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Author(s): Horsti, Karina; Neumann, Klaus

Title: Memorializing mass deaths at the border : two cases from Canberra (Australia) and Lampedusa (Italy)

Year: 2019

Version: Published version

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Please cite the original version:

Horsti, K., & Neumann, K. (2019). Memorializing mass deaths at the border : two cases from Canberra (Australia) and Lampedusa (Italy). Ethnic and Racial Studies, 42(2), 141-158. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1394477

Ethnic and Racial Studies

ISSN: 0141-9870 (Print) 1466-4356 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rers20

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To cite this article: Karina Horsti & Klaus Neumann (2017): Memorializing mass deaths at the border: two cases from Canberra (Australia) and Lampedusa (Italy), Ethnic and Racial Studies, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2017.1394477

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1394477

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Published online: 15 Nov 2017.

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ETHNIC AND RACIAL STUDIES, 2017
https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1394477

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Memorializing mass deaths at the border: two cases from Canberra (Australia) and Lampedusa (Italy)

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ABSTRACT
In this paper, we compare two seemingly very similar instances in which individuals and organizations within the borders of the global North have memorialized the deaths of irregular migrants at sea: the SIEV X memorial in Australia's national capital Canberra, and the *Giardino della memoria* (Garden of Remembrance) on the Italian island of Lampedusa. Unlike ephemeral manifestations of grief, potentially these memorials have effects that reach well beyond their creation. We relate the differences between the memorials to the contexts within which they were created: an immediate local response involving people directly affected by the disaster's aftermath, on the one hand, and a delayed nation-wide response involving people removed from the deaths at sea, on the other. We also discuss the difference between a memorial that names and thereby individualizes victims, and one that does not, and between one that celebrates an alternative, hospitable society, and one that does not.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 1 December 2016; Accepted 10 October 2017

KEYWORDS Borders; migration; refugees; border-related deaths; memorials; memorialization

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As countries in the global North are making their borders impassable for irregular migrants from the global South, the number of people who die trying to cross these borders continues to mount. For 2016, the International Organization for Migration recorded the deaths of 7,763 migrants en route to international destinations, including more than 5,000 deaths along migratory routes in the Mediterranean (GMDAC 2017). Until recently, only families and friends in the countries of origin and in the diaspora tended to publicly grieve for and remember the dead. Increasingly, however, commemorations are initiated by citizens of the global North with no personal connection to the deceased. They include local eyewitnesses; institutional search and rescue agents; local, national, and world political and religious leaders;

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political activists who oppose border controls; humanitarians who operate in the border zone; and others who witnessed deaths at the border through mediation.

Scholars are increasingly devoting critical attention to the deaths of irregular migrants. Criminologists, human geographers, and political scientists, in particular, have documented border-related fatalities (Spijkerboer 2007; Weber and Pickering 2011; Brian and Laczko 2014; Brian and Laczko 2016), analysed the biopolitics responsible for migrant deaths (Doty 2011; Albahari 2015; Cuttitta 2015; De León 2015; Vaughan-Williams 2015; Kovras and Robins 2016), engaged with the question of whether or not deaths at the border are "grievable" (Hodge 2015; Ritaine 2015; Albahari 2016; Boudreaux 2016; Rygiel 2016; Squire 2017; Ticktin 2016), and explored what Stierl (2016) has termed the "grief activism" of citizens of the global North.

In this paper, we extend the scholarship on recent responses to migrant deaths by exploring two seemingly very similar instances in which individuals and organizations within the borders of the global North have *memorialized* the deaths of people unrelated to them and from outside those borders. While much of the recent relevant scholarship focuses on the politics of "grievability", we are interested in a broader spectrum of emotional and political registers. Those creating a memorial may, of course, be driven by grief, but acts of memorialization could also be prompted by a range of other sentiments, including anger, shame, or love. The registers involved also depend on who those involved in memorial activism are: the motivations of survivors and of the members of diasporic communities may be very different from those of political activists from the global North. A memorial tends to project emotional and political drivers towards others – who are imagined to engage with its message when visiting it – and into the future. Somebody who has arranged for the erection of a memorial is often motivated by the desire to make others reproduce her own emotional and political response to what is being commemorated.

We bring a memorial studies lens and our disciplinary backgrounds in cultural and historical studies to bear on these issues and examine two place-specific memorials. They commemorate people who drowned while trying to cross into the global North by boat: a national memorial in Australia's capital Canberra memorializes the sinking of a boat on 19 October 2001 in the Indian Ocean (Mares 2002, 199–203; Marr and Wilkinson 2003, 224–238; Kevin 2004), and a local memorial on the Italian island of Lampedusa commemorates the deaths of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean Sea on 3 October 2013.

