources, and it turns out that they did not and it had to be civil society that rolled up their sleeves and took out of their own pocket (...) (Silvia, personal communication, 2022). For this reason, it is necessary that we now go on to talk about everything that the population of the Canary Islands has

actually been doing within the post-Canary border, since apparently it was the only actor capable of reaching and approaching the questions where neither the Spanish State neither the NGOs were being capable to reach.

Finally, the fact that these are military areas has some quite remarkable implications, with the implications that this may have, it is important to note that the fact that these centers are located in military zones (as you can clearly see at their gates and walls, just as in the picture below), means that no one can enter, which implies the same thing that happened with the Arguineguín pier when the police cordon was settled: no one can know what is really happening in the centers, since lawyers, journalists and researchers they have to settle for getting information from afar, and it is very difficult to prove what the people who live in them are saying. This occult situation, which is usually based on the false statement that it is carried out to protect the privacy and dignity of these people, contributes to a total masking of the centers that even makes us lose the notion that these centers are managed by NGOs and they exist by and for economic benefit, not to give adequate reception to migrants.



Figure 14 outside the Canarias50 macrocenter, in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, where you can clearly see the painting that says "Military Zone" (Zona militar) Picture taken in my second trip to Canarias in April 2022



Figure 15 Outside of the Canarias50 Macrocenter

To sum up, what can be seen is that, after all, this effort to make money with the situation of the reactivation of the Route in these privately managed macro-centres, which by the very nature of the complexes are dehumanizing for those who are forced to stay in them for long periods is causing migrants to be forced into accommodation models that clearly do not favor coexistence and only aggravate and accentuate the many negative consequences, both psychological and physical that the Canary Route already has.

7.1.5 The Canary Population

Facing the dispersion of responsibility derived from this poor migration management I have just described which only seemed to attend to economic benefit and satisfy the trends of privatization and managerialism of the market, it was the Canary population itself that chose to take on the responsibility boat-migrant people reception, which allowed to observe a very clear example of the increasing involvement of “Civil society actors, regions, and cities have provided hospitality and refuge to those in need, taking on some of the roles traditionally performed by national governments and international organisations.” (Panizzon & Riemsdijk, 2018, p.1). In the Canary Islands it was the people “who have been providing our time and financial resources where the NGOs and the states did not reach” (Silvia, personal communication, 2022).

Dirk Godenau commented that this interesting participation of Canarian citizens is framed in a context in which: “After the economic crisis of 2008, Spanish society has learned that many people are struggling, that there is a growing, chronic inequality; a social atmosphere that has nothing to do with the European dream, everything has to do more with an attitude towards politics that is much more skeptical, characterized by thoughts such as: ‘if you leave this issue in politicians hands, boat-migrant people are going to suffer, so let’s help each other and try to do something so that these people do not struggle so much” (D.Godenau, personal communication, March 18, 2022).

Thus, the general perception that was commented on in conversations I had in the Canary Islands was that part of the population proved to be equal to the challenge. There were people who went on to do all kinds of tasks in which the public administration was failing: “the indignation of some people from the Canary Islands turned into emotional dissidence that turned into commitment, and it was a very high commitment: there were people who welcomed people into their house, people who brought food, who put money, who transported people across the islands, who even paid flights to the EU mainland... It seems worthy of study to me” (D. Buraschi, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

Daniel Buraschi explained this based on the *Contact Theory*, according to which, when people of the Islands came face to face with this reality, solidarity emerged something that was also commented by Txema Santana, among others: “It was when the people were left in the streets that solidarity emerged” (T. Santana, personal communication, April 20, 2022). Thus, the people with whom I was able to talk commented on how they considered that the Canary population was genuinely supportive: “I think that they are responding in a more supportive and less aggressive way than in other territories, there have not been major episodes of mobilizations against the migration in the Canary Islands, although there were attempts, political groups that tried to promote it at (as previously commented in relation with the mayor of Mogán) the beginning, and that even distributed pamphlets” (R.Ascanio, personal communication, March 21, 2022). Also, Sukeina Ndiaye commented on how she believed that “the Canary people themselves do not complain about the arrivals, the Canary population is very welcoming, very generous in every way” (S.Ndiaye, personal communication, March 22, 2022). Also Luis Prieto added that, for him: “it was a very powerful social movement of neighborhood solidarity, I feel very proud of my neighbors, it moves me, I get a little tear to say, damn, what a sincere solidarity, I liked that a lot on the islands, people helping

other human beings because they are human beings” (L.Prieto, personal communication, April 2022).

But the social psychologist Daniel Buraschi warned me about how it is crucial to be careful with these ideas and perceptions of the “natural solidarity of the Canary Islands” because these thoughts could lead to a certain blockage: that “since everyone seems to agree on how supportive the Canarian population is, the migrants literally said: ‘gosh, I can't even complain anymore!’. Also, some Canary people also say things like: ‘In the Canary Islands we are Africans’, but no, no, no, sorry but do not put us on the same side. For me, this is very offensive, since you, the supposed ‘African’ are a white boy who lives in Europe and no one questions your existence here, remember you are talking about people that we are letting die in the ocean. (...) So, for me, all these ideas that ‘in the Canary Islands we are Africans’, that ‘there is no racism here’ and that ‘we were also emigrants and that is the reason why we are an anti-racist society’, seems to make no sense to me, and that is when I realize that there is no kind of deep criticism” (D.Buraschi, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

What Buraschi was arising with this idea that there was no deep criticism, was that it was not a question of approaching the root of the situation, or, as I tried to argue, that these population actuations were taking place within the margins of the spectacle, without trying to provide a necessary systemic approach to what was happening in the Canary Islands.

