

Luana Maria Alagna è dottoressa di ricerca in Studi Politici all'Università "La Sapienza" di Roma. Si occupa del pensiero politico di Claude Lefort, dei fenomeni totalitari e di storia delle istituzioni democratiche. Tra gli altri interessi di ricerca vi sono gli studi di genere e le teorie politiche sulla libertà repubblicana, in particolare la ricezione del pensiero politico machiavelliano nel Seicento anglosassone. È responsabile della segreteria scientifica e organizzativa della *History & Politics Summer School* di Marsala.

Alessandro Arienzo è professore associato di Storia delle Dottrine Politiche presso l'Università "Federico II" di Napoli. I suoi studi vertono sulla ragion di Stato e sui machiavellismi in prima età moderna, in particolare nell'Inghilterra Tudor e Stuart. Si occupa anche di teoria e filosofia politica democratica, con una specifica attenzione ai temi della *governance*, della sicurezza, delle forme del legame politico. Ha curato con Alessandra Petrina il volume *Machiavellian Encounters in Tudor and Stuart England* (Ashgate, 2013) ed è autore del volume *La Governance* (Ediesse, 2013). È attualmente presidente del Centro Studi Ars RoSA su Ragion di Stato e Democrazia.

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Il presente volume, il secondo della collana "Mothia. Quaderni di culture mediterranee", raccoglie i contributi di studiosi del panorama accademico nazionale ed internazionale. In continuità ideale con la terza edizione della Summer School di Marsala dal titolo *Sud-Nord: Identità, sviluppo, confini* i capitoli raccolti esaminano – nell'ottica della multidisciplinarietà – quella dualità geo-storica, che spesso contiene il senso della dicotomia oppositiva, e dalle quali coordinate sono stati generati modelli di sviluppo culturale, economico, politico e sociale alternativi, divergenti e anche sbilanciati, a scapito di quella parte di mondo, di continente, di nazione o regione che nel sud ritrova la misura di un progresso col segno *meno*. L'intento di questo libro è di dimostrare con efficacia quanto complesso sia oggi il dibattito intorno ai confini, alle loro articolazioni spaziali, funzionali, simboliche. La sfida posta da un diverso approccio alle relazioni tra i Nord e i Sud del mondo, allo sviluppo non può che presupporre una modalità nuova, non confinaria, di praticare e attraversare le identità che noi siamo.



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Mothia. Quaderni di culture mediterranee



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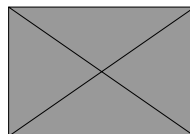
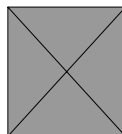
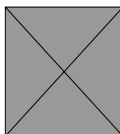
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a cura di

Luana M. Alagna, Alessandro Arienzo

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Passports powers: movement restrictions, regulations and troubles after death

Anthropological considerations on crossing borders based on fieldwork-notes from an ethnography on Italian bureaucracy for returning remains

FEDERICA MANFREDI*

Not all passports are created as equal. Some of them are more powerful than others. That's the case of an Italian or a USA citizen who are granted-visa free access to over 170 countries. A passport from Iraq is instead limited to 31 countries and a resident of Afghanistan see his traveling possibilities descend upon 28 options. More than a grant of access into a country, passports and visas are the reflection of geopolitics, relations between two nations and a country status cooperated to the rest of the world. The amount of these powers moulds moving freedom of people, both during life and after death.

In this paper I aim to lead a reflection focusing on the process of returning remains when death occurs away from ones native country. Specifically, when a citizen of a non-European country passes away in Europe, in case his family aims to repatriate remains in the motherland, the body is subject to powers and state-controlling actions, as it was during life. The relationship between person and the state passes through the management of the body and it depends on the laws of the country where

* Instituto de Ciências Sociais de Universidade de Lisboa (ICS); federicamanfredi@hotmail.fr.

the person physically was at his last breath and on relations between that state and the country where remains will be destined. So geopolitics play a role (an important one) even after death. If a dead body represents (paradoxically) a moving project, it becomes a juridical subject for the two states, aiming and supposed to produce security throughout controlling people movements. The body is involved in social and juridical relations realized mainly throughout bureaucratic processes which re-confirm the existence of state actions aiming to monitor bodies on the territory, after death as well as during life.