The disjuncture between the genesis of a particular commemorative project (including the intentions of those who initiated it), its ostensible message, its interpretation and use over time, and its location and form is a peculiar feature of memorials. While we suggest our own reading (which may not align with that of the memorials' creators), we do so against the

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backdrop of a contextual interpretation of the memorials' genealogy and appearance.

A comparative perspective helps us to understand what is specific about the two memorials and to identify commonalities. We demonstrate how different political and mediated contexts have produced different outcomes in the memorialization of the disasters. Drawing on media reports, interviews, site visits, and the relevant literature, we explore the politics that made the two memorial projects possible and the effects they could have over time.

The Australian and European contexts of the 2001 and 2013 maritime disasters

The 2001 and 2013 disasters became symbols for the violence of the borders shielding the global North. Both took place in spaces that had been constituted as border zones: between Southeast Asia and Australia, and between North Africa and Europe, respectively. The destinations of the two boats, Christmas Island, an Australian territory about 380 km south of Java, and Lampedusa, an Italian island 113 k, north of Tunisia, have been constituent parts of these border zones: the former is not quite in Australia, and the latter is not quite in Europe.[1]

On 18 October 2001, an unnamed Indonesian fishing boat left the port of Bandar Lampung in the south of Sumatra for Christmas Island where its passengers intended to seek asylum. The next day, while the boat was in international waters, its engine and pumps failed, it took on water, and capsized. Forty-five survivors were rescued by Indonesian fishermen who chanced upon the scene some 15 hours after the boat had sunk; the remaining 146 men, 142 women, and 65 children perished. Most of the boat's passengers were Iraqis.

This sinking took place in the context of significant changes to Australia's asylum seeker policies. Some two months earlier, the government had refused permission to the Norwegian container carrier *Tampa* to land 433 irregular migrants rescued in the Indian Ocean on Christmas Island, ordered special forces to take control of the ship, and transferred the rescued migrants to Nauru and to Papua New Guinea's Manus Island (Marr and Wilkinson 2003). At the same time, the government vowed that from then on asylum seekers who had arrived by boat would be detained and processed outside Australia, and instructed the navy to turn back boats with asylum seekers that were bound for Australia. The Australian authorities referred to these boats as "suspected illegal entry vessels", or SIEVs, and assigned a number to each of them. The boat that sank on 19 October is usually referred to as *SIEV X*.

The second instance of memorialization relates to the sinking of a trawler that had set out from the Libyan port of Misrata. Less than 1 km from

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Lampedusa, it sank on the early morning of 3 October 2013. Of the more than 500 passengers – most of them fleeing Eritrea – only 5 women and 150 men survived. They had been in the water without life jackets for some 3 hours before locals on a leisure boat noticed them and raised the alarm. At least 366 people died.

Both disasters occurred when irregular migration by boat and the policy responses to such migration were highly contested, although the trajectories of the debates in Australia and Europe contrasted sharply. In Australia, following the arrival of the *Tampa* and the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, government and public attitudes towards irregular migrants had hardened significantly, while 12 years later in Italy an almost opposite trend could be observed. Human rights groups had criticized the Berlusconi government's approach, including its push-back policy, and in the 2011 *Hirsi* case, the European Court of Human Rights had condemned Italy for returning asylum seekers to Libya without examining their protection claims. Since 2011, Italy had rescued people but had then let them move on, often without registering them, to countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden, which thereby became responsible for refugee status determination procedures and integration programmes or, in the case of negative decisions, costly deportations.

While Australian and European policy and public responses to irregular migration differed significantly, the two disasters had much in common. The number of fatalities was relatively high – higher than for any other disaster involving irregular migrants in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, respectively, up to that time. The dead included many children. In the media coverage and in subsequent court proceedings, the dead were portrayed as victims of unscrupulous people smugglers who had coaxed them onto unseaworthy boats. In both instances, the official response came under intense critical scrutiny. In Australia, refugee advocates accused the navy of not having done enough to save the *SIEV X*'s passengers. In Italy, Lampedusani who had been the first on the scene were highly critical of the rescue effort of the coast guard and the Guardia di Finanza.