In the first place, it is necessary to talk about the numerous protests carried out by these most involved sectors of the Canary populations, who were mostly denouncing the deficient public management as well as the terrible situation of the macro-centers. It is a fact that “the protest from outside the academia is growing (...) that demonstrate how the EU border regime is increasingly being contested by a rapidly growing network of observers and protestors” (Ferrer Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p.301”. Nevertheless, we have to be careful since this network may run the risk of falling completely into the rhythms of the spectacle and its framework, with all that this implies.

As an example, one of these “negative implications” of operating within the spectacle may have is that this led to several occasions in which "the role of activism itself became more important than what was happening with migrants" (Alberto, personal communication, March 23, 2022). Alberto commented on this explaining that there were many occasions in which more light was shed on the role of the activists and

the performative actions they were carrying out had been shown, than in the reason why they were there: the situation of boat-migrant people in the Islands. An example of this could be seen in how, on many occasions the activists openly branded the workers of the public administration or private entities of the macro-centers as racists, among other issues, alleging all kinds of (some times even false) information, without really verifying their veracity just because they contributed to the story they were most interested in highlighting and deepening, as Laura, working in one of these centers told me (Laura, personal communication, July 17, 2022). This turned out to be highly dangerous, since it also contributed to reinforcing the appearance of obscurantism and occultism that in itself characterizes the centers, contributing to distort and hide even more what was really happening with the migrants.

Therefore, it has been possible to see how, following Alberto's words: "an aesthetic of resistance has been created, in which migration is considered as resistance, as autonomy, as a protest movement against capitalism. Here in Europe we love being leftists, we look for this in boat-migrant people when maybe what they want is *just* to find a life in Europe, to reunite with their family, not to protest..." (Alberto, personal communication, March 23, 2022).

In addition, the fact that within this 'leftist' tendency of Europe, it is taken for granted that all the struggles with a more or less humanist aspect have to go hand in hand. For example, nowadays it is quite common to intersect the migrant struggle with the LGTB struggle, but this can be highly contradictory. For example, Alberto explained me that he agreed a priori in these intersections, in the sense that "I feel that I can participate in both struggles, but it seems curious to me how it was imposed on migrants (...). It is curious how we have not questioned the transversality of the struggle, that is, it is something very ethnocentric, as here we assume that pro-migrant people are also from the left and have rather progressive values (...)" (Alberto, personal communication, April 23, 2022). On one occasion, this led to the fact that during a pro-migration demonstration, some activists from the Canary Islands tried to intertwine the anti-racist struggle with LGBT, which encouraged a Senegalese boy to hold a banner with a message (in Spanish) supporting the group, but when they explained what it said, the boy got very upset, because he did not agree... Therefore, it is important that when understanding this type of situation, and this type of claims that occur in Europe, think of Europe from a global perspective as well as bring forward other (non-European) perspectives on the

world" (Bhambra, 2009, p.70).

It is important to take a moment to note that many of the people who were encouraged to carry out activism around what was happening in the centers were encouraged and summoned by social networks, a quite remarkable element in recent times, since, as Dirk Godenau explained, in the case of the Canary Islands, social networks have “made it much cheaper to communicate, make yourself visible, and you no longer need a spotlight paid for with public money to be seen, therefore, it is more appealing to create activism to change certain things”, therefore it is necessary to study “if these social movements are more of spontaneous combustion, more ephemeral, merely digital, or if they manage to become something influential, if they are rather an epiphenomenon, or if they are re basically vectors of change (...) What happens is that this reminds me a lot of the idea of the economy of experiences, it gives me the impression that networks favor and promote a certain activist tourism” (D. Godenau, personal communication, March 17, 2022).

Now, it is important to talk specifically about one of the macro-centers: Las Raíces, in the Island of Tenerife, which was surely one of the most notorious cases. In fact, among all the actions that took place on the island of Tenerife during the worst months of 2020 and 2021, “81% of the actions focused on the Las Raíces camp. It may be because the media focus and actions of mutual support were concentrated in this place” (Asamblea de apoyo a personas migrantes en Tenerife, 2020, p.13). Many of these actions took place in what was called "Dignity camp", created shortly after the opening of the Las Raíces center, there where several people who lost their place for remaining more than 72 hours outside the center. Basically, the dignity camp was created because when the centers opened their doors, the conditions that existed inside them were particularly terrifying: extreme cold, rainwater everywhere, little food and in poor condition... One of the workers from that same center commented that the existence of this group actually: “also makes sense because there has to be that counterpart of denunciation and it is true that the conditions here have not been ideal at all, much less from the beginning and it still continues to have quite a few shortcomings, especially in terms of the quality of the food and the habitability in which the boys find themselves here” (Laura, personal communication, July 17, 2022).

But that activist group was taking on a life on its own and reached the level in which the activists did not even allow journalists to speak with the migrants themselves:

“They did not allow us to speak with the people since the workers of the center did not allow us, but neither did the activists helping the people allowed it, instead, they told us to talk about the vocals of the group and so on” (Natalia G Vargas & Andrea Domínguez, personal communication, March 23, 2022). These activists dedicated themselves to intensifying the situation of protest resistance that was already taking place in the center to intensify it, give it gasoline; it seemed that rather they wanted to build a spectacle of resistance, of admirable activism, which ended up leading to harmful situations for migrants that did not respond to their needs at all.