I am going to base this paper on two main groups of material: the first is composed by authors' reflections, with a particular attention to Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar, Thanh-Dam Truong and Didier Fassin¹. The second source originates from results of a personal ethnography on migrants' remains repatriation that I led between December 2009 and November 2010 in Italy². My purpose is to illustrate how forms of geopolitical power are still exercised when a dead-body crosses borders. Thought the exposition of some segments of the ethnography on Italian bureaucracy, I will show that politics addressed to remains are confirming the logic of limiting of freedom movement of some sub-categories of people, needing to justify constantly their presence and freedom to move in Europe.

1. D. FASSIN, *Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries: The Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times*, in «Annual Review of Anthropology», 40 (1), 2011, pp. 213-226; N. GLICK SCHILLER, N.B. SALAZAR, *Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe*, in «Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies», 39 (2), 2013, pp. 183-200; T.D. TRUONG, *The Governmentality of Transnational Migration and Security: The Making of a New Subaltern*, in T.D. TRUONG, D. GASPER (eds.), *Transnational Migration and Human Security: The Migration-Development-Security Nexus*, Springer Verlag, Berlin 2011, pp. 23-37.

2. F. MANFREDI, *Morire da migranti. Tanatopolitiche e tanatoprassi nel contesto migratorio dell'Italia contemporanea*, Final dissertation for the post-master degree in "Migration, culture and psychopathology", Sacro Cuore University, Rome 2010; EAD., *Una lettura antropologica del rimpatrio delle salme: quando spegnersi in Italia è sinonimo di "cattiva" morte*, in «Rapporto dell'Osservatorio Romano sulle Migrazioni», 10, 2014, pp. 151-159.

I adopted the transnational perspective, proposed by Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar (2013), to approach the topic of returning remains because it highlights the multiple social-institutional actors involved. If mobility studies showed clearly that mobility is a constitutive aspect of the contemporary human life, as well as it has been since the spread of the mankind from the African continent, social sciences can be applied to understand people experiences also after life because mobility can be correlated also to deceased bodies. In the present paper the transnationalism approach is applied to highlight that the mobility of migrants continues also after their last breath, crossing frontiers and traveling through borders for the very last time still produces an inconvenience for their management from the state perspective and still in the position to prove their right to cross borders.

The Italian case: a quantitative introduction to non-natives mortality

Twenty first century is characterized by an increasing public attention in migratory movements worldwide, followed by a repudiation of celebration of mobility mentioned by several authors, such as Truong (2011, 9), Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013, 184-185). Even if mobility studies articulated categories of moving people, highlighting the presence of students, tourists, missionaries, pilgrims, researchers, athletes, soldiers, journalists, volunteers and consultants additionally to short-contract workers and refugees, Italy is a country which normalizes various forms of movement within a single grouping, defining "migrants" as a «problem to deal with» (Polchi, 2009). The perception of migrants has been analyzed by La Sapienza University, which showed that over 50% of migrants are considered

as illegal by 85% of Italian people³. Even if it is extremely hard to estimate the correct number of illegal presence, the research reported 100,000 illegal migrants over 3,600,000 regular foreign residents⁴. From research's results it is evident that native perception is negatively shaped by the local media and it confirms Truong, Glick Schiller and Salazar's intuitions about definition of mobility as dangerous and threatening. As Fassin noticed, this is one of the contradiction of globalization: «Whereas the promise of earlier migration was the social incorporation of migrants under the paradigm of multiculturalism, ethnic and religious division became the rule, leading to discrimination and violence» (Fassin, 2001, 214).

This evidence gives only a superficial idea about the migratory situation in Italy, but I think it can highlight the comprehension of the decision to repatriate a body. Yassin Chaïb wrote that no-one can consider himself as an alien when his family is buried in the cemetery⁵; at the same time, it can not be a surprise the choice not to remain in a country when the possibility of integration with the native population is shaped by prejudices of illegality.

Italy has a stable trend of incoming migration since the 90s, after a well-known internal migration experience from South to North during the 80s documented by several authors⁶. Political leaders adopted approaches of emergency facing a constant flow of immigrants, procrastinating the approval of measures to regulate aspects of the everyday life for migrants with longterm projects, such as adoption of the Italian nationality, school inser-

3. M. BINOTTO, M. BRUNO, V. LAI (a cura di), *Gigantografie in nero. Ricerca su sicurezza, immigrazione e asilo nei media italiani*, Lulu Press, Raleigh (North Carolina) 2012.