In both instances, the asylum claims of most victims would have stood a good chance of being recognized, which meant that the victims were potential future citizens of Australia or Europe. Many of the victims had wanted to follow relatives who legally resided in Australia and Europe, respectively, but were prevented from doing so through regular family reunion channels (see, e.g. Hutton 2013, 46). However, the ability to see the victims as prospective fellow citizens, as relatives of Australian or European residents, and as human beings whose sudden death tore a hole in the social fabric of a community differed in the two cases, as we discuss below.

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Memorialization in a mediatized context

The mass deaths near Lampedusa attracted immediate attention in the national and global media (De Swert, Schacht, and Masini 2015), whereas the *SIEV X* disaster was barely mentioned outside Australia and Indonesia, and reported only after a 3-day delay. The visuality of the disasters was also different. In Lampedusa, the coast guard provided footage of the rescue and the landing of the survivors for the media. Images of rows of coffins in the hangar of Lampedusa Airport circulated widely. By contrast, there were no images of the rescue of the *SIEV X* survivors, and while Lampedusani were feted as heroes on account of their response to the disaster, the Indonesian fishermen who rescued the survivors of the *SIEV X* were almost immediately forgotten.

The sinking of the boat near Lampedusa turned local people into eyewitnesses, and its mediatization created national, European, and global witnessing audiences. Media representations of death and survival prompted moral calls to respond. By positioning the Italian rescue agents at the centre of the drama, the media invited Europeans to join the spectacle as humanitarians. However, the media's interest in this particular incident waned quickly. Australians, by contrast, were twice-removed spectators of the sinking of the *SIEV X*. The media showed initially comparatively little interest in the disaster because it happened in the midst of a federal election campaign. But interest in the deaths was rekindled in the first half of 2002 when a Senate committee investigated claims that the Australian authorities had known about the *SIEV X* and its unseaworthiness and had decided not to come to its rescue (Senate Select Committee 2002, 195–290).

In Australia, the government used the *SIEV X* disaster to justify its hard line approach to asylum seekers. It also denied any responsibility, arguing that the sinking happened in Indonesia's, rather than Australia's, search and rescue zone. In Italy, by contrast, the government vowed to adopt a more compassionate approach to irregular migrants, albeit in the understanding that many of them would lodge their asylum claims in other countries. On 4 October, Prime Minister Enrico Letta promised to hold a state funeral for the victims and grant them posthumous citizenship.[2] On 18 October, 5 days after another boat with irregular migrants had sunk near Lampedusa, the government launched Operation Mare Nostrum, during which the Italian military rescued approximately 150,000 migrants in the Mediterranean.

In both cases, a wide range of individuals, communities, and organizations soon became involved in commemorating the disasters. In Australia, the first memorial events were dominated by members of the Iraqi community and others who could claim that the dead belonged to them. In Sydney, a

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prayer vigil was held on 25 October 2001, which was attended by several Iraqis who had lost relatives or friends on the *SIEV X* (Brown and Harvey 2001). That same day, asylum seekers in Indonesia staged a protest outside the offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to call for a speedier processing of their applications for refugee status and resettlement; a girl carried a placard that read "We are mourning the loss of life of our brothers and sisters in the boat accident" (AFP 2001).

Following the disaster of 3 October 2013, members of the Eritrean diaspora organized commemorations, which were often also protests against the regime that forced Eritreans to flee their country. For example, on 12 October, over a thousand Eritreans gathered in a Tel Aviv park for a memorial service (Hartman 2013). These commemorations – and the fact that the dead had ties in the global North and could therefore be seen to also belong there – received little attention in the European media. We argue that this is a consequence of the humanitarian framework that informed the reporting of the Lampedusa disaster: humanitarianism constructs a hierarchical relationship between the one who helps and the helpless victim, and therefore the responses of diasporic communities could not be easily accommodated in narratives about the disaster's aftermath.

Lampedusani initially responded to the disaster by participating in a candlelight vigil to express their solidarity with the survivors who were still held on the island (Stefano, Phone interview with Ilaria Tucci, 2017) and as a means of protest against European and Italian indifference to the border deaths (Puggioni 2015). On 4 October, the Italian government declared a national day of mourning; schools were instructed to observe a minute of silence. There were also numerous locally organized events throughout Italy, ranging from a minute of silence observed in all pizzerias and restaurants in Palermo in the country's south to a commemorative ceremony held in the centre of Parma in the north.