To give an example that Alberto explained to me: “There was a time in which, when migrants were complaining about the situation in the centers, activists began to say: ‘yes, they are not giving you food because all of them are racists’, that is, activists began to feed migrant people’s discomfort” (Alberto, personal communication, April 23, 2022). Laura, who at that time was working one of the centers, also added: “These groups of activists had attitudes of just looking for attention, that is my opinion and also the opinion of many other people: they just wanted to get attention in social media based on having a very challenging and negative attitude, often putting the boys against all the people who worked here with very negative comments that made them feel even worse for being here in the centers, in the circumstances that we all already know” (Laura, personal communication, July 17, 2022).

At that highly critical moment, there could have been two possibilities, as Alberto explained, “on the one hand, what was done: to feed the discomfort, to encourage migrants to leave the center that was so full of racists, or rather, what could have been done, to try to accompany the people with messages such as: ‘There are 2400 people in the center in the same situation as you, have a little patience, you will eventually be transferred to the peninsula’. At that time, in fact, we knew that when a person was transferred to the peninsula, the chances of deportation became minimal it could have been said: “hold on, maybe in two weeks, three weeks or a month at most you'll be on the peninsula and there the risk of being deported will drop considerably” (Alberto, personal communication, March 23, 2022), but at that time “migrant people did not have a person to tell them that they were going to go to the Las Raíces camp but no one explained to them that they were not going to be returned to their country...” (M. Cabezudo, personal communication, April 21, 2022). But of course, that did not happen, the interests of the migrants themselves were neglected in favor of activism, that

was actively contributing to glorify the spectacle. As Alberto said in this line, what was problematic was that at that moment a certain “aesthetic of resistance came together in the context of pain from people. Then, what interests you as an activist more? What is the best for the person? That does not mean that is the best for the activist movement, you know? (Alberto, personal communication, March 23, 2022).

In this way, the consequences reached the point where, exalted by these discourses of "they are racist, they treat you badly because you are African" etc, migrants were encouraged to leave the centers, and when they were outside them for over 72 hours, they lost their right to be there, they lost the little "protection" they had, which made them much more vulnerable to deportation, because they were discharged from the reception system, which was what it was actually keeping them, at least at the time, there in the Canary Islands. Plus, they then become exposed to even worse conditions than those inside the center, since, no matter how much that was the "dignity camp", and even more seriously, causing them to be "removed from the reception system, then, right now, they are the first to those who are going to be deported" (Alberto, personal communication, March 23, 2022). Also Laura the Las Raíces worker commented that “on a couple occasions it happened that some boys had reunions to inform them on how to travel and go to the airport that they missed since the activists convinced them not to go, with which these people ended up missing their flights” (Laura, personal communication, July 17, 2022).

But these very negative parts of activism are barely explored, and the fact that they are not questioned is because they fit perfectly within the framework of the *spectacle*: we are used to seeing how certain struggles take part and are accepted and become hegemonic within the society, making them simply find a place within the *spectacle* and then no longer questioning it, limit themselves to conforming to its requirements. This is how Debord himself explained it in the society of the spectacle:

“The sham spectacular struggles between rival forms of separate power are at the same time real, in that they express the system’s uneven and conflictual development and the more or less contradictory interests of the classes or sections of classes that accept that system and strive to carve out a role for themselves within it (...) “the more or less contradictory interests of the classes or sections of classes that accept that system and strive to carve out a role for themselves within it” (Debord, 1992, p.22).

That is why it is so important to take into account how these struggles dangerously collide, how the goal seems to be obtaining the biggest space for action and improvement

but always under the frame and the space that the spectacle allows, which on many occasions means that the true focus, the true goal of the struggle is lost, in the benefit of a pure activism that is only pure performativity, pure spectacle which can even cause migrants to waste their only possibility to reach their goal: getting a flight to Europe's mainland.

This was also quite commented by Jorge Ruiz, who from a critical point of view, reflected on the fact that many supportive people have been supportive without a base of going to the root and thinking that this is part of a systemic problem. (...) It is necessary to understand that it is a systemic problem, that it is an economic, geopolitical, geostrategic problem, and that what you do, your ideology, and behaviour also contributes and influences all of that. It is not question of that charity-based part of consciousness that is actually promoted by the system itself. I think charity is, so to speak, the makeup that only covers but does not approach the root of the problem” (Jorge Ruiz, personal communication, March 17, 2022).

For me, that charity makeup that Jorge Ruíz was talking about is rather a *charity-mask*, which is of great interest to the system (spectacle) itself. The system needs that charity to continue functioning. Moreover, the fact that the population has taken charge of ensuring that thousands of people do not die in the face of a lack of minimum services is a matter of problematizing this as well, of betting on “making a structural criticism of the system” (D. Buraschi, personal communication, April 24, 2022)

7.1.6 Reflection on the ‘human’ reception in the Canary Islands

In general, it should be said that nothing is black or white in terms of how people, the subjects themselves who are involved in institutions, in NGOs or in activism, have been responding. Even though all the subjects, or all the collectivities have been falling into different controversies and contradictions, it is important to remember that it is necessary, as Louelia Mint El Mani pointed out: “to have a very broad vision and avoid the danger of a single story, because in the Canary Islands there has been dehumanization, deprivation of fundamental rights, trampling, but there has also been beauty, people who have been able to travel outside the Canary Islands, work, reunite with their families, bring their families, people who have created networks in a short time... Having a single story of reality once the boat migration arrives in the Canary Islands, I think it is very complicated” (L. Mint El Mani, 2022).