4. *Dossier Statistico Caritas/Migrantes 2007*, Idos, Roma 2007.

5. Y. CHAÏB, *Eléments sociologique*, in «Carrés musulmans», B-4 (40), 2006, pp. 1-2.

6. G.A. STELLA, *L'orda. Quando gli albanesi eravamo noi*, Rizzoli, Milano 2003; P. SACCHI, P.P. VIAZZO, *Più di un sud. Astrid antropologici sull'immigrazione a Torino*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2003; A. DEL LAGO, *Non-persone. L'esclusione dei migranti in una società globale*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2004.

tion or repatriation of remains (Del Lago, 2004, 7-9). In 2003 Italy saw mortality of non-native residents exceeding the number of non-resident foreigners for the first time⁷; this trend has been confirmed in the following years, showing that foreigners' death mainly concerns people with a long-term project of residence. Despite of that, they are still perceived as a temporary phenomenon.

Although Italy has an important and stable migration quote (around the 20% of the population is non-native today), immigrants' death remains as a little phenomenon compared to native data. The National Statistic Institute (ISTAT) shows that the most part of the alien population is young (between 18 and 39 years) and only 2% is over 64 years old, a cause of the trend called «healthy immigrant effect» by Domnich⁸.

Tabella 1 - Decessi (valori assoluti e valori percentuali) della popolazione straniera oltre il 1° anno di vita residente e non in Italia - Anni 1992-2012*

Anni	Stranieri deceduti in Italia		Totale	% stranieri deceduti in Italia	
	Residenti	Non residenti		Residenti	Non residenti
1992	926	1.071	1.997	46,37	53,63
1993	862	1.091	1.953	44,14	55,86
1994	1.024	1.422	2.446	41,86	58,14
1995	1.004	1.525	2.529	39,70	60,30
1996	1.045	1.434	2.479	42,15	57,85
1997	1.289	1.563	2.852	45,20	54,80
1998	1.336	1.639	2.975	44,91	55,09
1999	1.702	1.990	3.692	46,10	53,90
2000	1.665	1.875	3.540	47,03	52,97
2001	1.938	2.112	4.050	47,85	52,15
2002	1.945	2.120	4.065	47,85	52,15
2003	2.098	2.060	4.158	50,46	49,54
2004	2.172	2.133	4.305	50,45	49,55
2005	2.391	2.176	4.567	52,35	47,65
2006	2.753	2.116	4.869	56,54	43,46
2007	2.877	2.287	5.164	55,71	44,29
2008	3.247	2.133	5.380	60,35	39,65
2009	3.457	2.039	5.496	62,90	37,10
2010	3.949	2.060	6.009	65,72	34,28
2011	4.287	2.206	6.493	66,02	33,98
2012	4.587	2.161	6.748	67,98	32,02
Totale	46.554	39.213	85.767	54,28	45,72

1. Mortality rate referred to resident and non-resident foreign population over 1 year old in Italy between 1992-2012. Source: *Rapporto Osservasalute 2015*, p. 297

7. *Rapporto Osservasalute 2009* (<http://simmweb.it>, consultato il 28 giugno 2010).

8. A. DOMNICH, D. PANATTO, R. GASPARINI, D. AMICIZIA, *The "Healthy Immigrant" Effect: Does It Exist in Europe Today?*, in «Italian Journal of Public Health», 9 (3), 2012, pp. 1-7.

There are not many foreigners dying in Italy and when it happens, it's mainly caused by accidents during work, which is the first mortality cause, and it is referred to people younger than 50 years old in 91% of cases⁹. There are not many seniors and when they died, they are not in Italy. The *good* death doesn't arrive by accident or during early years and it is in the homeland. Why senior migrants don't pass away in Italy? Because in the native country there are people knowing how to deal funeral rites and there are relatives to visit the tomb to keep the memory of the dead alive, as I documented in my previous researches (Manfredi, 2014). In this sense, returning remains is the evidence of a failed integration but also the demonstration that migratory process is not a simple movement from a country to another one: it is a circular process, a mobile itinerary which doesn't end with the life.