In both cases, the deaths have been commemorated since, particularly on the day of the anniversary of the disaster. In Italy, the disaster of 3 October even prompted the parliament's inauguration of a *Giornata nazionale in memoria delle vittime dell'immigrazione* (national memorial day for the victims of immigration) in 2016. The two disasters have also spawned temporary and permanent memorials, and have been the subject of numerous works of art.[3] Representations of the two disasters differed in one important respect: while Lampedusani and official rescue agents featured prominently as eyewitnesses and as heroes in narratives of the disaster of 3 October, the stories of the survivors who were taken back to Indonesia and of family members in Australia were central in the case of *SIEV X*. The testimony of the Iraqi survivor Amal Basry, in particular, amplified by writer Arnold Zable and film-maker Steve Thomas, shaped the way the disaster was represented (see Perera 2006).

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The Canberra SIEV X memorial and the Lampedusa *Giardino della memoria*

Both memorials are situated in public spaces away from the built environment. Both are designed to fit into the existing landscape. Lampedusa's *Giardino della memoria* (Garden of Remembrance) is located in a nature reserve administered by Legambiente, a national association that promotes the protection of the environment. The memorial is said to feature 366 small shrubs typical in Lampedusa. Most plants cannot be identified as belonging to the memorial. The exact number of the plants is uncertain because in the inauguration ceremony only fifty shrubs were planted. More were added later, but little care was taken to ensure that they took root. The garden has no marked boundaries and most plants had died by October 2017. Originally the plants were numbered, but the numbers had disappeared a year later. In 2017, Legambiente reattached the numbers to some of the plants.

Canberra's SIEV X memorial is an installation of 353 individually painted wooden poles in Weston Park, a public reserve on a peninsula in Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin (Biddulph 2007; Ware 2007, 2008; Stephens 2008; Gibbings 2010; Kleist 2013). The constellation of poles visualizes the number of victims and the outline of the boat that sank. Community groups, schools, and groups of individuals designed the poles. Most are inscribed with the name of a person who drowned; where a victim's name is unknown, the inscription refers only to their gender and presumed age. The focus on the relationship between an individual victim and the creator(s) of a particular pole is a significant feature of the monument. It recognizes the individuality of the victims and emphasizes the connection between the one who remembers and the one who is remembered. It also offers this connection as an exemplar to an imaginary audience.

Both memorials require signage to allow visitors to decipher their meaning. The signs that are part of the memorial in Lampedusa are inconspicuous and resemble other signs in the reserve. Visitors learn only that the 366 shrubs were planted "in memory of the victims of the shipwreck of 3 October 2013" – "lest we forget" – by the municipality of Lampedusa and Linosa, the Sicilian regional authorities, and Legambiente. The sign does not reveal that nearly all the victims were from Eritrea. The signage in Canberra is more informative. Visitors are told about the 2001 disaster and the creation of the memorial; according to the text's opening line, "The SIEV X Memorial remembers the 146 children, 142 mothers and 65 fathers who died on the refugee boat SIEV X, at the height of the Federal election campaign in October 2001." Another explains the arrangement of forty-two poles that mark the outlines of the fishing boat that capsized. It encourages visitors to experience the emotions associated with the disaster and its memorialization:

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> Step inside and you will see how small this was to carry 400 people. You may feel the sadness of such an event for these families, and the grief of those fathers and husbands detained here in Australia, unable to help or protect them. But please also feel the hope and promise that young Australians cared so much to create this beautiful memorial.

One of the signs refers visitors to a website to find out more about the sinking of the *SIEV X* (www.sievxmemorial.com).

The poles' creators hail from different parts of Australia; the diversity of the groups responsible for decorating the poles and the artwork featuring iconic Australian images prompt visitors to perceive the memorial as the outcome of an all-Australian effort. The memorial does not make any explicit claims about the Australian government's culpability; rather it points to an innocent Australia, which is represented by school children whose artwork demonstrates that they would have welcomed those travelling on the *SIEV X*.

While the Canberra memorial identifies the dead by gender and, where possible, by name, the *Giardino della memoria* refers only to a total number. Given that there are conflicting accounts of the number of dead in Lampedusa, even that number seems symbolic rather than specific; it may remind Italian visitors of the well-known *Cimitero delle 366 fosse* in Naples, which was used to bury the city's paupers in 366 unmarked graves, one for each day of a leap year. The *Giardino* commemorates a catastrophic event; the different plants signify its magnitude, rather than the individual human beings – one plus one plus one plus one plus … – who perished.

The lack of names in Lampedusa is noteworthy because a group of survivors compiled lists of victims immediately after the disaster (Kasim 2017) and the priest of Lampedusa recited them in commemorations (Stefano, Phone interview with Ilaria Tucci, 2017). In his view, the rituals that the islanders organized after the shipwreck were motivated by the wish to show "solidarity with the survivors and their grief". For the relatives and friends of the victims, however, the individual plants do correspond to names; thus, an Eritrean survivor who returned to Lampedusa for the third anniversary was anxious to water plant no. 18 because that number had been assigned to a childhood friend he had lost (Tonacci 2016).