In reality, at all levels there have been people very committed to what was happening who have really made the effort to try to change the situation, aware of the seriousness of everything that was happening.

7.1.7 Paper post-border

We have already commented on how, ultimately, the paper pre-border is really the deadliest of all the borders, because it is the one that really forced people to take the deadly Canary Route, but the truth is that when the Route goes well, the migrants they have to face another paper border that can also become truly dangerous and have terrible consequences in the lives of migrants.

Abdou Kane was very clear in his worked when I talked to him: “Speaking clearly, when we immigrants arrive in Europe, we suffer a lot from the bureaucracy. Also when we are in Africa we always think that by the moment when we get to the EU we are going to change our lives, to look for a better future, but they do not open the door to documentation: they do not open the door to listing, there is a lot of black work for example...” (A. Kane, April 26, personal communication, 2022).

Also Soda told me about her particular case, since she had recently been denied a residence card. Thus, she commented: “if I, married to a Spaniard, with two Spanish children, I have had problems with the visa, and they denied me the residence card. Imagine a woman who comes alone in a small boat with a child (...) Institutions are capable of the worst, of separating mothers and children. For example, the one who signed the document that denied me my residence card was a woman, a socialist and a psychiatrist, it's amazing. I don't understand how she could deny me on the grounds that she did not have sufficient means” (Soda, personal communication, April 20, 2022). To this, her husband, Carmelo, added: “From being regular they make you irregular, it is the supervening irregularity. And there are a lot of cases like that” (Carmelo, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

The reality is that immediately after boat-migrant people reach the Canary Islands mainland, they are given a return order, right in the coasts, which they have to appeal alleging the different reasons why they can benefit from protection and therefore stay in the EU.

Although this procedure begins as soon as they set foot on European soil, it tends

to last a long time. The lawyer Daniel Arencibia explained to me that it was very common that “many people, after applying for asylum are returned to their origin without their asylum application resolution, because they were stopped at illegal police checkpoints where only racialized people were asked for their documentation” (D. Arencibia, personal communication, April 18, 2022). As Arencibia explained me: this actually happens because Spain signs agreements with different countries of origin, and then the Spanish police are forced to find and detain people so that they can be deported.

In general, it can be said that there is no legal assistance in which migrants are truly informed about how to proceed, what rights they have or what rights are being violated, if that is the case. In this way: “there is no legal assistance, it is a disaster. I have had to go to the bar associations to explain why the blockade that took place at the airport, for example, was illegal, or how to proceed with the return orders... Due to this lack of information, it has gotten into the CIE to people with a return order from two years ago, that is not legal, but it is not fought because it is not known how to proceed (...) All these types of situations occur systematically, but it is very difficult to prove it.” (D. Arencibia, personal communication, April 21, 2022)

Within this paper post-border, it is important to talk about the difficulty to achieve a new future in Europe given the high difficulty of obtaining the necessary work permits. The main issue is that, while the request asylum is being processed, people cannot apply for work permit, which makes it impossible to work legally.

Facing the impossibility of finding legal jobs, many of the boat-migrant people who arrive through the Canary Route end up working in very hard and precarious jobs in which the most basic working conditions are denied. Žižek explains that, when these people come to Europe they are forced to “offering themselves as a cheap precarious workforce, in many cases at the expense of local workers, many of whom react to this threat by joining anti-immigrant populists?” (Žižek, 2017, p.40). In this way, what ends up being that “slavery can be right here, within our house. We just don't see it- or rather, we pretend not to see it. This new apartheid, this systematic explosion of the number of different forms of de facto slavery, is not a deplorable accident but a structural necessity of today's global capitalism”. (ibid).

Jorge Ruiz commented on how this was actually the result of what was supposed to be a failure of the border regime (in the sense that it borders are supposed to be as impenetrable as possible for the people coming irregularly), but the problem is that the

fact that there is a small number of people that reach the EU “despite the accumulated pressure and violence inflicted at borders” (De Genova, 2015, p.27), is quite operational, in terms of the labour market, since most likely they are not going to achieve legal jobs until long after being in Europe, but of course: “they are beneficial for us, for the underground economy, to exploit them, to work illegally in the *plastic seas* in Huelva... In other words, it is so pernicious, so cruel the system, that even what seems like a mistake [such as people entering Spain through the Canary Route] is not really a mistake, but rather it is premeditated and functional to the system” (J. Ruíz, personal communication, March 17, 2022).

Those *plastic seas*, are the infinite kilometers of greenhouses that fill the Spanish fields, providing one of the clearest examples of the types of jobs that people who do not have documentation can aspire to. In this way, the result tends to be that, on many occasions, migrants move from the macro-centers of the Canary Islands to the shacks and shacks of Almería or Huelva, where they may suffer even worse housing conditions.

In general, following Nicholas De Genova, it is precisely all the Border (but also preborder and postborder) spectacle, and the dynamics it implies “that illegalize migrants and produce the conditions for the exploitation of their labor” (2015, p.27), that is based on the impossibility of trespassing the paper post-border.

7.1.7 Consequences of the boat-migration management in the Canary Islands

It is necessary in this section to talk about the personal consequences of passing through the Canarian post-border, and it is that, first of all, there is a great shock regarding the preconceived image of Europe, which is added to the multiple shocks and psychological effects derived from a migration as hard as the one involved in the Canarian Route and that only worsens with the (on many occasions) negligent reception given to these people in the Canary Islands.