Truong wrote that no adequate attention was given to the historical reality that human movements across borders have always accompanied global trade expansion (Truong, 2011, 36), and so less consideration has been given to bodies flows after death: as Sayad¹⁰ said, studying migration is the occasion to understand not only the country of departure and people who move but also the arrival point. Like in a mirror, the analysis of repatriation of remains can highlight not only the mobility process but also the consequences of politics and laws of the host-country. The next paragraph demonstrates that the collection of documents required to repatriate remains validates a perception of exclusion for those who had not a powerful passport in lifetime and a perception of control because non-natives' power crossing borders always depends by holding a permission, even when death occurs. In contrast with the free circulation of goods, the twenty-first century extends freedom movement limitations going beyond human lifetime.

9. *Rapporto Istat 2010: Popolazione straniera residente* (<https://www.istat.it/it/immigrati>, consultato il 12 gennaio 2011).

10. A. SAYAD, *La double absence*, Séuil, Paris 1999.

Lost in the Italian bureaucracy

During a previous ethnographical experience (Manfredi, 2010), I had the chance to analyze the process of returning remains and its consequences on people involved: I will explicitly refer to that fieldwork for all the information I am going to expose in this essay. In the following paragraph I am going to expose the complex bureaucracy reconstructed during the fieldwork and related to that specific research time frame. Sometimes I interviewed relatives or friends of a non-native who passed away in irregular condition: this means that she was illegally present in Italy, without the legal permission to be in Europe. Other times interviews concerned regular non-native residents. I will specify this distinction along the analysis, highlighting when it does make differences.

When a person dies in Italy, regardless of his/her nationality, it is mandatory to call a doctor to verify death and fill out the death circumstances certificate. The document will have to be presented in 24 hours to the closest police office to officially document the event. A requirement of Italian regulation on immigrants (*Testo Unico sull'Immigrazione*) is that police documentation can be executed only by regular residents. A cause of this, if the person denouncing the decease is a non-white Italian mother tongue speaker, he will require to show his residency permission. Ethnographical experience showed that non-natives have to justify their presence on the Italian ground. This prove is not required only to the living person denouncing the death but it's paradoxically referred also to the dead-one. A police officer commented about the apparent paradox in prosecuting a dead person: «What do we want to do? Should I put a dead one in jail? There is not space for living people!»¹¹.

11. From fieldwork diary, June 2010. Interviews have been conducted and transcribed in Italian: excerpts presented in this article are the result of a personal translation.

The officer's comment confirms Truong's idea about the formation of a subaltern class labelled as "irregular migrant" (Truong, 2011) and its diffusion in the everyday conversations moulding the social life and reproducing a specific world structure. Dead or alive, migrants seem to be part of a process aiming to maintain a hierarchical global society based on politics within the nation-state. The class of irregular migrant, a kind of social outcast or «a kind of class without agency» (Truong, 2011, 35), is a group defined in the relationship with a state where the relation results in a restriction of physical mobility. In the ethnographical case, the death folder has to be filled also with criminal record documents and it is linked to how the deceased entered in Italy. Of course this practice is not usually performed in case an Italian citizen passes away.

After the initial documentation, which combines the necessity to record a death and also to control the status of people on the territory, police contact the National Health System (*Sistema Sanitario Nazionale*) that will send a second doctor in order to produce two documents: the postmortem certificate (*certificato di visita necroscopica*) and the report for the National Statistic Institute (*scheda di morte ISTAT*). These documents will be necessary for the funeral agency designated to take care of the body, both for local burial or repatriation procedure.

In case death occurs in hospital, the medical staff is in charge of recording the event; relatives can directly contact a funeral company, which requires from 5,000€ to 10,000€ for their assistance in repatriation. The price excludes flight-tickets and it depends on the destination country: if it is a member of the European Union, if it is easy to get an interpreter to translate documents in the local language, and if there are consolidated relationship with the Italian State and frequent flight connections, the cost is reduced. Otherwise grievers have to deal also with a sensible economical effort.

Even if foreigners' death is still a marginal phenomenon from a statistic perspective, private companies are forming in order to offer

specific services, as Alessandro Gusman¹² notes. Funeral companies appear as actors ready to fill the lack of accessibility caused by a complex bureaucracy which produces movement restrictions and need of control on circulating bodies, but they have a considerable cost. They explicitly propose to help as mediators in the relation between foreign citizens and the Italian State, as in the case of the agency "Luna": based in Turin in 2007, it is the first funeral company with specific services addressed only to muslim customers.