The SIEV X memorial evidences a different level of attentiveness towards the victims' relationality. Not only are no two poles the same, but where possible they are named. The public display of the names of the dead is a reminder that they were social beings who had once been named, and were then called by their name, and who are now missed and mourned (see Butler 2004, 19–23; Edkins 2011, 8–14). The person(s) creating a particular pole may of course have grieved for the victim commemorated by that pole; more importantly, however, the act of naming a pole restores to the dead ties that once bound them to members of a community that is largely outside of the field of vision of either the memorial's creators or the audiences imagined by them.

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The origins of the SIEV X memorial go back to a nation-wide design competition held for high school students in 2002. Its results were first publicly exhibited in a Sydney church on the third anniversary of the ship's sinking. Initially it did not seem that the poles could become a permanent memorial because the authorities declined a request to install them even temporarily with the argument that the event had been too recent to establish whether it warranted its permanent memorialization. On the disaster's fifth anniversary, the poles were used in a commemorative ceremony attended by some 2000 people, among them relatives of the victims, during which participants held the poles up. The following year, permission was granted for the temporary installation of the memorial on public land on Weston Peninsula. Although initially expected to be on display for only 6 weeks, it has remained in place ever since.

Whereas the memorial in Canberra was created 5 years after the shipwreck, the *Giardino della memoria* was a comparatively immediate response. In Lampedusa, the shipwreck made an imprint on the local people not least because of its corporeality. Islanders were the first on the scene of the disaster. Later they witnessed the inappropriate and disrespectful treatment of bodies, and in conversations with Horsti, many vividly recalled details about it 2 years later. The planting of the garden was an attempt to manage Lampedusa's emotional and political landscape, bring the different eyewitnessing communities together, and secure centre stage in what had become a contest for the adequate commemoration of the disaster.

Both in Lampedusa and in Canberra, the memorials register a dissenting voice. They are material proof that the governments of the global North cannot speak for all. Both memorials and the performances associated with their inauguration were positioned against national government policies (and EU policies in the case of Lampedusa). Lampedusa's then mayor, Giusi Nicolini, who since assuming office in 2012 has publicly criticized the tightening of border controls in Europe, objected to holding the official funeral in Agrigento (Sicily) on 21 October. She wanted the ceremony to be held in Lampedusa, which would have allowed the survivors, who were still held on the island – and who were aggrieved because they had not been invited to Agrigento – to attend the funerals. The survivors' opposition to the official handling of the disaster and its aftermath united them with Nicolini. The planting ceremony symbolically re-enacted the funeral that never was. Both memorials can thus be read as acknowledgements by some citizens of the global North that their own governments are implicated in the deaths at the border, however much that sense of responsibility is diluted by the efforts of members of a dissenting minority to distance themselves from those in power and thereby emphasize their own righteousness.

The relationship between the two memorial sites and the sites of the events of 19 October 2001 and 3 October 2013 is unspoken. In Lampedusa,

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the site of the shipwreck is visible from the garden, but no sign alerts visitors to this possibility. Less than a kilometre along the main road, a footpath leads to Lampedusa's most famous beach, the Spiaggia degli cognili (Rabbit Beach). A viewing area marked by ropes invites visitors to admire it and the sea but it does not make any reference to the shipwreck site. The silence of the *Giardino della memoria* and its relative inconspicuousness were deliberate; they contrast with the noise of the border spectacle and the mediated hyper-visibility of the disaster's immediate aftermath. In 2013, there appeared to be no need for a conspicuous marker to remind Lampedusani of the mass deaths.

The SIEV X memorial is a national memorial. It is logically located in the nation's capital. Unlike the memorial garden in Lampedusa, the SIEV X memorial is thousands of kilometres from the scene of the disaster it commemorates. However, in a metaphorical sense, the memorial is located in close proximity to the site of the events that led to the loss of 353 lives. The decisions to turn back boats and not to search for the *SIEV X* were made in Canberra. Those visiting Weston Park would be able to contemplate a site that is arguably related to the boat's sinking: Australia's Parliament House. From the vantage point of the SIEV X memorial, the large flag flying from its top is a clearly visible landmark. But here too, the commemorative gaze is not directed towards this particular site.