Although the EU is supposed to present itself as the cradle of human rights, of the protection of people, where the violation of rights can not take place, where institutions work perfectly... no matter how much the people who come to the EU “take seriously the principle proclaimed by the EU of the ‘freedom of movement for all’ within Europe” (Žižek, 2017, p.42), in reality, freedom only seems to exist for those who are already inside the EU, as it has been explicitly or implicitly stated by the European Parliament:

“We would like our citizens to continue enjoying the freedom of movement at the internal borders” (2021). Definitely, the cosmopolitan and freedom of movement program in the EU is thought and available only to some.

“It is a pain that we cannot imagine... It is difficult to see this in a country that when we are in Africa they tell us that it is a country of human rights, of light, of welcome, of all good deeds, you come expecting that it will to be arrive and that's it. On the other hand, when we arrived we found a completely different panorama... Thank God there are people who are part of the Europe that they paint us, people like the one who is part of the we are network, those people, few people, represent that image that I I had from Europe. But everything else is horrible. It's too big a shock for all those young people who come looking for a better life, but they stay in Europe and they can't take a shower, they can't go to the bathroom when they need to, they can't do anything... It's a terrible shock for the kids, I think. which is much more painful than the journey itself, because at least on the journey you know what you are going for, you know that the sea is dangerous. But having that crash in Europe is terrible” (Soda, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

“It is when they arrive at the centers that they collide with the reality that exists here, very different from what they are told. When the boat trip begins they think that things are going to be much better once they get here when the reality is that you are not going to start working as soon as you arrive, but you are going to find yourself locked up with hundreds and hundreds of people living in some conditions that are not at all the best” (Saida, personal communication, April 22, 2022).

"I have heard testimonies from girls saying: "I thought that when I arrived in Spain I would feel protected, but I feel violated, nobody takes me into account, I don't exist, I am nothing, they lock them up in those centers doing craft activities . That I do not underestimate all the work that can be done. These women have to be guided, but not do crafts... What is this? Is it a retreat center? It has been many years of many experiences, many people who have not been given the humane treatment they need and deserve as people, it seems that it costs and continues to cost” (Saida, personal communication, April 22, 2022).

These kind of testimonies I was told in the Canary Islands perfectly reflect the hardness of the shock of realizing that the difficulties and the borders of the Canary Route do not end with the arrival in European territory, since the psychological effects of the Canary post-border are brutal.

Boat-migrant people have to face multiple situations of authentic “uncertainty, frustration and despair” in the Canary Islands, and it is very common, specially among young people who reside in the macro centers to resort to self-harm or even suicide, not to mention the abuse of all kinds of substances, either legal, provided by the centers to

calm the people down or either illegal, obtained from dealers near the centers (A. Domínguez & N.G. Vargas, personal communication, March 23, 2022).

Regarding the legal substances, it was very common for these people to be over-medicated to keep them calm besides the hard situations they had to face in the Canary post-border, specially in the macro-centers. Saida commented quite a lot on the fact that “Many of the boys said that they were drugged, especially the underage ones, with the excuse of reassuring them because when they arrive, they suffer a lot of stress” (Saida, personal communication, April 22, 2022). Also, she commented on another very striking specific case: “I remember the case of a woman, a mother who lost her daughter in the Canary Route, I am aware that this women has been given pills to this day without any medical prescription (...) What happens is that the particular situation of each person in the Route is not taken into account, so people only begin to alleviate the situation with the basic needs of these people (food, water, etc), but psychological attention is fundamental, there are people who become psychologically deranged because they were not given immediate help, and on the contrary, they were pillaged, which is not the same thing. Medication was given without any type of professional indication and it has led to a worse situation.” (Saida, personal communication, April 22, 2022).

Regarding the illegal drugs, something that the journalists Andrea Domínguez and Natalia G. Vargas commented was that “the fact of being exposed to this type of situations places you in a situation of total vulnerability in the face of access, abuse and consumption of all types of substances, and it may even be the case, as happened with a friend of ours, Mohammed, who was initially a really nice boy with whom everyone has a very good relationship but became a highly conflictive boy because of a high dependency on all kinds of substances que was getting access in the macro-center” (A.Domínguez & N.G. Vargas, personal communication, March 23, 2022).

Also, there are even some ailments that are expressly caused by all the situations that happen in the Canary post-border, as is the case of the deportability syndrome, which Daniel Buraschi told me about: “It is a set of psychophysical discomfort, ranging from lack of sleep, alopecia, hair loss, migraines, stomach pain, anxiety, depression, etc., related to this type of situation that has occurred especially in 2021, and 2020, with the opening of the macro-centers” (D.Buraschi, personal communication, March 24, 2022). With all this, it is very clear that, as many authors agree, the effects of biopolitics policies in the centers are influencing the health and wellbeing of migrants (Samaddar, 2020).

7.2 Tourism Management in the Canary Islands

“There remains nothing, in culture or in nature, which has not been transformed, and polluted according to the means and interests of the modern industry” (Debord, 1998, p.10).