As Andersson¹³ already pointed out, migration has become a big business, and I can add that this is not limited when people are alive: crossing borders implies commercial transactions between several actors also for corps. The entire process of repatriation produces trade, as the ethnography pointed out referring to funeral agencies, document productions by consulates, translation requests and so on. In spite of Andersson studies, during the fieldwork I had no chance to observe the use of technology to check crossing coffins because my fieldwork didn't include physical frontiers. I wonder if it will be a future step to achieve in the border control or if it is caused by a lower interest related to the direction of the crossing. Anyway it could constitute an interesting follow up of the present research.

During fieldwork I collected information about the procedure of returning remains from Italy to Morocco and to Romania and, as I already mentioned referring to funeral agency costs, the collection of approvals required depends by geopolitics and specific relationships between the departure country and the destination one. The cheaper way to transfer remains is by flight, or by wheels in case of short distances. Transfer organization is easier for countries that are members of European Union, as in the case of Romania. Bringing a body outside of EU is more complicated, and

12. A. GUSMAN, *Gli altri addii. Morte e ritualità funebri nelle comunità immigrate del Piemonte*, Fondazione Ariodante Fabretti, Torino 2010.

13. R. ANDERSSON, *A Game of Risk: Boat Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*, in «Anthropology Today», 28 (6), 2012, pp. 7-11.

it requires more resources, as data about Morocco reveals. People with a dead relative with a Moroccan citizenship have to contact the Moroccan embassy which requires a form called *nulla osta per l'introduzione della salma* to the Municipality where the person died. Relatives or friends need to ask the consulate to contact the Minister of Foreign Affairs to share information about the cause of death and the location address for burial. In around two weeks they should be called by consulate's staff to pick up a code to complete the *death passport*. Paradoxically, a legal document allowing people movement is required even after lifetime, as the regular passport was necessary before death. As mentioned in the introduction, not all passports have the same power.

During the ethnography I observed that *nulla osta* permissions is required even for Rumanian corps, even if Romania belong to Schengen space. This logic for surveillance of borders and territory is applied to all bodies, but some of them have less restrictions than others. Some corps, thanks to their passport in the lifetime, have to collect less documents and permissions in order to be transferred. It's the case of a French corp which doesn't require a *nulla osta*.

Compared to the power of circulation for a regular passport, that Bauman defined as global hierarchy of movements¹⁴, my research showed that additional limitations of movement are applied in case of contagious illness, so when the transport of remains can be a dangerous cause of diseases transmission. The attention on official documents reinforce differences and inequalities on people's motility, a keyword from Salazar¹⁵ that refers to the potential or to the agency to move or to stay in a specific territory.

14. Z. BAUMAN, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, Columbia University Press, New York 1998.

15. N.B. SALAZAR, *Introduction. Keywords of Mobility: What's in a Name?*, in N.B. SALAZAR, K. JAYARAM (eds.), *Keywords of Mobility: Critical Engagements*, Berghahn Books, New York 2016, pp. 1-12.

Coming back to the permission collection, for Moroccan de-
cease, once holding *nulla osta* and death passport, grievors have
to present them for consul's signature and the legalization of each
sheet by the Italian prefect. The final dossier will include: death
passport, postmortem certificate, the *nulla osta per l'introduzione
della salma*, the medical declaration attesting death and its cause
and a document translated in French for inspectors at Moroccan
customs. As Fassin noticed quoting Bigo and Guild, the surveil-
lance and identification system imposed on irregular immigration
is becoming sophisticated, including not only inspection at
borders and sensible points, such as airports, but also involving
consulates and embassies as a first line of defense against un-
wanted immigration, acting as a form of policing at a distance (Fassin,
2011, 218-219). In the case of returning remains, the consulate's
staff keep monitoring bodies' movements reminding constantly
their power of rejecting undesirable ones. Thanks to the transna-
tional approach, embassies and consulates raise as one of the ac-
tors involved in processes of post-mortem border regime.

«If you don't have all right documents, I can't help you. And even
with all right documents, the final permission it's not guaranteed.
It depends by several factors... You have to keep in mind that the
permission is not guaranteed», office worker in Rome¹⁶.

During days required by the permissions collection, the body
is guarded by the funeral agency or by the Municipality. Each cus-
tom-day can be charged up to 150 and there is no chance to save
money by bringing the coffin at home: as well as for live people
waiting to be transferred, the space where the body is located is
not replaceable with private accommodations and its movement
of freedom is suspended, so similar to regrouping camps.