For the creators of the *Giardino della memoria*, the practice of planting the first fifty shrubs during the inauguration ceremony was of primary importance. The municipality has appeared unconcerned by the haphazard way in which 316 shrubs were later added to the garden and by the fact that some of the plants had already died. The initial planting was a performance of Lampedusan hospitality; at the time, Nicolini said: "Lampedusa continues to set an example. An example of not to forget, an example of commitment to what needs to be done". She also envisioned a hospitable future where the garden would become a place where today's children return as adults, and are able to say "this no longer happens" (Mastrodonato 2013). In doing so, the mayor distinguished Lampedusani from the governments that were implicated in the deaths. She envisioned the garden as a feature of the island and for islanders, rather than as a *lieux de mémoire* for the Eritrean diaspora or a site visited by survivors or grieving relatives. As hardly any of them live in Italy, such visits have been rare. The garden does not attract more than the occasional tourist or local either. Its role as a memorial was almost exhausted with the inauguration ceremony.

The initiators of the SIEV X memorial always envisioned a permanent monument located in Canberra. The SIEV X memorial project was probably most effective when Canberra's local authorities objected to it because of the attention their objections, and the federal government's alleged intervention in the issue, generated. However, unlike the *Giardino della memoria*, it has not disappeared from view since becoming a permanent feature of Canberra.

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Admittedly, these days, few people come to the Weston Peninsula specifically to visit the memorial – rather than, for example, to have a picnic or see the peninsula's many kangaroos. The fate of the *SIEV X* is not as much talked about in debates about Australia's asylum seeker policies as it was 10 years ago, and the fifteenth anniversary of its sinking went largely unnoticed. Yet given the memorial's size – it covers an area of approximately 100 by 400 m – it is hard to overlook, with its outline clearly visible even from the top of Canberra's Black Mountain Tower. While it is "inconspicuously inconspicuous", to use Robert Musil's characterization of memorials (Neumann 2000, 4), it is recognizable *as a memorial*. As if only temporarily dormant, it is waiting to be used by locals and visitors: as a backdrop for speeches, to be contemplated or to be talked about.

The SIEV X memorial and the *Giardino della memoria* vis-à-vis other memorials

We contend that it is important to consider memorials not in isolation, but also in relation to other memorials. Such a contextualization serves to highlight what is specific about particular memorials and to be attentive to the possibility that one's reading of particular memorials is informed by one's familiarity with related instances of memorialization.

At least two other memorials in Australia commemorate the *SIEV X* disaster: a bench in Hobart (Tasmania) and a memorial which also includes the names of some of the victims on Christmas Island. In Italy, a sign in a park at Villa Celimontana in Rome also commemorates the disaster of 3 October. Neither of these was conceived as an alternative to the Canberra or Lampedusa memorials. However, in Lampedusa, there are competing voices. Some survivors, local rescuers, and the local activist collective Askavusa criticized the official rescue effort, thereby exposing the consensus between all those who had witnessed the disaster and that the planting of the garden attempted to shore up, as fragile. Nicolini had invited Askavusa to contribute to the garden, and the collective created an installation, *Le radici nel cielo* (the sky's roots), an uprooted tree that resembled American land artist Robert Smithson's *First Upside Down Tree* (1969).[4] The collective wanted to criticize how the tragedy of 3 October and its memorialization were used as a cover-up for increasing militarization in the Mediterranean (D'Ancona, Interview with Ilaria Tucci, Lampedusa, 6 October 2015). The uprooted tree could be interpreted as a counter-memorial to the garden where roots were put in the ground.

The divisions among the islanders were tangible on 3 October 2014, when Italian and European politicians marked the first anniversary of the disaster. While Nicolini joined the commemorative ceremony attended by members of the European and Italian political elites, Askavusa protested at the

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Lampedusa airport, accusing the politicians of hypocrisy and holding up signs saying: "verita sul 3 ottobre" (truth about 3 October) and "commemorate I morti – ingabbiate i vivi" (commemorate the dead – lock up the living). In their blog, Askavusa wrote that the first anniversary ought to be commemorated as a day of "silence and reflection", but instead was being abused for political propaganda, with Lampedusa becoming the backdrop of a spectacle (Askavusa 2014).