These words by Guy Debord can be clearly and practically appreciated in the way in which, during the past years, the Canary Islands space “has been and is being constantly made, remade and sometimes even destroyed in order to absorb rapidly accumulating surpluses of capital (...) because the reproduction of capital accumulation requires it” (Harvey, 2016, p.15). In this way, and as has already been mentioned, the Canary Islands space has been developed by and for mass tourism, bringing with it the development and promotion of multiple touristic complexes and resorts to maximize profit in the Canary space, so that millions of tourists find them right after crossing the border so that they can enjoy their fantastic all-inclusive touristic promotions in the Islands after saving “their last pennies to escape the drag of daily life, for their annual discount holiday to Tenerife. Just to escape from the stuffiness, from commands and demands, competition and the routine, they could also be “refugees, yet their lawful classification is radically different”. (Van Houtum & Boedeltje, 2009, p.228).

The Canary Islands image as a mass tourism destiny has been constantly being reinforced, leaving aside all other issues: "The concept that the people of the Canary Islands have is the beach and the good weather" (Mariama, personal communication, March 22, 2022); “The image is of full tourism, unfortunately, that is the idea and that's it...” (Olalla, personal communication, April 25, 2022); “Obviously the Canary Islands are only understood as sun, beach, all-inclusive and tropical paradise” (T. Acedo , personal communication, March 18, 2022).

It is interesting here to make a small note about a recent example on how the Canary Islands are so focused on mass tourism infrastructures and how this can actually be really harmful for the Canary Space: “Cuna del Alma” (cradle of the soul), a luxury tourism project that aims to occupy 437,000 square meters of the last uncrowded beach in the South of Tenerife.

As much as the initiative was presented as an possibility of "sustainable growth", the truth is that crimes against both natural and archaeological heritage are taking place. In fact, in this case, there has been the absence of both an environmental impact report

and an impact report on heritage (Suárez & G.Vargas, 2022). The case of Cuna del Alma has been a great example of how the overexploitation that occurs in the Canary Islands "not only harms ecosystems, but also causes a loss of culture, history, and identity" (Ravina Olivares, 2022, min 22:41-22:50), all this, once again, for the benefit of capital accumulation. But it is interesting and very powerful to see how in recent times more and more people have been demonstrating against this situation, aware that the tourism model is seriously detrimental to its biosphere.

Given all this, it is important to pay attention to the effects of the fact that the Canary Islands region has been forged so much around mass tourism, since the infrastructure necessary for all the mass tourism is created for the Benefit of capital accumulation, totally at the back of the citizens of the Canary Islands, who barely benefit from the production of these complexes: "A defining feature of the Canary Islands as a destination is the weakness of economic impacts, that is, the insufficient capacity of tourism activity by itself (...) to become a more dynamic element of the economy providing higher living standards. This is related to the difficulties of the destination to generate employment even in an economic expansion phase (...) Around 30% of tourist expenditure takes place in the archipelago, while expenditure at source is around 70%. This is related to the relevance of tourism packages and, particularly all-inclusive deals. (...) This kind of tourism model along with the weakness of the local entrepreneurship and innovation systems does not encourage economic impacts in the archipelago" (Hernández et al, 2021, p.13).

Talía Acedo clearly explained this when talking to me: "the Canary economy subsists mainly through the service sector and specifically tourism (...) paradoxically, the indicators continued to be fatal. When you look at indicators such as gender violence, poverty, child poverty, the ratio of social workers per inhabitant... All those indicators that tell us how we are, it turns out that we are always first, second, third in the Spanish State So, is much invested in tourism here? Yes, of course, a lot is invested. But, does that affect the well-being, the quality of life of the population? Not really... (T.Acedo, personal communication, March 18, 2022).

What happens is that, as Noemí Padrón explained: "Tourism is a very private activity. Basically, who connects the tourist market, has a characteristic that other markets of products or goods and services do not have, and that is that in reality, (...) it is an international export, but in reality to consume the product they have to move consumers

(...) It is a highly intermediated market, although now we are talking about Airbnb and getting on the internet and booking your own hotel and such, but in the Canary Islands you need air transport to get to the islands, so it is a very intermediated market. More than 80% of the tourists who come to the Canary Islands come with a tourist package” (N.Padrón, personal communication, March 18, 2022). Despite this, Noemí Padrón insisted that, despite all this: “tourism has allowed the islands to come out of a situation of absolute poverty. (...) For example, in the Eastern Islands (Gran Canaria, Lanzarote and Fuerteventura) there was a lack of availability that limited tourism growth, and it has been tourism itself that has been financing those structures that the State was not in a position to give (...) Once again, in this situation it is not all black and white, but the fact that the Canary Islands can be what they are today is thanks to tourism.” (ibid.)

The data show how “The archipelago is among the three regions with the lowest GDP per capita in Spain (...) which is related to a series of reasons such as the high level of unemployment; lack of educational skills; lack of entrepreneurship; the difficulties to integrate the internal market and the difficulties to promote economic activities beyond tourism” (Hernández et al, 2021, p.8). This causes what Dirk Godenau commented was that this predisposition of all resources to tourism and not to the population meant that "the Canary welfare state has a development, let's say, without offending, "weak" compared to other richer Spanish regions” (D. Godenau, personal communication, March 17, 2022).