Berlin Convention (10/02/1937) and Declaration from the Pan
American Health Organization (5-13/12/1965) constitute the two

16. Interaction during fieldwork, 27.1.2010.

available regulations about returning remains in a transnational approach. Inside European Union borders there is not an official set of guidelines ruling on remains repatriation, even if recently the right of returning remains was compared to the right of free movement for Europeans. According to Berlin Convention and Declaration from the Pan American Health Organization, which could be analyzed in future works in parallel with the four international pieces of legislation on human movement across borders discussed by Truong (2011, 28-34), the body has to be closed in a double coffin: the internal casket is made by zinc and it is soldered and the external one by wood, hermetically closed. The coffin has to be kept locked even once remains are repatriated and they are at the destination. This rule implies that relatives in the homeland are not allowed to see the dead person one last time, facing difficulties in processing grief for someone that maybe, in the case of the migratory project, already missing years from home. As result of this, a funeral ceremony or a collective praying moment is organized before body's departure: migrant community can use a municipality funeral house or the morgue at the hospital where they can invite a minister. Even if the third article of the Italian Constitution safeguards religion freedom, morgue access is often limited by visiting time; music, flowers or other symbolic objects are not allowed inside and ministers are difficult to find, except for the catholic religion. These difficulties complicate the management of the separation and grief processing.

Daniela comes from Romania and she lost her mom five years ago. She was in Italy as well, due to working reasons. She died in hospital in two days, after four months of suffering caused by pulmonary cancer. Daniela and her younger sister decided to bring her back to Romania, to rest in peace close to her parents. They didn't know if they would continue to live in Italy and so the repatriation of remains appeared the best choice. Before closing the coffin for the last time, Daniela organized a praying moment with members of the Romanian community living in Italy. Daniela called a priest to bless her mother's body in the chapel of the Le Molinette hospi-

tal: an orthodox minister was not available and so they welcomed a catholic one because, according to Daniela's words, "Anyway, they sell the same product"¹⁷.

The process required for returning remains is long and not easy to gather: there are no clear available information describing the entire procedure, neither on an official web site nor in a physical office. I met confused governmental employees during the ethnography, each one with different hypothesis about the best procedure to adopt. During the participant observation, I peregrinated around hidden offices with short working time and I kept in my hands tiny sheets with very little letters. Their technical language was hard to understand even for a native person with a high educational level. In that moments it was easy to understand those preferring to pay a private company in order to provide to all permissions, but my informers were rarely in the position to put that money together.

I had the chance to consider that energies and time required to manage the bureaucratic operations are a distraction to processing the grief: the collection of permissions and documents necessary for returning remains produces a delay in the acceptance of the loss with social and psychological difficulties for those who accompany the dead. Grievers have to face the effort of coming to terms with the senseless death while their ordeal is made harder by the mobility conditions: far from family or other social networks and living in their social frontiers as described by Didier Fassin, people are alone and vulnerable.

Repatriation between tears and fees

In addition to difficult emotions necessary to manage a cause of facing death, the process to repatriate remains also requires considerable resources from an economical point of view. Once

17. From fieldwork journal, 2.8.2010.

the body is ready to leave the Italian territory, it is necessary to organize and pay the transfers from the hospital (or from the place where remains were guarded) to an international airport. In 2010 the minimum rate was 1€ per kilometer and total price could arrive up to 2,000€ according to transfer starting point. Additionally to it, the air-ticket is between 2,500€ and 3,500€ flying with African air companies but it can be over 4,000€ flying with European ones. Furthermore a corp can fly alone but generally it is accompanied by one or two escorts, whose airline tickets (round trip) will increase the total cost of the journey.

For the transfer, the coffin is located in a black bag with a pocket on the top where all documents are placed. Once the body arrives at the destination, the frontier police will check all documents, and an ambulance will transfer the coffin from the airport directly to the burial place, where generally a second ceremony is organized for friends and family members in their homeland. They can only see and touch the wood coffin, listening to the testimonies of those who accompanied the body from Italy. Sometimes they show some pictures from cellphones about the praying moment that happened in Italy before the journey: it is a consolation for the family because they see more people paying respect to their relative in addition to those who are now around the coffin. Not being alone when facing death is a relief.