While the *Giardino della memoria* and most of the plants in it are inconspicuous, one plant stands out because it is marked by a small plaque and surrounded by stones. On 10 October 2016, relatives of victims of an unrelated maritime disaster in Italian waters, the 1991 collision of the ferry *Moby Prince* with an oil tanker in Livorno Harbour, which claimed 140 lives, planted a small bush in the garden. According to its accompanying sign, it is "in memory of migrants who have lost their lives". This (nominally) 367th plant could be read as an attempt to amplify the garden's message. First, it is ostensibly a gesture of solidarity by those affected by the earlier tragedy. Second, it potentially frames the memorial politically as it reminds visitors that there has been no justice for either those who perished on 10 April 1991 or those who died on 3 October 2013. It therefore sheds a critical light on the efficiency and honesty of the institutional rescue efforts – an issue that is still raised by Askavusa, Eritrean survivors, and Lampedusan civil rescuers. Third, the plant added in 2016 potentially turned the garden into a memorial for *all* migrant deaths, which pays no attention to the particular grievances of the relatives of those who died in 2013.

There are several public memorials in Lampedusa that commemorate those lives the sea took, including the obelisk *Cassodoro* (1988) by Arnaldo Pomodoro, and two bronze statues by Gerry Scalso, *Trionfo del Mare* and *Omaggio al Pescatore*. These monuments are centrally located and clearly visible sculptures that were made to last and which, not least for that reason, do not attract much attention. The main church also has a small statue that commemorates those who were lost at sea. None of these memorials provides the names of victims or ships. While the *Giardino della memoria* continues a tradition in that it does not list names, its attention to one specific shipwreck is unique.

However, before the inauguration of the *Giardino della memoria*, Lampedusa had already two memorials to commemorate migrants who drowned while trying to reach Europe. Pope Francis gifted a small sculpture that features Jesus in a wooden boat rescuing black Africans, to Lampedusa's main church following his visit earlier in 2013. More prominent is the *Porta d'Europa*, a 5-m-high doorframe decorated with ceramic tiles that was designed by Mimmo Paladino and unveiled in 2008 in memory of migrants who lost their lives at sea (Muneroni 2015; Horsti 2016). Like the *Giardino della memoria*, but unlike other monuments on Lampedusa, it is removed

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from both the daily lives of the locals and the world of tourists. In May 2016, a religious group of Italians reconstructed a section of the cemetery where the then retired caretaker Vincenzo Lombardo had buried eighty-six anonymous bodies since 1996, and added a sculpture – created by local carpenter Francesco Tucco from a ship's bow – and crosses made out of the wood of migrant boats. An accompanying sign reads: "Here lie Muslims and Catholics, old and young, black and white, all of them migrants who died at sea, in search of freedom". Unlike the *Giardino della memoria* the *Porta d'Europa* and the sculpture in the cemetery do not remember a specific shipwreck but are generic.

Along Australia's coastline, other memorials commemorate shipwrecks that took lives, often those of (European) migrants heading towards Australia. Usually, these memorials do not name the dead; in fact, those known by name tend to be the survivors of such disasters, rather than their victims. The practice to represent every single victim individually and – in the case of the Canberra memorial – to try to name them deviates from the practice of remembering other shipwrecks. The naming of the victims has an impact on the future use and meaning of the SIEV X memorial: it does not reference other shipwrecks, nor does it appear to be related to them. By contrast, the *Giardino della memoria* is becoming a generic memorial among others that commemorate those who died at sea.

Conclusion

By engaging with instances of public memorialization, this article is offering a distinct perspective onto responses to border-related deaths. We argue that the analysis of memorial forms and practices ought to be context-specific and attentive to the issues of political interests, mediation, relations with the diasporic and survivor communities, and the cultural landscape of memorialization. Through a comparative analysis of two memorials, the SIEV X memorial in Canberra and the *Giardino della memoria* in Lampedusa, we have demonstrated how the memorialization of border-related deaths is not necessarily prompted by grief and that it can produce a range of – often conflicting – emotional and political registers, among them anger towards injustice, righteous pride, and solidarity.

There are important differences between the memorials we examine in this paper. The SIEV X memorial was designed to counter Australia's hardened public and policy responses to asylum seekers. Australians engaged in the project imagined themselves as people who would have welcomed the passengers of the *SIEV X*, and invited visitors to the memorial to identify with a view of Australia as a welcoming nation. The memorial was conceived as a national project; its location in the capital underscores that. The memorial in Lampedusa, by contrast, was the outcome of a local initiative that

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attempted to bring together disparate communities of witnesses who had been traumatized by the disaster and its immediate aftermath. Whereas the memorial in Canberra was designed to allow its creators and users to imagine themselves as citizens of an alternative Australia, the humanitarian identities engendered by the *Giardino della memoria* were commensurate with the official image of Italy that was cultivated by its political leaders: that of a nation which, led by its government, adopted a compassionate approach to irregular migrants.