Although in an objective way, as Txema Santana explained me, this is due in part to the fact that “if you approach this in economic terms, the islands have a less competitive reality in business terms than the rest of the State, because a large part of the financing of State transport, such as trains and others, does not affect us: such as trains and other types of services that speed up the movement of products for sale. We have an uncompetitive commercial reality, due to our geographical condition. And this means that we have some social markers, which, together with the significant increase in population, do not allow us to solve socially complex situations: we have an average unemployment rate above the state, an average number of people in poverty above the state, a series of circumstances that we have a lot to improve” (T. Santana, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

All this together generates an important controversy for the Canary people, since although they understand that their main source of income is tourism, they are also aware that it does not really benefit them and has such an impact in the islands. As Jorge Ruiz

explained: “People see themselves in a dichotomy, they know that tourism generates negative impacts, but at the same time it is the only industry we have, if I want to work, where can I work? Who is going to consume? The Canary people? The canary people are not going to consume... You need tourists, so it's a whiting that bites its own tail, you need tourism to work, but in turn, the negative effects of tourism also affect you.” (J. Ruiz, personal communication, March 17, 2022).

Indeed, in the Canary Islands everyone is closely linked to mass tourism, as explained by Manuel Cabezudo, who in fact has been working in different parts of the tourism sector on the islands. Thus, he commented that: “I personally had been directly or indirectly linked to tourism for many years, first of all, being a Canarian, because this is a mass tourism destination (...) it is a matter of survival because the context here is very hard” (M. Cabezudo, personal communication, April 21, 2022).

So, what could be said is that although the Canary Islands have been growing considerably thanks to tourism specially since the 1960s, and that if it were not for mass tourism, the Canary Islands would not be what they are today, it is still true that: “No matter how much has been said about economic sustainability since the 1960s thanks to tourism, the Canary Islands continue to be at the bottom of Europe's development chain, they have failed as a model. At an environmental level, it is ridiculous to put 17 million where 2 million usually live.” (M. Cabezudo, personal communication, April 18, 2022).

For all these reasons, even though the positive effects of tourism are certainly generally recognized "in a region condemned to underdevelopment and emigration, (...) the consequences on development are negative” (Marrero Rodríguez, 2006, p.334). And it is that the great transformations that have been taking place, and as Márquez explains: "this scheme of accumulation and dispossession, exclusion- has perpetuated social and wage inequality in the Canary Islands" (2018, p.25). And it is that, effectively, the Canary Islands could be developing, but the truth was that only in favor of a few who went from being landowners to owners of hotel complexes, employing in practically the same (bad) conditions.

But it is fact that the Canary population gets really concerned if there is the possibility that tourism in the islands is at risk, as they are aware of the great repercussions that this can have for their personal economy, and it is because of this that it is very possible that “an energy that can produce unwanted populism” (T. Santana, personal communication, April 20, 2022) could arise. Therefore, a series of altercations,

complaints and annoyances occurred when decided to use the hotels for the migrants.

The truth is that at a certain moment, there was quite a stir with the idea of how boat-migration was “negatively affecting the tourist image of the islands”, but after talking to different people once there, I could see, just as Dirk Godenau rightly commented that: “In economic terms, it is not problematic, in terms of image it is more problematic, when the photo of the black person, lying, thirsty on the beach, with the fat red Nordic tourist next door That for a photographer and for an analyst has a lot, because it is a clash between two worlds that generates a bad conscience (...) But of course, this space-time coincidence generates a lot of dissonance, and consequently, that can bother, however, it is quite realistic . I do not believe that the 16 million tourists that we usually receive have serious problems of conscience or change their minds because there are camps with immigrants in the places where they go on vacation (...) no matter how much some right-wing politicians have tried to suggest or impose it, immigration is not a threat to tourism” (D. Godenau, personal communication, 18 March, 2022). And it is that even if that is so, it is clear that, as Natalia G Vargas collected in an article: !The hoaxes and the political use of immigration that some local and national politicians made lit the fuse of xenophobia in the Canary Islands (...) He came to talk about 'The migratory crisis is the last straw for tourism and employment (...) he also came to question whether 'Would you go on vacation to Lesbos or Moira?' But he really did not have any type of implication” (G. Vargas, 2021).

7.3 Reflection on the Canary post-border

It has already been seen that without a doubt, the post-border (as well as the spectacle of the post-border) is completely different, or rather, paradoxically different for boat-migrant people and for tourists. In fact, looking at the figures, it is crazy to appreciate “how a mass tourism destination becomes a point of arrival for migrants, with all that this implies. But as I always say: in 2019, an archipelago in which 2 million people live received 17 million, and in 2020, when 20,000 immigrants arrived, we call them an invasion, but not the 17 million. That is something to reflect on and that the people of the Canary Islands must think about.” (M.Cabezudo, personal communication, April 21, 2022).

With this testimony, we can realize that there really is a strong “partitioning along fault-lines of class and race of both alien and member populations into privileged,

authorized communities [tourists], and abject groups [boat-migrant]. people]” (De Michelis, 2017, pp. 6-7), which means that the Canary postborder is so extremely paradoxical.

In general, reflecting on what the Canary post-border is like, one should ask this question, that was already raised some years ago: “On what grounds do we make a holiday camp for the tourist and a deportation camp for the boat people?” (Van Houtum & Boedeltje, 2009, p.226).

The answer I can come up with after having made this journey through (the spectacle of) the Canary Islands pre-border, border and post-border, would be that all of this is done *on the grounds* of capital accumulation. It has already been shown how profitable migrant centers are, despite the fact that the macro model, the industrial model to host people (in macrocenters), it is clearly not adequate for human beings, even more taking into account that these people’s background with the Canary Route, but it is that, in the capitalist accumulation process of dismantling the State in favor of the market, that has brought with it the privatization of migration management, NGOs have found a great niche in the Canarian space. In the case of tourism, this has been the case for much longer, since several decades ago it was decided that the main (and practically) only industry on the Canary Islands would be mass tourism.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this thesis, my greatest effort has been to *unmask*, as far as possible, the spectacle of the Canary Border, by trying to show the social relations that are underlying this spectacle in its pre-border, border and post-border.

