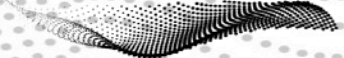# Aperitivo con AI

The Ontology Explorer: A method to assess semantic interoperability across border management data systems

June 9th, University of Bologna
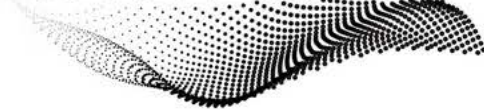
Prof. Annalisa Pelizza

PROCESSING
CITIZENSHIP

The Ontology Explorer

- Open access at Zenodo, OpenAire, http://processingcitizenship.eu

Processing Citizenship, 2017-2023
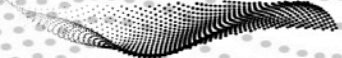
Processing Citizenship

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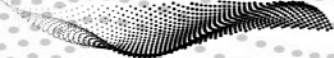
"PROCESSING CITIZENSHIP"

Individuals

Territory

Polities

The data **infrastructures**, informational **practices** and bureaucratic **procedures** that **co-produce** individuals and polities (and territory)

Methods to enact people at the border

- Methods rely on **databases**
- In Europe, they are deployed
at national and supranational scale
- I.e., Greek Register of Foreigners,
SIA, SIS II, Eurodac, Jora, VIS, ETIAS,
EES, etc.

How databases can enact people at the border
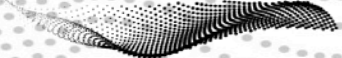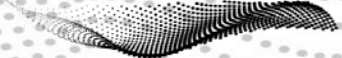
1. By making **assumptions** about people

E.g., "Is the person aggressive?" on SIS II

2. By not providing for some categories and attributes, by **silencing** them

E.g., "School director" on dropdown menu

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- Objectives:
  1. Semantic analysis of **data models** to reveal how border crossers are enacted through databases (e.g. as "regular travellers", "irregular migrants", "threat", etc.)

  2. How **diverse authorities** running diverse databases enact populations in diverse ways (more later)

**The Ontology Explorer**

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The Ontology Explorer principles

1. Ontologies as discursive 'meta layer' of data for the observer. They reveal **assumptions** about people, but also the **possibilities** that are excluded by design

2. Meaning emerges from **comparison**. The meaning of categories and attributes stems from their presence in some databases, and lack in some others (or lack with respect to actual use)

    – how do national and European authorities differ in the way they enact migrants? (Pelizza 2019, Pelizza and Van Rossem forthc. 2021)

3. It can account for **resistance**. Analysis of ontologies reveal "scripts" (Akrich and Latour 1992) of "intended people". How do actual people react?

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"CATEGORICAL STRETCHING" CONTESTING EUROPEAN CATEGORIES (PELIZZA 2019)

Practices of resistance exerted by actual people emerge as a contestation of authorities' ontologies, data models, classifications, rather than in a vacuum
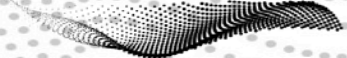
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THANKS

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