The memorials differ in the way in which they recognize the victims as persons-as-such (Edkins 2011). The different levels of attention devoted to the individuality and relationality of victims reflect the difference between Lampedusa, a community at the margins of the Italian nation-state and of Europe, and Canberra, which is – at least nominally – the centre of Australia. For irregular migrants, Lampedusa is only a first stepping stone on their way to Europe. Lampedusani too do not expect migrants to stay; their hospitality towards strangers is that of hosts towards travellers passing through. Canberra residents – and those who contributed to the memorial – do not have such expectations. They would like those who have successfully sought Australia's protection to remain in their midst.

In both cases, those who remembered felt responsible towards the dead. In their responsibility, they nevertheless distinguished themselves as those who would have welcomed irregular migrants, from those who wanted to prevent them from seeking protection. The act of memorialization functions as a posthumous recognition that the dead are part of the community that authorized the memorial. Memorialization in this sense bestows citizenship on people who did not have the right to have rights, to use Hannah Arendt's expression.

Both memorials celebrate those creating or authorizing them and do not mention the involvement of survivors in the textual material. However, their future social lives are not predetermined. It may well be that Eritreans in the diaspora, together with the Lampedusani whom they befriended, will ensure that the *Giardino della memoria* remains visited and that likewise the survivors of Australia's border regime will take ownership of the SIEV X memorial. Such claims would be more difficult to realize in Lampedusa, which is a long way from where most of the survivors and relatives and friends of the victims have settled. But it would also be easier because their claims could not compete with the claims of the locals responsible for the memorial's creation. For the latter, the *Giardino della memoria* was largely a by-product of its inauguration ceremony.

For the creators of the SIEV X memorial, however, as well as for many of the Australians who have visited the memorial in the past 10 years, the memorial is about them as much as about the men, women and children who drowned in 2001. It does not just commemorate the dead but also celebrates the living: those who would have welcomed the passengers of the *SIEV X* and who do

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not identify with the asylum seeker and "border protection" policies in place since 2001 (which have the support of the majority of Australians). Thus, any attempt to claim the memorial as belonging to those with a personal connection to the *SIEV X* and its dead would compete with the claim that the memorial represents an alternative Australia.

Unlike ephemeral manifestations of grief, memorials have a life that potentially extends well beyond the process that led to their creation and could in fact become disconnected from the intention of their creators. For example, a war memorial that is ostensibly celebrating the willingness of citizens to sacrifice their life for the nation might become a focal point for anti-war protests. We therefore do not wish to speculate about what the uses of the Lampedusa and Canberra memorials in 20 or 50 years' time might be. Assertions about their potential use in the present, however, do not need to be speculative. In both cases, the memorial's critical potential lies in their propensity to commemorate a past that is not yet over; an ongoing tragedy (see also Post 2015, 25).

Deaths at the borders of the global North continue. Whether or not a visitor's glance rolls "right off, like water droplets off an oilcloth, without even pausing for a moment", to use again Musil's famous words (Neumann 2000, 5) is not just a question of a memorial's conspicuous inconspicuousness but also depends on a viewer's ability and preparedness not to see the disasters of 19 October 2001 and 3 October 2013 as singular events – while nevertheless recognizing those who die at the border as individuals who have names and who are embedded in relationships that may be entirely outside of the field of vision of people in the global North.

Notes

1. On Christmas Island, see Chambers 2011; on Lampedusa, see Brambilla 2014; Friese 2012, 2015; Gatta 2012, 2014; Kushner 2016; Mazzara 2015; Orsini 2015, 2016; Reckinger 2013; Rinelli 2015; Puggioni 2015.
2. The government subsequently reneged on Letta's promise.
3. They include, among others, Dierk Schmidt's painting *SIEV X – On a case of intensified refugee politics*, the 2008 documentary *Hope*, the plays *CMI* and *Two Brothers* for the *SIEV X* disaster, and Emma Jane Kirby's 2016 book *The Optician of Lampedusa* and Anders Lustgarten's 2015 play *Lampedusa*.
4. In 2015, Askavusa's installation was destroyed in a storm.

Acknowledgements

The authors are indebted to two anonymous referees for their exceptionally detailed and constructive comments. Karina Horsti also wishes to thank Aregai Mehari and Mohamed Kasim for sharing their insights, all the Lampedusani and Eritreans who participated in her research, and Adal Neguse and Ilaria Tucci, who provided valuable research assistance.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

The study received funding from the Academy of Finland project *Remembering Migration: Memory Politics of Forced Migration in Mediated Societies* (grant no 277357).

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