Referring to the experience of returning remains, a keyword from interviews was "torture". Facing death of a dear person is extended by the bureaucratic process of collecting documents and complicated by the migratory condition, which underlines the lack of the family and other familiar cultural codes to treat the end of life collectively. Death is a tragic event that interrupts daily life and forcefully comes to end a life. Robert Hertz¹⁸ states that death is not only a precise event but also a process that involves the tearing of the social fabric. All around the world cultures de-

18. R. HERTZ, *Sulla rappresentazione collettiva della morte*, Savelli, Roma 1978.

wise ways where the woe arisen by this tragic event could be ratified, “channeled” and overcome. Social groups have found ways to decree their members’ loss, and this one has reference models to show how the death, in a sense, has a “good” management. That is why burial rites have to be *right* arranged and not simply made. Among the aims of funeral rites is one to reintegrate the normality of daily life to those who are more involved: family members and closer friends to the dead. Repairing the social fabric to this laceration obviously implies a solemn affliction. By intervening during the mourning process within the context of migration, a reality marked by the absence of the one who dies (and by the lack of social fabric and family if those who assist are migrants), further complicates the situation and requires social actors to invent new practices to restore normality’s balance, such as the praying moment organized by Daniela with a catholic priest in the hospital. Migrations demonstrate the adaptability of religions, as mentioned by Van Der Veer¹⁹ in his essay on religious conservatism, but ethnographical data showed that the constant negotiations experienced by the grievors and required by the migrant contexts are perceived as extra sufferances, complications, causes of affliction and discomfort complicating the elaboration of the mourning. Processing death is a painful work requiring energies, emotions and people knowing how to *deal* the death, but the steps required by the bureaucracy steals much more than time.

That period was a nightmare. I had to pick up all those sheets with stamps and signatures... I had no idea what was written on that! It was impossible to understand. But they were important, oh yes. The good office was always another one, not the one where I was, and it was never open when I was out of work... It was terrible. It takes me years to understand that... I should prey and calm down in that days, not to run in all that offices. I should stay with my friends and

19. P. VAN DER VEER, *Transnational Religion: Hindu and Muslim Movements*, in «Global Networks», 2 (2), 2002, pp. 95-109.

prey for my brother, eating together and talking about him, paying respect and crying. Instead my mind was running to permission and embassy's appointments. And I was alone: my sister was not able to come with me or to help me because she had not her paper [regular permission of residency] at that time. I was alone and I felt alone even if I have many friends in Italy²⁰.

Conclusion

The difference from inside and outside leads to the creation of frontiers and borders, but authors like Sandro Mezzadra²¹ are talking about a crisis in the classic relationship between state and territory. The concept of frontier has been analyzed as an instrument of regulation, establishment of power and formulation of security. It's a tool to control movement and not to stop it: at borders there is a selection of goods and bodies with a distinction between unwanted and welcome.

Death is a concept that we immediately refer to immobility, but this essay shows that there are some exceptions relating it to the frontier concept. Throughout the exposition of some segments of an ethnography about returning remains, I highlighted that dead bodies are allowed to cross borders according to the nationality and the relationships between Italy and native country.

The analysis of repatriation of remains shows the influence of frontiers and national identities in shaping the experience of migrants facing other migrants' death, highlighting the role of geopolitics and social authors involved: the body has to prove that it is fit to repatriate by collecting forms, proving its right to move. In order to do that, it has to be recognized and managed by doctors, National Statistic Institute operators, police officers and Municipi-

20. Fieldwork interview, 2.9.2010.

21. S. MEZZADRA, *Confini, migrazioni, cittadinanza*, in «Scienza & Politica», 30, 2004, pp. 83-91.

pality agents, consulate or embassy staff, prefecture employees, airline company attendants, custom officers and also agents of private funeral companies. The cost of the entire operation for remains repatriation is considerable, including time and energies that are detracted from the grieving process. The ethnography collected silenced voices reporting vulnerabilities and pain, aggravated by bureaucratic requests and economical efforts.

Passports are always very important, in lifetime as well as after it. Not all of them have the same power. Returning remains description confirms that people are subject to having to constantly prove their right to move. Ethnographical data showed that post-mortem regime is part of the set of rules used to perform frontiers check. Border and people control is such a contemporary feature that it goes beyond life's limits, because migration is not only a movement from A to B.

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