First of all, it would be convenient to clarify that this *unmasking* that I have tried to do in the Canary Islands could well be applied to any other space and any other border in the world, although perhaps not as striking or paradoxical as the Canary one, but that it equally differentiates and unifies under his show the subjects who cross it for one reason or another.

I talk in terms of paradoxical since there is clearly a paradox that clashes the two realities of the dead of thousands poor boat-migrant people in the same coasts where millions of rich tourists are attracted to go. And this paradox has become a continuum, a very deadly continuum that has extended for way too many years now.

In the particular case of the Canary border specifically, although this same observations could be found in any other border, what clearly be seen and appreciated is that: “wherever capitalism goes, its illusory apparatus, its fetishisms, and its systems of mirrors come not far behind” (Harvey, 1989b, p344). In the case of the Canary Border, we can see how capitalism has arrived and has completely permeated the border, what is more, it has arrived in a much more fruitful way than that any other actor hegemonically present in borders such as the State, and it has done so by establishing a strong spectacle without precedent that has given rise to brutal spectacular oppositions when it comes to tourists and boat-migrant people crossing the border.

David Harvey explained that capital is a process that *masks* and fetichizes everything since “there is the reproduction of social life in which all of us in the advanced capitalist world are heavily implicated” (Harvey, 1989, p.343). The point here is that this reproduction of social life in which we, subjects are all so involved, two realities emerge as disparate as those of the tourists and the boat-migrant people who cross the Canary border, but these two realities are unified under the spectacle, but big efforts are carried out by the capital (through its masking and fetichizing capacities) so that these two realities do not come into contact at any point: they are unified under the spectacle, in a reality that increasingly separates and atomizes the subjects within it while unifying them under a paradox as great and brutal as the that occurs in the Canary Islands. The result is

that there is a paradoxical continuum involving the people crossing the Canary Border who are being mortally differentiated (by the social relations) underlying the spectacle of the Canary Border.

In this dangerous continuum, many lives are lost, but only the ones that are considered as *wasted* by the capital, and therefore it could be said that there is a wasteness continuum all along the process of boat-migrant people arriving to the EU: it is very clear and no one seems to worry about the fact that these people are forced to come to Europe in unwanted conditions, that they find an unwanted reception and that they live in unwanted jobs and lives once in the EU. This is the consequent creation of wasted lives in modernity, just as Bauman says (2004).

In fact, it is problematic that this continuum is becoming more and more consolidated, because after all it is something that has many accomplices, because we see ourselves as completely alien to what is happening at the borders, it could be said that we buy “the illusion of a perfect sealing-off in times of globalization” (Ferrer-Gallardo & Van Houtum, 2014, p.300), everything seems immovable.

But the Canary Border is not something static, it is not something alien to us, and we have to continue problematizing the fact that thousands of people die in their attempt to migrate towards the EU: all these deaths may not seem alien to us, no matter how much the spectacle with its tools has been able to dehumanize and criminalize migrant people, forging the humanitarian border that causes some human beings to be presented as completely alien, whose death or suffering we can only accept, and assume as alien to us.

And, just as all these deaths on the Canary border are presented as alien, as totally natural, the Canary space, so (com)modified in favor of tourism is also presented as alien, as natural, as unavoidable, making it practically impossible to think of any other Canary space or Canary border.

But it is that, it is imperative to emphasize that it is not alien to us: it is possible to act, it is not something natural, given: rather, it is the result of the social relations that currently occur in the Canary border. For this reason, we must also problematize the imaginative possibilities that arise around border management, since these possibilities are nothing more than the ones permitted by the spectacle within its margins.

In this way, it is essential that we understand the *rules of the game*, the rules for which the spectacle allow people to die and territories to be destroyed by and for the

accumulation of capital. It is important to rethink the entire set of social relations behind the pre-border, border and post-border, all that they imply, how they really relate to all the people who inhabit the world.

So, all the mechanisms by which boat-migrant people at the end have to take the route are actually part of the EU's autoimmunity and of multiple factors that have allocated the EU in a very specific position that include the plundering of natural resources (having to control fallen states in many cases through formal or informal imperialist mechanisms); not opening the borders establishing a terrible pre-border, specially that of paper that should be intensively approached in a first place; deadly border, allowing the deaths as a normal consequence of the externalization of borders, rescues that are not enough and do not work properly and that actually serve to reinforce the humanitarian border; and also a terrible post-border in which the dismissal of responsibilities has serious consequences on the boat-migrant people.

And all of this is really hidden by the prevailing industry of the Canary Islands: tourism, and more concretely, mass tourism. But what is *really hidden, or rather, masked*, is that the system that provokes mass tourism and boat-migration in the Canary Islands to coexist as much as they both serve to capital accumulation and to the neoliberal system.

So in general, it is necessary to keep in mind that everything is both a result and goal of the capitalist system that has consolidated a paradoxical continued spectacle by which people die while others enjoy. But what is key is to bare in mind and act in consequence to the fact that the spectacle is not alien to us human beings, as subjects, but that we are all part of it, not mere spectator, so we have to problematize that, keep in mind the framework within which we are operating and consequently assume that we can do something to denaturalize boat-migrant people clearly. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind, even more, when there is a clear evidence on the thousands of the people concerned about this from many different spheres and that are somehow thinking and acting trying to actually change things.

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